

Lamps for the Mind: Illumination and Innovation in dPal dbyangs's Mahāyoga

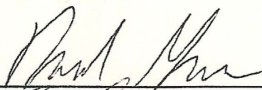
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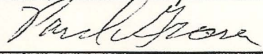
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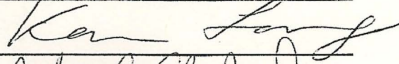
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of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

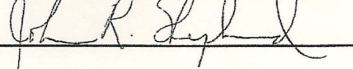
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August 2009









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ABSTRACT

Mahāyoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*) was among the earliest forms of tantra to take hold in Tibet, and it provided both template and springboard for the development of later forms of Buddhism on the plateau, including the Great Perfection (*rDzogs chen*), the highest vehicle for the Translation School of the Ancients (*snga' 'gyur rnying ma*). The journey from India to Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries of texts and teachings associated with Mahāyoga tantra, and the course of their development as the paramount forms of tantric teachings there, involved both careful conservation and creative innovation. Though the details of this process have become largely obscured to modern historians, ninth-century Tibetan master Pelyang (dPal dbyangs) emerges as the most influential and innovative figure in its early establishment on the plateau. The seven works comprising his extant corpus provide a full view of Pelyang's innovations, including his emphatic focus on view as opposed to practice, and a uniquely early form of a transcendent and evocative rhetoric which was, together with his focus on view, to become the visionary heart of the Great Perfection tradition approximately a century later. A close examination of these uniquely Tibetan characteristics deepens our understanding of the early religious history of Buddhist Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries, providing a crucial missing link in the chain of developments leading to the Great Perfection.

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To my parents,
Sherry and Kim Morrison,
who made this work possible in myriad ways.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to thank for contributing to this final product, and the degree that accompanies it. My dissertation advisor, David Germano, provided many useful suggestions and an abundance of creative insight and inspiration for this work. The breadth of his knowledge and the depth of his understanding of Tibetan religious literature and history were invaluable resources to me as I thought and wrote. My other academic advisor, Paul Groner, provided wonderful support throughout, while reminding me to keep my priorities straight—for which I will be forever grateful to him. Special thanks also are due Ueyama Daishun, who gave generously of his time while he was serving as president of Ryūkoku University in Kyoto, helping me to navigate the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. A generous grant from the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai allowed me to spend a year in Kyoto with Dr. Ueyama, which work enriched my understanding of early Tibetan Buddhism a great deal. Finally, I would like to pass my thanks to Drongbu Tsering Dorje of Tibet University in Lhasa for comments on my translation of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, and for his insight into the distinctive terminology in that work.

Colleagues I met along the way also helped me to forge my own unique path with their research and writings. These include Dan Martin, Sam Van Schaik, Jake Dalton, Carmen Meinert, and Matthew Kapstein. I would also like to thank my friends and fellow students, Steve Weinberger, Than Garson, Kevin Vose, Amy Miller, and Frances Garrett, for their support and the inspiring examples of their own careers. To my dear friend, Krista

Weih, who was always ready with listening ears and helping hands, thank you for your precious friendship and good humour.

My dissertation writing was made possible in part by the Whitehead dissertation-year writing fellowship from the University of Virginia and by a Huskey travel grant and a grant from my alma mater, Mount Holyoke College, for travel to London where I was able to read the Mahāyoga Dunhuang manuscripts held at the British Library. I am immensely grateful for this assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for fostering in me a sense of adventure and curiosity, for the years of encouragement they provided me through my studies, and for the untold hours of childcare and other help they offered while I wrote. I could not have finished this work without them. To my dear husband and darling daughters, thank you for your patience and flexibility as my research took us around the globe at difficult times, and my writing sometimes kept us at home when we might have been cavorting elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

The late tenth century brought important changes to the Tibetan religious landscape. It is during this time that Tibetans began to reengage with Buddhism and Buddhist tantra in new ways after the so-called Dark Period. The two traditions of the Ancients (*rnying ma pa*) and the Modernists (*gsar ma pa*) had their inception in this time, from which point each developed a distinct view of the history of Tibetan Buddhism. While the Modernists looked to the new translations of tantras coming out of India as the textual sources of their central teachings, the Ancients constructed a version of Tibetan religious history in which lineages stretched backward in unbroken fashion to the Dynastic Period when Buddhism was first introduced to Tibet. As the Ancients tradition evolved, there developed within it two separate strands of religious interpretation known as Atiyoga and Mahāyoga respectively. Atiyoga is characterized by a strong philosophical orientation, and valorized the themes of naturalness, spontaneity, simplicity, and direct seeing in conjunction with relatively simple contemplative practices. In contrast, Mahāyoga is characterized by a ritual orientation, and prioritized rite over view, while focusing ideologically on the themes of deity propitiation, wrathful symbolism, and complexity.

This distinction between these two divergent strands of religious interpretation and focus within the Ancients tradition has its roots in a much earlier tantric perspective—that of early Mahāyoga—which dates to the eighth through early tenth centuries and represented the newest developments of Indian Buddhist tantra at the time. In the Mahāyoga poems of the early ninth-century Tibetan master Pelyang (dPal dbyangs), we see

one of the first extractions of philosophical tantra from its ritually-oriented matrix. Pelyang's pioneering contribution to tantric development was not only to isolate these tantric views as worthy of consideration in their own right, but in fact, to prioritize them as preeminent. This differentiation of philosophy from praxis fully manifested two centuries later in the dual tantric traditions of Atiyoga and Mahāyoga, which historically have been held together in tension within the rubric of the Ancients School. In Pelyang's expositions, we see both a firm foundation in the Mahāyoga tantra tradition, and an intended ideological departure from its normative, ritually-oriented focus. This incipient bidirectionality presages the dual strands of philosophy and ritual praxis that come to characterize the Ancients tradition in the eleventh century and beyond. Thus, Pelyang is a pivotal figure both in the establishment of early Mahāyoga tantra in Tibet, and in the history of the evolution of the Ancients School in general.

Mahāyoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*) was among the earliest forms of tantra to take hold in Tibet, and it provided both template and springboard for the development of later forms of Buddhism on the plateau, including the Great Perfection (*rDzogs chen*), or Atiyoga, the highest vehicle for the Ancients. The journey from India to Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries of texts and teachings associated with Mahāyoga tantra, and the course of their development as the paramount forms of tantric teachings there, involved both careful conservation and creative innovation. Though the details of this process have become largely obscured to modern historians, assessment of Pelyang's seven extant works points to his having been the most influential and innovative Tibetan in its early establishment on the plateau. These include the emphatic focus on view as opposed to practice described

above, and a uniquely early form of a transcendent and evocative rhetoric. These two elements were to become the visionary heart of the Great Perfection tradition approximately a century later. A close examination of these uniquely Tibetan characteristics deepens our understanding of the early religious history of Buddhist Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries, providing a crucial missing link in the chain of developments leading to the Great Perfection.

Pelyang's Mahāyoga corpus

There are eight texts attributed to a Dynastic-era Pelyang in the Peking edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. These are the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* (*rDo rje sems dpa'i zhus lan*), six poems collectively referred to as the *Six Lamps* (*sGron ma drug*), and a letter of instruction addressed to various Tibetan groups on Buddhist doctrine, hereafter referred to as the *Letter* (the *gCes pa bsdus pa'i 'phrin yig*). The *Six Lamps* texts are as follows: *The Lamp of the Mind* (*Thugs kyi sgron ma*), *The Lamp of the Correct View* (*lTa ba yang dag sgron ma*), *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes* (*mTha'i mun sel sgron ma*), *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom* (*Thabs shes sgron ma*), *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation* (*bsGom thabs kyi sgron ma*), and *The Lamp of the Precious View* (*lTa ba rin chen sgron ma*).¹ The *Six Lamps* form a cohesive group, and together with the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, provide a consistent description of Pelyang's vision of Mahāyoga. The first of the *Six Lamps*, *The Lamp of the Mind*, is both a comparative doctrinal text and an explication of the central Mahāyoga tenets. The *Letter* is the odd text out for a variety of reasons which will be explained in detail in Chapter Two, and may not be the work of

¹ P 5918, 5919, 5920, 5921, 5922, and 5923 respectively.

the same author. In any case, the *Letter* does not promote Mahāyoga teachings in any way, and thus contributes little to our understanding of the development of Mahāyoga doctrine during this period.

Dynastic Tibet extended great political and cultural influence westward into China, and the dissemination of Tibetan Mahāyoga reached as far as the Silk Road, to the pilgrimage and monastic learning center of Dunhuang. A millennium later, textual and iconographic traces of the activity of students of Tibetan Mahāyoga there demonstrate its wide-spread popularity across Central Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries. Among those textual traces, the remarkable presence of no less than three manuscript copies of Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, which is extremely rare for an individually authored text at Dunhuang, provides a glimpse of Pelyang's popularity and authority among Tibetan speakers on tantric matters. The rest of Pelyang's works are known to us only through canonical versions, collected and copied many centuries after Pelyang's death.

Among the seven texts attributed to Pelyang that do address Mahāyoga concerns, several of them include passages from other texts. Of all of these, *The Lamp of the Mind* borrows most extensively from other sources, including Buddhaguhya's *Margavyūha*, Vimalamitra's *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag ces bya ba*,² and the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*, and *The Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* all contain passages from Buddhagupta's *Small Hidden Grain* (*sBas pa'i rgum chung*). Finally, *The Vajrasattva*

² P 4725.

Questions and Answers contains passages from Buddhaghosa's *Small Hidden Grain* and from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* as well.

The Abstract and the Active: Thought and Rite in Indian Mahāyoga

The form of tantra called Mahāyoga, or 'Great Yoga', was considered to be on the cutting-edge of the new religious imports from India in ninth-century Tibet, although there seems to have developed no unanimously supported hierarchical system of tantra categories in India by that time. Tantra, a unique form of esoteric Buddhism, had emerged as a distinct and self-sufficient method only in the seventh century in India with the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*, regarded as the central tantra of the Yoga tantra tradition. With the Yoga tantras appeared the central tantric rite of ritually and meditatively cultivating oneself as an enlightened Buddha, and of the performance of further oblations and prayers to oneself while projecting blessings as that supreme being. These tantras offered the unique promise of enlightenment in this lifetime, as opposed to the slow accumulations of merit and wisdom required for enlightenment by other 'exoteric' forms of Buddhism,³ and held themselves to be "inner" methods as opposed to the inferior "external" tantras.⁴ For

³ Such texts and their teachings appear to have been transmitted carefully, only after disciples passed certain tests of realization or loyalty, in secret initiations called *abhiśekha*, or empowerment ceremonies. Thus, the tantric traditions might also be called 'esoteric' traditions, although that latter term is broader and less instructive than 'tantric'. For a recent analysis of this well-worn topic, see Charles Orzech, "The "Great Teaching of Yoga": The Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34 (2006).

⁴ Whether the external tantras historically were ever held to be cohesive systems of teachings and practice with their own followings has never been shown. It is likely the bibliographical classification "external" (to which are relegated those texts labeled Kriyā and Caryā tantras, for example) was a sectarian coinage meant to boost the prestige of the "internal" tantras by disassociation.

these reasons, the Yoga tantras were regarded as a source of advanced soteriological technology.

The Yoga tantras included brief descriptions of sexual practices (such as depictions of iconography involving the intimate union of male and female buddhas), as well as descriptions of violent imagery (demons were crushed under the feet of tantric heroes, for example). However, with the later rise in India of those tantras classed as Mahāyoga, these sexualized and violent images and depictions of ritual were enhanced and pronounced, as were the ritual innovations themselves. Based on refinements and advancements of these sexual and violent technologies, Mahāyoga later became known for its dual rites of what were euphemistically named ‘union’ (*sbyor*) and ‘liberation’ (*sgrol*).

The central text of this early Mahāyoga movement, and one which exemplifies these innovations, was the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. It is the only tantra quoted in the works of Pelyang, emphasizing both its early redaction and its centrality to the Mahāyoga movement. The *Guhyagarbha tantra* most likely began circulating in India sometime in the eighth century, and is thought to have spread to Tibet just a few decades later. Ritual manuals based on the *Guhyagarbha tantra* describing and prescribing in detail the stages of sexualized practices and meditations characteristic of early Mahāyoga developments also appear to have been produced and were circulating during this period. Though passages in the *Guhyagarbha* utilize the basic tantric iconography of a supreme, royally-attributed, divine buddha acting from within a complex *maṇḍala* of attendant deities or with a consort, it also depicts buddhas in other contexts. This new narrative framework displaces older models—of buddhas preaching to disciples in specific Indian settings or cosmic Pure

Lands—with unnamed buddhas preaching by merely being, in timeless and unlocalizable settings, a sort of metateaching in a metacosmos. The tantra also represents a radical departure from earlier forms of tantra in several other aspects. It foregrounds, especially in its latter half, the types of antinomian elements found only in minor roles in the earlier Yoga tantras. In fact, this process of development can be witnessed even within the text itself, as the *Guhyagarbha tantra* appears to have been redacted in layers, with the earliest layers including verses depicting the teachings and actions of peaceful manifestations of deities similar to earlier tantras, and the newer layers developing and emphasizing the wrathful and sexualized aspects of its final content.

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of the *Guhyagarbha tantra* is its brief mentions of a new metaphysic—that all phenomena are of a fundamentally enlightened and spontaneously arisen nature. This philosophical strand runs throughout the work, and exerted its force on exegetes and ritualists from its inception, including our own author, Pelyang. In fact, in many of his descriptions of ultimate reality and the true nature of phenomena and mind, Pelyang quotes the *Guhyagarbha* directly. This indicates that by his lifetime, it had become the *locus classicus* for these types of ideas and expressions.

The presence of these philosophical descriptions in the tantra, however, are not numerous or elaborate, and together comprise a persistent but limited theme amid the fuller and more visually-oriented depictions of deities, *mudrās*, and *maṇḍalas*, *mantra* parsings, ritual instruction, and exclamations of the effectiveness of the tantra and its practices. The nature of early Indian Mahāyoga tantric developments is difficult to discern, due both to the lack of many extant Sanskrit tantric manuscripts and to an equally debilitating dearth of

historical and administrative documents describing the social aspect of these developments. From the slight historical record which remains, these developments appear to have been primarily ritually focused. Indeed, Ronald Davidson remarks that this focused interest primarily in the practical aspect of tantra was present in Tibet from the time of tantra's introduction there, and that even as late as the twelfth century, Tibetan tantric scholarship was still concerned primarily with ritual and translation activities and ventured much less often into exegetical exploration, let alone more speculative literature such as the type we see with Pelyang.⁵

The scarcity of abstract speculation in Indian tantric scholarship is clear in the Tibetan translations of tantric texts attributed to Indian masters, a prime example of which is the *Margavyūha (Stages of the Path)* by Buddhaguhya. Buddhaguhya is a controversial figure, with texts from several different tantric traditions attributed to his authorship, causing doubt regarding whether a single person could have composed such a varied wealth of texts. However, there are a number of works on Mahāyoga attributed to a Buddhaguhya, and it is not difficult to believe that a single author composed these texts, though further analysis of Buddhaguhya's Mahāyoga corpus would advance considerably our understanding of Indian Mahāyoga and this monumental figure. The prime exemplar of these texts, the *Margavyūha*, is both a brief doxographical presentation of religious systems leading up to Mahāyoga, and a description of Mahāyoga ritual itself. Throughout this text, and especially in the doxographical section, we see citations of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, and some brief elaborations on its philosophical themes. However, even within the

⁵ Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 261.

doxographical treatments of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist vehicles, distinctions between them are often advanced with little doctrinal discussion. Buddhaguhya most often merely states summarily that a particular school's view of reality is mistaken, or that believers in such a system will suffer as a result of their ignorance. The great majority of the text is concerned with ritual and its accoutrements, much as is the *Guhyagarbha* itself.

Sex, Death, and Ideas: Tibetan Mahāyoga comes of age

As is clear from the list provided above of Pelyang's literary sources, he relies primarily on Indian Buddhaguhya/Buddhagupta⁶ as a source of authority and inspiration. Although Pelyang was the first to foreground tantric views within Mahāyoga, the doctrinal foundation for those views can be found already within Buddhaguhya's texts. There, the Indian author offers brief explanations of the conceptual underpinnings of Mahāyoga's ritual dynamics.

Two centuries later, Pelyang himself is quoted extensively as an authority on Mahāyoga in a seminal doxographical work by tenth-century author Nupchen Sanggye yeshes (gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes) entitled *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. Nup's *Lamp Eye* is a unique comparison of the four main Buddhist schools present in Tibet during the Dynastic Period: classical Indian 'gradualism', Chinese Chan 'simultaneism', Mahāyoga, and the Great Perfection. From its inclusion in this list, it is clear that Mahāyoga had matured sufficiently by Nup's time for him to categorize it as a *gzhung*, or standardized textual tradition. Thus, Nup's chapter on Mahāyoga in the *Lamp Eye*

⁶ The common identity of the authors Buddhagupta and Buddhaguhya in the case of the texts mentioned here is probable. The controversy surrounding this issue and my reasons for asserting their identity are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

represents the final culmination of early Tibetan Mahāyoga's development. Among the dozens of Mahāyoga sources cited in the Mahāyoga chapter of the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, Pelyang's works are quoted eleven times, second in number only to citations from the *rDo rje bkod pa*. Pelyang's influence also can be seen in Nup's general perspective in the *Lamp Eye*. This perspective eschews the typical descriptions of tantric ritual or Buddhist cosmology in favor of a sort of poetic epistemology in which view is paramount, just as his master Pelyang does in his own catechism and *Lamp* poems.

We might see these two key players in the development of early Mahāyoga—Buddhagupta/Buddhaguhya and Nup—as the earliest and latest brackets to its formations. The link which emerges to bind them historically and ideologically is Pelyang. The course of Mahāyoga's progressive development in Tibet, then, might be usefully mapped within the period encompassed by the lives of these three masters, with the intermediary Pelyang serving both as innovator and passer of the torch.

While Indian tantric exegetes such as Buddhaguhya may have incorporated the *Guhyagarbha tantra*'s brief soteriological and ontological pronouncements into their own commentaries on the tantra, it is only with Tibetan author Pelyang that we see the first full flowering of what might be called philosophical Mahāyoga. Pelyang not only elaborates on the ideas of spontaneity and direct vision in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and in the *Margavyūha*, but he does so to the total elision of the ritual and iconographic descriptions that make up the bulk of Mahāyoga tantric literature, including the *Margavyūha*. Thus it is with these thin strands of philosophical presentation from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and the

Margavyūha that Pelyang weaves an intricate metaphysical cloth all his own in which view is paramount.

That this move toward view occurred in Tibet, and that a similar movement does not seem to have arisen in India at the time is curious, especially when we consider that the sparse antecedents to Pelyang's conceptual innovations were Indian in origin. Certainly, tantra requires a unique perspective of its practitioners. In developing the motivation to engage the practice initially, one must understand the concepts of enlightenment in this lifetime and of the potential buddhahood within oneself. Furthermore, the tantras do include some reasoning in their explanations of the process of enlightenment, and occasional ontological statements. A limited degree of abstract or conceptual engagement with the process is integral to tantric literature. However, for the most part, the Yoga and early Mahāyoga tantras simply issue proclamations regarding their utility and do not provide lengthy discussions of the philosophical foundations for it. It was indeed a conceptual leap for Tibetan Pelyang to have urged practitioners to enter into spontaneous engagement with reality by leaving aside what were considered to be the very underpinnings of tantric functionality—the ritualized praxis.

Part of the reason for this phenomenon occurring in Tibet probably lies in the particular social context in which Mahāyoga found itself in the eighth and ninth centuries. As tantra was introduced to Tibet, tantric communities and the texts in whose transmission and interpretation they were engaged, began to be dislodged from their Indian contexts involving castes, cultural taboos, forbidden substances, and so forth. This dislocation broke the nexus which bound Mahāyoga to its more materially-oriented functions and

meanings. Though Tibetans sustained a similarly keen interest in Mahāyoga ritual, Pelyang's ability to foreground view over rite may have grown out of this kind of rupture of tantra's previous social mold. Mahāyoga's leap across borders was certainly a factor allowing this creative expression. Other attendant conditions include the prevalence of Chan teachings in Tibet during the Dynastic Period and the development of the unique attributes of the Mind Series (*sems sde*) literature.

Through these efforts of Pelyang and other Indian and Tibetan exegetes and ritualists, Mahāyoga rapidly took hold and developed its own Tibetan character between the eighth and tenth centuries. In the process, it came to be regarded as more than a mere technological or literary advancement within Yoga tantra. Certainly by the tenth century, Mahāyoga had come to be perceived in Tibet as a distinct system of tantra, with its attendant core texts, commentaries, ritual taxonomies, and transmission lineages. One of the markers of relative progress within this development lies in textual depiction of the stages of Mahāyoga practice. Early Mahāyoga texts describe a flow of meditational objectives in which one first prepares oneself and the ritual space, visualizes a *maṇḍala* and its inhabitants, meditatively cultivates oneself as the central figure, and finally acts as that supreme being. During the latter half of the eighth century, the rites and meditations performed as a realized buddha turned ever more inward and were further sexualized as these practices were refined, resulting in a prioritizing of the latter stage practices over the former, and initiations and culminating rites in which practitioners engaged in sexual

practice outright.⁷ These sexual rites came to be known euphemistically as those of ‘union,’ and as opposed to sacrificial rites also categorized euphemistically as ‘liberation’.

In texts representing practical innovations of the ninth and early tenth centuries, Jacob Dalton has shown that the traditional flow of these meditations is interrupted, and a gap widens between those stages in which the *maṇḍala* and deities are cultivated (known in these later texts as the development stage, or *bskyed rim*) and those in which one attains realization and acts as a buddha (perfection stage, or *rdzogs rim*). Once separated conceptually in the liturgical literature from the earlier generation stage practices, the perfection stage practices grew more inwardly focused on processes involving the sexual anatomy of the practitioner’s own body and on the resultant arising of physical and meditational experiences. Through this interruption and separation between stages, the now explicitly eroticized perfection stage was divorced from the flow in which it had been embedded, and came to be regarded as a separate set of meditations and rites characteristic of the new technology of Mahāyoga. As the literature evolved further, it also diversified. One prominent strand of this tradition involved perfection stage meditations on a psychophysical body, in which the practitioner manipulates channels, winds, and drops entirely within a subtle body in order to bring about divine states of bliss and realization. These subtle-body tantric texts first codified as *nirottatantra*, and later as *anuttarayogatantra* texts, were eventually incorporated into the tantric traditions of the more popular Modernist Schools, which saw themselves as superseding the earlier

⁷ Davidson remarks on this inward shift, seeing in it a move from sacramental sexual rites to yogic sexual rites. Ronald Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 198.

Mahāyoga practices.⁸ Although this is a difficult and complicated issue, based on this course of maturation, Pelyang's Mahāyoga corpus appears to lie in an earlier period, before the clear distinction of perfection stage practices.

The other side of Mahāyoga's 'union and liberation' dyad seems to have developed initially at a slower pace, indicating perhaps that there was in the beginning less interest in the wrathful deities and violent rites than in the peaceful deities and the rites of union.⁹ Rites of liberation, based in part on the Rudra subjugation myth in the eleventh chapter of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*,¹⁰ involved the ritual sacrifice of an opponent of the Buddhist teachings. Here, said opponent is "liberated" from present and future suffering through death, because he or she is no longer producing those particular negative karmic seeds. Whether these rites were meant to have been carried out in actuality and on living subjects, or whether the rites were carried out with an inanimate, symbolic object, is not always clear, and the intention most likely varies between texts and traditions. At least it is clear that by the tenth century, these practices had come to be regarded as dangerous by regional Tibetan authorities.

The history of these forms of socially transgressive tantric features—the sexual and the violent—is hard to distinguish given their antisocial foundations, but they do appear to

⁸ Jacob Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2004).

⁹ Despite the explicit depictions of violence in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, liberation rites are not discussed nearly as much as are sexualized rites in the ninth and tenth century manuscripts from Dunhuang, and Pelyang mentions such rites only once in the context of a clearly symbolic ritual.

¹⁰ These rites of subjugation and violence toward opponents of the Dharma have antecedents in a variety of discussions on the useful employ of violence in nontantric Buddhist literature as well.

have had fairly distinct contexts in India, as Ronald Davidson has shown.¹¹ On the one hand, the early versions of violent rites and iconography involving wrathful deities were utilized by those tantric adepts supportive of the established political and religious hierarchies in the monasteries. This institutionalized type of tantra, in its reference to universal royal authority, power, and dominion, well suited those in powerful positions and with a stake in preserving social order. On the other hand, the sexualized literature and its associated rites appear to have been propagated especially by a noninstitutional element comprised of tantric practitioners called *siddhas* who were outside of the monasteries, or at least on their fringes, and who also developed further the rhetoric and ritual of violence, but in more local and personalized applications.

Davidson has provided an outline for the relatively discrete, but by no means mutually exclusive, historical developments of the institutional and noninstitutional forms of tantra in India. Their continued history in Tibet, however, is still very much a mystery, particularly during the so-called Dark Period (842-978), in which the structures of centralized political authority and state-sponsored religious activity collapsed entirely. As mentioned previously, Tibetans seem to have felt an early affinity during the introduction of tantra to Tibet in the Dynastic Period (ca. 600-842) for those rites involving sexual or eroticized practices. Indeed, the sexual aspect of tantra has remained a steadfast element of Tibetan tantric practice and literature to the present day. However, by the tenth century, violent forms of Tibetan Mahāyoga practice outside of the rationalized, universalized form of institutional coercion had become established to such an extent, and were perceived as

¹¹ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 196.

powerful enough, that they had come to be regarded with suspicion by local leaders. Indeed, the general theme of the wrathful divine was seen as an integral part of tantric practice in Tibet as early as Pelyang's lifetime, as evidenced by his comments regarding wrathful deity practice in his *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.

Though little is known about the early interaction between these two—eroticized and wrathful—tantric developments, and whether they were associated, as in India, with relatively distinct social groups, it is clear that they were both considered carefully by Tibetan leaders. Translation, transmission, and practice of tantra were carefully supervised by Tibetan political authorities during the Dynastic Period, and this appears to have been the case for both sexualized and violent forms of tantra equally. During this time, Tibet was expanding its borders westward and extending its cultural influence into west central Asia. As a part of the national project involving military growth and internationalization, Tibet also began to look to its Buddhist neighbors in search of a suitable form of state religion. The diverse range of Buddhist traditions represented at Samye (*bsam yas*) Monastery during the reign of King Trisong detsen (Khri srong lde brtsan, 756-797) brought enrichment to the religious scene, but was simultaneously attended by confusion and suspicion on the part of the court. In addition, there were the various native traditions of shamanic, folk, and state religions, as well as the traditional antecedents of Bön, to consider in the building of a religious hierarchy. Standardization and oversight of religious practice was a foremost concern of King Trisong detsen and his Dynastic Era successors.

While Buddhism historically has been a useful tool for political leaders, tantra brought its own particular dynamic of power and risk to its elite ruling sponsors. The

potent model of universal hegemony inherent in tantra's complex of royal metaphors may be overwhelmed by the disruptive imagery of its socially-transgressive violent and sexual depictions. Monastic tantric activity in general was closely bound up with political authority in India, and this most likely translated to the Tibetan cultural sphere. During the Dynastic Period, state-sponsored translation and textual study of Buddhist literature was severely limited in the case of the tantras, and especially those with the strongest antinomian features, such as the *Guhyagarbha* and other texts belonging to the Mahāyoga movement. However, there is much about the social history of Tibetan tantra that is unclear. A nuanced history of the relationship that bore between monastic tantra and *siddha* movements in Tibet would be a most welcome contribution to early Tibetan religious studies.

It does appear that during this period transmission of the *Guhyagarbha* and its teachings must have continued without public exhibitions of royal support. Yet, we must be careful not to assume as a result that Mahāyoga was a splintered or minimal movement. For the tradition to have grown as it did during the immediately subsequent Dark Period, it seems probable that it had established a firm foundation during the Dynastic Era. Indeed, we see in Pelyang's texts that there was some form of a codified Mahāyoga tradition, albeit evolving, in the early ninth century which could only have grown stronger with the interest his teachings generated. Indeed, the Mahāyoga texts continued to be preserved and transmitted actively through the Dynastic and Dark Periods and attained new heights of popularity with the maturation of classic Mahāyoga in the Renaissance.

Recalling a Vanished Vanguard: Pelyang as Mahāyoga Pioneer

The ninth and early tenth centuries were a glorious period for Mahāyoga in Tibet. Based on the Dunhuang Mahāyoga texts, it clearly was considered the superior form of Tibetan tantra at the time by many factions. Though his name seldom appears in later religious histories, the Dunhuang record depicts Pelyang at the forefront of this early movement.

Pelyang's centrality to the movement is evident in two forms. The first is the virtually unrivaled prominence among the Dunhuang texts of his individually-authored *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. Special care obviously was taken with the manuscript copies of that work, and two copies include detailed interlinear commentary, indicating that it was a highly valued text and that further teachings on the text were given and preserved.

The other piece of evidence for Pelyang's leading role can be found in a document dating from the tenth century written by a man claimed by the Ancients' tradition to have been his disciple or grand-disciple, Nupchen Sanggye yeshe. In his *Lamp Eye of Contemplation (bSam gtan mig sgron)*, which is a detailed doxographical treatment of the views of Indian Buddhist philosophy, Chinese Chan, Mahāyoga, and Great Perfection, Nup quotes and mentions Pelyang as an authority on Mahāyoga more than any other figure. It is a testament to the sustained power of Pelyang's teachings in the tenth century, and to the perceived authority in his words.

Nup's deference to Pelyang's authority is the last remaining instance of such reverence, however. From the eleventh century, Tibetan histories make only brief, if any,

reference to him as author or as adept. The reasons for this abrupt and surprising shift in regard for Pelyang bear some investigation. Such an inquiry offers the potential of furthering our understanding of Tibetan religious developments during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Beyond Pelyang: The emergence of the Great Perfection

Nup does not present Mahāyoga as the highest view in the tenth-century *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. Rather, by the tenth century, we see that the religious landscape has shifted enough for Nup to perceive (or intend for his audience to perceive) that the Great Perfection has rightfully taken the ultimate doxographical position. As Mahāyoga evolved and was being codified in the late eighth and ninth centuries, this Great Perfection tradition of Atiyoga tantra was emerging based in large measure on those very same Mahāyoga texts and teachings. Great Perfection texts share much with Pelyang's works in their use of negative rhetoric to describe ultimate reality, their visionary and evocative phrasing, their emphasis on view over method, and their reliance upon the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. In retrospect, it is clear that the types of innovations we see in Pelyang's texts represent the beginnings of conceptual and literary styles that are characteristic of the Great Perfection described in Nup's *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*.

However, we as yet have a poor understanding of these crucial transitions between the emergence in the eighth century of those practices which are based on, but distinct from, the Yoga tantras, through the full codification of Mahāyoga as a cohesive tradition, and ending with the eventual detachment in the tenth century of the Great Perfection from Mahāyoga as a distinct tradition. What was the relationship of Mahāyoga during this time

to other forms of tantra, such as the Great Perfection? Why did the Great Perfection teachings arise, and how did they evolve during the ninth and tenth centuries, and what is particularly Tibetan about these developments? Why do Ancients proponents elevate the doxographical rank of the Great Perfection over that of Mahāyoga, despite the latter's continued popularity within the Ancients tradition? This dissertation seeks to shed light on these issues regarding the developments of Mahāyoga and the Great Perfection by exploring one of the clearest links we have between them, the life and works of one of Dynastic Tibet's greatest and most pioneering thinkers, Pelyang.

With the dawning of the Classical Period (978-1419) in Tibet, official regional Buddhist sponsorship was renewed with the limited re-establishment of political centralization and economic revival. Though interest in Pelyang's texts appears to have waned drastically from this period onward, his apophatic rhetorical style and emphasis on view persisted in a particularly philosophically-oriented trajectory within the Ancients exegetical tradition. This tradition, whose texts are categorized bibliographically as Gyude (*rgyud sde*, 'Tantra Collection'), focuses relatively more on philosophical exegesis of the tantras as opposed to ritual method. The Gyude, though a continuum of tantra exegesis in the Dynastic Period, developed in two separate streams from the eleventh century: the Rong-Long and the Zur traditions. These two eponymous traditions are distinguished by their relative stances on the universality of the application of the Atiyoga perspective. The Rong-Long tradition uses Atiyoga views based on the teachings of Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (Rong zom chos kyi bzang po, eleventh century) and Longchenpa (kLong chen pa, 1308-1363) to explicate Mahāyoga texts, and the *Guhyagarbha tantra* in particular. The

Zur tradition, on the other hand, strictly compartmentalizes Mahāyoga teachings as separate from those on the Great Perfection, using only Mahāyoga doctrine to comment upon texts traditionally held to be Mahāyoga tantras.

Of the two, the Rong-Long most closely mimics Pelyang's perspective, incorporating much of his visionary, transcendent language and depictions of the spontaneous nature of reality and so forth. This sort of evocative rhetoric was associated by Rong-Long scholars primarily with the Great Perfection, under which Mahāyoga was subsumed as a lesser doxographical category.

However, in contradistinction to these Atiyoga developments of a more philosophical interpretation of Mahāyoga in the Gyude, there also developed Mahāyoga lineages and ritual transmissions centered on wrathful and sexualized imagery and rites, the texts of which were developed under the rubric of Drupde (*sgrub sde*, or "Practice Collection"), a collection of texts on tantric attainment. Though the philosophically-oriented Gyude texts are respected as pristine, prestigious forms of erudition, the Drupde genre was much more popular, judging from the explosion of literary development and text creation within the latter. From the eleventh century, we see great interest in revealed treasure teachings (*gter ma*), in the *ka gye (bka' brgyad) sādhana* texts which describe rites involving wrathful forms of Manjuśrī, Heruka, and so forth, in mythological and exorcistic narratives involving Dynastic heroes like Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairocana, "revealed" by Nyangrel Nyima Özer (Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer, 1136-1204) and others, in manuals describing the rites of union and liberation, and so forth.

As these two paradigms—the conceptual and the ritual—developed within the emerging Ancients tradition, their distinctions were exaggerated even further through bibliographical categorization. Beginning with the development of early Tibetan Mahāyoga, the distinction pioneered by Pelyang between tantric rite and thought evolved into strict separation in Nup’s *Lamp Eye*. In the Classic Period, these separated paradigms are finally fully dichotomized. Thus, Mahāyoga has come to be characterized as the dominant practical faction within the Ancients school, inferior doxographically to the Great Perfection, but offering nonetheless uniquely powerful technologies. It is ironic that the view espoused and promoted by Pelyang as Mahāyoga’s defining characteristic ultimately nourished a tradition intended to eclipse it.

The careful work of a handful of world-class scholars— David Germano, Ueyama Daishun, Matthew Kapstein, Sam van Schaik, and Jake Dalton—have only begun to scratch the surface of the vast topic of early Tibetan Mahāyoga. Hundreds of Mahāyoga texts, from both published Tibetan Buddhist canons and from the manuscript collections from Dunhuang, have yet to be translated and analyzed by modern researchers, and thus their content and relative import can only be guessed. In entering such an unknown arena, the potential of this dissertation to contribute to our modern representation of the wider panorama of early Tibetan religious life, and the development of Mahāyoga within it, is thus considerable.

Chapters

Tibet’s importation and assimilation of Buddhism during the eighth and ninth centuries included extensive imperial patronage of official translation projects, of

international monastic scholarship, and of temple consecration in Tibet, China, and Central Asia. Tibetan kings also invited Buddhist scholars from India, China, Korea, and Central Asia to teach at Samye, Tibet's first monastery. Tibetan historical chronicles assert that, during this period, a Ba Pelyang served as the second abbot of Samye and as a royally-appointed translator, and that he may also have been the first person to have been ordained in Tibet, and thus was at the axis of much of this early vortex of official religious activity. It has long been conjectured that this politically powerful, multilingual, religiously moderate Ba Pelyang might also have been our thoughtful Mahayogin poet, much to the dismay of later Tibetan scholars and some modern Western thinkers alike. Chapter One explores this topic from a historical perspective, exposing the historical and doctrinal issues involved. It concludes that no statement can be made with certainty either way, keeping open the possibility that a powerful political figure might also have been actively engaged in promoting Mahāyoga.

The moderate stance in Pelyang's letter and the radical stance in his catechism and poems might easily represent the multifaceted position of a thinker at the center of Tibet's multicultural Buddhist exchanges. Pelyang appears to have mastered both the standard Indian Yogācāra-Mādhyamika philosophy endorsed by the court and the radical, ritualized native Tibetan Mahāyoga. Regardless of Pelyang's political identity, the diversity apparent in his terminology and philosophical perspective mirrors the multicultural and poly-sectarian influences that bore on the early religious scene as Mahāyoga entered Tibet. We see by examining Pelyang's works in the following chapters that the stark contrast of monasticism and *siddha*-hood posited by those interested in clearly distinguishing the

author and the abbot cannot be supported with textual evidence from Pelyang, and that his poetry presents us with constant points of connection, overlap, and unexpected convergences between these two interpretations of tantra, and also radical departures from both. Furthermore, the threads of the seam between Mahāyoga and Atiyoga, or Great Perfection, are woven through Pelyang's texts. This may offer some explanation regarding the reasons for the eventual demise of his popularity and the clear demarcation made between abbot and author, as the later Ancients tradition looked to sources for legitimating its literature which could not possibly include Pelyang—direct Indian lineages and Buddha-voiced texts.

Chapter Two delves further into Pelyang's identity and ground-breaking role by examining his corpus. The unique, cohesive literary style in all his poetry indicates a departure from the type of tantric literature produced in India at this time, and in the Mahāyoga documents from Dunhuang. These texts quote from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and the lengthy *Margavyūha*, and include discussions of such diverse topics as classic Indian Buddhist philosophy, socially-transgressive tantric ritual, and native Tibetan deity propitiation all in the context of asserting the ability of practitioners to directly see the spontaneous arising of the true nature of reality. In so doing, Pelyang simultaneously exhibits his fluency in the traditional Buddhist scholastic taxonomies of the day, and asserts the uselessness of traditional effort and ritualized practice. We see in these works the freedom injected into Tibetan tantric literature nearly from its inception, and the birth of Tibetan Vajrayāna philosophy.

Chapter Three is an overview of Tibetan Mahāyoga during the late Dynastic and early Dark Periods, as well as an introduction to the various other types of religious traditions present in Tibet at the time. As religious adepts gathered in the capital and at Samye from China, India, and all over Central Asia, a astonishing array of texts and teachings and practical schema vied for native Tibetan support and adoption. Among these, Mahāyoga gained in prominence due in large part, it seems, to the efforts of Pelyang. Against what type of cultural and religious backdrop did Pelyang work to define his teachings and Mahāyoga in general? What were the competing interests, and what were Pelyang’s concerns in overcoming them? What might he have adopted from his partners in this rich religious dialogue, and what did he eschew? Furthermore, what was particularly Tibetan about his innovations, and what might be said to have Indian or other provenance? Here, we look closely at Pelyang’s use of Indian master Buddhaguhya’s *Margavyūha*, and compare Pelyang’s interpretation of Mahāyoga with those texts on Mahāyoga found at Dunhuang. These contexts provide a sense of the particular project of Pelyang, not only in promoting Mahāyoga, but also in reinterpreting it.

Chapter Four seeks to illuminate two important questions: What was Pelyang’s legacy? and how do we explain the rise of the Great Perfection with the concurrent fall of Pelyang’s particular Mahāyoga? By looking at the copies of his texts preserved at Dunhuang, it is clear that his teachings were carefully preserved and studied for at least a century after his death. Nup’s deference to Pelyang is also apparent in his frequent citations of the master’s texts. These two sources—the Dunhuang manuscripts and Nup’s *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*—provide clues to the changing Tibetan religious landscape of

the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the transitions Tibet underwent on its way to forming the more universalizing approaches of the Ancients and the Modernists. Pelyang's crucial role in this transition, as its first tantric philosopher, is made clear.

Despite Mahāyoga's central role in Tibetan religious history and in particular, its seminal force during the earliest transmissions to Tibet of Buddhism itself, Mahāyoga texts have received relatively little attention in modern scholarship until very recently, as a result of its relative neglect by traditional Tibetan Modernist approaches. In the last few years, interest in early Mahāyoga has grown, and several excellent studies have been published. However, this project is unique for its detailed focus on a particular and influential Mahāyogin author and the system he promoted in the early periods of Tibetan tantric development. A thorough examination of Pelyang's oeuvre with regard to the development of Mahāyoga in Tibet will enrich the current conversation in the field of early Tibetan Buddhist studies by bringing to light this essential description of its beginnings.

CHAPTER ONE • THE AUTHOR AND THE ABBOT: TANTRA AND MONASTICISM IN EIGHTH- AND NINTH-CENTURY TIBET

Introduction

The eighth and ninth centuries were the crucible in which Tibetan tantric Buddhism was first forged on the Tibetan plateau. As Tibetans studied and assimilated into the Tibetan religious milieu new texts and practices arriving from India and other regions, they also very quickly established unique expressions of tantra. Tibetan Mahāyoga was the most prominent expression of the religious creativity which developed and flourished during this period, and was the product of the rich associations which developed between Indian and Tibetan religious figures, detailed in letters, lineage texts, and textual citations in the various Tibetan Buddhist canons and in the documents found in the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang.

As is clear from these sources, Pelyang was a key figure in the assimilative and creative activity that resulted in distinctive forms of Tibetan Mahāyoga tantra. Three versions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, which is attributed to Pelyang, were preserved at Dunhuang. Several Tibetan Buddhist canons also include that text as well as a collection of Pelyang's poetry entitled *The Six Lamps (sGron ma drug)*.¹² In addition to his

¹² Texts attributed to Pelyang are the collection entitled the *Six Lamps (sGron ma drug)*, the *Letter*, and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. The Peking edition of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* attributes authorship to Pelyang, while the two Dunhuang versions containing colophons—PT 837 and ITJ 470—attribute this text to dPal dbyams. These all have been shown by Ueyama Daishun to be editions of the same text. Daishun Ueyama, "Peruyan Cho No Daiyuga Bunken: P. Tib. 837 Ni Tsuite [a Mahaayoga Document Composed by Dpal Dbyangs; P. Tib. 837]," *Bukkyou*

literary legacy, a Pelyang is commonly remembered in Ancients lineage texts as a chief disciple of Nyak Nyanakumara (sNyags Jñānakumara) and as teacher to the great Nup, and his miraculous abilities as a *vidyādhāra*, or ‘awareness holder’ (*rigs ‘dzin*),¹³ are frequently extolled. We thus have extensive, if not detailed, evidence of an accomplished Dynastic-era Tibetan Mahāyogin siddha named Pelyang who was a poet, teacher, and yogi. This dissertation seeks to analyze the literary works attributed to Pelyang in order to better articulate the character of the Tibetan Mahāyoga tantric tradition in its early stages as it was first formed during the Tibetan imperial age.

In contradistinction to these sources’ portrayal of a radical Mahāyogin master named Pelyang living during the Dynastic period, there are also abundant references to a moderate, seemingly conservative, monastic Tibetan figure named Pelyang who lived during the same general period. While the life of the Mahāyogin siddha is described only briefly in historical texts and colophons, literary descriptions of the official religious activity of this monastic Pelyang are almost ubiquitous, and accounts of his service to the throne as royally-appointed abbot are relatively detailed. In attempting to understand the social and intellectual context of the Mahāyogin author of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamp* texts, this dissertation explores the possibility that these two religious figures named Pelyang—the author and the abbot—are simply two disparate

bunka kenkyuusho kiyō 16 16, no. June (1977).

¹³ *Vidyādhāra* is a term with a wide range of meanings. It can be used to refer to human yogic adepts, or to powerful deities such as might belong to the retinue of a tantric buddha such as Vajrasattva. For more on this term, see David L. Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski, *Indo-Tibetan Studies : Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Buddhica Britannica. Series Continua, 2 (Tring, U.K.: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990), 135-36.

representations of a single man. Although the issue has been addressed in both traditional Tibetan literature and in modern scholarship, this dissertation is the first to explore the issue in detail with reference to the rich variety of sources mentioned above.

The import of this question is broad, extending to the greater Tibetan religious milieu, and has implications for the general history of tantra development in Tibet. Modern views of the mutual distinctions between these two types of figures—yogi and monastic—most likely have influenced the preemptive isolation of these two roles from one another, and in turn, the common assumption that the yogi Pelyang and the monastic Pelyang were different men. This dissertation questions the asserted presence in this early period in Tibet of a strict division between institutional and noninstitutional tantric activity in India as a hermeneutic misplacement. Having reopened the possibility for the common identity of abbot and author, an unexpected ambiguity emerges from those texts by and about Pelyang between the projects of sustaining religious social structures and of disregarding them in the service of higher awareness.

As with many descriptions of Dynastic-era figures in Tibetan historical texts, several factors serve to obscure what might otherwise be a simple project of identification: the complex web of the tenuously connecting threads of purported religious lineage, general sectarian affiliation, and clan membership; the brief character of many of the key historical references; unclear or ambiguous dates; contradictory biographical information; and the likelihood of at least some level of retroactive attribution or sectarian rewriting of history. This chapter will set forth the various accounts of religious figures named Pelyang said to have lived during the Dynastic era, and will attempt to clarify the situation by

exploring the possibilities of identity among all of them. In so doing, several important bibliographical and historical questions will be considered. What are the various names given to these Dynastic Pelyang figures? Might all these names belong to a single person? What are the earliest and latest possible dates for any Dynastic-era figure named Pelyang? Are those dates separated by more than what reasonably might be considered a single lifespan? In attempting to answer these initial questions, I will examine the available data regarding each of the Pelyang figures mentioned in the colophons and in Tibetan histories of the period, sorting out the possibilities of identification with our Mahāyogin author. I then will examine three modern historical perspectives on the subject and attempt to draw conclusions as they relate to the present dissertation's analysis of the literary works from the Dynastic period attributed to Pelyang.

These deceptively simple questions will thus constitute the backdrop for the greater inquiry into the role of early Mahāyoga in the formation of Tibetan Buddhist tantra, and its relationship to other Buddhist systems taking root in Tibetan soil during these early centuries. The possibilities regarding Pelyang's identity will enable us to advance the much more interesting and nuanced query: Could a moderate, court-appointed, scholastically-minded monastic leader also have been a proponent of Mahāyoga in the developing religious environment of the Tibetan empire? Because the historical data cannot be used to rule out this possibility, as often has been assumed, our understanding of early tantra in Tibet may have to be revised. The second chapter of this dissertation, on Pelyang's literary corpus, further examines his possible identity based on the philosophical positions set forth in those texts, concluding that there is no evidence that Pelyang was

associated exclusively with either institutional or noninstitutional forms of Buddhism. In the third chapter, the wider religious environment of eighth- and ninth-century Tibet is explored with a view toward establishing the historical implications of this ambiguity in a major Mahāyogin author's work, and furthermore, toward seeking the reasons that his texts were forgotten despite his hagiographic prominence for the Ancients. For now, let us turn to the immediate questions of identity.

The Names of Pelyang

In several historical chronicles relating events during King Trisong detsen's reign (756-797), the name Pelyang appears numerous times in reference to a figure who played multiple pioneering roles in the course of Buddhism's introduction to Tibet. A Pelyang is cited as the second abbot of Samye, the first monastery in Tibet, and the name is also listed in several chronicles as one of the first six or seven monks to have been ordained in Tibet—possibly even the first. In some sources, Pelyang is said to have been a royal preceptor and an official Buddhist translator. There are also frequent references, as mentioned above, to a famous Mahāyoga specialist during this period named Pelyang and to a Pelyang later construed as belonging to the Ancients lineage. Despite this wealth of references to a Dynastic-era Pelyang, however, it is seldom clear whether any correspondences can be made between the various figures described even within a single historical work, and the uncertainty concerning the identity of these figures seems to be at least as old as our oldest Dynastic chronicles.

In an effort to clarify the obviously important figure or figures in these references, several Tibetan authors offer alternate preordination names, personal names or clan names

for particular figures with the name of Pelyang, thereby allowing those historians either to merge the various references into a single figure or differentiate them into multiple figures as befitted their own agendas. Clearly, later Ancients exegetes and historians, intent on presenting the Great Perfection as a direct transmission from India, and its seminal texts as revealed *buddhavacana*, were keen to dismiss Pelyang's Tibetan, Mahāyogin, and historically localizable role in the literary creation of their highest tantric vehicle. While his presence as a Mahāyogin adept serves to enrich the retelling of the Buddhist history of Tibet, his sectarian literary presence may have been deemed too damaging to the image of the Great Perfection as a superior doctrine, and thus, may have presented an interpretive challenge too great to overcome. Thus, the Ancients appear to have expended no effort toward creating historical descriptions of the author Pelyang, or toward tying the author and the adept together descriptively.

Furthermore, the identification of the author and the abbot within the Mahāyoga tradition sullies the clear waters of the glorious Dynastic Period as it is revisioned by Ancients historiographers. For them, the exegetes and translators of this period were responsible for the creation of a perfect Buddhist state. From the eleventh century, the strong Ancients orientation toward the revealed treasure tradition of *gter ma* texts reveals marked preference for authors from the Dynastic Period, but not those with specific, exclusive sectarian affiliations other than with the Great Perfection, as Pelyang most certainly exhibits. Thus, it may have been easier to elide any textual evidence of a link between the Mahāyogin author and the Dynastic abbot than to allow the cognitive dissonance such a link would engender.

Despite the efforts of some Tibetan scholars to clarify the issue historically, however, there remains little agreement regarding references to Pelyang as author and as abbot. Such disagreement over names and identities is rife between the historical chronicles mentioning Pelyang, and there are incongruities even between the various versions of one particular text, the *sBa bzhed*, which is among the earliest sources of information regarding the Dynastic period. The debates over Pelyang's name primarily focus on two key issues: 1) clarification of Pelyang's preordination name or names, whether Khri gzigs, Khri bsher sang shi ta, Sang shi, or Ratna; and 2) clarification of Pelyang's clan name, whether dBa'/sBa/ rBa/'Ba' or gNyan/bsNyan/sNyan.

The first type of debates—over Pelyang's preordination name—have been thoroughly summarized and evaluated by Yamaguchi Zuihō in his attempt to identify the abbot Pelyang. According to Yamaguchi, the abbot Pelyang has been referenced using several names throughout Tibetan history, and this figure can be reliably equated with the Pelyang who belonged to the first small group of Tibetan monastics known as *se mi (sad mi)*.

The second debate—over whether the two clan names used to refer to Dynastic-era figures named Pelyang distinguish two separate men, and whether those two men can be reliably identified – a Ba (spelled variously as dBa', sBa, rBa', and 'Ba') Pelyang as the abbot, *se mi* member, and author of the *Letter* on the one hand, and on the other hand, a Nyen (spelled variously as gNyan, bsNyan, and sNyan) Pelyang as Mahāyogin adept and the author of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps*. This question has not been adequately explored, and is the one to which this chapter will now turn.

Pelyang, the Author

Bibliographic data is our richest source of information for determining dates for authors identified as Pelyang. Four of the five main versions of the Tibetan Tenjur (*bsTan 'gyur*)¹⁴ contain six to eight ostensibly Dynastic-Era works attributed to a Pelyang, including the *Letter*, entitled *A Compendium of the Essential Teachings – A Letter for the Tibetan King* (*gCes pa bsdus pa'i 'phrin yig Bod rje 'bangs la brdzangs pa*), a group of six religious poems called the *Six Lamps*, and a catechism entitled *The Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. In addition, two manuscripts and one nearly complete fragment of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* were also found at Dunhuang. Among these eight works, four of the *Six Lamps* are attributed in some sources specifically to Nyen Pelyang. All of those sources are canonical collections from the seventeenth century or later.¹⁵

Despite the presence of these many versions of Pelyang's texts, only the *Letter* and two Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* contain colophons, the *Letter* yielding more useful biographical information about its author than the manuscripts.¹⁶ It is clear from the contents of these colophons that they were not written by

¹⁴ These are the Peking, sNar tang, and dGa' ldan editions and the sDe dge edition of the *bsTan 'gyur*. I do not have access to the Cone edition at this time.

¹⁵ The *Lamp of the Mind* and the *Lamp of the Correct View* are attributed to gNyan Pelyang in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*. The *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes* is attributed to bsNyan Pelyang in the Peking edition of the *bsTan 'gyur*, and to gNyan Pelyang in the Derge edition and in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*. The *Lamp of the Method of Meditation* is attributed to gNyan Pelyang in the Peking and Derge editions and in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*.

¹⁶ The Peking version of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is prefaced by a largely illegible line regarding Pelyang. The Peking version is nearly identical to the third, fragmentary Dunhuang version of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*—PT 819—however, in which there are no interlinear notes at all. Hence, the Peking version's prefatory line probably post-dates PT 819, and its colophon added as recently as the fourteenth century or later when the Peking canon was compiled.

Pelyang himself, but were later additions to the texts by an unknown editorial hand written at an unknown date. In fact, even the Dunhuang manuscripts cannot be assumed to date from the era of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang.¹⁷ Although we know from their contents that Pelyang could not have lived before Buddhaguhya, who most likely was born in the early eighth century, because the former explicitly cites the latter, the earliest historical reference to Pelyang's literature is in the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*), which is a relatively late historical work from the fifteenth century.¹⁸ The most important data available for determining a *terminus ante quem* for Pelyang's corpus is the inclusion of several of his texts in Nup's *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, which is currently thought to be a late ninth- or early tenth-century work.¹⁹

The two Dunhuang colophons are in the same hands as those of the texts to which they are appended. Being nearly identical in content, they read as follows:

¹⁷ This is due to the fact that Tibetan lay and religious populations remained at Dunhuang following the Tang's recapture of the region in 848, and thus, Tibetan language texts continued to be produced and consumed along the Silk Road at least through the first half of the eleventh century when Cave 17, containing these and thousands of other artifacts, was sealed.

¹⁸ "The Venerable Ling, a disciple of dPal phag mo gru pa... was born in the year Earth-Male-Ape (1128). ... He heard numerous precepts, such as the *sGron ma rnam drug* by the ācārya Pelyang, and others." George Roerich, *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 659.

¹⁹ Carmen Meinert, "Structural Analysis of the *Bsam Gtan Mig Sgron*: A Comparison of the Fourfold Correct Practice in the *Āryāvikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī* and the Contents of the Four Main Chapters of the *Bsam Gtan Mig Sgron*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26, no. 1 (2003): 175, fn. 2. Jacob Dalton and Sam van Schaik, "Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Buddhist Syncretism in Dunhuang," in *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, ed. Susan Whitfield (London: British Library Press, 2004), 167.

This [*Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*] is the work of Master Pelyang, imputed from [his] specific teachings. The collections and tantras in the aspect of Mahāyoga, without fabrication, were collected from the various texts into one, and were taught to clarify the illness of hazy doubt. Its aim is to teach the clear meaning of the obstructions in the mind, which have grown into afflictions and hazy doubt, for the benefit of sNa nam lDong khyu and for yogins of later generations. All together from beginning to end, there are fifty-three answers to [fifty-] three questions regarding the meaning. Specifically, questions and answers are collected into pairs.²⁰

The biographical information that can be gleaned from this is limited, but there are two points of interest. One is the term ‘master’ or *lop pön* (*slob dpon*) used to describe Pelyang. Although the title *lop pön* was a fairly common appellation for a religious teacher throughout the Tibetan historical chronicles and in Pelyang’s *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, it is worth noting that Bu tön (Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290-1364) also applied the

²⁰ *slob dpon dpal dbyams kyis mdzad/_/mtshan don las btags/_phyogs ma ha yo gar bsdu zhing rgyud ni//gcig gzhung gcig nas bsdu pa ma mches ste/_rgyud kyid nad myi gsal zhing the tsom du gyur pa bsal ba’i phyir gsungs/_/dgos ched ni sna nam ldong khyu’i don du ‘am/_/phyi rabs kyid rnal ‘byor pa blo la myi gsal zhing the tsom dang sdug par gyur pa’i gags bsal ba’i don gsungs/_/mgo mjug du bsdu pa’i don zhus pa’i tshig lnga bcu rtsa gsum lan btab pa la/_bcu rtsa gsum de yang de yang zhus pa dang lan btab pa gnyis su ‘dus so//*

ITJ 470 ends with the following attribution, *phra shi meng hwe’i ‘gyog kyis bris*, “written by Phra shi meng hwe’s palanquin [bearer].” This line probably refers to the copyist and not to the author of the colophon, especially given that ITJ 470 seems to be an exact copy of PT 837.

term *lop pön* to Pelyang the abbot in his description of Pelyang's appointment as successor to Ye she wang po at Samye Monastery.²¹

The more interesting biographical element of this colophon is the assertion that the text's teachings were given for the benefit of *na nam dong khyu* (*sna nam ldong khyu*). This appears to be a person, lDong khyu of sNa nam.²² The sNa nam clan (*rus*) was extremely powerful politically during the Dynastic period, as the source of the first true *zhang*, or maternal uncle to the king, and thus of protection and support to the royal family. The name appears frequently in Tibetan biographies of King Trisong detsen. sNa nam contemporaries of the king include sNa nam rGyal tsha lha snang,²³ who was military general and Chief Minister to Trisong detsen, the minister sNa nam Ma zhang khrom pa

²¹ *dPal dbyangs slob dpon du bskos te chos ston/* "Pelyang was appointed *slob dpon* and taught the Dharma." Bu ston Rin chen grup, *Chos 'byung gsung rab tin po cha'i mdzod*, sDe dge: 142a6.

²² Although the lDong were among the most established and powerful clans in Tibet, here *ldong khyu* appears to be a personal name. lDong tshab and lDong zhi, which likewise contain the clan name in their first syllable, are personal names that can be found in early Tibetan historical records. Hugh Edward Richardson and Michael Aris, *High Peaks, Pure Earth : Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture* (London: Serindia Publications, 1998), 20.

²³ rGyal tsha lha snang was chief minister under King Trisong detsen from 782 through that king's reign, and he is listed as a minister in Trisong detsen's edict of 780-781. cf. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston, ja* 109b5. Per K. Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 387, fn. 1302. General Zhang rGyal tsha lha snang overtook the Chinese capital and large parts of China in 763. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* 112a5-7 in Sorensen 1994: 421 fn. 1478. rGyal tsha lha snang is also described by the *dBa bzhed* as having supported the Bon priests in their insistence on traditional royal funerary rites for the king at his death. *dBa' bzhed* 2002: 95.

skyes,²⁴ the famous translator sNa nam Ye shes sde,²⁵ and the treasure-concealer sNa nam rDo rje bdud 'joms.²⁶ The latter two figures are said to have been among Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples, as is Pelyang himself. Perhaps most well-known among all the Dynastic sNa nam figures is Trisong detsen's mother, said to have been a supporter of Chan master Mahoyen prior to the Samye debates.²⁷ Although Tibetan lexicographers Das and Jäschke equate the area controlled by the *sNa nam* with Samarkand, Giuseppe Tucci dismisses these claims and fixes the *sna nam yul* firmly within Tibet.²⁸ Referring to a passage in the *sBa bzhed* and to later accounts such as the *sNe'u chos 'byung* regarding the high number of sNa nam clan members active in that area, Per Sorensen concludes that the sNa nam clan was based in the sTod lung Valley, near Lhasa, during Trisong detsen's rule. Indeed, as Sorensen points out, Tibetan historian dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba records the gift of this area to the control of the sNa nam clan during the same period.²⁹ Thus, it appears that among this Pelyang's chief disciples was a member of one of the most

²⁴ Ma zhang khrom pa skyes is said to have written a law ordering the destruction of the Dharma during the reign of Trisong detsen. *dBa' bzhed* 2002: 35, fn. 61.

²⁵ Ye shes sde, author of the *lTa ba 'i khyad par*, belonged to the sNa Nam clan. For Tibetan references to Ye shes sde, see Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long*, 399, fn. 1359.

²⁶ sNa nam rDo rje bdud 'joms was among those sent to Nepal to invite Padmasambhava to Tibet. *Ibid.*, 368, fn. 1195.

²⁷ For a list of the many Tibetan sources containing an account of Trisong detsen's parentage, see Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-37 and 215, fn. 29.

²⁸ Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 37, fn. 2.

²⁹ Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long*, 365, fn. 1183. Michael Aris, *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*, Aris & Phillips Central Asian Studies (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 83-91.

powerful clans in Tibet during the Dynastic period, most likely from an area near Lhasa. This may be further supported by two separate historical references to a Nyen Pelyang living in that area during the Dynastic era.³⁰

The other colophon we have available to us, that appended to the *Letter*, is much more explicit regarding the identity of its author and his connection to the court.

In Tibet, there was not even the word ‘monk’. Then, the Lord Bodhisattva, Trisong detsen, obtained the Dharma, and faith arose in the honorable king’s mind. One known by the ordination name Pelyang, preeminent among monks, of utterly noble tranquility, unrivaled among those in Tibet’s court, composed this. After the king requested consultations, because some things were allowed and others were not, there was disagreement. There was a dismissal,³¹ and [he] departed for IHo. This teaching later was given to the king and his ministers, to the monastics,³² and to the royal subjects of Tibet. It is said that in the end, the disagreement was for the best because the

³⁰ Ne’u Pandita in the thirteenth-century *Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga* records a gNyan Arya Pelyang building the g.Yung drung temple in ‘Dam chen, northwest of Lhasa, in the context of describing the activities of nine men all of whom are commonly included in *sad mi* lists or in lists of Padmasambhava’s twenty-five disciples. *sNgon gyi gtam me tog phreng ba*: 27. Sixteenth-century Tibetan historiographer Tāranātha claims a gNyan Pelyang lived in Kha ra sgo btsun in gTsang in central Tibet. *rGyal khams pa ta ra na thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa’i deb gter shin tu zhib mom ma bcos lhug pa’i rtogs brjod*: 51. As per Samten Gyaltsen Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1988), 68.

³¹ Taking ‘gyed for *bgyed/gyed*.

³² This term also appears in the Peking ed. of the sBa bzhed: nga’i drung du ser chags ma btang cig zer nas dam la btags. sBa bzhed, Peking ed.: 29.

reverend [Pelyang] was able to accomplish good deeds, and the king and the people of Tibet, through his assistance, were humbled. This letter summarizing the precious instructions is known due to the karmic connections created by the reverend Pelyang, and was given to the king and people of Tibet.³³

This colophon names Pelyang as author of the letter but does not identify his role within the royal court or his clan name. Fortunately, from the historical references therein, we are able to conclude that this Pelyang is understood by the colophon's author to have been the second abbot of Samye. The disagreements mentioned in the colophon must refer to those of the king with Ye she wang po (Ye shes dbang po), the first abbot of Samye, who was dismissed over differences of opinion regarding monastic entitlement, and who subsequently went into exile at lHo brag. As a Dunhuang manuscript attests, Pelyang served as his successor, the second abbot of Samye,³⁴ and thus was the preeminent religious authority to “the king, his ministers, the monastics, and the royal subjects of Tibet.” In an article examining the identity of this second abbot, Pelyang, Yamaguchi Zuihō concludes that the teachings provided in the letter to the king were given after Ye she wang po's exile

³³ *bod la dge slong ming yang med pa las/_rje byang chub sems dpa' khri srong lde
btsan gyis dam pa'i chos brnyes nas dpal lha btsan po dad pa skyed de/_rab tu byung
ba'i ming dpal dbyangs zhes bgyi/_btsun pa'i phul du phyin/_mdzangs pa'i zhi rab tu
phyin/_bod kyi mdun sar bsres na dpe zla med pa des mdzad de/_btsan po la bka'
gros dag gsol ba las/_la la ni gnang/_la la ni ma gnang bas 'khon nas gyed de lhor
bzhud/_gdams ngag 'di slar rje blon dang/_ser chags yongs dang/_bod rje 'bangs la
brdzangs pa lags so/_mjug 'khon pas legs te/_btsun pas ni bzang po'i spyod pa 'grub/
_bod rje 'bangs ni grogs kyis dma' zhes gda'o/_gdams ngag gces pa bsdus pa'i
'phrin yig btsun pa dpal dbyangs kyis sngon nas las kyis 'brel cing bshes par gyur pa
bod rje 'bangs la brdzangs pa rdzogs so// *Derge, sna tshogs, co 472.2.**

³⁴ ITJ 689 II.

to lHo brag, and thus must have been delivered while Pelyang was serving as abbot of Samye.³⁵

Although the *sBa bzhed* and other histories tend to treat Ye she wang po's exile as a minor interruption in a glorious career, this colophon takes a different stance. Here, the epithets given Pelyang grant him a position even greater than that of his predecessor; the text goes so far as to deem Ye she wang po's exile beneficial to the people of Tibet in that it allowed a way for Pelyang's teachings to reach them. Although this colophon cannot be dated, Pelyang does not receive this level of praise in any historical work or hagiographical treatment of which I am aware, which leads me to speculate that it may have been written by a contemporary during Pelyang's abbacy, when Pelyang would have enjoyed the greatest support. Indeed, while Pelyang was still serving as second abbot, Ye she wang po was recalled from his exile to provide religious consultation to the court and attended the famous debates between Kamalaśīla and Mahoyen. The space of time in which such a glowing colophon might have been written appears to have been quite short, and must certainly have come to an end even before Pelyang's abbacy was concluded when Ye she wang po was recalled to the capital and official duty.

In addition to these two colophons, the fourteenth-century *Ka tang de nga* (*bKa' thang sde lnga*) also mentions a Dynastic-era author named Pelyang. In its *Lön po ka tang* (*bLon po bka' thang*) chapter in a section summarizing the teachings of the Simultaneists (*ston mun*), author Ögyen lingpa (O rgyan gling pa) quotes two lines from Pelyang's *The*

³⁵ Zuihō Yamaguchi, "Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai," in *Bukkyō Ni Okeru Hō No Kenkyū*, ed. Hirakawa (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1975), 646.

Lamp of The Correct View, calling that text “the exegesis of meditation master and scholar Pelyang.”³⁶ The lines from Pelyang’s text appear surprisingly out of place, embedded as they are within a succession of quotations from Chan masters representing the *Simultaneists*, including Bodhidharma and Mahoyen. The lines read as follows:

Ascertaining by means of scripture and awareness,
Have genuine confidence in the intrinsic nature of mind.³⁷

A fundamental tenet of Chan teachings is that scripture is to be neither relied upon exclusively nor contradicted; the realization of reality requires a different sort of ascertainment. These lines of Pelyang would support such a view in their assertion of the dual, and perhaps equal, importance of scripture and awareness. *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* appears to have been the source for this and other *Ka tang de nga* quotations, as it includes several nearly identical quotations to those in the *bLon po bka’ thang* chapter of the latter work.³⁸ However, the lines as recorded in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* differ slightly from the *Ka tang de nga*:

Ascertaining by means of an awareness of the scriptures and oral
instructions,
Have genuine confidence in the intrinsic nature of phenomena.³⁹

³⁶ *bsam gtan mkhan po dpal dbyangs kyis bshad pa* | *bKa’ thang sde lnga* 1997: 466.

³⁷ *lung dang rig pas thag bcad de* | *sems kyi rang bzhin yang dag yid ces bya* | *bKa’ thang sde lnga* 1997: 466.11.

³⁸ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 90.

³⁹ *mkhan po dpal dbyangs kyi bsgom lung las* | *lung dang man ngag rig pas thag bcad de* / *chos kyi rang bzhin yang dag yid ches bya* | *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, 49.5. These two lines from *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* more closely match those in the canonical version of Pelyang’s *Lamp of the Correct View* itself. *lung dang man ngag rig pas thag gcad te* / *chos kyi rang bzhin yang dag yid ches bya* / *Lamp of the*

Nup's slightly different perspective replaces awareness with oral instructions (*man ngag*) as the equal sources of one's confidence, which fails to support the Chan tenet regarding the relative importance of scripture. It may be that the line was altered to fit Ögyen lingpa's aims, or that he would not have used the lines as they stand in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. Yet, despite the fact that the lines as quoted by Ögyen lingpa mesh nicely with the emphasis on awareness elsewhere in the *Ka tang de nga* section on the Simultaneists, it remains unclear why Ögyen lingpa felt the need to include a quotation from a Mahāyogin among the many teachings of Chinese and Korean Chan masters. While the rest of the Simultaneist quotations in this section of the *Ka tang de nga* are taken verbatim from, or summarize, the citations in the fifth chapter on the Simultaneist tradition in Nup's *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*,⁴⁰ nowhere in the Chan chapter of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* is there any mention of Pelyang nor any citations from his text, *The Lamp of the Correct View*. In fact, those two lines Ögyen lingpa attributes to Pelyang are the only ones not taken from Nup's Chan section. In fact, they actually are cited in Chapter Three of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. There are two possible resolutions to this conundrum. The first is that, given Ögyen lingpa's general attitude toward the debates,

Correct View, Peking No.5919: 285b.4.

⁴⁰ *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, in turn, borrows heavily from the Chan text *Erru sixing lun* for its citations of Chinese masters. 二入四行論. Katsumi Okimoto, "Chibetto Yaku Ninyū Shigyō Ron Ni Tsuite [Concerning the Tibetan Translation of the Erh-U Ssu-Hsing Lun (Treatise on Two Entrances and Four Practices)]," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 24, no. 2 (1976). For an English summary of Okimoto's article, see Daishun Ueyama, "The Study of Tibetan Ch'an Manuscripts Recovered from Tun-Huang: A Review of the Field and Its Prospects," in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Walen Lai and Lewis Lancaster (Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies, 1983), 337. For the details of these borrowings, see Jeffrey Broughton, *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 141-2, fn. 20.

which is sympathetic to the Chinese side, he may have chosen a seemingly supportive passage written by a prominent figure from the Indian side of the debates, the Samye abbot, in an effort to further validate the position of the Chinese. A second, more plausible possibility is that by the fourteenth century when the *Ka tang de nga* was composed, the author of the *Six Lamps* may have been equated solely with the figure of a radical Mahāyogin poet, despite controversy regarding the possibility of his also having been Samye abbot. If this clear identification had prevailed at the time of the writing of the *Ka tang de nga*, Pelyang might have been subsumed easily under the designation of Simultaneist, based at least in part upon the rhetorical conventions that are common to both Chan and Mahāyoga literature of that period, just as happened with other such figures in later works.⁴¹

Although he would not have agreed with the designation, Nup may have fueled this later perception of Pelyang as a proponent of Simultaneist thought through the terms he

⁴¹ Indeed, a Dunhuang commentary on a Chan text attributed to Bodhidharma, PT 699, probably dating from approximately the same general period as *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* (tenth century), quotes directly from Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, calling it the "rDo rje sems pi zhu lan." However, before we rush to assume the text shared O rgyan gling pa's characterizations of Pelyang, it must be made clear that this text has recently been described by Van Schaik and Dalton as a Mahāyoga commentary on a Chan text, rather than a Chan text *per se*, as has been the view of others who have written about it. Cf. Katsumi Okimoto, "Tonkō Shutsudo Chibetto-Bun Zenshū Bunken No Kenkyū (3)," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 28, no. 1 (1979). Carmen Meinert, "Chinese Chan and Tibetan Rdzogs Chen: Preliminary Remarks on Two Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts," in *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet, Tibetan Studies Ii*, ed. Henk Blezer (Leiden: Brill, 2002). The attention paid in PT 699 to Pelyang most likely arises from its Mahāyoga orientation rather than from its focus on a Chan text, and says more about the type of religious syncretism that was common in Dunhuang during the tenth century than it does about any Chan elements in Pelyang's teachings. Dalton and van Schaik, "Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Buddhist Syncretism in Dunhuang," 65-66.

used to describe the poet. Prefacing *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* citation of *The Lamp of the Correct View* quoted above, Nup refers to Pelyang's text as "the meditational instructions of scholar Pelyang" (*mkhan po dpal dbyangs kyi bsgom lung*).⁴² The two terms *khen po* (*mkhan po*) and *gom lung* (*bsgom lung*) are of interest here because of the unambiguous context in which Nup uses them. The first, *khen po*, is used throughout *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* to refer to Chan masters, including Bodhidharma, Mahoyen, and A dhan her.⁴³ Nup also uses the term three times to refer to Pelyang: once in the above passage, and twice to cite from Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.⁴⁴ The second term, *gom lung*, is commonly used to refer specifically to the teachings of Chan masters, and indeed the only other context in which this term is used in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* is in its fifth chapter on the Sudden Entrance tradition, where it is used throughout in reference to Chan masters.⁴⁵ Nup does not make clear the reason for these references to Pelyang and his teachings with such clearly Chan terms, which is especially puzzling for the author of a text that takes pains to systematically distinguish between Simultaneist and Mahāyoga views. Considering that Nup is commonly said to have been a disciple of Pelyang, and that the focus of both the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* is meditation, Nup's use of these Chan terms to refer to Pelyang may be merely an indication of Nup's high regard for Pelyang as a master of

⁴² *STMG* 49.5.

⁴³ *STMG* 57.6, 58.2, 58.3, 58.5, and throughout the fifth chapter. The single exception to this usage (aside from the Pelyang passage) is a reference to Āryadeva: "from the *mantra* instruction of Mādhyamika master Āryadeva" (*dbu ma 'i mkhan po nyid kyis mdzad pa 'i sngags kyi man ngag las*). *STMG*: 289.2.

⁴⁴ *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*: 30.3, 49.5, and 225.2.

⁴⁵ *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* 144.2, 145.5, 147.4, 148.4, 150.6, 151.6.

dhyāna. While it is possible that Nup saw Simultaneist elements in Pelyang's teachings, he makes no indication of such an interpretation.

In summary, there are three types of reference in Tibetan literature to a Dynastic-era author named Pelyang. One such reference is to a Ba (dBa') Pelyang, which is found only once, in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, to name the author of the *Letter*. A second type is to Nyen (gNyan or bsNyan) Pelyang as the author of two of the *Six Lamps*—the *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes* and the *Lamp of the Method of Meditation*. Finally, the third type of reference, the most common, simply names the author Pelyang, occasionally adding the appellations *lop pön* (master) or *khen po* (scholar).

Pelyang the Mahāyogin Saint

There are many Tibetan references to a Dynastic-era Mahāyoga tantra proponent named Pelyang. He is commonly included in Ancients lineages as a disciple of Nyak Nyanakumara and of Vimalamitra, and as a teacher of Nupchen Sanggye yeshe, author of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*.⁴⁶ Most of these references simply give the ordination name Pelyang, and many affix the clan name gNyan (with variant spellings). This is the case with *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, for example. In the sixth chapter, on Mahāyoga, author Nup includes Pelyang in a list of examples of Tibetan *vidyādhāra*. This passage directly follows a quotation from Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. The passages are as follows:

It is said in the Vajrasattva Questions and Answers,

⁴⁶ Cf. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* Delhi: Delhi Karmapa Chodhey Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang: 581 (tha 25a.3). Also *Guru bkra shis chos 'byung*, Peking ed.: 242.

“What does it mean that one might achieve buddhahood in a single lifetime?”

“By means of the remainder body itself,

Immortal *Vidyādhāra* is obtained.

By means of the [unceasing] life of a *vidyādhāra*

One becomes unexcelled Samantabhadra.”

Therefore, by this, they accomplish [it] and the fifth—direct valid cognition. Great masters in Tibet later taught the method of passing beyond, and then [that teaching] was established in Tibet as no different than it was in India. It is true that, as Padmasambhava went about taming the demons of the depth and so forth, so there were innumerable Indian specialists. Also in mNga’ ris, the kingdom of Tibet, innumerable *vidyādhāra* roamed about. The Venerable Zhang-drung conversed with tutelary deities. Lotsāwa rMa Rin chen mchog performed manifestations. Ngan lam rGyal ba mChog dbyangs had the pride of accomplishing Hayagrīva. The Venerable Namkha’i snying po was escorted by *ḍākinī*. The Venerable Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang was escorted by *ḍākinī*. Innumerable [such] examples exist.⁴⁷

It is obvious from the context that these *vidyādhāra* are offered by Nup as examples of Pelyang’s own assertion that buddhahood can be achieved in a single lifetime by means of a *vidyādhāra*’s immortality. This reference makes it clear that during Nup’s time, which may have been only a generation removed from Pelyang’s, the Mahāyogin Pelyang was

⁴⁷ *de yangs zhus lan las/_sang s rgyas tshes gcig gis ‘grub pa’i don ji lta bu lags/_lhag mar bcas pa’i lus nyid kyis/_tshes la dbang pa’i rig ‘dzin ‘grub/_rig pa ‘dzin pa’i tshes nyid kyis/_bla med kun tu bzang por bgyur/_zhes pa’i phyir ‘dis ‘grub ste/_lnga pa mngon sum ba’i tshad ma/_slob dpon chen po byi ma la bod yul du ‘da’ ba’i tshul bstan nas/_rgya gar yul na ma ‘das par bzhugs pa dang/_padmo ‘byung gnas gting srin po ‘dul du bzhud pa la stsogs pa rgya gar gyi mkhas pa la grangs med na/_mnga’ ris bod kyi rgyal khams su yang grangs med par rig ‘dzin du gshegs so/_jo bo gnyags dzanyān zhang drung gis rdzugs dam lha dang bka’ mol pa mdzad/_lo tsāba rma rin chen mchog rab snang la gshegs spyod/_ngan lam rgyal ba mchog dbyangs rta mgrin gyi dngos grub snyems/_jo bo Nup namkha’i snying po mkha’ bgro mas bsus nas gshegs/_mkhan po gnyan dpal dbyangs mkha’ bgo mas bsus nas gshegs/_grangs med pa byung/ STMG: 277.4-278.2.*

already known as a gNyan, and though Nup doesn't make the reference explicitly, it is implied through the proximity of the passages that the author of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* was that same Nyen Pelyang.

The Mahāyogin Pelyang is also commonly identified as gNyan in later historical sources. For example, Gö lotsawa shyön nu pal's ('Gos lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal) fifteenth-century *Blue Annals* includes Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang in a list of *ācārya* together with Vairocana and Nyak Nyanakumara,⁴⁸ normally considered Mahāyoga masters themselves. Interestingly, the text does not do so in its section on the *Māyājāla* tradition, but in its section on the Mind Series (*sems sde*) transmissions. According to that text, a Nyen (sNyan) Pelyang was a successor to the following line: Sangs rgyas sgang ba, Bi ma la, and Nyak Nyana(kumara).⁴⁹ In a separate passage, the same author also makes reference to Pelyang as a famous yogi, and there, too, specifies this Pelyang's clan affiliation as Nyen (gNyan). From this we see that Nup's earlier assignment of Pelyang the Mahāyogin to the Nyen clan sets a pattern that holds many centuries later. In another section regarding the transmission of the *Māyājāla* texts in the *Blue Annals*, we find the following passage:

During the time of Trisong detsen and his son, many siddhas, follower of the Vajrayāna, appeared, such as 'Bre dpal gyi blo gros, sNa nam rdo rje bdud 'joms, Ngan lam rGyal mchog dbyangs, Un a nang ga, sNubs nam mkha' snying po, gLang dPal gyi seng ge, glNag gTsug gi rin chen, 'Bre rGyal ba'i blo gros, Khams pa Go cha, Vairocana, rMa Rin chen mchog, Nyak Nyanakumara, and Nyen Pelyang, and many others, who were able to move in the sky, penetrate mountains and rocks, float on water, and exhibit before multitudes their forms inside divine mandalas.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Sam van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2004): 192.

⁴⁹ Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 170.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

The one fly in this seemingly straightforward ointment appears in Nyang ral Nyi ma ‘od zer’s twelfth-century Ancients chronicle, the *Chos ‘byung me snying*. In a description of Padmasambhava’s teaching and empowerment of King Trisong detsen and others, the author lists many of the famous twenty-five mahāsiddhas of mChims phu, including the core eight members, who are said to have attained miraculous powers and high level *vidyādhāra*-hood. In a partial list of the core eight initiates, Nyang ral includes a Pelyang, but with an interesting pair of clan names: “sNubs Nam mkha’i snying po, Lotsawa Nyak Nyanakumara, Nyen Ba (sNyan sBa) Ācārya Pelyang, and others, together with the [other] twenty-five mahāsiddhas [of mChims phu], attained eternal life *vidyādhāra*.”⁵¹ Although this is the only reference like it of which I am aware, it is one of the earliest extant historical references to a Mahāyogin Pelyang. Nyang ral’s inclusion of both of the possible clan affiliations in this context may be due to the fact that there was either controversy or confusion regarding Pelyang’s name or names, and that Nyang ral was simply covering all his bases. However, another possibility is that these were one figure, and his double nomenclature itself caused the ensuing confusion. Of the eight other references to a Dynastic-era Pelyang in Nyang ral’s *Chos ‘byung me snying*, all of which conform to the standard clan name attributions—of sBa or its variants to the abbot and *se mi* member, and sNyan or its variants to the Mahāyogin—or use no clan name at all when speaking of Pelyang, none repeats the unique name Nyen Ba (sNyan sBa) Pelyang.⁵²

⁵¹ snubs nam mkha’i snying po/ lo tsa’ ba snyags dznya’ na ku ma ra dang / snyan sba A tsarya Pelyang la sogs pa grub chen nyi shu rtsa lnga dang bcas pas tshe bsgrubs te/ Chos ‘byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi’i bcud: 348.

⁵² *Chos ‘byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi’i bcud*: 327; 351; 392; 397; 398; 400; 404; 482.

Pelyang in the Tibetan Histories: *lak pön*, *se mi*, *ring luk*, *khen po*, and *lotsawa*

Pelyang and the Establishment of the Four Horn Temples

In a section of the *Gyal rap salwe me long* (*rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*), a fourteenth-century historical chronicle, which describes the establishment of twelve protectorate temples during the reign of Song tsen bam po (Srong btsan sgam po, 569-649), a Ba (sBa) Pelyang is named as *lak pön*, or supervisor or patron (*lag dpon*)⁵³ of the construction of the fourth of the four Horn Temples (*ru gnon gyi lha khang bzhi*). This is the earliest datable activity attributed to a Dynastic-era Pelyang in any of the Tibetan histories, and the only such activity said to have taken place before the reign of King Trisong detsen.⁵⁴ The passage from the *Me long* is as follows:

Fearing that this should not even be enough [to tame the prostrate rākṣasī-demoness], Four Temples Taming the [Four] Horns were erected. ...In order to suppress the left palm of the foot [of the prostrate demoness], the temple of Tshangs-pa Rlung-[g]non was erected in the

⁵³ Although the term *lak pön* is normally used to refer to a person involved in the actual labor of construction—an architect, overseer, or foreman—in this specific instance it may signify ‘patron’ or ‘sponsor’, given the fact that the individual named is a member of the elite and influential sBa clan. Such usage of *lak pön* is attested elsewhere. See Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long*, 607, fn. 1300.

⁵⁴ The passage is not without its controversy. According to Per Sorensen, almost all major Tibetan histories contain some discussion of this scheme of twelve protectorate temples, but the narrative contained in the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* is an ‘elaborated’ version, and thus, may not be among those sources closest to the original. Indeed, the *Maṅi bka' 'bum*, which is a much older text than the *Me long*, does not contain any reference to Pelyang in its list. Yet, as Sorensen points out, it is not clear whether the unelaborated version is indeed the older one, and he seems to indicate that, contrary to common sense, the shorter narrative in the *Mani bka' 'bum* may be later than that in the *Me long*, whose author may have referred to an older source for his information. *Ibid.*, 561, fn. 770.

northern direction, after Ba (sBa) Pelyang of Hor had taken over the [task of being] supervisor (*lag dpon*).⁵⁵

Two elements of this description are distinctive. The first of these is that the author, bSod nams rgyal mtshan, mentions only one individual in this context: Ba Pelyang. The rest of the temples' *lak pön* are identified simply by the region in which they lived, or not at all. The versions based on narratives found in the *Ma ni bka' 'bum* and in the *bKa' chems ka khol ma* contain no reference to *lak pön* or any other non-royal, individual patrons or workers whatsoever. A second distinctive element of this passage is the fact that, unlike the other temples mentioned, the rLung gnon temple cannot be located with certainty. The passage offers no clues as to its location, except to designate it as a Temple Taming the Four Horns (*ru gnon*), which, based on similar passages elsewhere, is most likely a mistaken label for the Temples Suppressing the Area Beyond the Border (*mtha' 'dul*).⁵⁶ The other eleven temples mentioned in this passage have been identified and fit within the ordered spatial requirements of the descriptions in the *Ma ni bka' 'bum* and other early sources for this arrangement.⁵⁷ However, though Tibetan historians such as kLong rdol bla ma locate the Rlung gnon lha khang near Lhasa,⁵⁸ Lhasa clearly is not beyond the border, but rather at the center of King Song tsen gam po's kingdom.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 278-79. *des kyang ma thub dogs nas ru gnon gyi lha khang bzhi bzhengs te| ... rkang thil gyon gnon pa la| byang phyogs su tshangs pa rlung gnon gyi lha khang| hor sba dpal dbyangs kyis lag dpon byas nas gzhangs so| rGyal rab gsal ba'i me long* Lhasa ed.: 60a.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 278-79, fn. 854.

⁵⁷ Cf. Aris, *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom.*; Sorensen 1994: Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long*, 561, fn. 770.

⁵⁸ dLong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blo bzang, *bsTan pa'i spyin bdag byon tshul gyi ming gi grangs*. Aris, *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*, 23-24.

Given that this section of the narrative regarding Pelyang contains these idiosyncratic and puzzling elements, we must treat the information therein with some care. However, should the information in the passage be accepted provisionally, two important questions arise: one, whether it is possible that this *lak pön* Ba Pelyang might have been the Samye abbot; and two, whether he might also have been our Mahāyogin author.

The first question concerns, at base, the general time frame of these events. If these temples were erected between the year the Chinese princess was invited to Tibet in 641 and her king's death in 649 as stated in the *Me long*, it would be a full century before Trisong detsen took the throne. This would make it highly unlikely that the same Pelyang lived during both these kings' reigns, not to mention his serving as an adult in both of their administrations. This, in turn, would make it nearly impossible to equate the eighth century abbot Pelyang with a seventh-century *lak pön* Pelyang.

The second question regards the possible compatibility of interests between someone directly involved in the erection of a Horn Temple and a Mahāyoga teacher. The erection of these temples was one of the first and most meaningful acts of the Buddhification of the Tibetan landscape, and represents not only early imperial interest in, and sponsorship of, Buddhism, but also was a key event in the inception of the Tibetan redefinition of the role of native traditions.⁵⁹ Thus, it would have been necessary for anyone acting in a religious capacity at such a temple to have been a clear Buddhist partisan in some form of opposition to native religious traditions.

⁵⁹ Cf. Nyang cho 'byung: 242, 244; Ne'u chos 'byung: 16-19; and throughout the Maṅi bka' 'bum.

The author of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* most likely would have supported any suppression of the propitiation of native Tibetan deities. In that text, the master is asked, "If yogins provide offerings to Tibetan gods, are these acts concordant with the Yoga scriptures?" to which Pelyang replies:

To worship mundane gods and nāga

Despite making vows to Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva,

Is like a king conducting himself as though he were a commoner—

It does not fit the circumstances, and contradicts the aim of Yoga.

We see in this passage a clear warning to Pelyang's disciples against propitiating local deities, which matches well the intentions of those building the Horn Temples. Unfortunately, though it is an interesting possibility, there is nothing more to support an equation of the Mahāyogin Pelyang with this *lak pön* Pelyang than the fact of possible shared interest. Such interest being a common one among Buddhist of the time makes this an even less compelling bit of evidence.

Thus, we must conclude that the entire reference is of doubtful relevance to the identity of any other Dynastic Pelyang known to us. It may well be that in the narrative retelling, in the case of a particularly problematic temple, a well-known figure's name was just the one to shore up the twelfth, problematic entry. We are once again on ground too unstable for making any claims regarding the Mahāyogin Pelyang's participation in this event.

Pelyang as a member of the *se mi*

Several Tibetan historical chronicles include Pelyang's name in their lists of the first Tibetans to be ordained, known as the 'six tested ones' or, alternatively, as the 'seven tested ones' (*sad mi mi drug*, or *sad mi mi bdun*).⁶⁰ In fact, it was in the context of sorting out the members of the various lists of *se mi* that Giuseppe Tucci was first led to examine the figure of Pelyang, and as a result, this aspect of Pelyang's identity has received more attention in modern scholarship than any other. Unfortunately, references to the identities of the individual *se mi* are problematic, for several reasons. The members listed vary widely from list to list, sometimes even within a single text, pre- and post-ordination names are frequently interchanged, and in some cases, interlinear notes or other remarks of unclear provenance equate certain names with others, or deny identifications made elsewhere. For all these reasons, a definitive reconstruction of the original list of the first Tibetans ordained may be beyond the modern historian's grasp. Indeed, the tradition of a list of six or seven men itself may be more reconstructionist myth than accurate historical record. Regardless of the total number of the first Tibetan monastics, there are several names that recur from list to list.

Some Tibetan authors of historical chronicles include the name Pelyang as such in their lists of the original *se mi*, though most do not. These texts include the *Ka tang de nga*, Bu tön's *Chö jung*, the *dPag bsam ljong bzang*, and the *Ne'u chos 'byung*. An example from the *Ne'u chos 'byung* follows.

⁶⁰ Early versions list six names. Later, membership was expanded to seven, and the newest versions often give nine.

When no sangha had been established yet, the seven—rBa rmang gzigs's son, Ratna (the first monk of Tibet), 'Chims anu's son, Śākyaprabha, rTsangs the len tra's son, Legs grub, Ba (rBa) Pelyang, Zhang nyang bzangs's son, lHa bu, gZhang yang Shud bu Hong len, and rBa gsal snang (also known as Ye she wang po)—were ordained by mKhan po Bodhisattva.⁶¹

This account receives even more attention in the Stein version of the *rBa bshed*, where it is alleged that these *se mi*, one of whom later was ordained as Pelyang, were the sons of ministers, and began their Sanskrit studies at an early age:

After Samye was completed, there was not a single monk, and the temple became like a rat's nest, so one day in early spring of the year of the sheep, on the advice of Śāntarakṣita, the king invited twelve Sanskrit-speaking, Sarvāstivādin monks, and caused the ministers' children to study Sanskrit under them.⁶²

The recently discovered version of the *dBa' bzhed*, unlike the other two, apparently later, Stein and Peking versions, includes no mention of the *se mi* as a group. However, in the former's description of the establishment of Tibet's first monastery, Ba (dBa') Pelyang is clearly asserted to have been the first monk ordained in Tibet, which would automatically require his inclusion in any list of those first ordained.

As not even the term 'monk' [dge slong] was known in Tibet, dBa' lHa btsan became a monk [ban dher] and was given the name Ba (dBa') Pelyang.⁶³

⁶¹ *dge 'dun (dkon mchog gi) sde ni ma chugs par yod pa'i du su / rba rmang gzigs kyi bu rad bod kyi btsun pa la snga ba na 'chims a nu'i bu shakya pra ba rtsangs the len tra'i bu legs grub rba dpal dbyangs zhang nyang bzangs kyi bu lha bu gzhang yang shud bu hong len rba gsal snang la (ye shes) dbang po zhes btags pa dang bdun mkhan po bo dhi sva tva las rab tu byung. Ne'u chos 'byung: 10a6-10a7.*

⁶² *Une Chronique Ancienne De Bsam Yas: Sba-Bzhed*, (Paris: Publications de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1961).

⁶³ *bod la dge slong gi ming yang ma mchis pa las dba' lha btsan ban dher bsnyen rdzogs ming yang dba' dpal dbyangs su btags/_ dBa' bzhed 2000: 14b-15a.*

Although Pelyang's name does not appear as such in most *se mi* lists where they occur, it is assumed by many sectarian Tibetan historians and modern scholars that Pelyang is recorded in many *se mi* lists under a preordination or other such name. These possible alternate names for Pelyang include Khri gzig, rBa Khri bsher sang shi ta, Ratnarakṣita, Ratnendrarakṣita, and Ratna. Historians Bu tön and dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba, as well as the author of the *sBa bzhed*, address this issue directly.⁶⁴ If any of these correspondences are accepted, the inclusion of a Pelyang among those men first ordained in Tibet is nearly ubiquitous, as these other names are very commonly included. Yamaguchi has demonstrated quite convincingly that all of these seem to refer to a single figure, Pelyang.⁶⁵ Of the ten historical sources containing *se mi* lists examined by Tucci, up to nine might be said to contain his name in one or another of the above forms.⁶⁶

While many of these versions which apparently include Pelyang in their lists of the *se mi* prefix his name with the clan name of sBa (or a variant spelling of that name), a relatively early Tibetan chronicle written by lDe'u jo sras specifies that the *se mi* member named Pelyang belonged to the gNyan clan.⁶⁷ The history, which may have been written as

⁶⁴ Bu tön's *Chos 'byung* 1931: 141b. Szerb II 1990: 29. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* 1985: 304. *sBa bzhed* Stein ed.: 50.13-16. *sBa bzhed* Peking ed.: 58.6.19-22.

⁶⁵ Yamaguchi, "*Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai.*"

⁶⁶ The sources including possible Pelyang mentions are: the *lHa 'dre bka'i thang yig* and *bLon po bka' thang yig* chapters (*nga* 67a and *ca* 16a) of the *Ka tang de nga*, the *sBa bzhed zhabs thag ma*, two passages within Bu tön's *Chö jung*, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, Pad ma dkar po's *chos 'byung*, and Sum pa mkhan po's *dPag bsam lhong bzang*. Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*, 12-26.

⁶⁷ *Chos 'byung* Chen mo bTsan pa'i rGyal mtshan lDe'u Jo sras kyis mDzad pa.

early as the twelfth century, but more likely was composed in the thirteenth century,⁶⁸ lists gNyan A tsa rya Pelyang among five monks who took the first ordination vows in Tibet, including Ye she wang po, rMa Rin chen mchog, sNyags Ku ma ra, and Nam mkha' snying po, all commonly purported in other texts to have been among the *se mi*.⁶⁹ So even here in the description of this early monastic figure named Pelyang, we find discrepancies on the issue of clan affiliation.

Pelyang as second abbot of Samye

Unlike the *se mi* references, historical descriptions of the abbacy of a Dynastic-era Pelyang are relatively clear. All three versions of the *sBa bzhed* (or *dBa' bzhed*), Bu tön's *Chö jung*, and Pao tsuk lak treng ba's (dPa'o gtsug lag 'phreng ba) sixteenth-century *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, as well as a manuscript from Dunhuang listing the abbots of Samye, agree that Pelyang was Ye shes dbangs po's successor as *ring luk* (*ring lugs*), or leader, of the religious activities at Samye.⁷⁰ Pelyang's clan affiliation is not provided in every source, but where it is, the name 'sBa' is recorded, with only orthographical variations.⁷¹ If the above-mentioned correspondences between Pelyang and Khri gzhigs/Khri bsher sang

⁶⁸ Leonard van der Kuijp, "Dating the Two Lde'u Chronicles of Buddhism in India and Tibet" *Asiatische Studien*, vol. 46 (1992), pp. 468-91.

⁶⁹ *gzhan yang dge slong la snga ba A' tsa rya ye shes dbang po/ thos pa che ba'i rab gnyan A' tsa rya dpa dbyangs/ dang/ rma rin chen mchog/ snyags ku ma ra/ mthu che ba'i rab nam mkha' snying po de rnam la dpa blangs nas dge dang yig tshan du bcas pa brgya dang bzhi bcu rab tu byung/ Chos 'byung Chen mo bStan pa'i rGyal mtshan lDe'u Jo sras kyis mDzad pa*: 124.

⁷⁰ Of these sources, all relate that Pelyang was appointed *ring luk*, except for Bu tön, who merely states that he was appointed *lop pön* of Samye. *dBa bzhed*: 18b3. *sBa bzhed* Stein ed.: 54.2. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* 1962: 114b6. Szerb 1990: 142a6. ITJ 689.

⁷¹ The *dBa' bzhed* records dBa', the *sBa bzhed* Peking ed. records sBa, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* records rBa, and ITJ 689 records dBa'.

shi ta are to be accepted, then it is apparent from perusing the *se mi* lists in various historical chronicles that the *se mi* Pelyang is most likely the same figure said to have succeeded Ye she wang po as abbot of Samye. Pelyang and sBa Ye she wang po are commonly treated as a pair in both the *se mi* context and in discussions of Samye's administration, which clearly suggests a common identity between the *se mi* Pelyang and the abbot Pelyang. Of course it is logical that the second abbot of the first monastic establishment in Tibet would be chosen from among those who first accepted monastic ordination there.

Whether Pelyang agreed with Ye she wang po's mainstream, conservative religious views is not as clear, however. As all the above sources relate, Pelyang was appointed abbot under difficult circumstances involving irresolvable conflict between Ye she wang po and members of the king's court over the types and extent of privileges that should be accorded monastic institutions. Ye she wang po either was exiled or chose to leave, and went into retreat at a rock cave named mKhar chu bcan in Lho brag, a famous Padmasambhava retreat site. The specific reason for Pelyang's appointment as Ye she wang po's successor is not given in any source. It may be that Pelyang was considered the best man for the position based upon his moderate philosophical or political position in a time filled with controversy regarding the various available Buddhist practices and philosophies and their attendant, clan-affiliated sponsors. Alternatively, it may be that there simply was not time for a more protracted selection process given the heat of passions and the seemingly sudden decision that Ye she wang po vacate his position and enter retreat. In such a case, and if one is to believe the *sBa bzhed*, the closest eligible monk to

Ye she wang po in terms of lineage and sectarian affiliation was Pelyang, making him the obvious choice.

Based upon all of this, one would expect the abbot Pelyang to have been a fairly conservative representative of the Tibetan monastic establishment and of Indian Buddhist thought, and thus fundamentally divergent in his views from the Pelyang who was deeply involved with the radical Mahāyoga tantra movement stigmatized by the royal court. However, considering the focus on the glories of the sBa clan in the *sBa bzhed* chronicle, the publication of which may post-date the original recording of these materials, it is quite possible that Pelyang was only later valorized by post-Dynastic compilers as having been, together with the sBa clan, a supporter of the Indian side of the debates, and that he may have indeed held a position closer to the middle with tolerance or even some support of other traditions of Buddhism at Samye.

Despite ubiquitous statements regarding Pelyang's loyalty to Śāntarakṣita's teachings, many historical accounts indicate that during Pelyang's abbacy, Chan master Mahoyen was allowed to be very active at Samye, and that Chan studies increased among members of the Tibetan court.⁷² When we turn to the other set of references to a Mahāyoga-based Pelyang, as has been mentioned previously, Nup refers to Pelyang the author with specifically Chan terms, and Ögyen lingpa includes selections from Pelyang's *The Lamp of the Correct View* in his description of Chan doctrine. Whether any real Chan influence can be observed in Pelyang's texts is a discussion to which we will return in later chapters, where a comparison between Mahoyen's teachings and Pelyang corpus will be

⁷² Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*, 59.

made. In the context of the present historical investigation, however, it does at least establish potential Chinese Chan ties for both the monastic Pelyang, and the Mahāyogin Pelyang. In this regards, it is of interest to look at the only quotation of Pelyang that is common in most Tibetan chronicles, namely his purported speech delivered at the famous Samye debate(s).

Several accounts of the Samye debate(s) provide direct quotations of many of the key participants, including those of Pelyang.⁷³ In all these narratives, when Trisong detsen invites major attendants (*rgyal ba'i 'khor kun*) to give their opinions, following Kamalaśīla and Mahoyen's remarks, the same two speeches are recorded, and one of these is attributed to Pelyang in most sources. In the *dBa' bzhed*, the Stein version of the *sBa bzhed*, and in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the first speech is attributed to Pelyang; in the Peking version of the *sBa bzhed* and in Bu tön's *Chö jung*, Pelyang is listed as the second speaker. In all these sources, the first speech is a gentle criticism of the nonspecific nature of the Simultaneist path. It ends, however, with a surprisingly moderate statement given its rather severe context—that of determining which of the two positions would hold in Tibet and which would be rejected:

Although the door of entrances can differ, the meaning of non-conceptualization and non-apprehension is one and the same. The result, i.e. striving for extinction, is one and the same. There is general agreement on this.⁷⁴

⁷³ These include the three versions of the *sBa bzhed*/*dBa' bzhed*, Bu tön's *Chö jung*, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, and the *Ka tang de nga*.

⁷⁴ Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger, *Dbā' Bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet, Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Tibetan Text* (Vienna: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 22b; p. 84.

The second speech is much more pointed in its criticism of Mahoyen's position.

The Simultaneist position is summarized thus:

Without learning, without practicing, without knowing anything, one does not operate for the sake of oneself and others. So, with a mind which does not think anything, like an egg, will one achieve enlightenment?⁷⁵

While the Stein version of the *sBa bzhed*, which attributes the second, more critical speech to Pelyang, might be rejected in favor of the canonical, Peking version, which attributes the first, more moderate speech to Pelyang, the relatively newly discovered and probably older *dBa' bzhed version* agrees with the Stein version in its attribution. However, most other historical sources support the association of Pelyang with the more moderate speech. This association is also supported by the fact that the more flexible approach in the first speech is similar to the moderate stance on Buddhist practice in the *Letter*, attributed in its colophon to the abbot Pelyang.

Pelyang as royal preceptor

Another capacity in which a Dynastic-era Pelyang is described as having served the court is that of royal preceptor. Both the *sBa bzhed* and the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* describe a mass ordination in the sheep year after the consecration of Samye at which rBa Ratna, who both texts equate with Pelyang through his preordination name of Khri gzigs, is said to have been preceptor to one hundred people, including sRu bTsan mo rgyal and the queen Jo mo gcen Khri rgyal mo btsan.⁷⁶ Accordingly, this role of preceptor is consistent with

⁷⁵ Ibid., 24a, p. 87.

⁷⁶ *sBa bzhed* Peking ed.: 59. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*: 104b2. Yamaguchi, "Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai," 650.

having been one of the first to have been ordained in Tibet and with serving as a royally-appointed abbot of the state-sponsored Samye temple. Unfortunately, the passages in question offer no interesting detail or associations beyond the description of the event.

Pelyang as translator

The final capacity in which we see a Pelyang mentioned in Dynastic historical chronicles is as official Buddhist translator. According to Tucci, a Khri bsher sang shi is listed in the catalogue *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* as a translator during the reign of Trisong detsen.⁷⁷ Pao tsuk lak treng ba clearly gives the same name, Khri bsher sang shi, as a preordination name for the *se mi* member Pelyang, and Yamaguchi has shown this to be a credible assertion. Indeed, we find among the Dunhuang documents, a short list of *sūtra*, *śāstra*, and *vinaya* texts with their Tibetan and Chinese titles, whose translations the manuscript attributes to a Pelyang.⁷⁸ This is very interesting, especially when taken together with Ögyen lingpa's apparent attribution of certain elements of Simultaneist thought to the *Six Lamps* author, Pelyang, and with Yamaguchi's theory that the abbot Pelyang was the Tibetan-Chinese translator Sang shi.⁷⁹ Although these Chinese texts and their thematic resonances in Pelyang's corpus will be discussed in a following chapter, in

⁷⁷ Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*, 49.

⁷⁸ Pelyang bris te zhus/ The titles include such classics as the Samprachsampr̥cchati, the Ākāśāgarbhasūtra, and the Yogacara-bhūmi, as well as the Chos bcu pa (Ten Dharmas), several dhāraṇi texts, and even a text whose title, *Shes rab sgron ma*, bears remarkable similarity to one of Pelyang's own texts, *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom (bsGom thabs kyi sgron ma)*. Pelliot tib. 1257. Unfortunately, none of the texts indicates that these texts were part of a Mahāyogin's collection or reading list in particular.

⁷⁹ Yamaguchi, "Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai."

the present context it must be mentioned that this image of an official Buddhist translator accords well with the image of a monastic Pelyang serving the court in an official religious capacity. Because the *se mi* figure Pelyang and the abbot Pelyang can be fairly reliably correlated, I think it is also reasonable to assume that the same person served as both preceptor and Sanskrit-Chinese-Tibetan Buddhist translator during those years. Overall, we thus have the depiction of a Tibetan deeply involved in monasticism and the royal court, but with seemingly moderate views and persistent connections to Chinese Buddhist traditions as well. The very thin lines connecting this figure to the *Six Lamps* and *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* author, Pelyang, are less reliable. We shall have to turn to the content of the texts attributed to these figures themselves for better clues.

Weighing Three Modern Views of the Author Pelyang

This chapter has surveyed and analyzed the full spectrum of references to a Dynastic-era Pelyang in extant Tibetan histories. While the majority tend to assign the clan name Ba to Pelyang the abbot, *se mi* member, royal preceptor and translator, or to assign the clan name Nyen to the Pelyang the Mahāyogin and author of the *Six Lamps*, there are exceptions to both these generalizations. Furthermore, there are an equal number of references that assign no clan name whatsoever. It is thus difficult to come to a definitive conclusion with regard to the identity of the author Pelyang based on these historical sources.

As we have seen, there are few instances of Tibetan scholarship which explore the identity of the author Pelyang to any extent, and no exhaustive study has been done before now. Three opinions have been put forth by modern scholars—Giuseppe Tucci,

Yamaguchi Zuihō, and Ueyama Daishun—based largely on Tibetan histories and, to a much lesser extent, on the content of Pelyang’s texts.⁸⁰ Giuseppe Tucci was the first modern scholar to examine the various lists of the *se mi* and Pelyang’s part in them. He also briefly summarizes Pelyang’s *Letter* and the *Six Lamps*. Tucci radically dichotomizes the teachings of Pelyang’s texts into two philosophical camps: the strictly mainstream teachings in the *Letter*, which he associates with the *Bhāvanākrama* of Kamalaśīla; and the progressive teachings in the *Six Lamps*, which he associates with the Simulteneist thought of the Chinese Chan master Hoshang Mayohen and which, he says, “is nearer certainly to the *Great Perfection* than to the point of view of the Indian dialectician [Kamalaśīla].”⁸¹ In so separating these texts, Tucci puts forth two possibilities for resolving the mystery of the identity of their author or authors.

The first possibility, according to Tucci, is that the abbot Pelyang and the author of all these texts were one person. In this case, Tucci asserts that the clan attribution of rBa to the abbot Pelyang in the historical chronicles may have arisen from politically motivated, retroactive attributions by the sBa clan in the *sBa bzhed* in order to glorify their own clan name, and that this retroactive attribution was picked up by other historians in their references to that text. In other words, the author of the *Six Lamps* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* also would have served as the second abbot of Samye, and that man’s name was changed by later Tibetan historiographers to sBa/rBa/dBa/'Ba '. The

⁸⁰ Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*. Daishun Ueyama, "Peruyan Cho No Daiyuga Bunken: P. Tib. 837 Ni Tsuite [a Mahāyoga Document Composed by Dpal Dbyangs; P. Tib. 837]," *Bukkyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō* 16, no. June (1977). Yamaguchi, "Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai."

⁸¹ Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*, 150.

second possibility, and the one Tucci seems more inclined to think is correct,⁸² is that there were two men named Pelyang—one man who authored the *Six Lamps*, and another man who was ordained as a *se mi* and later served as abbot of Samye. The only statement regarding Pelyang's identity that Tucci makes with certainty is that "our author [of the *Six Lamps*] can hardly be the same person who was one of the seven *se mi* and encouraged the young Trisong detsen to accept and propagate Buddhism."⁸³ As for the author of the *Letter*, Tucci makes no clear assertions whatsoever, and he appears not to have been aware of the existence of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* at all.

Nearly two decades later, Yamaguchi Zuihō again took up the question of Pelyang's identity. Yamaguchi agrees with Tucci's general hypothesis, that the *Six Lamps* author and the abbot were two different men. He adds to this the assertion that the abbot must have authored the letter to the king. Based on colophons to Pelyang's *Six Lamps* texts and on his analysis of several historical chronicles, Yamaguchi asserts that there were two men named Pelyang: Ba (sBa) Pelyang, a conservative member of the orthodox monastic establishment who was both abbot and author of the *Letter*, and Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang, a radical tantric proponent who wrote the *Six Lamps*. Because he is concerned exclusively with establishing the identity of the abbot, the majority of Yamaguchi's comments are dedicated to unraveling appearances of the abbot Ba Pelyang in the various lists of *se mi* and the general timeline of his service to the court.

⁸² Ibid., 21.

⁸³ Ibid., 151.

Unfortunately, neither of these arguments regarding authorship of the texts is based on strong evidence. Tucci's inclination toward distinguishing the figures of tantric author and royal abbot is based on two factors: 1) the content of the *Six Lamps* texts compared with the mainstream philosophical position the abbot Pelyang is said to have possessed; and 2) the attribution in the Peking bsTan 'gyur of two of the *Six Lamps* texts to Nyen (gNyan/bsNyan) Pelyang.⁸⁴ Given the variation of content and perspective evident in early Tibetan Mahāyoga texts, and the ambiguous stance in the speech at the Samye debate(s) attributed to Pelyang by some chronicles, the first basis for Tucci's position seems inadequate to support a definitive division of the two figures. The second basis for Tucci's suggestion is equally unconvincing. As is now well known, the compilation in the Peking canon of Pelyang's *Six Lamps* as a collection most likely took place several centuries after the texts were composed and nearly a full continent removed from the place of their original composition. The simple addition of an author's clan name to a text's title thus may have occurred over the intervening centuries by any number of editors or copyists, and is not in any way indicative of the historical reality.⁸⁵ Thus, neither of Tucci's reasons is definitive.

As for Yamaguchi's position, his main argument for differentiating the two figures of abbot and author is based on the Ancients lineage to which the Mahāyogin Pelyang belongs, which lists Vimalamitra, Nyak Nyanakumara, and Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang in order

⁸⁴ Ibid., 150.

⁸⁵ It must be said that these two texts are unique among the *Six Lamps*, in that they quote extensively from the *Small Hidden Grain*, as has been shown by Samten Karmay. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 63-69.

of direct transmission. Yamaguchi finds it untenable that a disciple of a disciple of Vimalamitra might have lived during Trisong detsen's reign.⁸⁶ However, though Vimalamitra is not thought to have appeared in Tibet until the end of, or even shortly after, Trisong detsen's reign, it is still possible that Pelyang might have served as a monastic official during the Samye debates at the end of the eighth century, and later to have studied under a student of Vimalamitra. Thus, without clear dates for either Vimalamitra or for Nyak Nyanakumara, Yamaguchi does not offer definitive reasons to exclude our Mahāyogin author from the possibility of having been the well known abbot. In addition, Yamaguchi states that a yogically-inclined Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang would not have been of sufficient status to have delivered the teachings in the *Letter* to the king of Tibet, thereby further negating the possibility that the Mahāyogin author, gNyan, might have been abbot.⁸⁷ Yet, what we know of Pelyang the Mahāyogin is minimal, and surely insufficient to make such an assumption about his social status. The example of Padmasambhava should be sufficient to convince one of the potential political power of a yogic adept during the reign of Trisong detsen.

Following directly on the heels of Yamaguchi's study, Ueyama Daishun published an article in 1977 identifying PT 837, a Dunhuang version of the *rDo rje sems dpa'i Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, as the same text by that name in the Peking canon.⁸⁸ In it, Ueyama makes the assertion that the *Letter*, the *Six Lamps* collection, and the

⁸⁶ Yamaguchi, "*Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai*," 643-44.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 646.

⁸⁸ Ueyama, "*Peruyan Cho No Daiyuga Bunken: P. Tib. 837 Ni Tsuite* [a Mahāyoga Document Composed by Dpal Dbyangs; P. Tib. 837]."

Vajrasattva Questions and Answers all were written by the same author. Ueyama finds the absence of any recognition of Chan practices or the use of any Chan-related terminology in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* as evidence of its having been written prior to the introduction of Chan to Tibet, and thus very early in the introduction of tantra itself to Tibet. This thereby undercuts one of the main reasons for Yamaguchi's reluctance to attribute the *Six Lamps* to the abbot—that of temporal proximity. Ueyama concludes that Pelyang the abbot and Pelyang the author were most likely the same person, and shows how the two roles of Samye abbot and Mahāyogin author might easily be included within a lifetime. The fascinating implication of Ueyama's claim is that an early Mahāyoga master might have embodied such a varied array of interests, perspectives, and abilities represented by the diverse references to Pelyang which we have surveyed above, and further, that a politically powerful member of the monastic orthodoxy could also have participated in the highly restricted new tantric tradition of Mahāyoga. Unfortunately, on the other hand, Ueyama does not suggest any evidence for reconciling the tension between the suppressed, radical content in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* texts, displaying the author's tantric leanings, with the abbot's involvement in the government-sponsored monastic establishment.

These three opinions and their attendant reasonings thus vary considerably. Let us review the evidence at hand. The clan names sBa and gNyan are seldom interchanged within a single context. The clan Nyen almost never is mentioned in the contexts in which Ba Pelyang is named, and vice-versa. The types of context are also clearly distinguishable. Contexts in which Ba Pelyang is mentioned usually relate to his official functions as abbot,

his state-sponsored ordination as a *se mi*, his *Letter* addressed to a Tibetan king, and his participation in the Samye debates. The two contexts in which Nyen is mentioned are Ancients hagiography and lineage lists on the one hand, and in colophons to the *Six Lamps*, which are easily categorized as Mahāyoga texts, on the other hand. Nup, who is said to have been a disciple of the Mahāyogin Pelyang, mentions a Ba (dBa') Pelyang only once in his single citation of the *Letter*, and mentions Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang in a context consistent with most other mentions of that name, in a description of his yogic feats. Finally, in the oldest of these documents which mentions the abbacy of Samye, the name of the second abbot is clearly given as Ba (dBa') Pelyang. Only two exceptions to these general rules appear, in twelfth-century histories.

The reasonings behind Tucci's and Yamaguchi's opinions regarding the author(s) Pelyang are in themselves insufficient, largely because these authors depend almost solely on historical references for their conclusions with inadequate attention to the literary works attributed to Pelyang. Yamaguchi hardly mentions Pelyang's texts, dismissing the Mahāyogin author entirely from his sphere of interest in the introduction of his article, while Tucci gives only superficial consideration to the content of six of Pelyang's works. Although Tucci's dichotomization of the works attributed to Pelyang into conservative (the *Letter*) and progressive (*The Six Lamps*) does exemplify the general contrast of tone and content in these texts, it is an oversimplification of the myriad possible religious affiliations and interests of a Buddhist teacher in Tibet during the Dynastic period, and is dismissive of the fact that such strict literary and sectarian partitions were likely a much later phenomenon there.

Conclusion

It is unfortunate for our understanding of Pelyang's relative dating that we cannot conclude with any certainty whether our author Pelyang was the first abbot of Samye. Furthermore, we cannot say where or how he lived, though it is clear that he was a native Tibetan and appears to have taught a community of budding Mahāyoga practitioners. The contribution of this chapter, regardless of these unanswered questions, is to open the field of possibility by showing that the two roles of conservative, politically-appointed abbot and radical, free-thinking Mahāyogin author are not necessarily mutually distinct categories. In so concluding, I hope it frees us to rethink our notions of these types of figures during the period in question, and to hold open the possibility that Mahāyoga may have had closer connections to the court than heretofore thought, and that the forms of tantra that were formally banned may have enjoyed some level of support even from those in the highest seats. Furthermore, it allows us to imagine that Tibetans may have been more flexible in conceiving categories of institutional and noninstitutional forms of tantric practice than we seem to be in forming our own historical interpretations. The interesting possibility that the author of all these texts also may have been *se mi*, *ring luk*, *khen po*, and *lotsawa can* be further explored based upon a detailed analysis of the content of his writings. It is to this project which the following chapter will turn.

CHAPTER TWO • LAMPS AND DIALOGUES: SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE BIRTH OF TANTRA IN TIBET

Eight texts are attributed to a Dynastic-era Pelyang in the Tibetan Buddhist canon: the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*; the six doctrinal texts comprising the *Six Lamps* collection; and the *Letter*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the canonical collection colophons provide a clan affiliation for some of these texts' authors, and in some cases name the author simply as Pelyang. This has caused some controversy regarding whether all the texts are the work of a single person.

Behind these concerns regarding authorial attribution, however, lurk deeper and more consequential issues. The *Letter* appears to have been written by someone actively engaged in Buddhist scholarship, and with reason to address the king, the ministers, the monastics, and the common people of Tibet with great authority on general topics involving ethics and correct Buddhist behavior. This suggests rather convincingly that the *Letter's* author was concerned to advance an institutional form of Buddhism among Tibetans. The rest of the texts, however, take a quite different approach, focusing on the nature of reality and insisting upon the possibility of seeing reality directly without engaging in ritual praxis or putting forth any directed effort whatsoever. This would suggest an author who might promote freer forms of practice and a less structured form of religious community. Thus, the interest among scholars in clearly delineating these two is closely linked to a perception of the incompatibility between these different religious forms.

A further distinction has been drawn by Samten Karmay, who asserts that two of the *Six Lamps* poems present a view characteristic of the Great Perfection, largely on the basis of their authorial identifications of Nyen Pelyang, and their direct borrowings from another text identified as a sort of proto-Great Perfection, the *Small Hidden Grain*. This drive to separate the Great Perfection Pelyang from the Mahāyogin Pelyang may represent the same interests previously discussed—to avoid the uncomfortable proximity of Pelyang’s explicitly stated Mahāyoga affiliation to a view which greatly resembles that of the Great Perfection.

This chapter will discuss the stylistic and thematic consistency as well as the doctrinal complexity of the eight works attributed to Pelyang. On the basis of this and other textual sources, I will show that of the eight, at least seven are the work of a single author. Furthermore, rather than offering fractured or diverse presentations or positions, they display a remarkable integrity, and clearly were meant to promote a single system—that of Mahāyoga tantra. This finding entails a further fact—that Pelyang’s presentation differs from the other Mahāyoga texts we find at Dunhuang from this period, and that it resembles the Mind Series and Great Perfection texts of the Ancients, providing a strong link between the early Mahāyoga tradition in Tibet and the later Great Perfection.

Consistency among the Texts: Format, style, and theme

There are a total of eight texts attributed to a Pelyang in the Peking Tibetan Buddhist canon. With the exception of the *Letter*, these texts share sufficient common themes, positions, expressions, and so forth as to warrant being accepted as the corpus of a single author. The following section will examine the literary aspects of the eight texts in

detail, providing evidence for considering seven of them as a group stemming from a single author, and presenting the various reasons one might choose either to include or exclude the *Letter* from this oeuvre.

The texts are composed in verse for the most part, but vary considerably in other aspects of their format. The first text we will examine here, the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, as its title implies, is a catechism. Altogether, there are fifty-one questions in prose, and corresponding answers in verse of one or two even stanzas each. The majority of the answers are comprised of four-foot lines, with a few answers in stanzas of three or five feet interspersed throughout the text. The second through seventh texts to be discussed here are collected as the *Six Lamps (sGron ma drug)*. These are *The Lamp of the Mind (Thugs kyi sgron ma)*, *The Lamp of the Correct View (lTa ba yang dag sgron ma)*, *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes (mTha yi mun sel sgron ma)*, *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom (Thabs shes sgron ma)*, *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation (bsGom thabs kyi sgron ma)*, and *The Lamp of the Precious View (lTa ba rin chen sgron ma)*.⁸⁹ These texts are entirely in verse, also with even metrical lines of three to four feet each. Finally, the eighth text is the *Letter*. It is divided into sections, each of which is addressed to a specified audience. The first two sections, addressed to a general audience of community members including merchants, farmers, soldiers, musicians, and women, and to the king, respectively, are comprised of eleven lengthy verse passages cited from classic Buddhist texts, each of which is prefaced with two or three lines of prose introduction written by the letter's author himself. These two sections to the general public and the king are followed

⁸⁹ PT 5918, 5919, 5920, 5921, 5922, and 5923 respectively.

by several sections of instruction written by the author in verse and addressed to general workers, to the ministers, and to fully ordained and novice Buddhist monks and nuns. The stanzas in these latter sections vary considerably in form, from three to seven feet per line. There are introductory homages in two of the texts attributed to Pelyang: the *Lamp of the Mind* and the *Letter*. These are to Vajrasattva and to the historical buddha, respectively. As mentioned in the previous chapter, only the *Letter* and the Dunhuang versions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* are appended with colophons.

With the exception of the letter, a more detailed discussion of which will follow, all of Pelyang's texts are uniform in their unique literary style, which is characteristic also of the Mind Series poems and the early Great Perfection literature. Those seven texts—the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* poems—are written in a concise, poetic form rather than in versified prose, as is most Tibetan philosophical literature. Pelyang's verse also follows a simple periodical meter in which each foot is comprised of one stressed and one unstressed syllable with the exception of the final foot. That last foot, called a synalepha, is comprised of one stressed syllable and two unstressed syllables. Although Tibetan verse often introduces new topics with lines that begin with an opening foot composed of merely one stressed syllable, or catalexis, Pelyang's texts are unique in that they very rarely display this common feature.⁹⁰

The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* all address the same general issue, the true nature of reality. They also share a similar exegetical stance, that

⁹⁰ For more information on meter in Tibetan poetry, see Stephan Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

reality is ineffable, its realization spontaneous, and that all effort to realize its dynamic is needless. Although obviously instructional, the author of all seven works eschews the specifics of praxis, focusing instead on the ultimate realization by addressing such metaphysical topics as the characteristics of space and mind, the intrinsic nature of reality, the relationship of conventional and ultimate truths, and so forth. Again, this representation of reality presages the emergence of the later Great Perfection texts.

Within this common framework, however, there is some variation between the seven texts in their focus and the particular topics they address. The questions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* are largely concerned with matters of ritual and meditative technique, and are phrased in direct, simple terms. The answers, on the other hand, take on a more philosophical focus, and employ a more poetic style of expression, including some apophatic language. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is firmly rooted in the mainstream tantric perspective of its day, however. It discusses tutelary deities, the status of, and proper conduct toward, the master, the necessity of empowerments, and other such overtly tantric subjects.

The *Six Lamps* express much less of a tantric orientation and are marked by a richer and more poetic style than the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. The first and longest poem of the *Six Lamps*, *The Lamp of the Mind*, has two distinct sections, the first of which differs slightly from the rest of the text, and, indeed, from the rest of the collection. That first section is a doxography, or comparative review of philosophies, including both Buddhist and non-Buddhist views. In this section, the author uses a relatively straightforward style to dispute each lesser view in turn, and discusses such philosophical

issues as illusory appearance, causality, and the nature of consciousness. The second section of *The Lamp of the Mind* is an instructional catalogue of Mahāyoga positions on various subjects such as emptiness, sameness, nonduality, and so forth. In contrast to the first section, this second section of *The Lamp of the Mind*, together with the rest of the *Six Lamps* poems, resemble the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* in their poetic style, employing apophatic expression to an even greater degree. They focus much less on the explicitly tantric subjects treated in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, and turn instead toward a purely philosophical realm. This is a shift we see fully developed within the Great Perfection, but is only in nascent form in Pelyang's works.

Because these seven texts address varying facets of Mahāyoga, this dictates an equally varying use of language. While the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and most of the poems of the *Six Lamps* employ a richly evocative idiom, the doxographical section of *The Lamp of the Mind* often relies upon clearer, more straightforward language, technical terms, and a sort of Buddhist shorthand to refer to commonly understood technical and philosophical terms and enumerations. Colloquialisms appear throughout the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp of the Mind*, which texts may have been intended for less advanced audiences, and they appear with less frequency in the remaining poems of the *Six Lamps*.

However, the slight idiomatic variations cannot be taken as evidence that the texts were composed by different authors. It may simply indicate that they were intended for different types of audiences and in differing contexts. In fact, a generally didactic tone is obvious throughout all the texts, in Pelyang's practical instruction, in his direct

exhortations, and in the rhetorical questions which he employs in almost every text. This is not the dreamy poetry of a cave-dwelling hermit, but seems to be the education, albeit lyrical, of real, individual students by their master.

Although we can see a relative uniformity of poetic style, didactic tone, metaphysical concern, and so forth among those seven texts, the unique literary style of the eighth text, the *Letter*, make it problematic to include in this group. Because it was intended for the general population, the letter addresses largely mainstream religious and ethical topics, while the rest of Pelyang's texts were clearly intended for an exclusive audience of educated Buddhist tantric specialists. Throughout the letter, the author strives to simplify basic Buddhist teachings, addressing such practical issues as how to behave in the face of enemies, how to conduct oneself while working, general ordination procedure, and so forth. Accordingly, the style of address in the letter is straightforward, the vocabulary is generally nontechnical, and the expression simple. In fact, the author says in his introduction,

If the helpful instruction and many profound meanings in the works by the intelligence of Nāgārjuna, Sthiramati, and Maitreya—the Bodhicaryāvatāra, the Suhr̥llekha, and the Ratnāvalī and so forth—are explained at length, they will not be understood. Therefore, I have compiled a very little bit of those things from those works which are easy to accomplish and understand.⁹¹

⁹¹ *klu sgrub snying po blo gros dang/ ma la byams pas mdzad ba yi / byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa dang/ bshes shing mdza' ba'i phrin yig dang / rin chen phreng pa la sogs ba'i/ nang nas phan pa'i gdams ngag dang/ mang zhing zab mo'i don rnams ni / rgyas par bshad na mi rtogs pas/ de las bsgrub sla gzung bde rnams/ nyung zad tsam zhig bdag gis bsdebs/ Letter, Derge 4355: 452.*

Furthermore, unlike the other seven texts attributed to Pelyang, none of the works Pelyang cites in the letter are tantric, and no tantric terms appear in the text.⁹²

These differences have caused modern scholars to doubt the common authorship of the letter with the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps*.⁹³ Indeed, but for the common mentions of the ten and the sixteen virtues in two of the texts, there is no concrete evidence to tie the letter reliably to any of the other works attributed to Pelyang.⁹⁴

⁹² The Tibetanized Sanskrit term ‘*man da la*’ does appear in the section addressed to fully ordained monks, but does not appear to have a tantric meaning in this situation.

⁹³ Cf. Yamaguchi, "Ring Lugs Rba Dpal Dbyangs--Bsam Yas Shūron Wo Meguru Hito No Mondai." Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I & II*. Ueyama, "Peruyan Cho No Daiyuga Bunken: P. Tib. 837 Ni Tsuite [a Mahāyoga Document Composed by Dpal Dbyangs; P. Tib. 837]." and Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*.

⁹⁴ The sixteen pure human laws (*mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*) are said to have been instituted by Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century, though this may be a later attribution. The sixteen as described in Pelyang’s *Letter*: “The sixteen human laws are as follows: 1) to have single-minded faith in the Three Jewels; 2) to be pious toward virtuous renunciants and 3) Brahmins; 4) to be honest and 5) have the nature of honesty; 6) to repay past deeds and 7) actively help others; 8) to be filial to one’s father and 9) mother; 10) to have faith in the elders of one’s lineage; and 11) to be expert in the [astrological?] dates; 12) to support the passing yearly periods; 13) to assess without deception weights and 14) measures; and 15) to do no harm to one’s friends and 16) rivals (*mi chos bcu drug ni/ /dkon mchog gsum la gcig tu dad/ /dge spong ‘dzin cing bram zer ‘dzin/ /drang zhing drang ba’i rang bzhin can/ /byas gzo byas la phan ‘dogs dang/ /pha dang mar ni ‘dzin pa dang/ /rigs kyi rgan rims gus par byed/ /tshes grangs rgyud la mkhas pa dang/ /dus tshigs gso spyod byed pa dang/ /bre srang ‘jal lugs g.yo sgyu med/ /phan tshun ‘gran sems gnod mi byed/*.” D 4355, 453.

The ten virtues are defined in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*. They are the practice of the renunciation of the ten nonvirtues (*mi dge ba bcu*), which are: 1) *srog gcod pa spong pa* (murder); 2) *ma byin par len pa spong ba* (theft); 3) *‘dod pas log par g.yem pa spong pa* (improper sexual practices); 4) *brdzun du smra ba spong ba* (falsehoods); 5) *tshig rtsub po smra ba spong ba* (verbal abuse); 6) *phra mar smra ba spang ba* (slandering others); 7) *tshig bkyal ba smra ba spong ba* (irrelevant chatter); 8) *brnab sems spong ba* (covetousness); 9) *gnod sems spong ba* (vindictiveness); 10) *log par lta ba spong ba* (mistaken views). *Mahāvīyutpatti*: 1687-98. Buddhaghosha also discusses the significance of the ten deeds to the realm of gods and humans, in his *Mārgavyūha*. “Asserting mainly the ten virtues while failing to see the virtues and the nonvirtues as

Given the text's historical considerations—its very specific colophon, which apparently was written not long after the original letter was composed and which obviously points to the letter's author being the second abbot of Samye, and the uncertainty with regards to the identity of the author(s) of these texts—it cannot be said with any confidence that the letter was authored by our Mahāyogin poet, Pelyang. However, as argued previously, there is also no reason to believe that a high-ranking religious figure would not be practicing tantra during the Dynastic era. Indeed, given the interest in tantric literature, it would be surprising to find such a person did not have an interest in what was considered the newest and most modern religious technology available. Furthermore, it seems reasonable that were such a prominent figure involved in tantric study, s/he would mostly likely intend to keep powerful and potentially dangerous material from the eyes of the uninitiated and uneducated public, such as are included in the intended readership of the *Letter*. It is not so difficult to imagine that the Samye abbot Pelyang's own religious interests might have veered further and more exclusively toward Mahāyoga as his religious acumen developed, or that he might have attracted a group of students interested in much more esoteric subjects as he grew further removed from the public eye and from public obligations and pressures when he retired from his post as abbot. The best and only reliable assertion that can be advanced based on both historical and textual evidence is that the *Letter* and the rest of the collection cannot be distinguished merely on the basis of the imagined social matrices into which each text's author posthumously has been placed.

equal, they take birth in the realms of gods and humans, but not realizing Sameness, they are reborn in the desire realm.” (*dge bcu dag la gtsor len cing/ /dge dang mi dge mi mnyam pas/ /lha dang mi'i skye gnas te/ /mnyam nyid ma rtogs 'dod khams 'khor/*). *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 471b8.

Editions of Pelyang's texts can be found in a few sources. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is included in the Peking and Narthang canons, and the Kinsha collection. In addition to these canonical versions, three manuscript copies of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* were found at Dunhuang. The six poems attributed to Pelyang gathered in a collection known as the *Six Lamps* are included as a collection in the Peking, Narthang, and Derge editions of the Tibetan Buddhist canon and the Kinsha collection, as well as in the more recent Ancients collection, the *Kama shintu gyepa*.⁹⁵ The final text, the *Letter*, is included in the Peking, Narthang, Kinsha, and Derge editions. None of the texts attributed to Pelyang is included in the Dynastic-era catalogue of Buddhist texts, the *IDan kar ma*,⁹⁶ nor in Bu tön's catalogue, which is found within the latter's *Chö jung (Chos 'byung)*.⁹⁷

Pelyang's Literary Sources

There is some literary range of citations in the works attributed to Pelyang. Three of the *Six Lamps* poems—the *Lamp of the Mind*, *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, and the *Lamp of the Method of Meditation*—as well as the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Letter* contain passages borrowed directly from other texts. If taken together as the corpus of a single author, the citations in the *Letter* and the other seven texts would allow us to form an image of an author who was well-versed in classical Buddhist literature, as

⁹⁵ *Bka' Ma Shin Tu Rgyas Pa (Kah Thog)*, ed. 'Jam dbyangs, 120 vols. (Chengdu: KaH thog mkhan po 'jam dbyangs, 1991).

⁹⁶ The *Denkar Palace Catalogue*, or *IDan kar ma*, was compiled in the early ninth century, and is comprised primarily of the work of official translation teams during the reign of King Trisong detsen. Marcelle Lalou, "Les Textes Bouddhiques Au Temps Du Roi Khri Srong Lde Bcan," *Journal Asiatique* 241, no. 3 (1953).

⁹⁷ Bu ston Rin chen grub, *Bu Ston Chos 'Byung* (Xining: *Krung-go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang*, 1988).

well as being familiar with the more modern and controversial tantric literature newly available in Tibetan as represented by the *Guhyagarbha tantra*.

The length of citations in the *Letter* in particular and their clear and careful attributions are evidence of a scholar who has memorized a great wealth of material or, at the very least, had access to an excellent collection of Buddhist texts. In the *Letter*, the author includes passages from such Indian Buddhist classics as Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha*, the *Śrīmālādevisūtra*, Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhaṅga*, Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, and Mātṛceṭa's *Mahārājakaniṣkalekha*. These cited passages are formally introduced, and most quotations are closed with quotative particles and exegetical commentary, making clear that these passages are borrowed from other respected sources.

If, on the other hand, the *Letter* is excluded from our present consideration of Pelyang's corpus due to doubt over common authorship, the image that might be conjured based upon the citations in the remaining texts of the author's literary fluency is much more limited. All the texts from which Pelyang borrows in the *Six Lamps* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* are tantric and belong to the earliest period of Tibetan tantric assimilation. Furthermore, the quotations in those texts are exceptionally brief. The quoted passages are not marked as such in any way, even with quotative particles, and no other authors or works are mentioned at all, save for the occasional mention of the *Māyājāla* cycle of texts in general and a single reference to the "secret nucleus," or *Guhyagarbha* (all of which occur only in the *Lamp of the Mind*). Rather, such cited passages in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* are woven

seamlessly into Pelyang's own composition, preceded and followed by text that precisely matches the citations in content and meter.

Because they are so deeply and seamlessly embedded in the text, it is extremely difficult to isolate and identify borrowed passages in those works. Samten Karmay published his findings of quoted passages from Buddhagupta's *Small Hidden Grain* in Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, and *Lamp of the Method of Meditation*. I have identified several further citations and their sources--Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* quoted in Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind*, Vimalamitra's *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag ces bya ba* quoted in Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind*, and citations from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* in several of Pelyang's texts—but I would not be surprised to discover more. The fact that these tantric works are cited without attribution and that their citations are brief may indicate that Pelyang's own training and study was largely aural, and that printed texts were rarely, or perhaps never, available. It may also indicate that the quoted material was familiar enough to his intended audience and readership that they did not require any introduction or identification. Considering the fame and popularity of those three texts, the latter hypothesis is fairly likely.

The great majority of cited passages in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* are those taken from Buddhaguhya's Mahāyoga treatise, the *Mārgavyūha*. The second-most commonly quoted text is the *Small Hidden Grain*, which is attributed to Buddhagupta. In addition to these borrowed passages, Pelyang appears to have used Buddhaguhya's doxographical scheme in the *Mārgavyūha* as a model for his own *Lamp of the Mind*. We know little historically about the two figures of Buddhagupta and

Buddhaguhya, though there has been some scholarly conjecture regarding their possibly common identity.⁹⁸ With regard to Buddhagupta, Nup, in his *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, identifies a Buddhagupta (*Bu ta kug ta*) as a Mahāyogatantra master, though without drawing a connection between that figure and the *Small Hidden Grain*, which he, like Pelyang, also quotes.⁹⁹ Regarding Buddhaguhya, there is some controversy over whether all the exegetical texts attributed to him, which include commentary on Kriyā-, Yoga-, and Mahāyoga-tantra texts, were authored by the same man.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, in this case also we have an eighth-century problem that pertains to whether a single figure might have been the author of more normative tantric materials as well as of more controversial Mahāyoga literature. Regardless of this controversy, a Buddhaguhya is said to have been a key figure in the dissemination from India to Tibet of Mahāyoga tantras, and of the Māyājāla in particular. A common lineage is alleged between that Buddhaguhya and Pelyang through Vimalamitra, who is said to have studied the tantras under Buddhaguhya and then passed them to Pelyang.¹⁰¹ Ancients accounts include all three figures in lineages of the textual

⁹⁸ The earliest known Tibetan historical reference to Buddhaguhya is in the Dynastic-era chronicle the *sBa bzhed*. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 154.

⁹⁹ *STMG*, 223.1. Unfortunately, the *Small Hidden Grain* attributed to Buddhagupta is cited only in the chapter on Great Perfection and not at all in the Mahāyoga chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Leonard van der Kuijp has hypothesized that these works were composed by two different figures. van der Kuijp, “*Sarvadurgatiparisodhanatantra* in Tibet,” pp. 124-125, n. 25. He claims that the former Buddhaguhya belongs to a transmission lineage of the *Purification of All Transmigrations*. van der Kuijp further conjectures that this person may be the same person as the Buddhagupta mentioned by Bu tön. Cf. Steven Weinberger, “The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet” (University of Virginia, 2003), 84-85.

¹⁰¹ Gyurme Dorje, “The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*” (School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987), 77. David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* (London: Serindia Publications, 1987), 446.

transmission of the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and of the Māyājāla cycle of texts in general, which are fundamental sources for Pelyang's work. Therefore, it is reasonable to imagine that Pelyang would have looked to Buddhaguhya's works as particularly edifying and legitimate Mahāyoga sources.

Given the controversy regarding the possible common identity of Buddhagupta and Buddhaguhya, Pelyang's frequent use of works attributed to both these figures is worthy of note. Although clearly the fact of Pelyang's using these two texts cannot prove the theory that the authors of the *Small Hidden Grain* and of the *Mārgavyūha* were the same man, at the very least it may indicate that Pelyang understood these two texts to have been authored by a single person, and that he regarded the author of the *Small Hidden Grain* to be an authority on Mahāyoga, and that text to be representative of the type of Mahāyoga principles he intended to promote.

The Vajrasattva Questions and Answers

Literary Traditions in Dialogue

The forms of tantra that are now so strongly associated with Tibetan Buddhism have their origins in the transmission and development of Mahāyoga in Tibet, but the first three centuries of this process, from the eighth to tenth centuries, remain shadowy at best, despite recent scholarly advances in the studies of Indian and Tibetan esoteric Buddhism.¹⁰²

¹⁰² See, for example, Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*.; David Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed. Helmut Eimer and David Germano (Leiden: Brill, 2002).; Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries.";

Based on this research, it appears that early versions of the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and other tantras belonging to the Māyājāla cycle were circulating in Tibet by the mid-eighth century,¹⁰³ and the following decades brought an increasing number of commentaries on Mahāyoga texts in general, as well as ritual manuals designed to guide one in the progression of the associated rites and practices. Simultaneously with these tantric developments, of course, Tibetans were composing their own philosophical treatises on exoteric subjects within Mahāyāna from the eighth century onward. However, for the most part, these two streams of literature—the esoteric ritual literature and the exoteric philosophical literature—remained distinct throughout the eighth, and into the ninth, centuries. In fact, based on the texts found at Dunhuang, most later Mahāyoga authors of the ninth and tenth centuries continued to address primarily the issue of ritual in practical terms and to avoid philosophical speculation. Indeed, this bifurcation appears to have been standard in India itself even longer than it prevailed in Tibet, with the *Kālacakra tantra*, as in so much else, serving as a prominent exception.¹⁰⁴

The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is one of a mere handful of Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang to bring these two literary traditions into dialogue, directly addressing the issues of wrathful, ritualized Mahāyoga praxis in epistemological and ontological terms.¹⁰⁵ In so doing, the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* also addresses the apparent

and van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection."

¹⁰³ Nathaniel Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra" (University of Virginia, 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* is another rare example of an early Mahāyoga text which attempts both to prescribe proper ritual enactment and to contextualize such ritual within a philosophical framework. This was, perhaps, the reason Pelyang felt drawn to use it as a model for his own *Lamp of the Mind*.

¹⁰⁵ Other such texts include ITJ 454, ITJ 508, and PT 647.

ideological contradiction between the themes of deliberative, violent practice commonly associated with Mahāyoga literature, and the themes of spontaneous, expansive awareness just beginning to appear in the philosophical literature, and is almost certainly one of the earliest Tibetan texts to do so. The text strikes a distinctive balance between the priorities of praxis and gnosis, and appears to represent a stage in Tibetan tantra's general development between the directed design we see in the liturgical Mahāyoga material from Dunhuang and the more relaxed and open style of the philosophical discussions associated with the Mind Series literature and the later *Great Perfection* movement.¹⁰⁶

The catechistic literary form of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* also exemplifies this balance. An interlocutor, concerned largely with ritual, meditation, and the immediate results of yogic practice, questions apparent contradictions and paradoxical assertions made within the tantric tradition. S/he is answered by the master, whose philosophical perspective frames and gives meaning to the rites and meditations, while ultimately asserting their emptiness. In fact, the text might be seen as an edifying conversation between the young Mahāyoga movement focused rather narrow-mindedly on the technical aspects of the practice, and a developed, philosophical sophistication in the form of the master, who is able to illuminate for his young student the more subtle, profound teachings to be garnered through philosophical inquiry into the nature of that practice and its resultant view.

¹⁰⁶ van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection." The Mind Series movement most likely had begun during Pelyang's lifetime, but the Great Perfection movement had not yet reached the level of self-identification or promotion that the Mahāyoga had.

The catechistic style was fairly prevalent during the eighth and ninth centuries in Tibetan Buddhist literature. Most closely resembling the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* of these in format and content is ITJ 419, a collection of Mahāyoga and other tantric treatises, ritual manuals, *sādhana*, and notes. The sixth text in this collection is a series of nineteen questions and answers regarding such issues as the consort, preparing the oath water, experiences gained in yogic practice, and the particulars of sexual yoga. More texts like this include treatises in debate format such as PT 116V, the *Lön po ka tang* chapter of the *Ka tang de nga*, which is structured around twenty questions put to Padmasambhava, records of actual debates such as the *Tun wu ta sheng cheng li chueh*, a Chinese account of the Samye debates and the partial Tibetan translation PT 823, and records of questions and answers as part of official communications such as Vairocana's *Rin po che rtsod pa'i 'khro lo*¹⁰⁷ or Tan kuang's *Ta sheng erh shih erh wen pen*.¹⁰⁸ The function of the catechism is to present in easily accessible form the prevailing questions regarding complexities and confusions of an interested public or the involved parties, here tantric practitioners. The very fact that Pelyang felt the need to present his Mahāyoga in this way implies that there were confusions regarding the relationship between native and imported traditions, the role of the master, and so forth, which questions may have been on the minds of both suspicious onlookers and government officials as well as earnest practitioners puzzled by apparent contradictions within their own tradition's view. The eighth century was a fecund environment in which imported forms of Buddhism were

¹⁰⁷ To. 4354.

¹⁰⁸ T2818. All as per Kenneth Eastman, "Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-Huang" (University of California, Berkeley, 1976), 12-13.

studied, adopted, augmented, and transformed, and it is certain that the questions regarding all these processes abounded.

Tantric Ideological Foundations of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*

Although several later Dunhuang texts using the term *rnal 'byor chen po*, or Mahāyoga, do not appear to have been intended for an audience of exclusively esoteric practitioners or even to be commenting upon an esoteric tradition,¹⁰⁹ the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* was clearly written for those deeply involved in tantric practice. If we follow Ronald Davidson's polythetic approach to defining the category of tantra,¹¹⁰ the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* contains most of the central, defining variables listed by Davidson. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* opens with a description of Vajrasattva, the reigning buddha of the Māyājāla tantras, and touches upon such topics as the five primordial wisdoms and their covalence with the five buddhas, the importance of *mantra* and *mudrā*, the correct attitude with which to approach the use of sacramental substances, the necessity of keeping one's samaya commitments, and the practitioner's own divine transformation.

The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* also makes overt reference to what Davidson calls the overarching narrative of tantra—the act of the practitioner assuming power and exercising dominion as a lord or ruler through a variety of tantric rites, including most importantly the *abhiṣeka*, or empowerment, ceremony. Pelyang employs this sustaining narrative throughout the text. In Question 9, the interlocutor asks, “Then what is

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, PT 116V.

¹¹⁰ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 121.

the distinction of the accomplishments attained through yoga?” In response, the master juxtaposes two methods of gaining accomplishment, the outer and the unexcelled, by comparing the relative power-sources of a minister and a king.

For example, like a king appointing a minister,

The bequeathal of accomplishments from above is the outer method.

Like gaining power through the people offering the kingdom [to the king’s command],

[Their] self-emergence is great perfection, the unexcelled method.

In the “outer method,” the practitioner, like a mere minister, obtains empowerments and receives power and accomplishments from an external, higher source in the form of blessings. In the “unexcelled method,” by contrast, the practitioner-made-sovereign deploys his or her own natural power, derived from an internal, ever-present source, like the subjects of one’s own realm.

Further, in the answer to Question 36, Pelyang affirms that the royal simile is indeed central to the intent of tantra itself.

Worshipping worldly gods and nāga

While making pledges pertaining to Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva

Is like a king conducting himself as though he were a commoner.

It does not fit the circumstances, and contradicts the significance of yoga.

These references to the classic royal trope, combined with the interlocutor’s references to wrathful deity praxis as we shall see later, firmly establish Pelyang’s

presentation as befitting those of a supporter of institutional forms of tantra. However, by no means does such a presentation limit Pelyang's works to this form. The evocative, apophatic means of expression and the insistence upon the uselessness of effort coexist in Pelyang's texts, serving to upset the commonly held belief that these have always been watertight distinctions.

The Questions: Early Tibetan Mahāyoga as a practical base

Now that we have seen that the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is firmly built on an esoteric foundation, what evidence of early, ritualized Mahāyoga specifically, then, can we see in this text, other than Pelyang's own assertion in the opening lines that the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is an explanation of "Mahāyoga, the supreme system?"¹¹¹ The clues to the practical matrix of Pelyang's philosophical teachings lie in the questions of the interlocutor—in the assumptions, aims, and expectations of his student as s/he, however wrongly, envisioned the practice of Mahāyoga. Taking the questions as our focus, we catch a glimpse of the path with which his students must have been most familiar before beginning training with Pelyang. It contains many aspects of practice and perspective that are either unique to, or at least characteristic of, the type of Mahāyoga practice we see in other Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts, though certainly not all. As is apparent from various references to Mahāyoga itself in the questions, a practical Mahāyoga system had already been established as such, and a set of authoritative Mahāyoga scriptures seems to have been known as such to Pelyang's students. Meditative cultivation of oneself as the tutelary deity with the full entourage in a *maṇḍala* realm appears to have been the

¹¹¹ P 5082, 134a1.

main practice, with the attendant expectations of acquiring powers and yogic feats, as well as of the signs and marks to verify such accomplishments. Although there is no mention of the sort of organized panoply of peaceful and wrathful deities that we see in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*'s one hundred *zhi khro'i lha*, Pelyang's interlocutor mentions a particular rite involving a wrathful deity, in which it seems a buddha figure was visualized as ritually trampled beneath the feet of a wrathful deity. The interlocutor also expresses an obvious familiarity with the practices of emanation and absorption, though the details of these practices are not provided. Vajrasattva is apparently understood by Pelyang's interlocutor to be the primary form of the highest deity, a sort of meta-buddha to the five buddhas, and the state of *rig 'dzin*, or awareness holder (Skt: *vidyādhara*) is assumed to be the pinnacle stage of Mahāyoga practice.

Within the interlocutor's questions, there is some evidence of the social aspect of this group of practitioners as well. Empowerments from one's teacher were an accepted prerequisite to the meditations, and the continued necessities of offerings and obedience to one's master, though questioned by them, were not new concepts for Pelyang's students. Unfortunately, it is not clear from the text whether Pelyang's audience was monastic or whether they formed any kind of specific community. It is obvious, however, that the master's role in his relationship with each student was central to the practice. In the concluding section, the disciple questions Pelyang about the authority of the master and the necessity to becoming a master of receiving the proper empowerments. Such questions suggest that the abuse of power and false claims of mastery were already problems for Mahāyogins in Pelyang's day.

We also see in the questions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* the type of tensions that might arise early in a tradition's development and practical standardization. Regarding the forms of one's tutelary deity, the disciple expresses confusion over what must have been conflicting forms of available advice. For instance, the interlocutor wonders whether it is correct to cultivate multiple forms of the deity, such as the peaceful sambhogakāya, or blissful buddha body, as one's tutelary deity, a wrathful manifestation of a buddha as the active deity (*las kyi lha*) as ritual agent effecting specific ritual aims, and so forth. S/he asks whether the exclusive cultivation of a single deity is sufficient. Is it necessary to gain accomplishments? Pelyang's interlocutor also expresses what must have been the concerns of many practitioners in a time when Mahāyoga was becoming established to such a degree that it began to compete with the autochthonous traditions, and was beginning to absorb such practices into its own scheme. In Question 36, s/he asks, "If yogins provide offerings to Tibetan gods and demons, are these acts concordant with the scriptures?" We also see concern over the relationship of tantric practice to broader exoteric studies: "In practicing *mantra*, how important are the axioms taught in *sūtra*?" and "Once one [has] great power, does it matter that one does not develop skill in the Dharma?"

Although this view is by no means complete, the depiction of contemporaneous tantric contemplative and ritual practice that might be drawn from the interlocutor's questions involves many of the techniques and tensions associated with the *Guhyagarbha tantra* relatively early in its propagation in Tibet. As we have seen, the characteristically Mahāyoga propitiation of wrathful deities and rites of domination appear to have been

perceived by the interlocutor as the central aspect of his or her tradition, and Pelyang himself does not hesitate to use its characteristic metaphors of taming and subduing. In response to Question 35, Pelyang issues the following injunction:

Constantly, with neither timidity nor aspiration,
Like a Great Conqueror who has subdued the earth [deities],
One commands and reigns over all without exception.

In obvious references to a clearly differentiated tradition, Pelyang calls the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* a description of “Mahāyoga, the supreme system,” and his interlocutor wonders how to act in accordance with the authoritative Mahāyoga scriptures (*ma ha yo ga'i gzhung*).¹¹² As I shall explain in a later section, in his *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang makes explicit the distinction between Mahāyoga and less effective, older forms of tantra. There, he asserts that while there are three subdivisions of the lower, outer form of the fifth vehicle, Mahāyoga is its ultimate, “secret” form.¹¹³ Further, there is no recognition by either speaker in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* or, indeed, elsewhere in Pelyang’s texts, that there are different types of Mahāyoga, or any higher forms of tantra. There can be no doubt that with this text, Pelyang intended to promote Mahāyogatantra as the ultimate method of esoteric Buddhist practice.

¹¹² P 5082, 138a2.

¹¹³ “The fifth [vehicle includes] the secret as well as the outer: The first [aspires to] completely pure intrinsic awareness; the second follows the former and latter [outer tantras]; [and] the third arranges the seven grounds of the clear light of the expanse itself in order (*Inga pa gsang ba'ang phyi pa'ang/ dang po rang rig rnam par dag/ gnyis pa snga phyi rjes su 'brangs/ gsum pa dbyings nyid 'od gsal ba'i/ sa bdun rim par bkod pa*).” *Lamp of the Mind*, P 5918, 276a7. The last line of this section begins a longer, continuing citation from Buddhaguhya’s *Mārga-vyūha* (P 4736, 468a2), which is quoted throughout the *Lamp of the Mind*.

The Answers: A new philosophical perspective

Despite Pelyang's own insistence that his views and the methods that he teaches represent the Mahāyogatantra paradigm, and despite an apparently firm foundation in the praxis of classic Mahāyoga as it most likely was taught during the late eighth centuries, neither Pelyang's views nor his method fit exactly with what we know of contemporaneous mainstream Tibetan Mahāyoga. In response to the questions in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, which are focused almost purely on the technical aspects of the practice, as we have seen, Pelyang's answers in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* point to the subtle, spontaneous states of realization that characterize the coeval Mind Series poetry, and much of later *Great Perfection* literature. In his answers, we see a subtle departure from the Mahāyoga world view associated with the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, involving ritualized violence and sexual imagery together with themes of subjugation and taming. Here, Pelyang appears to be stretching the very limits of what might be expressed with language, playing with common tantric themes in order to illuminate the open vista of possibility that is, according to him, true Mahāyoga seeing.

Taking Pelyang's definition of *rdo rje*, or vajra, as an example, we see that not only does he employ the standard terms used in the *Vajrasāekhara tantra*—‘unchanging’ and ‘indestructible’—but he also expands that classic definition to include the total and open vision of a buddha—“unoriginated, the spontaneously [arising] expanse of primordial wisdom.” This type of expansion is typical of the answers given by the master in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. In addition to stretching and transcending the practical and philosophical limits of a traditional Mahāyoga view, Pelyang's responses

often turn the wrong assumptions of the interlocutor inside out, rendering the question itself illogical by exposing an ignorant attachment to the techniques and observable benefits of the traditional form of practice with its traditional aims. For example, there is the following exchange in Question 19:

Then, is it suitable to rest in ‘non-meditation’?

If the topic of your question existed [i.e. meditation],

There would also be a meditator.

If it is true that mind is without origination,

What is it that rests in ‘non-meditation’?

When the disciple asks, in Question 10, about what signs to expect in accomplishment, Pelyang replies:

The intrinsic nature of a Conqueror is just insight and meditative stabilization.

With those, the issue of external signs and marks is extraneous.

For example, in the case of wanting fire, once the fire is found,

The issue of there being smoke as the sign of fire is extraneous.

In two stanzas taken almost verbatim from Buddhagupta’s *Small Hidden Grain*,¹¹⁴

Pelyang asserts that there is no reason for transformation, and that awakening is without cause. In answer to Question 7, he says:

One’s own nature abides as the sky. This means that

¹¹⁴ sBbas pa’i rgum chung, ITJ 594, 1b19.

There is no reason to transform oneself into the sky.

The mind itself is the sky, the expanse of awakening;

There is no cause of the attainment of awakening.

Without ground or root, the mind itself,

Like the sky, is not [made] pure by cleansing.

Awakening, free of origination,

Is without any cause or fruit of awakening whatsoever.

Later, in the answer to Question 13, Pelyang also asserts that the optimal circumstance for drawing near to the deity is one that occurs spontaneously:

When it appears as oneself, if the Reality Body

Comes to be understood as unchanging like the sky, and

If that ritual approach is not perceived in terms of object and subject,

There being neither toil nor exertion, this is the highest form of drawing
near.

In fact, Pelyang makes clear that there is nothing to cultivate, as we see in these lines from the answer to Question 18:

The Conquerors of the three times do not contrive;

From the beginning, one's own mind is unoriginated.

If one's own mind, unoriginated, is reality,

Reality is not something to be meditatively cultivated.

Maintaining a Balance between Exertion and Relaxation

However, despite Pelyang's regular assertions of the nonorigination of mind and the causelessness of awakening, Pelyang does not reject outright the value of tantric rites and meditative cultivations of deity and *maṇḍala* in favor of a purely natural, gnostic approach. Rather, Pelyang's teachings maintain a careful balance of emphasis on both aspects, and the play between effort and effortlessness appears throughout the rejoining stanzas in this text. Ultimately, as we shall see, however, effortlessness triumphs and forms the ideological spark of his Mahāyoga.

In answering Question 10, Pelyang makes clear the importance of effort:

The two yogas, the foundation of the Conquerors of the three times,
Arise within oneself. Having perceived this, strive to view the mind's
experience.

We see the clarification of this importance of effort in his answer to the next question, "There will be accomplishment only by means of insight and meditative stabilization, indeed," and he explains that this effort is rightly grounded in realization in this example from the answer to Question 13:

A wise person possessed of such realization
Clearly cultivates the three seals of marks in meditation.
While persevering without distraction and never abandoning [the practice],
Employing all the rituals, he or she will approach the wisdom deity.

Given such clear statements of the importance of striving, how does Pelyang reconcile the seemingly opposing statements regarding effort and non-effort, the need for deliberative rites and for the expansive speculation which dissolves such need? The key lies in his summation of a discussion of the ultimate state, that of vidyādhara, near the end of the text, in answer to Question 47. There he describes the three necessary ingredients for achieving the ultimate state of vidyādhara. “Through one’s own yoga, the Conqueror’s blessings, and Incomparable, unrivaled virtuous roots, [vidyādhara] will be actualized.”

The first of these three requirements—one’s own yoga—is indeed to be engaged without effort, but effort is not to be discarded entirely. The natural entrance into meditative stabilization and the state of spontaneous presence of accomplishments that are described by Pelyang as optimal come about only after having first exerted oneself toward that end repeatedly. He answers Question 31, saying:

Regarding that which is to be achieved,

Having strived, one rests in meditative equipoise again and again.

Then, having meditated and slowly entered the flow [of practice],

It is accomplished without effort, spontaneously.

We see how effortlessness arises in the path here, too, in the answer to the question that follows:

If it is obvious that sentient beings must strive,

Is it false [to say that] Conqueror-hood is spontaneously accomplished?

It is like the letters and so forth: with diligence, again and again,

Having grown to be proficient, [literacy] comes to one without effort.

The second ingredient for attaining vidyādhara —the blessing—is treated in a similar fashion to effortless yoga. Although Pelyang first explains that blessings arise in accordance with one’s effort, he later makes clear in answer to Question 11 that when the mind is finally pure in yoga, they then arise without striving.

As when sediment settles and water becomes clear again,

One does not need to strive for the reflections of the sun and moon to come
into view.

When one’s own mind emerges in pure yoga,

One does not need to strive for the arising of the Conqueror’s blessings.

Finally, Pelyang makes clear the necessity for conventional, intentful Mahāyoga practice in his description of the third requirement for vidyādhara, special virtuous roots. These incomparable, unrivaled virtuous roots are those that ripen naturally in this lifetime, but they are the exclusive result of having engaged in esoteric rites and of having practiced secret *mantra*. Thus, in each of these three elements on the path to vidyādhara-hood, Pelyang explains that effort and a directed set of rites and meditations, though necessary to the Mahāyoga path for most practitioners, do not cause awakening or accomplishments, and fall away in the final stages of realization. The ultimate state emerges as spontaneous, effortless realization through philosophical speculation on the emptiness of the practice and its manifestations. This philosophical speculation forms the basis of the six poems collected in the *Six Lamps*, and according to Pelyang is what sets Mahāyoga apart from other forms of tantra, as is clearly elucidated in the first of those six, the *Lamp of the Mind*.

The Six Lamps

The poems of the *Six Lamps*, unlike the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, contain very little recommendation to specific practices, and equally little reference to particular rules or ethical systems, or even to the relationship between tantric master and disciple. Where the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* strives to bring the philosophical to the practical, the *Six Lamps* texts fully immerse themselves in epistemological and ontological reflection. The view they present is one of openness, a freedom from extremes and limits that, despite Pelyang’s attempts to describe, “is ineffable and inconceivable”¹¹⁵ and “naturally transcends the realm of mind.”¹¹⁶

The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, as we have seen, primarily provides the practitioner a passage from traditional tantric practice to a philosophical view incorporating the fresh themes of noneffort and openness while still grounding them in the tantric tradition. In contrast, the first text of the *Six Lamps* texts, the *Lamp of the Mind*, maps a more complex, upward progression “like the rungs of a ladder” from the lowest, non-Buddhist types of views, through the range of Buddhist philosophical positions, to the outer tantras, and finally to the supreme, secret vehicle—Mahāyoga. In this work, Pelyang distances his Mahāyoga system even further than he did in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* from mainstream Buddhist contemplative practices or tantric ritual, and more clearly illuminates his transcendent depiction of unmediated awareness of the spontaneous presence of the expanse of reality. Finally, as we shall see in the other five poems of the

¹¹⁵ This term appears throughout the *Lamp of the Mind*, the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, and the *Lamp of the Correct View*

¹¹⁶ *Lamp of the Correct View*.

Six Lamps, Pelyang takes this progression further and makes even fewer references to tantric symbolism or ritual or to other religious systems, focusing almost exclusively on his own open, unstructured vision of Mahāyoga, presaging such developments in the Great Perfection.

Doxography and Relative Delineation of Mahāyoga in the *Lamp of the Mind*

The first half of the *Lamp of the Mind* is a Buddhist doxographical presentation of non-Buddhist and Buddhist systems, refuted or criticized in the standard hierarchical progression of lower to higher systems, ending with a summation of the highest system. In this, Pelyang's work is nothing out of the ordinary. However, while most Indian Buddhist tantric doxography centers on distinctions in the rituals of the various tantras,¹¹⁷ Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind* mentions ritual very little. The distinctions that concern Pelyang are related to view exclusively; he does not comment on the role of ritual in distinguishing whether a system is effective. Furthermore, though later Tibetan doxography resembles Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind* in relying upon view and perspective rather than practice or ritual for their rankings, it appears that Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind* is among the first, and perhaps the oldest extant, Tibetan doxography to do so. Once again, Pelyang appears to have been an innovator among Tibetans in this field.

As I noted above, and will show in greater detail below, Pelyang relied upon Indian tantric author Buddhaghya in the writing of his own *Lamp of the Mind*, and citations from

¹¹⁷ See Jacob Dalton's summary of Indian and early Tibetan tantric doxographies, where he illustrates the clear divide between the two with several examples of each, including the *Lamp of the Mind*. Jacob Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005).

Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* are present throughout the doxographical section of the *Lamp of the Mind* in particular. A comparison of Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* with other contemporaneous Indian tantric doxographies quickly provides another reason for Pelyang's dependence upon his work than simply sharing a common lineage with the Indian author. Buddhaguhya, like Pelyang, distinguishes the lower vehicles and tantras in terms of view, and speaks very little about distinctions in practice or ritual. To my knowledge, it is the only Indian tantric doxography from the eighth and ninth centuries—roughly contemporaneous to Pelyang's life—to do so. It is not unreasonable to think that Pelyang saw something unique and valuable in Buddhaguhya's approach, and wanting to expand upon his predecessor's work, wrote the *Lamp of the Mind*.

Although the *Mārgavyūha* is largely a description of Mahāyoga views, a four-folio section of the second chapter—less than a tenth of the text—is devoted to a brief doxographical discussion. Buddhaguhya utilizes the five-vehicle format of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, dividing the final tantric vehicle into three—Kriyā, Yoga, and Mahāyoga. He describes a sort of evolutionary process of rebirths through progressively higher levels of *saṃsāra* in the first of the vehicles, the realm of gods and humans. In this first vehicle, birth in the lowest realm—the desire realm—is due to grasping conceptualizations which further cause a false sense of the existence of subject and object. From this, defilements arise, and with them, false appearances and the five poisons (*duḥkṛtāṅga*). Evolving further, an individual might continue to see self in his or her practice of the four immeasurables and the four concentrations, and may fail to see the nonexistence of the four names (*ming bzhi*). In such a state of ignorance, but due to a continuing practice of

beneficial meditations, s/he may advance to birth in the formless realms, and finally to a birth at the peak of cyclic existence, but s/he will continue to cling to views of eternalism or nihilism, which keep him or her from entering a path that might lead to salvation. The main teaching in the realm of gods and humans is the assertion of the benefits of the ten virtues,¹¹⁸ but Buddhaghya makes clear that this vehicle, unlike the other four, is a mundane vehicle and does not include beings on the Noble Path.

In the *Mārgavyūha*'s more concise treatment of the next three Buddhist vehicles of *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*, Buddhaghya abandons the evolutionary format he uses to describe the vehicle of gods and humans, briefly listing instead two or three central teachings and misunderstandings for each. They are as follows:

Without realizing nonduality, everything

Is seen to be an existent [within the framework of] the Four Noble Truths,
and

Renunciation and non-renunciation are employed.

This is the level of *śrāvaka*.

Without knowing that all activities and afflictive emotions—everything—

Is of the dynamic of Sameness,

¹¹⁸ The ten virtues are the renunciation of the ten nonvirtues (murder, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, slander, irresponsible chatter, verbal abuse, covetousness, vindictiveness, and holding wrong views), and the practice of their opposite. NSTB, vol. 2, 166. The ten virtues are also mentioned in the *Letter*, attributed to Pelyang. “Putting into practice the ten and the sixteen virtues, the ten thoughts and ten dharmic actions, and the six perfections, one tallies numerous lifetimes (*dge ba bcu dang bcu drug dang/ bsam pa bcu dang chos spyod bcu/ pha rol phyin drug spyad pa yis/ tshe rabs mang po bgrangs bar yang*).” *Letter*: 127a.

There is grasping at the cause and effect of dependent origination as existent.

This is the level of pratyekabuddha.

Without knowing the dynamic of Sameness itself,

Distinctions are made between ultimate and conventional, but

Phenomena and beings are known to be without self.

This is the level of bodhi[sattva].¹¹⁹

These descriptions agree in general with the even briefer descriptions of the five vehicles given in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*:

By means of the vehicles of Gods and Humans, of the Hearers, of the Solitary Realizers, of the Bodhisattvas, and of the Highest Vehicle, they have taught, teach, and will teach the 84,000 doctrines as antidotes to the 84,000 afflictive emotions of ignorant conceptuality. All of those [doctrines] concern subjects and objects, outer and inner dependent arisings, the mistaken imputation of subjects, the incontrovertibility of the cause and effect of actions, leading up to [the ultimate doctrine regarding the fact that] there is no staining by the cause and effect of actions, there will be no stain, and no stain exists.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ *gnyis med ma rtogs thams cad la/ bden bzhi'i dngos po yod lta zhing/ /spong dang mi spong byed 'gyur na/ /'di ni nyan thos sa ba yin/ /las dang nyon mongs thams cad la/ /mnyam pa'i don du ma shes shing/ /rten 'grel rgyu 'bras yod zin na/ /di ni rang sangs rgyas kyi sa/ /mnyam pa'i don nyid mi shes shing/ /kun rdzob don dam gnyis 'byed la/ /chos dang gang zag bdag med da/ /'di ni byang chub sa ba yin/ Mārgavyūha, 472a3-5.*

¹²⁰ *lha dang mi'i theg pa dang / nyan thos kyi theg pa dang / rang sang rgyas gyi theg pa dang / byang chub sems dpa'i theg pa dang / bla na med pa'i theg pas/ ma rig pa'i rnam par rtog pa nyon mongs pa stong phrag brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i gnyen por/ chos stong phrag brgyad cu rtsa bzhi gsungs so/ /gsung ngo / /gsung bar 'gyur ro/ /de dag thams cad kyang gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i phyi nang gi rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba dang / 'dzin pa dang 'phrul [read: 'khrul] pa las bzlog pa dang / las dang las kyi 'bras bu chud mi za ba dang / las dang las kyi 'bras bus mi gos/ gos par mi 'gyur/ gos su med pa ston pa'i mthar thug go// Guhyagarbha tantra, Tb.417: 160-61.*

Finally, at the close of the doxographical section, Buddhaguhya compares the Unsurpassed Vehicle with the fifth vehicle, the Great Vehicle of Method. According to Buddhaguhya, the former takes a conventional view of the distinction of pure and impure, while the latter sees that pure and impure are indivisible, both conventionally and ultimately. Unfortunately, he does not identify the Unsurpassed Vehicle further. Given his very brief depictions of both the middle three vehicles and the lower vehicles of the fifth Great Vehicle of Method, it is unclear whether he means by “Unsurpassed Vehicle” the three lower Buddhist vehicles or the two lower tantric vehicles of Kriyā and Yoga, which he describes in the passage that directly follows. The depictions of the three lower vehicles in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* are even more abbreviated, and the tantra does not make any distinction among tantric vehicles, so provides us with no further clues in this regard.¹²¹ More will be said about this issue of the identity of the Unsurpassed Vehicle for both Buddhaguhya and Pelyang, who also employs the term, later in this chapter. In the present context, it is important to note only that Buddhaguhya used this term in this ambiguous way, and that a reliable identification of the term as used by these authors with a particular vehicle is unavailable to us at present.

It appears that Pelyang followed Buddhaguhya’s template very closely in arranging his own discussion of the five vehicles. As did Buddhaguhya, Pelyang takes an evolutionary perspective in his descriptions of samsaric rebirths in the first vehicle of gods and humans, and then relies upon his analysis of doctrinal distinctions to describe the latter four Buddhist vehicles. His descriptions and characterizations include many of the same

¹²¹ Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 135.

ideas and terms used by Buddhaguhya, which clearly originated with the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, as we have seen.

Pelyang extends Buddhaguhya's analysis, however, fleshing out some of the particulars of nihilist and eternalist views in particular, and describing the evolution of the individual through various rebirths in much greater detail. While the doxographical section in the *Mārgavyūha* consists of four folios, Pelyang's discussion comprises a full half of the entire *Lamp of the Mind*—ten folios. While not disagreeing with Buddhaguhya's approach, Pelyang obviously felt there was a great deal more to say regarding the mistaken views of the lower vehicles and their relation to the highest views of Mahāyoga. He devotes a great deal of time to distinguishing between the lower Buddhist vehicles, including the lower tantras, and Mahāyoga, in typical fashion—that is, without entering into meticulous debate or fully discussing the finer philosophical points involved. Considering the promotional tone of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, we might see Pelyang's doxographical contribution as both a project of explication and of legitimation. Although the *Guhyagarbha tantra* makes clear that the doctrines taught to beings in each vehicle by the buddhas are valid, and though Buddhaguhya further clarifies this point, Pelyang seeks to obscure these concessions. Pelyang emphatically claims that even those few valid doctrines attributable to the lower vehicles are clouded by their own mistaken perspective, which fails to see Sameness.

The distinctions Pelyang makes in the *Lamp of the Mind* between various schools and vehicles are difficult to tease out of the text, often rendering his criticism of one school or view indistinguishable from another. Furthermore, in cases where Pelyang does not

identify by name the object of his criticism, attribution of those views to particular tenet systems or philosophical schools is sometimes impossible. These difficulties are compounded by the fact that the text is probably corrupted, perhaps even with missing or mixed pages, and certainly some copyist error and selective editing of the text must have occurred during the long history of its transmission.¹²² Indeed, the greatest variance between textual editions seems to occur in those passages that are most difficult to understand in their present form, most likely a sign of selective editing to clarify passages that had become, or were originally, difficult to understand. However, be that as it may, the views refuted in the *Lamp of the Mind's* doxography are generally identifiable and appear to progress in a clear order of increasing correctness in accordance with the five vehicles as given in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and in the *Mārgavyūha*.

In his discussions of the various views, it is clear that Pelyang assumes his audience possesses knowledge of a wide variety of epistemologies and soteriological systems, standard enumerations of types of consciousnesses, truths, paths, buddhas, meditative techniques, and logical arguments. It does not appear that Pelyang's intended audience includes any of the heretics or lower-level Buddhists whose views he refutes as misguided or dangerous, and is therefore not meant as debate. Rather, Pelyang is plainly instructing his own students in the superior ways of Mahāyoga. By setting the tradition he shares with his students against a backdrop of the whole panoply of doomed nihilists, neurotic ritualists, and merely mistaken tantrists, he is able to encourage his disciples in the glorious path they have chosen, and to make the sometimes subtle distinctions that hold Mahāyoga

¹²² This has also been noted by Jacob Dalton. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 20.

apart from all other schools of thought, and in particular, from the other forms of tantra known to Tibetans at the time.

Pelyang begins his doxographical discussion by providing an overview of all Buddhist views, which he categorizes into two (presumably Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna vehicles), and subsequently more precisely, into five common paths and five supreme paths. These are the five sutric or causal paths known to most Tibetan Buddhist tenet systems from Maitreya's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (the Paths of Accumulation, Joining, Seeing, Cultivation, and Being Beyond Training) and the five tantric, or fruitional, paths belonging exclusively to Mahāyogatantra (the Paths of Great Emptiness, Great Compassion, the Single Seal, the Elaborate Seal, and Accomplishment of the Clusters of *Maṇḍala*). The practice and view of the five supreme paths are discussed in great detail in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, in which a chapter is dedicated to each of these.¹²³

Pelyang then addresses the views of non-Buddhist followers in general, spanning all five realms of *saṃsāra*.¹²⁴ These include the views of Hindu devotees of Śiva and Viṣṇu, of those humans promoting theories of nihilism and eternalism, and of gods dwelling at the peak of the lower realms of samsaric existence—the highest level of the four formless realms. In an abbreviated version of classic Buddhist cosmology, Pelyang explains that all these beings are attached to their own mistaken philosophical positions and religious practices. Even the gods in the highest formless realm, though dwelling in

¹²³ This is our first clue that Pelyang is borrowing from other texts in the writing of this one. *Mārgavyūha*, Chapters Three through Seven, 475b1-498b6.

¹²⁴ The five realms are calculated by including aśura in the realms of either deva or preta, thereby eliminating their realm as a separate one.

quiescence, are attached to the state of absorption in which they abide. Thus, Pelyang warns that “when the contemplative body disintegrates,/ The dreadful fruit falls,”¹²⁵ referring to these gods’ ensuing rebirths in the lower realms of *samsāra*. Based on their attachments and due to the arising of the five afflictions in their minds, they experience the suffering of continual rebirth.

Within his treatment of the mistaken views of non-Buddhists, Pelyang interjects a short refutation of the ontological positions of the nihilists and eternalists. Engaging a variety of theories on the origins of the arising of mind, Pelyang reveals the error in each by taking them to their impossible logical conclusions. Although Pelyang introduces this section with a comment on the two types of mistaken thinkers, the nihilists and the eternalists, in fact he focuses almost exclusively on the views of the nihilists. It may be that he considered nihilist views to be closer to his own and thus more in need of clarification, but it also seems possible that, due to Pelyang’s often negatively phrased expressions, he himself may have faced charges of being a nihilist. In such a case, his focus on the mistaken notions of nihilism may have been a defensive attempt to distinguish it from his own Mahāyoga teachings.

The *Lamp of the Mind* then turns to the subject of the five vehicles. Although Pelyang does not explicitly name them as such, they appear from context to be the vehicles of gods and humans, of śravakas, of pratyekabuddhas, of bodhisattvas, and of followers of tantra. This schema of five vehicles also can be found in the third chapter of the

¹²⁵ *thal 'byung ting 'dzin lus zhig na/ ya nga'i 'bras bu lhung yod phyir/ Lamp of the Mind*, 288.

Guhyagarbha tantra, with slight variation in the name given the final vehicle.¹²⁶ Pelyang's descriptions of these five closely match the standard Ancients descriptions of these vehicles.¹²⁷ Other variations on this five-vehicle scheme, such as can be seen in ITJ 384¹²⁸ and in the *Laṅkavataṛasūtra*, in which the five vehicles are those of gods, Brahma, *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and Tathāgata, may have been known to Pelyang. However, given that this scheme of gods and humans, *śrāvaka*, and so forth is clearly enumerated in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, which is cited by Pelyang in the *Lamp of the Mind* itself, and given the general agreement between most Ancients characterizations of these five vehicles' practices with Pelyang's characterizations, I think it is safe to apply the associations of gods and humans, *śrāvaka*, and so forth to Pelyang's five vehicles.

According to Pelyang, beings in the first vehicle make the error of perceiving appearances as real through their attachment to a dichotomy of subject and object. Although they may make some strides toward the goal of enlightenment, their own potentially beneficial activities, such as following the sixteen pure human laws and engaging in meditative absorptions and concentrations, are inadvertently counteracted by

¹²⁶ In the tantra, the final vehicle is named the Unsurpassed Vehicle (*bla na med pa'i theg pa*), whereas in the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang calls the fifth vehicle the Great Vehicle of Method (*thabs kyi theg pa chen po*). *Guhyagarbhatantra*, Chapter Three.

¹²⁷ See Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje Bdud-'joms, Gyurme Dorje, and Matthew Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, ed. Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje Bdud-'joms, 1st ed., Wisdom Advanced Book (Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 156-59 and 223-37. The now-standard Ancients enumeration of the Buddhist vehicles into nine seems to have appeared after Pelyang's lifetime, most likely in the tenth century. Only three Dunhuang manuscripts contain lists similar to the modern one: PT 849, ITJ 656, and ITJ 644. See Dalton's article on doxography for a full translation of the last text. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries."

¹²⁸ See Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 32, fn. 49.

their delusions and attachments.¹²⁹ The sixteen pure human laws that Pelyang uses to characterize this vehicle's path are enumerated in the *Letter*. They involve such nonreligious injunctions as to express filial piety, to be honest, to repay past kindnesses and to become well-versed in the astrological calculations, and also include two religiously oriented laws: to have faith in the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha; and to be deferent to religious renunciants and Brahmins (*bram zer*).¹³⁰ For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that Pelyang understood this first vehicle to be occupied by lay Buddhists, as opposed to Buddhaghya in his *Mārgavyūha*, who places the first vehicle of gods and humans outside the Noble Path.

Immediately following this discussion of the first vehicle is a section which introduces the term "Unsurpassed Vehicles." Pelyang appears to use this term in an unconventional sense, not to refer to the highest tantric vehicles as one would expect, but to

¹²⁹ Jacob Dalton has suggested that this vehicle may owe its existence to an early Chinese Buddhist doxographical system. According to Peter Gregory, our earliest example of the use of the vehicle of gods and humans is with a text written in the fifth century by Liu Qiu (438-495). Peter Gregory, "The Teaching of Men and Gods: The Doctrinal and Social Basis of Lay Buddhist Practice in the Hua-Yen Tradition," in *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-Yen*, ed. Robert Gimello and Peter Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983). See Jake Dalton's article on Tibetan Buddhist doxography for a summary and an interesting discussion of the implications for this vehicle's use in Tibet as part of the effort to bring non-Buddhist Tibetans within the Buddhist fold, and for examples of further usage in the Dunhuang materials. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 23-25. I would only remark that because the *Lamp of the Mind* is based so closely on the *Guhya garbhatantra*, which employs the same five-vehicle schema, and on the *Mārgavyūha*, which mentions the realm of gods and humans prior to its discussion of the four Buddhist vehicles in the *Lamp of the Mind*, that Pelyang was merely following his sources and intended no conciliatory gesture toward non-Buddhist Tibetans with this text. If anything, his remarks toward this group are more caustic than conciliatory.

¹³⁰ This list varies quite considerably from those given in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and in the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, and if authored by the second abbot of Samye, is significantly older than any other enumerated extant version. Cf Sorensen, 1994: 183.

refer to the middle three of the five Buddhist vehicles—those of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas* respectively. More will be said on this term later. The issue of the middle three vehicles is further complicated by the fact that, rather than proceeding to a description of each of the three middle vehicles following his introduction of the term “Unsurpassed Vehicles,” Pelyang instead launches a critique of the three major schools of Buddhist thought—Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Mādhyamika. Following his discussion of the first vehicle as this section on the Unsurpassed Vehicles does, and being followed in turn by a description of the final, tantric vehicle, and without including any other explication of the three intermediate vehicles, Pelyang seems to be equating these three schools of thought with the middle three of his five Buddhist vehicles—the *śrāvakayāna*, *pratyekabuddhayāna*, and *bodhisattvayāna*. In fact, there is precedent for this within the later Ancients tradition, in which the three philosophical schools are associated with the vehicles of *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*.¹³¹ In the only explicit mention he makes of these three middle vehicles, his descriptions are so brief (a single line for each), that it is not possible to claim with certainty that Pelyang intended such a clear correlation between the three vehicles and the three schools. However, regardless of our inability to assign intent in this case, and assuming there is no major corruption of the text here, Pelyang’s replacement of a discussion of vehicles with a discussion of philosophical schools does indeed fit seamlessly with his general treatment in this text of all aspects of religious tradition under the rubric of philosophy.

¹³¹ The Sautrāntika school is normally associated in the later Ancients tradition with the *śrāvakayāna* and *pratyekabuddhayāna*. The Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika are associated with the *bodhisattvayāna*. Cf. NSTB, 156-160.

Pelyang’s refutation of these three traditional Buddhist systems of thought relies not on the specifics of their arguments, but rather on the success of their adherents’ visions of reality. In so doing, Pelyang criticizes the whole project of debate without resorting to such an activity himself. This is evident in his discussion of the first school, the Sautrāntika. According to Pelyang, the Sautrāntika have a mistakenly fractured view of mind because they are caught in debate regarding aspects of the mind—whether the mental continuum of an individual involves dualistic representation, and so forth. Thus, they mistakenly assert the impermanent reality of individual moments of consciousness, and in so doing, miss seeing the dynamic and unceasing flow of the intrinsic awareness of primordial wisdom. Because all is Self, primordial wisdom is utterly and perfectly reflective of reality, “like a glittering crystal.”¹³²

In his discussion of the second Buddhist philosophical school, Pelyang joins later Buddhist doxographers in claiming that, though both schools assert that all is mind, the Yogācāra position improves on the Sautrāntika position by accepting an unoriginated consciousness without aspects. However, like the Sautrāntika, the Yogācāra aims for transcendence in its views. Because the Yogācāra clings to its own transcendent view of the mind as unoriginated (despite the fact that such is true, as Pelyang concedes), followers of that school gain a false confidence and while “playfully enjoying the four emptinesses of the mind,” they fail to see the non-dual indivisibility of reality. Theirs is a fractured view of reality. Pelyang closes his section on the Yogācāra by briefly addressing the rubric of the three natures.

¹³² 'od gsal shel ltar. *Lamp of the Mind*: 277a.

According to Pelyang, the final school, the Mādhyamika, appears to propound the highest truth, but they also fail to grasp the nature of reality. Pelyang criticizes their logical debates over such matters as meditation, liberation, the nature of appearances, and accomplishment, saying that such debates only serve to establish in their minds a dualism of subject and object. Although they might debate whether the two truths are of one entity or two, they will either miss the subtle distinctions or fail to understand their symbiotic relation. Despite even their attempts to abandon attachment to any one argument or assertion of truth, such efforts instead contribute to furthering mental distortions, which spoils the whole project of coming to understand reality. In the end, the Mādhyamika are attached to “the mere sound of their argument,” and thus lose the way. With this section on the Mādhyamika, Pelyang completes his treatment of the Unsurpassed Vehicles.

As Jacob Dalton has shown, this term ‘Unsurpassed Vehicle’ (Skt: *niruttarayāna*; Tib: *bla na med pa'i theg pa*) was used by several tantric authors of both Indic and Tibetan origin in the eleventh century to refer to the highest form of tantra at the time. *Niruttarayogatantra*, or *anuttarayoga*, as it is more commonly labeled in Modernist scholarship, with its systems of subtle body manipulation and clear light meditations, was a later development¹³³ and most likely not known to Pelyang. Indeed, in the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang gives no indication that this term means anything associated with the tantras. Instead, he uses the term to refer to those Buddhist vehicles which, ironically, are surpassed by tantra itself within his own system. Pelyang uses the term twice in the *Lamp of the Mind*. In the first such usage, he says:

¹³³ Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 153.

As for those on the unsurpassed paths,
 The assertion that they purify objects of abandonment and
 Past deeds through the three disciplines
 Is made by the Sautrāntika [practicing] the yoga of cognition.¹³⁴

Clearly the term here is not meant to refer to a tantric vehicle, but rather a lower form of practice in which objects are abandoned and purified, practices explicitly disparaged by Pelyang. The referent of the second such usage is less clear.

Thus, [for] those following the Unsurpassed Vehicle,
 In the ultimate, [all] is indivisible, and
 In the merely conventional, all [things]
 Are grasped, both the pure and impure.¹³⁵

This second passage is a direct quotation from Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*. It is followed both in that text and in the *Lamp of the Mind* by lines extolling the Great Vehicle of Method (*thabs kyi theg pa chen po*). In fact, it appears that Buddhaguhya also intended the term 'Unsurpassed Vehicles' to refer to those Buddhist vehicles immediately preceding the tantric vehicles in an ascending order of correctness of view. In fact, Pelyang's quotation mixes the order of the lines from Buddhaguhya's text regarding the Great Vehicle of Method, and omits two important lines from Buddhaguhya's text:

The Great Views and Activity of Method,

¹³⁴ *bla na med pa'i theg ba pa/ bslab pa gsum gyis spang bya dag/ sol spyod dag pas thob 'dod pa/ rnam rig rnal 'byor mdo sde'o*

¹³⁵ *de bas bla med theg pa pa/ don dam du ni dbyer med de/ kun rdzob tsam du thams cad la/ dag dang ma dag gnyis kar 'dzin*

Are superior to [those of] the Unsurpassed Vehicles.¹³⁶

Thus, it is evident that both Buddhaguhya and Pelyang use these two stanzas to segue from their discussions of the three lower sutric views or vehicles to the three lower tantric vehicles.¹³⁷ It is an inexplicable choice of term, given its history, its literal meaning, and the very different usage of the term in the authoritative *Guhyagarbha tantra*. I can only guess that Pelyang's and Buddhaguhya's use of the term followed that of fellow Buddhist thinkers advocating nontantric views with the term, and thus the term had a different, and perhaps older, meaning to these two authors and to their audiences than it did to tantric exegetes of the eleventh century and later. It is, however, puzzling that Pelyang's and Buddhaguhya's usage of the term conflicts so clearly with its usage in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, and points to the shifting terrain of doxographical categories in both Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.

The fifth and final vehicle in Pelyang's doxographical section of the *Lamp of the Mind* is the Vajrayāna, the Great Vehicle of Method. Pelyang gives a general description of its view of conventional and ultimate truths. According to Pelyang, the Great Vehicle of Method propounds an ultimate truth in which reality, as waves of grace, is unfragmented, and in which spontaneously emerging, primordial wisdom is free of any characteristics. Such a description of ultimate reality is not unusual for a tantric text of this time. It is Pelyang's description of Vajrayāna's conventional truth that veers from the expected. In it, the seemingly various appearances are indivisible, without origination or cessation. Thus,

¹³⁶ *thabs kyi lta spyod chen po ni/ bla med theg pa las 'phags pa/*

¹³⁷ In Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, these stanzas are preceded by a discussion of the three Buddhist vehicles of *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*.

Pelyang tells us that the Great Vehicle of Method stands alone in its depiction of conventional truth. In its matchless status, the Vajrayāna is like the compassionate tantric practitioner fulfilling his or her aims removed from those who might benefit from such compassionate acts.

Following this general description of the ontological views of the fifth vehicle, Pelyang describes the limitations of the three outer forms of tantra. Pelyang summarizes each of the three forms as follows:

The first [of the outer tantras—Kriyātantra—aspire to] completely pure intrinsic awareness.

The second [Upatantra/Ubhayātantra/Caryātantra] follows the former and latter.¹³⁸

The third, [Yogatantra,] regards the clear light of the expanse itself.¹³⁹

For the lower tantric practitioners, wrong views and mistaken spheres of activity emerge in their ascertainment of the dynamic of the expanse, despite the unceasing flow of blessings that is reality. These wrong views and activities form the basis of the outer tantric vehicles' paths. The first, Kriyātantra, takes a biased view of reality in aspiring toward purity, and this creates a mistaken view of the six modes of the deity. Based on these wrong views, Kriyā practitioners undertake their practice of three-fold observation—of the physical form of the deity, the moon disc upon which he sits, and the accompanying

¹³⁸ The second of the outer tantras, generally referred to as either the 'tantra of conduct' (Tib: *spyod pa'i rgyud*; Skt: *Caryātantra*) or the 'tantra of both' (Tib: *upa'i rgyud*; Skt: *ubhayātantra*). The latter term refers to the ambiguous nature of this form of tantra, in that its view commonly is said to resemble that of Yogatantra, and its conduct, that of Kriyātantra.

¹³⁹ *dang po rang rig rnam par dag/ gnyis pa snga phyi rjes su 'brangs/ gsum pa dbyings nyid 'od gsal ba/ Lamp of the Mind: 291.*

mantra—and thereby create a dichotomy of subject and object in which the buddha is separate from the practitioner. Pelyang laments that, as a result, the Great Identity within is never seen. The third, Yogatantra, is better in that it focuses on the clear light of the expanse even on a conventional level, but it clings to meditative stabilizations and to conventional practices of *maṇḍala*, *mantra*, and blessings which turn one's focus outward. Concerned with the marks of the deity, Yogatantra practitioners miss the four clear lights of the realizations of emptiness. The second outer tantra, in merely combining the views and practices of these two, fares no better than its predecessors. The only form of Vajrayāna that remains free of these mistaken views is Mahāyoga.

In closing the doxographical section of the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang deconstructs the entire enterprise of naming and debating the particulars of realization and reality. In an all-encompassing discussion employing the language of *via negativa* methodology, Pelyang denies both positive and negative characterizations of reality, all distinctions between truths, all aspirations, and even liberation itself, such labels being distinct from their meanings, and all phenomena being utterly unmixed in reality. In the context of this full erasure of all descriptions of consciousness and the expanse, such as is attempted by the lower vehicles and schools, Pelyang commences his explication of the inner, secret form of the fifth vehicle, Mahāyoga, on his own terms and with a clean slate. That explication comprises the remainder of the text.

The second half of the *Lamp of the Mind* addresses thirty discrete philosophical issues from the perspective of Mahāyoga. Pelyang defines this highest form of tantra by repeatedly setting it against the mistaken positions of Kriyātantra and Yogatantra in a

formulaic manner. With the introduction of each new philosophical topic, he makes a concession to the assertions of the outer, lower tantras as seemingly correct: “Although one speaks of nonconceptuality...,” or “Although there is a scriptural teaching regarding nothing existing whatsoever...” and summarizes briefly those assertions. Then, having characterized the lower tantric views on each topic, Pelyang undercuts them with critical statements regarding their larger mistaken perspective, misguided aims, delusional attachments, or the otherwise negative effects of such wrong views. Finally, he presents the ultimate view of Mahāyoga from the perspective of each of the thirty philosophical issues. Because the second half of the text employs the open, transcendent language that is characteristic of the rest of the *Six Lamps* poems, and because of the general consistency among these texts’ positions, I will treat them as a group in the following section.

Cohesion within the Collection

The *Lamp of the Mind* is the only poem of the six in the *Six Lamps* collection that explicitly mentions Mahāyoga, although *The Lamp of the Correct View* refers to its perspective as that of the Highest Yoga (*rnal ‘byor dam pa*), and *The Lamp of the Precious View* calls its system the Yoga of One’s Own Mind (*rang sems rnal ‘byor*), a term which is used synonymously with Mahāyoga in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.

It is clear that the six poems of the *Six Lamps* were composed by a single author. This is reflected in the texts’ style, as has been described above, as well as in their content. Many key terms occur throughout Pelyang’s *Six Lamps*, such as intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin*), nonobservation (*mi dmigs* or *dmigs med*), nonabiding (*gnas med*), and sky-like

(*kha' 'dra/ltar/bzhin*). Several themes also recur throughout the collection, including the characteristiclessness of both mind and reality itself, the nonorigination of mind and reality, the illusory nature of external phenomena, the importance of compassion, and the ineffability and inconceivability of reality. Not all of these themes are addressed in every text, but the fact that so many are expressed in a majority of texts, and that those texts which might lack inclusion of one theme contain several of the other themes in the constellation of themes, supports the argument of single authorship for all six texts.

The Subject/Object Dichotomy and Exertion, Revisited

The one theme which is common to all the *Six Lamps* poems without exception (as well as to the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*) is that of the fruitlessness of effort. This theme is central to the departure's Pelyang's Mahāyoga takes from the rest of the early Mahāyoga material which are characterized by a series of directed rites with their attendant layers of delineated results. In uniformly asserting the ultimate uselessness of ritual praxis, Pelyang makes a drastic shift away from the standard tantric formula toward the methods of direct seeing that are more characteristic of the Great Perfection.

I shall address Pelyang's treatment of this topic below, but let us look first at the basis for his radical assertion. Pelyang's non-effort is directly linked to his assertion that in reality there is neither meditator nor anything upon which to meditate, thus obviating any need for, and indeed any possibility of, effort. Here is a passage from *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*:

As there are no existential elements apart from the mind,

There is no object apart to be meditated upon.

If the mind is primordially unoriginated,

How can there be a “meditator”?

If the mind which is the basis of verbal concepts

Is unoriginated and essentially unreal,

How can any terminology apply to what can be contemplated and what can
be not,

To what thing can this terminology apply?¹⁴⁰

Another stanza from *The Lamp of the Correct View* asserts the same lack of any
object of meditation in reality:

All phenomena always have been of one flavor.

Thus, neither meditation nor anything upon which one should meditate can
be observed.

If one knows that mind itself always has been the *dharmata*,

There will be no need for meditating on anything other than the expanse of
dharma itself.¹⁴¹

And finally, a passage explaining the lack in reality of any objects of observation
from *The Lamp of the Precious View*:

¹⁴⁰ *sems las ma gtogs chos med phyir/ bsgom bya 'i chos nyid gud na med/ sems kyang
ye nas ma skyes na/ sgom pa po 'ang gang la yod/ brjod pa 'i rtsa ba sems nyid ni/ ma
skyes dngos gzhi yod min na/ sgom dang bsgom du med pa yi/ tha snyad gang zhig
gang la 'jug/*

¹⁴¹ *chos rnams thams cad ye nas ro gcig phyir/ bsgom pa dang ni bsgom bya 'ang dmigs
su med/ sems nyid ye nas chos nyid yin shes na/ chos kyi dbyings nyid gzhan du
bsgoms mi dgos*

There is no conceptualization of things because there are no ‘things’.

Subjects are not observable. Objects themselves are non-existent.¹⁴²

Given this basic absence of any real dichotomy between subject and object and the fundamental indivisibility of mind and appearances, the logical conclusion is that there can be no object toward which to strive, nor anything other to attain. I have shown how this is expressed in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. There, Pelyang asserts the importance of tantric ritual and meditational practices in the early stages of one’s career, but ultimately, describes attainment as requiring neither particular practices nor any intentional activity. Although there is some mention of the benefits of specific practice, especially in the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang takes an even more ontologically-oriented perspective in the other poems of the *Six Lamps* and as a result, focuses much more in those poems than in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* on the pointlessness of directed effort. Here, he seems to be speaking from the stance of ultimate reality, and at times articulates something closer to a supreme subjectivity. This sort of perspective resembles the early, and probably coeval, Mind Series literature, as I will show in the following chapter.

In the *Six Lamps*, Pelyang rejects the temporary and limited benefits of mainstream tantric practice, and describes instead the contents of the ultimate realization for which no action whatsoever is required. Every one of the *Six Lamps* poems intones this anthem of effortlessness to one degree or another. For example, in the *Lamp of Method and Wisdom*, Pelyang says:

¹⁴² *dngos po med phyir dngos por rtog pa ’ang med/ chos can mi dmigs chos nyid yod ma yin/*

Yogins who know the intrinsic nature of phenomena

In the same way the Conquerors of the three times fully understand it

Also attain without attainment. Therefore, though one does not strive,

The particulars of compassion—the activity of skillful means—are also
taught.¹⁴³

In *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*, we see a similar refutation of the
necessity of seated meditation, or indeed, of any action undertaken to advance one toward
liberation:

Similarly, sitting upright with legs crossed,

All these physical modifications,

Originate in attachment to the body.

The formless sky cannot be modified.¹⁴⁴

If one understands the body as illusion,

No activities such as sitting upright are needed.

In whatever of the three modes of life (*viz.* eating, sleeping, moving about),
one is in,

No action is to be taken, none is being taken.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ *dus gsum rgyal bas ji ltar thugs chud pa'i/ chos kyi rang bzhin rig pa'i rnal 'byor pas/ ma thob thob phyir brtson par mi byed kyang/ snying rje'i bye brag thabs kyi spyod pa'ang ston*

¹⁴⁴ This stanza appears to be taken from lines 13-16 of the second section of the *Small Hidden Grain* by Buddhagupta, a manuscript copy of which was found at Dunhuang, ITJ 594. “*dkyil dkrung drang 'dug bcas pa dang/ lus kyi bcos pa thams chad kyang/ lus rtog mngon bar zhen las byung/ lus myed mkha' la bcos su myed'*” Karmay, 1988: 60-61

¹⁴⁵ *de bzhin skyil krung drang 'dug dang/ lus kyi bcos pa thams cad kyang/ lus rtog mngon par zhen las byung/ lus med mkha' la bcos su med/ sgyu ma bzhin du lus shes*

Finally, in the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang hints at the dynamic of this intrinsic awareness arising without engaging in intentional activity:

Similarly, though there is no aspiration,

The three forms of aspirationlessness—

Being without the aspiration by small-minded people, eliminating, and accepting—

These are clinging aspirations because they are desires.

Completely perfect aspiration is intrinsic awareness itself.

Because it is the real substance of the path and fruit,

As with the type of enjoyment appropriate in the Realm of Enjoying Emanations,¹⁴⁶

Hope for something else simply does not arise.¹⁴⁷

The themes of reality's seamlessness and the resultant lack of any need for effort run throughout the *Six Lamps*. However, each text does address reality from a slightly different perspective, employs unique metaphors and similes, and displays varying degrees of esoteric orientation or, in some cases, no esoteric elements whatsoever. It is the *Lamp of the Mind* that ties these *Six Lamps* poems together, as I will show in the following section.

na/ drang 'dug skyil krung 'cha' ba med/ spyod lam gsum gyis gnas pa gang/ ched du bya med byed pa 'ang med/

¹⁴⁶ This heaven, the Nirmāṇarati (*'phrul dga'*), is the fifth of the six heavens in the Desire Realm, in which deities' desires are satisfied at will.

¹⁴⁷ *de bzhin smon pa med pa yang/ blo chung ltos pa'i smon byed dang/ bsal dang len dang smon med gsum/ 'dod pas zhen pa smon pa yin/ smon pa kun rdzogs rang rig nyid/ lam dang 'bras bu dngos gzhi'i phyir/ 'phrul dga'i longs spyod tshul bzhin du/ gzhan du re smon skye ba med/*

Tantric Elements within *The Six Lamps*

While the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* employs the classic regal tantric narrative and refers to several overtly tantric symbols, rites, and meditations, the *Six Lamps* are less explicitly tantric in their affiliation. Of the six poems, the *Lamp of the Mind* is most clearly tantric in its orientation, and references to *maṇḍala*, *mantra*, levels of accomplishment, tantric rites, and the Mahāyoga system, as well as references to, and citations of, tantric texts, are plentiful there. *The Lamp of the Precious View* contains far fewer references, which are limited to mentions of joining with the three Buddha Bodies by embodying their supreme qualities and to a brief discussion of Sameness, a characteristically Mahāyoga term. A third text, *The Lamp of the Correct View*, is even less tantric – its only esoteric reference is to “the glorious *maṇḍala* of Mind” (*thugs kyi dkyil 'khor*), a term which occurs throughout the *Guhyagarbha tantra*.

The remaining three poems of the *Six Lamps* collection—the *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, the *Lamp of Method and Wisdom*, and *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*—contain no classically tantric references whatsoever. Samten Karmay identifies two of these texts—the *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes* and the *Lamp of the Method of Meditation*—as Great Perfection treatises, while categorizing the remaining four texts in the collection as Mahāyoga in orientation. Indeed, as Karmay points out, these two texts are unique in that they are appended with alternate titles, as are many *Great Perfection* texts. In addition, only these two texts among the six provide the author’s clan name: gNyan or bsNyan.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 183.

However, the stylistic and thematic consistency we have seen throughout all six texts calls Karmay's deduction into serious question. The *Lamp of the Mind* in particular might be seen as the crucial text, linking all the others and providing evidence for accepting the *Six Lamps* as a collection. The *Lamp of the Mind* embodies Pelyang's full range of literary styles, topics, and perspectives. This text includes, on the one hand, Pelyang's direct recommendations to Mahāyoga, and on the other hand, his depictions of the realization of reality as utterly unstructured, unmediated, and transcendent of any dichotomization or reification in the apophatic language of the rest of the *Six Lamps*. Thus, by bringing these two elements together within a single text, the *Lamp of the Mind* provides the key to connecting the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the rest of the *Six Lamps* to one another and to a single author, Pelyang. I will say more about the *Lamp of the Mind* as a linking text later in this chapter.

The Rhetoric of Absence

A passage in the middle of the *Lamp of the Mind* directly following the doxographical section summarizes Pelyang's largely apophatic teachings on Mahāyoga views, while simultaneously acting as a table of contents for the remaining half of the text. As is evident from this passage, almost all of the thirty topics of discussion in the latter half of the *Lamp of the Mind* are phrased in negative terms. Individual topics are here shown in bold.

The **unoriginated** thusness

Is **empty** and **without appearance**,

Nondual and equal,

Nothing at all, ineffable and inconceivable,

Unabiding, unobservable, without thought, and

Beyond extremes, utterly pure and

Without [302] characteristics or aspirations.

In the **dharmatā**, the dharmadhātu itself,

There are **no elaborations, no going or coming,**

No obstructing appearances, nor any attainment.

There is no freedom, liberation, or attainment,

No conventional or ultimate truths,

No **nonattachment or intrinsic nature,**

No immateriality, desirelessness, or logic,

No **selflessness, otherlessness,** nor any sphere of activity.¹⁴⁹

Following this passage, Pelyang addresses each of these topics one by one in some detail and from a variety of perspectives. Pelyang begins each discussion by summarizing the view on each topic of the lower tantras of Kriyā and Yoga. He then characterizes those views of the lower forms of tantra as mistaken due to the attempts by the lower tantras to reject, deny, abandon, and overcome negative emotions, mistaken thoughts, and so forth using hatred, fear, and attachment. Thereby, Pelyang shows how the lower tantric vehicles

¹⁴⁹ *mtshon phyir ma skyes de bzhin nyid/ stong pa nyid dang snang ba med/ gnyis su med dang mnyam pa nyid/ chi'ang min dang smra bsams 'das/ mi gnas mi dmigs mi rtog dang/ mtha' bral rnam par dag pa dang/ mtshan [302] med smon pa med pa dang/ chos nyid chos kyi dbyings nyid dang/ spros bral 'gro 'ong med pa dang/ snang dang 'gag med thob pa med/ grol dang thar dang thob pa dang/ kun rdzob don dam bden pa dang/ ma chags pa dang rang bzhin dang/ dngos med zhen med rigs pa dang/ bdag med gzhan med spyod yul med/ Lamp of the Mind: 301.*

begin with a worthy teaching or idea, and proceed to one extreme or another in conceptualizing that idea or putting it into practice, almost always serving to reify an absence. Pelyang undercuts those acts of negating, denying, and so forth by exposing their mistaken perspective, aim, or outcome. Finally, in his exposition of Mahāyoga position on each topic, Pelyang provides a glimpse of complete freedom from the lower tantras' attempts at elimination, from their reification of elimination, and in some cases, even from their attempts at the elimination of reification. It is a thorough departure from both sutric Buddhist theory regarding the afflictions and classical tantric assumptions regarding purificatory and other practices. For example, on the subject of eradicating extremes of view, we see first a list of the lower tantric categorizations of the topic:

As for what are renowned as [methods of] overcoming the “extremes”—

Formlessness free of the two wrong extremes,

Freedom from partial knowledge of origination and cessation,

Intrinsic awareness that is freedom from the eight, four, and two extremes,
and

Obtaining the good quality of being free from extremes

While simultaneously conceptualizing the extremes as defects—¹⁵⁰

Next comes Pelyang's undercutting of their mistaken perspective on the importance of eliminating the extremes:

These are methods of overcoming [the extremes] while depending [upon the existence of the extremes themselves].

¹⁵⁰ *mtha' zhes thub par grags pa rnams/ log pa'i mtha' gnyis bral gzugs med/ skye 'gag cha shes bral ba dang/ rang rig mtha' brgyad bzhi gnyis bral/ mtha' la skyon du rtog byed cing/ mtha' bral yon tan len byed pa/ Lamp of the Mind: 756.*

Therefore, even [this] very freedom from extremes is the chief of all extremes.

Having made the conventional into an object of knowledge, they are mistaken.¹⁵¹

Finally, Pelyang reveals the Mahāyoga transcendence of all dichotomies and extremes:

Although absolute freedom from the extremes should be understood,

Those known as the eight extremes and so forth

Are [mere] appearances to intrinsically aware primordial wisdom.

Therefore, elaborations at the very moment of compassion

Are merely nominal at that time, because they don't exist.

Nonduality is free of extremes.

It is just like when camphor is called 'medicine',

[Although] it is nondual with cool poison,

That is merely an expression of freedom.

Although it is undifferentiable from the contacted extreme,

There is no contact with anything whatsoever.

Therefore, it is explained as the highest form of freedom from the extremes.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Itos pas thub pa yod pa'i phyir/ mtha' bral nyid kyang mtha'i gtso/ kun rdzob shes yul byed pas 'khrul/ Lamp of the Mind: 756.*

¹⁵² *yang dag mtha' bral shes bya ba'ang/ mtha' brgyad la sogs grags pa rnams/ rang rig ye shes snang pa'i phyir/ spros pa thugs rje'i dus nyid na/ ming tsam der red med pa'i phyir/ mtha' dang bral ba gnyis su med/ sman zhes bya ba'i ga bur dus/ grang ba'i dug*

Thus, Pelyang shows how the lower tantras attempt to distance themselves from extremes of view while inadvertently attaching themselves to the existence of those extremes. Pelyang aptly portrays their reification of the concept of each extreme and how they have gone awry in trying to eliminate it. Finally, he portrays a freedom that neither reifies nor eliminates, but is spontaneously free by means of a realization of the absence of any extremes in reality.

This *via negativa* terminology and methodology extends throughout the *Six Lamps* collection. In the *Lamp of Method and Wisdom*, Pelyang explains that there is no aim to one's practice of Mahāyoga:

If one knows the single authentic method by which sentient beings are
awakened, and that

One's own mind itself is [already] awakened,

Then there is nothing else to achieve.

Therefore, neither is there anything to abandon.¹⁵³

In *The Lamp of the Precious View*, Pelyang employs the simile of a dream to examine the illusory nature of reality. The dreamlike qualities of appearances cannot be reified if one realizes the natural state of all things to be unoriginated and self-aware.

As for the mirage of nonexistence within appearance itself,

*dang gnyis med ltar/ bral rjes brjod pa de kho na/ thug ba'i mtha' dang dbyer med la/
gang du'ang thug pa med pa'i phyir/ mtha' bral bla mar bshad pa yin/ Lamp of the
Mind: 757*

¹⁵³ *sems can sang rgyas bden par tshul gcig cing/ rang gi sems nyid sangs rgyas yin shes
na/ gzhan nas bsgrub par bya ba ci yang med/ de lta bas na spang bar bya ba'ang
med/*

There arises no awareness of nonexistence for those who know it [to be a mirage].

The wise who realize the unoriginated, intrinsic nature of phenomena,

Do not reify it as unoriginated emptiness.

If the intelligent who possess awareness of unoriginated, primordially pacified,

Nondual, unelaborated self-awareness

Do not abide even in the sphere of the ineffable,

How could they perceive [a dichotomy of] real and conventional?

Finally, in *The Lamp of the Correct View*, Pelyang goes so far as to declare

Mahāyoga free even of the elimination of the reification of elimination:

Just as the blisses and sufferings of one's dreams

Are equal in their intrinsic nature once one has awoken,

So both conceptual and nonconceptual consciousnesses

Are completely equal once one has insightful awareness.

Similarly, once one knows that throughout the three times, the utterly pure

Does not transcend one's own intrinsic nature,

And once one no longer pursues the elimination of reification,

The natural sphere emerges, and thus, there will be no need of fabrication.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ *rmi lam dag gi bde dang sdug bsngal dag/ sad par gyur na rang bzhin mnyam pa ltar/ rnam par rtog dang mi rtog gnyis ka yang/ shes pas rig na rang bzhin yongs kyis mnyam/ de ltar dus gsum rnam par dag pa dag/ rang bzhin nyid las ma 'das shes na ni/ sgro 'dogs bus pa'i rjes su ma 'brangs nas/ rang bzhin ngang du yong gis bcos mi*

Luminosity within the Absence

As I have shown, Pelyang often turns to negatively-phrased expressions in his discussions of the expanse and primordial awareness to describe their sheer absence of aspects or characteristics. In fact, even his few positive statements about the nature of reality are limited almost entirely to metaphoric descriptions.¹⁵⁵ However, Pelyang does not rely on negative description entirely. Despite the preponderance of *via negativa* methodology and of his rejection of intentional activity in general, he affirms several positive doctrines which can be summarized in the following statements and which appear uniformly throughout the *Six Lamps*: all discriminating consciousness is self, which is also intrinsic awareness. Emptiness is the intrinsically aware expanse of reality, the source of all, the Ocean Mind of the buddhas. Elaborations are mind itself spontaneously arising. Yet, these illusory phenomena exist right in the foundation of the expanse itself. Therefore, it is as if there are no illusory phenomena at all. Such appearances cannot be established. Rather, all phenomena which might become an object of knowledge are already aware and luminous, in, and as, the expanse of reality.

With this view of reality, it would be nearly impossible to propose any particular method of generating or attaining such a view. However, Pelyang occasionally does mention, and even recommend, practice in a general way. He explains that the focus of meditation (*bsgom*) in Mahāyoga is mind,¹⁵⁶ or alternatively, the expanse of dharma itself

dgos/

¹⁵⁵ Spontaneous presence is like the reflective qualities of a jewel, appearance and nonappearance are like ocean water and waves, attachment and nonattachment are like a swamp and a lotus, complete emancipation without any crossing over to another side is like a great fish gliding through the water, and so forth.

¹⁵⁶ *Lamp of the Mind*, 306.

(*chos kyi dbyings nyid*),¹⁵⁷ these two being equivalent. He further states that it is the intent of the buddhas to meditate in accordance with the nonabiding nature of mind.¹⁵⁸ Pelyang asserts that, having seen all phenomena as an unimpeded flow of illusion and as all of one flavor in the vast expanse of reality, one should meditatively cultivate even the five impurities which are characteristic of our degenerate Dharma age as blissful heavenly abodes.¹⁵⁹ The impression all these positive descriptions of meditation give is that the practice Pelyang taught, if any, was to take a new perspective rather than to take up a particular posture or method. View is paramount once again.

Pelyang uses only one specific technical term—meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin*)—in those few positive statements regarding Mahāyoga meditation that we do find in the *Six Lamps*. In a sūtra-oriented Buddhist context, this type of *samādhi* is said to be perfected when the mind contemplates or abides in a particular conceptual or nonconceptual object or mental state without wavering from it. In the more specific context of Mahāyoga meditative practice, a set of three meditative stabilizations, or *ting nge 'dzin gsum*, refers to a series of ordered meditative cultivations of *maṇḍala* and deities, and specifically, of oneself as the deity. This set of three meditative stabilizations form the foundation of early Mahāyoga practice, constituting the generation stage (*bskyed rim*) of

¹⁵⁷ *Lamp of the Correct View.*

¹⁵⁸ *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom.*

¹⁵⁹ *The Lamp of the Precious View.*

cultivating oneself as the deity.¹⁶⁰ More will be said about these meditations in the following chapter.

Pelyang's usage of the term *ting nge 'dzin* in the *Six Lamps* does allow for the possibility that he was referring to particular aspects or stages of this set of three practices. However, his comments are very general and lack any reference to the set of three as a whole, or to a specific stage in the context of a structured progression of meditations. Neither does he employ any of the standard terms for these stages which would make such an identification clearer, though one such reference, to the Meditative Stabilization of Suchness, does exist in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.¹⁶¹ For example, in the *Lamp of Method and Wisdom*, he seems to be describing something resembling the second of the three meditative stabilizations, which is associated with the skillful employment of compassion.

When one is aware of such a method of Dharma,

Universal compassion toward all those who are unaware is generated.

Having generated such compassion, one practices meditative stabilization
on the illusory nature [of appearances].

Thereby, one teaches all manner of skillful practices to benefit [others].

¹⁶⁰ The three meditative stabilizations (*ting nge 'dzin gsum*) appear quite early in Mahāyoga *sādhana* literature. These three are the yogic practice of discriminative awareness—great emptiness (*shes rab stong pa chen po'i rnal 'byor*), the apparitional display of skillful means—compassion (*thabs snying rje sgyu ma*), and the subtle and coarse seals (*phyag rgya phra rags*). Bdud-'joms, Dorje, and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, 360.

For a detailed description of these three stages of meditative generation of the deity, using slightly different terms, see PT 626, PT 634, and ITJ 716/1.

¹⁶¹ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 18.

What is the intention of the buddhas?

It is to meditate in accordance with the nonabiding intrinsic nature of mind.

What is [their] boundless compassionate endeavor?

It is to emanate in accordance with the meditative stabilization of yogic skillful means.¹⁶²

Although Pelyang's description here suggests the second Mahāyoga *samādhi*, in which of generation of oneself as a deity or of the emanation of a buddha appearing to the meditator, his descriptions lack both the standard terminology used to refer to these three *samādhi*, and any reference to particular, ordered stages of meditation.

In *The Lamp of the Precious View*, which is the most specifically tantric and most closely resembles the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* among the texts of the *Six Lamps*, Pelyang refers to the normative division of yogic practice into their two respective types of resulting accumulations: accumulations of primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) and accumulations of merit (*bsod nams*):

Having purified the mind of misconceptions with supreme insight,

[One attains] the great accumulation of primordial wisdom, the Dharmakāya of the Conqueror.

Having mastered meditative stabilization of the minor and major marks,

¹⁶² 'di lta bu yi chos kyi tshul rig na/ ma rig rnams la snying rje yongs kyis skye/ snying rje skyes nas sgyu ma'i ting 'dzin gyis/ phan 'dogs thabs kyi spyod pa cir yang ston/ sangs rgyas rnams kyi dgongs pa ji lta ba/ sems kyi rang bzhin gnas med de ltar bsgom/ thugs rje'i 'bad pa rab 'byams ji lta ba/ rnal 'byor thabs kyi ting 'dzin de ltar sprul/ *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom*.

[One attains] the great accumulation of merit, the *Rūpakāya* of the Conqueror.¹⁶³

This dyad of primordial wisdom and merit is associated with the most basic division of all the various types of meditations into those which are nonsymbolic (*mtshan med*), including formless meditations on emptiness, and those which are symbolic (*mtshan bcas*), including the set of three generation-stage meditative stabilizations described above. Here, Pelyang himself uses the term ‘symbolic’ (*mtshan gyi*) to describe the yogic accumulation of merit involving meditative cultivation of the marks of a buddha (constituting normative generation-stage practice) and resulting in attainment of the *Rūpakāya*. In so doing, he alludes to the standard polarization of Mahāyoga practice into symbolic and nonsymbolic that we find, for example, in Vimalamitra’s commentary to the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, the *Rim gsum*.¹⁶⁴

This is in accord with a similar passage in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. Pelyang remarks that the superior path of awakening includes two types of meditation:

Calm abiding based on nonmistaken realization and

Meditative stabilization [in which] the seals of marks clearly [appear]—

Such a meaningful superior path of awakening

Is bound to lead to excellence time and again.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ *shes rab mchog gis log rtog sems sbyangs nas/ ye shes tshogs chen rgyal ba chos kyi sku/ dpe byad mtshan gyi ting ‘dzin dbang thob nas/ bsod nams tshogs chen rgyal ba gzugs kyi sku. The Lamp of the Precious View.*

¹⁶⁴ Peking 4742: 568a1.

¹⁶⁵ */ma nor rtogs dang ldan pa ‘i zhi gnas dang /mtshan ma ‘i phyag rgya gsal ba ‘i ting nge ‘dzin// ‘di ‘dra ‘i don ldan byang cub lam mchog ste// yang nas yang tu khyad par ‘gro bar bya/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 30.*

Here, Pelyang may be referring to the third meditative stabilization in which one meditates on subtle and coarse seals, and reminding his interlocutor of the fact that such a meditation belongs to that rubric of yogic practice which is symbolic.

However, though Pelyang may be intending such specific references to the dyad of symbolic and nonsymbolic and to the three stages of meditative stabilization, he fails to employ any standard terminology and to make any reference to any graduated method. Indeed, Pelyang compares all methods of practice to medicine in a dream. Ultimately, such methods are without any actual effect.

One should know the many [means of] liberation on the Noble Path

To be like the medicine which cures illness in a dream.

The moments of gradually purifying suffering

Are methods of generating distinctive insight and meditative stabilization.

Attaining awakening to the intrinsic nature of mind

Is like eradicating illness and gaining the bliss of healing in a dream.¹⁶⁶

This is similar to his remarks in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* where he warns that in meditative stabilization, though the deities of the *maṇḍala* may appear even to move of their own volition, these are merely aspects of one's mind and do not really exist as separate bodies.¹⁶⁷ Pelyang describes meditative stabilization throughout the

Vajrasattva Questions and Answers as concentration upon “the ocean of awakening”¹⁶⁸ or

¹⁶⁶ *rmi lam nad sel sman dang 'dra ba ni/ 'phags lam rnam thar mang por rig par bya/ sdug bsngal khad kyis 'byang ba'i skad cig ma/ shes rab ting 'dzin khyad par skye ba'i tshul/ The Lamp of the Precious View.*

¹⁶⁷ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Question 34.

¹⁶⁸ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Question

upon the marks of a buddha as aspects of mind.¹⁶⁹ The recommendation that exemplifies his views most neatly is the following, which beautifully plays with the image of currents of pure water flowing from one's actions and which utilizes metaphor instead of making specific injunctions regarding practice:

Although it may take an extremely long time
 Emancipation from the four currents
 Of suffering due to the affliction of ignorance, and
 Emancipation through clearing away hindrance and abandoning, and
 Emancipation through joining with splendor—
 Because desire for all these is entering the ocean of desire,
 One will be carried off in a single direction by the stream of [one's] effort.
 [However, though one] possesses the highest and longest wrong views,
 Those very four streams are the path and fruit.
 Therefore, by playing directly in the current
 Flowing from method and insight,
 There is complete emancipation without crossing over
 Like a great fish gliding through the water.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Question 24.

¹⁷⁰ *ma rig nyon mongs las sdug bsngal/ chu bo bzhi las thar pa'ang/ shin tu ring dang rgyud pa dang/ 'gag spangs bsal bas thar pa dang/ zil gnon sbyor bas thar 'dod pa/ 'dod pa'i rgya mtshor chud pa'i phyir/ rtsol ba'i chu rgyun phyogs cha khyer/ mchog dang ring ba'i log lta can/ chu bo bzhi nyid lam 'bras phyir/ thabs dang shes rab las nyid kyi/ chu bo nyid la rol spyod pas/ brgal ba med par rnam par thar/ chu la nya chen 'phyo ba/ Lamp of the Mind: 313.*

Far more common than these brief mentions of Mahāyoga meditative stabilization, however, are Pelyang's criticisms of ill-performed and misguided uses of meditations by gods in the Formless Realm, by those in the lower vehicles, and especially by those in the lower forms of tantra who are attached to their methods of purification and approximation of the deity without realizing the true nature of reality as all-encompassing. In the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang criticizes the lower tantras for clinging to stages of phony magical appearance and for desiring the appearance of the deity, which is only mind itself. In *The Lamp of the Correct View*, Pelyang equates the characteristiclessness of mind with that of space, showing how meditation on either is fruitless.

There is no meditating on space

Because space is without defining characteristics.

Just so, how can there be meditation on the nonorigination of

Mind, which is unoriginated by means of its very essence?¹⁷¹

Yet, encompassing all these mentions of meditation, whether positive or negative, are Pelyang's constant declarations that the very idea of engaging in meditation upon some other object is a mistaken dichotomization of reality. In *The Lamp of the Correct View*, he describes his method of no-method:

When you know the dynamic by which the obstructions are
indistinguishable from their antidotes,

You will abandon all diligence.

¹⁷¹ *ji ltar nam mkha' mtshan ma med pa'i phyir/ nam mkha' de nyid bsgom par mi 'gyur
bzhin/ ngo bo nyid kyis ma skyes sems kyis ni/ ma skyes de nyid bsgoms par ga la
'gyur/*

When you settle into the continuum with great equanimity and without fabrication,

Although it is merely a nominal convention, practice “meditation” on this.¹⁷²

Throughout the *Six Lamps*, as in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Pelyang’s injunctions to follow Mahāyoga are not recommendations to particular practices, but rather to ways of seeing that, like waking from a dream or gliding through the river like a great fish, are luminous, natural, spontaneous, and free from any effort whatsoever.

Creating a Philosophical Vajrayāna

The Ancients tradition, which claims the Mahāyogin Pelyang as a member of one of its earliest lineages in Tibet, is characterized by a peculiar, but essential, union of two perspectives: the graduated, violent esoteric rites of the tantras, on the one hand, with the philosophical assertions of primordial spontaneity and release that culminated in the *Great Perfection* teachings, on the other. Although several factors likely contributed to the enduring popularity both in Dunhuang and in Tibet itself of Pelyang’s *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, the text’s early confluence of these two streams of perspective regarding practice and philosophy is clearly among them. Indeed, it could be argued that the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is a crucial textual event in the birth of philosophical Vajrayāna and the early movement toward development of the Great Perfection.

¹⁷² *mi mthun pa dang gnyen po dbyer med don/ rang gis shes na rtsol ba kun spangs te/ btang snyoms chen por ma bcos ngang bzhag na/ tha snyad tsam du’ang bsgom zhes di la bya/*

Pelyang furthered this project of establishing a tantric philosophy with his *Six Lamps* collection of poems. Among these, *The Lamp of the Precious View* most resembles the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* in its tantric grounding and terminology, and in its method of lending a new philosophical insight to such common tantric practices as joining with the Three Bodies and attaining meditative stabilization of the marks of the tutelary deity. The *Lamp of the Mind* bridges tantric practice with philosophical liberation by infusing its doxographical presentations of the lower views, including those of the lower forms of tantra, with the same sort of philosophical perspective we see in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp of the Precious View*. The *Lamp of the Mind*'s latter half takes the hermeneutic method a step further by delving deeply into a Buddhist negative theology in which even the most basic ontological and soteriological positions of the lower forms of tantric Buddhism are undercut with an apophatic language of ultimately ineffable freedom from, and transcendence of, rite and purpose. Finally, with the remaining four *Six Lamps* poems—*The Lamp of the Correct View*, *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, the *Lamp of Method and Wisdom*, and *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*—Pelyang yields nearly entirely to the *via negativa* in his approach. Although he offers in all his texts a divergent perspective from that of wrathfully oriented Mahāyoga such as we encounter among the Dunhuang materials, it is in these four poems that he explores that divergent perspective with the greatest focus and to the greatest extent. Taken as a collection, these seven texts extend a clear message to the practitioner about the proper perspective regarding practice.

Though we might take exception to assertions that Pelyang's texts present disparate ideologies merely because they present different facets of Mahāyoga tantra, it cannot be denied that there are differences between the *Six Lamp* poems and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. One possible explanation for this relative diversity of exegetical stances found among the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* poems is that Pelyang composed these texts at different points in the development of his own thought and teaching, as his own and his students' realization changed and deepened. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* is clearly meant as an introduction to Mahāyoga, and the *Lamp of the Mind* seems to be taking its audience, already familiar with various basic forms of tantra, further toward Pelyang's unique definition of the Mahāyoga perspective. The remaining *Six Lamps* poems give very little attention to the practical issues raised by the questions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* or to the *Lamp of the Mind's* wide-ranging philosophical topics, focusing almost exclusively on the unoriginated and characteristicless intrinsic nature of reality without looking back at what might be considered the tantric roots of Pelyang's teachings. I will have more to say about this continuum of perspective and its historical and philosophical context in the following chapter. In the present context I would like to say merely that, while it might seem logical to take this continuum of perspective as representative of the chronology of Pelyang's developing views, doing so does not fit necessarily with what we know of Tibetan religious compositions. A number of authors, not the least of which are Pelyang's own Buddhaguhya and the latter's own teacher, Vilāsavajra, apparently authored a wide variety of exegeses on a wide variety of traditions with great diversity of perspective. Such works

do not appear to have coincided chronologically with any particular development of the author's view toward what might be considered more "advanced" or newer religious interpretation, nor do they appear to fit any intended collected presentation of a progression of view. In the case of Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *Six Lamps* collection, we have an even narrower range of perspective than we see with the above two authors. It is quite plausible that the differing perspectives we see in Pelyang's texts represent merely varying levels of hermeneutic sophistication meant for audiences with differing needs rather than representing a progression of his own thinking from mainstream tantricism toward the nascent *Great Perfection* teachings, as some have asserted.

Having said this, the final text to consider here, the *Letter*, is a full departure in terms of perspective and subject matter from the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps*. In fact it is so fully dissimilar in those aspects that it is difficult to place it within the same spectrum of ideas as the other texts. Nevertheless, it is attributed to a Dynastic-era Pelyang, and the possibility of its having been authored by our Mahāyogin Pelyang must be considered.

The *Letter*

As explained in the previous chapter, Giuseppe Tucci conjectured, and Yamaguchi Zuihō asserted, that the *Letter* and the rest of the texts attributed to Pelyang were authored by separate persons. Most modern scholars have tended to follow their lead unquestioningly. What reasons have we, then, for discussing the *Letter* at all in the context of Pelyang's Mahāyoga works? There are three reasons that I discuss it here. The first is that, given our inability based on the historical evidence at hand to deny the shared identity

of abbot and yogi as I have explained in the previous chapter, we must consider the *Letter* a possible member of the Mahāyogin poet Pelyang’s corpus. The second reason is that the *Letter* shares an interesting feature with the *Lamp of the Mind*: they both appear to have been modeled upon texts by Buddhaguhya, as I have mentioned previously. And finally, the third reason to consider it here is that, though modern opinion tends to lean toward denying that the *Letter* shared authorship with the rest of the texts, there is no convincing proof that they were not authored by the same person. Attribution is merely to “Pelyang” in both the *Letter*’s case and in the cases of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and four of the *Six Lamps*. For these reasons, a summary of the text’s structure and content follows.

With this text, author Pelyang enters the classic Buddhist tradition of composing religious instruction in the form of a letter addressed to a king. By including passages from three such letters—the *Suhr̥llekha*, the *Ratnāvalī*, and the *Kaniṣkalekha*—in the section of the *Letter* meant for the king, Pelyang makes clear that not only was he aware of such an epistolary tradition, but that he also intended to include himself in its esteemed assemblage of authors. Perhaps not deeming himself worthy of direct instruction to the king, however, his remarks in this section are limited almost entirely to introductions of cited passages from elsewhere.

In the sections that follow, however, Pelyang provides instruction in his own words as he addresses commoners, ministers, and monastics in turn, and in this he differs from the established tradition. Here, Pelyang appears to have been following Buddhaguhya, whose own letter of Buddhist instruction to a Tibetan king, the *rJe ‘bangs dang bod btsun rnam*

la spring yig, also includes substantial passages addressed to ministers, great meditators, and ordinary monastics. This is an interesting point, considering that Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind* so clearly is based on another of Buddhaguhya's texts, the *Mārgavyūha*. This is one of the rare bits of evidence we may use to tie the author of the *Letter* with the author of the larger Mahāyoga corpus examined above.

Yet, while a shared perspective on a common constellation of related topics expressed via a shared lexis is undoubtedly manifest throughout the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* poems, it is nearly impossible based solely on the topics covered by the *Letter* to make a plausible case for a connection between it and those seven texts. Even the nonspecialist language used in the *Letter* is unique from that in the other seven works.¹⁷³ We find no mention of Mahāyoga, tantra, *mantra*, nor any apophatic treatment of doctrine whatsoever in the *Letter*. In fact, the single appearance of the word 'maṇḍala' in the *Letter* occurs in a discussion of how to prepare the guru's teaching platform, or 'maṇḍala', rather than in a tantric context.¹⁷⁴ The subjects discussed in the *Letter* include general ethical edification, basic Buddhist procedural instruction, simple ordination descriptions, and so forth. Furthermore, the intended audience or recipients of

¹⁷³ I have been able to find only one unique technical term which is common to both the letter and any another of Pelyang's texts. This term is the 'sixteen dharmas', or *mi chos bcu drug*—which is mentioned in the *Lamp of the Mind* and fully enumerated in the *Letter*. This term is found in much later Tibetan literature on the Dynastic period, including *bKa' chems ka khol ma*, *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, and *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*. Sorensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the Xivth Century Tibetan Chronicle, Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'i Me-Long*, 183. The enumeration in the *Letter* may represent the earliest such list.

¹⁷⁴ "Sprinkle with water and sweep the teaching platform (*maṇḍala*), and wash the alms bowls. (*maṇḍala chag chag phyag dar dang/ zhu gnas bca' dang lhung bzed bkru*). *Letter*, 461.

the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Six Lamps* and those of the *Letter* are vastly different types of persons, the former being practicing and self-proclaimed Mahāyogin adepts and the latter including the general public interested in learning about Buddhism.

It is obvious that the author of this *Letter* was deeply familiar with mainstream Tibetan Buddhism, and considered himself fit for addressing both the king and his ministers and a wide range of ordinary Tibetans, including fully ordained monks and nuns. This would indicate that such a person was either part of the Buddhist establishment or was held in great esteem by the Tibetan people and their ruler, or both. In fact, such an image fits perfectly with the picture I have drawn of the Dynastic-era abbot Pelyang and with the situation outlined in the text's own colophon. It is possible that the eight texts attributed to Pelyang were written over the course of a long lifetime under differing social and religiously instructional contexts, but the unfortunate reality is that even after analysis of both the historical and literary evidence, no such claim can be made conclusively.

Conclusion

Leaving aside the *Letter*, the remaining seven texts considered here appear to have been written by a single author with a single purpose in mind—to transmit a clear and transcendent vision of Mahāyoga as a method of no-method. In this vision, one perseveres in the path without endeavoring, the highest realization of which comes to one as spontaneously and naturally as a fish gliding through the water. While most Dynastic-era Tibetan Buddhist authors produced exegesis from the perspective of two or more tantric traditions, Pelyang promoted a single system, the tantric tradition of Mahāyoga. Even in passages that name other systems of tantra explicitly in the context of doxographical

comparison, Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind* uses only the term Mahāyoga to describe his own system. Though Pelyang utilizes this nomenclature in only two of his texts—the *Lamp of the Mind* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*—they clearly share a common message and style with the remaining five *Lamp* texts.

Based in large part upon the lack of explicit tantric identification in the latter five *Lamp* texts, Samten Karmay has described two of those five texts as portraying early Great Perfection, rather than Mahāyoga, thought,¹⁷⁵ and other scholars have expressed doubt regarding whether one can identify any sectarian affiliation at all in the works attributed to Pelyang, taking the term Mahāyoga to mean something as general as 'great yoga', or 'great Buddhist practice'. In one extreme example, as we have seen, the fourteenth-century author Ögyen lingpa chose to include Pelyang in a group of Chan authors and thinkers.

However, there are obvious commonalities in style, ideology, and even expressions between the five poems of the *Six Lamps* which do not identify any particular sect or school and the *Lamp of the Mind* and *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. This allows us to confidently assert that the remaining five of the *Six Lamps* poems that do not name Mahāyoga explicitly were meant by their author to portray the same Mahāyoga system as do the *Lamp of the Mind* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.

It is clear from the many specifically cultural references Pelyang makes in his writings, including those to cairns, rainbows, and so forth, and the reference to propitiating native deities that these texts were original compositions in Tibetan. Based on references

¹⁷⁵ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 59-69.

within the texts and to citations of it, the texts can be dated as later than Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, which was most likely composed in the eighth century, and earlier than Nup's early tenth-century *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, which would suggest placing Pelyang's corpus within the ninth century. Bibliographic and liturgical evidence further narrows this period to the early ninth century.

It is also readily apparent that Pelyang wrote for an audience of Mahāyoga followers, and that he was familiar with both mainstream Buddhist philosophical discussion and with the more specialist esoteric exegetical views and practices assigned to Kriyāntara and Yogatantra. He also may have been familiar with the complex Mahāyoga tantric ritual system presented in the latter chapters of the *Mārgavyūha*, given that he borrowed such a large number of passages from that work for citation in his *Lamp of the Mind*.

However, it is interesting that he did not make any mention of the rituals or visualizations outlined in great detail by Buddhaguhya in the *Mārgavyūha*, but cited instead passages from the *Mārgavyūha* that are either explicitly doxographical in nature, or that addressed the more transcendent philosophical issues of spontaneously arisen primordial wisdom, the purity of appearances, selflessness, and so forth.¹⁷⁶ The same selective referencing can be seen in the type of passages he extracts from the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. These passages may provide valuable evidence of Pelyang's intention in writing

¹⁷⁶ It is possible that Pelyang had access only to the first, doxographical section of the *Mārgavyūha* and not to the later chapters outlining the details of the sexual rites, given that he only quotes from the first section. This issue will be taken up in the following chapter.

these works—to depict and propagate a Mahāyoga movement that was more concerned with view than with practice, and to draw that depiction from the most classic Mahāyoga sources available to him, grounding it in tradition but allowing it to soar with new focus. Thus we see here one of the earliest foundations of what came to be a characteristically Tibetan tradition, namely a distinctive philosophical tradition grounded within Indian Buddhist tantric literature and notions.

We will now turn to a discussion of the earlier forms of Mahāyoga we see in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and in the *Mārgavyūha*, and of the later forms evident in the Dunhuang manuscripts in order to contextualize Pelyang’s own philosophical position.

CHAPTER THREE • PELYANG'S MAHĀYOGA IN RELIGIOUS CONTEXT: THE GREATER CONVERSATION

Introduction

Although the immediate audience of these texts most likely was comprised of Mahāyoga practitioners, Pelyang's texts were being redacted during a fertile time in Tibet's religious development, in which a large number of Buddhist traditions were vying for official attention and support. We can see even among the texts cited by Pelyang (the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Buddhaguhya's doxographical *Margavyūha*, Vimalamitra's Mahāyoga treatise the *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag ces bya ba*, and Buddhagupta's apophatic *Small Hidden Grain*) an interesting diversity of perspective. These texts were part of a greater dialogue regarding the proper understanding and practice of Buddhism in general, and the nature and significance of tantric Mahāyoga in particular. How then are we to contextualize Pelyang's views in a manner that is both instructive with regard to his religious background and his self-identification as a Mahāyogin, and illuminating with regard to the possible innovations in his work and their later trajectories after his death?

This chapter will explore Pelyang's religious milieu, both traditions which were established and those which were just emerging, and will focus in particular on what we know of the contemporaneous Mahāyoga tantra movement. An initial review of the coeval Tibetan understanding of Indian Buddhist philosophical schools will provide a background

for understanding Pelyang's occasional references to such, as well as his intellectual engagement with these views. Next, an outline of the state of early Mahāyoga will explore the Mahāyoga works which have survived from Dunhuang as well as the canonical Mahāyoga works. Finally, a comparison between proto-Great Perfection texts known as the Mind Series and Pelyang's work shows how these two groups of texts espouse similar views with similar rhetoric, but also significantly diverge from one other.

Based on the wide variety of perspective and focus present in these texts, it is clear that early Tibetan Mahāyoga during its development in the eighth and ninth centuries encompassed a wider range of thought than heretofore assumed, and that overly general portrayals of this early movement may detract from the more subtle intricacies of innovation and creativity taking place therein. Pelyang's role in the philosophical development of this diverse movement was pioneering, and led to changes so expansive that they ultimately impelled the creation of a new tantric category altogether—the Great Perfection.

Classic Philosophical Roots

Whether or not our Mahāyogin author served as abbot and was hence at the administrative center of the controversies surrounding Tibet's assimilation of Buddhism, almost anyone involved in Buddhist activity in Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries would have been affected by the diversity of Buddhist teachings being imported and developed on the plateau. Indeed, the fact that Pelyang devoted so much of his longest work, the *Lamp of the Mind*, to doxographical discussion is indicative of the concern Tibetan scholars of the time had with sorting out the great complexities and internal

contradictions of the richness of Buddhist traditions flooding into Tibet. At issue for many Tibetans were the Indian exoteric epistemological and ontological issues dating back centuries, promoted by such scholars as Nāgārjuna, Bhāvaviveka, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu. In both the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang discusses these forms of mainstream Indian Buddhist philosophy, and in summarizing the general issues of the debates between them, mentions several schools by name.

The *Lamp of the Mind* presents the views of three major Indian philosophical schools—the Sautrāntika, the Yogācāra, and the Mādhyamika. This discussion takes place in a passage that should, according to the text's general organizational schema, describe the three vehicles of *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*, respectively. Pelyang's displacement of those vehicles with Indian philosophical schools would indicate at the least that Pelyang understood this list of schools to be in ascending order of accuracy. He does not, however, explicitly articulate such a judgment. In fact, ultimately, he finds all three schools lacking to some degree in their descriptions of reality. In his portrayal of Mahāyoga thought that follows the passage on the Indian schools, Pelyang generally avoids even the terminology of the preceding descriptions of scholastic Indian philosophy, and turns instead to the apophatic and transcendent language characteristic of the rest of the *Six Lamps* collection. The entire section on the Indian schools serves as a clear abdication of any exclusive affiliation with any one of the three main philosophical schools, and suggests that Pelyang saw tantra as involving characteristic philosophical positions that could not be entirely contained within those earlier frameworks.

Although the basic texts of all three of these schools were part of the early Tibetan monastic curriculum, the primary affiliation during the early Dynastic era for monastics in Tibet was with one of two hybrid schools that formed as subdivisions of the Mādhyamika: the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika or the Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika. The tenets of the first school, the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika, were propounded by the famed Indian scholars Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla at Samye, thus becoming the normative philosophical system taught at Samye from its establishment to the eleventh century. The tenets of both of these subschools of Mādhyamika, however, appear to have been established already by the eighth century.¹⁷⁷

The primary sources of information about the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika are Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* and his disciple Kamalaśīla's commentary, the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra-kārikā*. The basic arguments of both Mādhyamika schools were subsequently summarized in the early ninth-century Tibetan doxography the *lTa ba'i khyad par*, written by royal translator Zhang Ye shes sde. According to the *lTa ba'i khyad par*, the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika asserts that conventionally, consciousness knows objects, but that this is only because the objects themselves are of the intrinsic nature of that consciousness. External objects are like those things seen in a dream—nonexistent. On this point, they disagree with the Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika school, which asserts that conventionally, objects do indeed exist. Because on the level of the ultimate truth, the two

¹⁷⁷ References to the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika have not been found in Indian literature. Masamichi Ichigo, "Santaraksita's *Mādhyamikalaṅkāra*," in *Studies in the Literature of the Great Vehicle: Three Mahāyāna Buddhist Texts*, ed. Luis Gomez and Jonathan Silk (Ann Arbor: Collegiate Institute for the Study of Buddhist Literature and Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1989), 152.

schools agree with the basic Mādhyamika premise that mind is free of both singularity and multiplicity of essences, and that therefore, its existence is not established at all, it is primarily their divergent stances on the issue of the conventional level of truth that differentiates the two subschools.

In his answers to three of the questions in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*—Questions 24, 25, and 28—Pelyang addresses the fundamental tenets of these two Indian philosophical schools with slightly more attention to detail than he does in the *Lamp of the Mind*. In the first of these passages, Pelyang begins by addressing the relevance to tantra of the essential distinction between the schools, asking, “For the mantric practitioner, how is it best to view [the distinction between] the two—Yogā[cara]-Mādhyamika and Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika?”¹⁷⁸ Without going so far as to explicitly self-identify as a member of the former, Pelyang clearly aligns himself with its tenets in the answer that follows. “All the meditative stabilizations which fail to view those marks [of a buddha] as merely aspects of consciousness/ Will lack a connection to the mind, and therefore will fail to accomplish the One.”¹⁷⁹ In the answer to the question that follows, Pelyang explores the issue further, “If one does not view those marks conventionally as merely mind, and yet is aware of there being no phenomena whatsoever, is it not still possible to achieve transformation through meditative stabilization?”¹⁸⁰ In other words, might the Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika interpretation bring about buddhahood? His answer clearly refutes such a possibility:

¹⁷⁸ *sngags spyod pa la rnal 'byor dbu ma dang/ /mdo sde dbu ma gnyis gang ltar bltas na bde/*

¹⁷⁹ *rnam rig tsam du ma bltas ting 'dzin kun/ /sems dang 'brel ba myed pas gcig myi 'grub/*

¹⁸⁰ *kun rdzob tu sems tsam du ma bltas na/ /yang/ /chos ci yang myed par rig na/ /ting nge 'dzin kyis ci ste sgyur du myi rung/*

[If there were] an unrelated meditative stabilization, on something other
[than mind],

That object other [than the mind] would not be transformed,

And in the case [of a meditative stabilization] upon there being no
[phenomena] whatsoever,

Mind would be unable to appear outside itself.¹⁸¹

In such passages, we find Pelyang actively thinking about tantric practice in relationship to specific philosophical positions. In a final question, addressing the issues of conventionally existent external objects, Pelyang warns that simple adherence to a philosophical position is not sufficient. The interlocutor asks, “If one engages in calm abiding without conceptualizing external objects, but still possessing a view which clings to self, will there be no liberation?”¹⁸² to which Pelyang answers:

Having completely abandoned attachment to the self,

There is no clinging to [external] phenomena anywhere.

As long as there is a deceiver clinging to self,

Although one attains an abiding calm as a mountain, there will be no
liberation.¹⁸³

This brings us to Pelyang’s ultimate position with regard to the mainstream scholastic interpretations of reality. However much Pelyang’s views align with the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika set of epistemological assertions in some ways, his project is not to

¹⁸¹ *'brel myed ting 'dzin gzhan na sgom/ /gzhan kyi yul la 'gyur ba myed/ /ci yang myed pa nyid la yang/ /sems kyis de phyir snang myi nus/*

¹⁸² *phyi'i yul la myi rtog par zhi gnas las su r ung na/ bdag tu 'dzin pa lta zhig mchis na yang myi grol lam/*

¹⁸³ *bdag tu 'dzin pa yongs su spangs nas ni/ /chos su 'dzin par byed pa gang yang myed/ /ngar 'dzin sgyu mkhan yod kyi bar du ni/ /ri 'dra'i zhi gnas thob kyang grol myi 'gyur/*

conform to any particular philosophical system, but rather to cut through the reification of concepts themselves which he sees as characterizing such philosophical disputation.¹⁸⁴ In seeking to integrate and contextualize Tibetan notions of Indian Buddhist speculative thought with his own tantric views, Pelyang finally seeks to subvert their importance altogether and to employ a quite different vocabulary unencumbered by negotiations with the terminology and conceptual frameworks of conventional Buddhist philosophy. In this, he declines to embrace even the Mādhyamika foundations of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position. We see in the *Lamp of the Mind*:

[The Mādhyamika] dismiss the particulars of extreme [positions].

In so doing, topics such as meditation, great nirvana,

The existence and nonexistence of appearances, and

Accomplishment and non-accomplishment by means of reasoning, and so
forth

Are debated, and the extremes are examined.

[Yet,] from such verbal conventions,¹⁸⁵ they thereby establish [those very
extremes], [creating] subject-object dualism.¹⁸⁶

Though its aim may be worthy, Pelyang ultimately asserts that the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position creates the sort of conceptual dichotomization it attempts to avoid by

¹⁸⁴ Samten Karmay has pointed to the full title of *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation—rNal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs nges pa'i don ji bzhin bsgom thabs*—as an indication that Pelyang's thought accords with the Yogācāra school. A more general reading of the title also works, however, and is in keeping with the content: *The Method of Meditation on the Definitive Dynamic belonging to the System of Those Engaging in Yogic Activity*.

¹⁸⁵ Taking *snyad* for *snyed*.

¹⁸⁶ *mtha' yi bye brag sel byed cing/ de 'dra bsam gtan 'das chen cing/ snang ba yod dang med pa dang/ rigs pas 'grub dang ma grub sogs/ de dag la rtsod mtha' tshol ba/ snyed nas des 'jog bzung 'dzin can/ Lamp of the Mind: 277b.*

establishing arguments through the use of verbal conventions. Though he does not elucidate the point any further, it appears that Pelyang finds fault not merely with the use of verbal conventions, but with the deeper project of attempting to dismiss extreme positions through reasoning itself. This also explains his reticence to enter into detailed logical discussions of the various philosophical positions.

The Tiers of Tantra: Dating Pelyang relatively

Pelyang identified himself as a promoter of the Vajrayāna, and clearly promoted tantrism—The Great Method—as the single most effective means of attaining buddhahood. Before beginning an examination of the various forms of tantra with which Pelyang apparently was familiar, and those traditions with which he intended to engage in dialogue, it is important to understand Pelyang's interpretation of the general principles of tantra and the extent of his involvement with standard forms of esotericism in Tibet during his lifetime.

In his study of the development of Indian Buddhist tantra, Ronald Davidson distinguishes two types of tantric practice. The first is an earlier, institutional esotericism, in which the themes of violence and dominion played out in tantric rites of appropriating and deploying power, and which served to reinforce hierarchical organizations such as were present in monasteries. The second type of tantric practice is a later, noninstitutional esotericism, involving sexual yoga and other antinomian practices, which served to undercut the established social hierarchies.¹⁸⁷ The *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and other texts

¹⁸⁷ Chris Wedemeyer offers an interesting perspective on the possible higher-order discourse involved in the transgressive language of Indian Mahāyoga texts, employing Roland Barthes's theory of connotative semiotics. Christian K. Wedemeyer, "Beef, Dog,

belonging to the Māyājāla cycle, which Davidson would categorize as representative of the earlier, institutional form of tantra, appear to have been circulating in Tibet by the mid-eighth century, at the latest.¹⁸⁸ The latter form of noninstitutional esotericism had emerged already by the early eighth century in India,¹⁸⁹ and by the mid-eighth century the early ritualization of sexual tantric practices was being described in Tibetan-language *sādhana* texts.¹⁹⁰ Thus, both forms of tantra—the institutional and the noninstitutional—were active in Tibet by Pelyang’s lifetime.

Although Pelyang refers to the wrathful aspect of esoteric practice and employs various royal metaphors, characteristic of the first strata of tantric development in India, there is no mention in any of Pelyang’s works of the ‘union and liberation’ (*sbyor sgröl*) practices associated especially in later periods, but also in tenth-century Dunhuang documents, with the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, despite the fact that the tantra is central to his ideological agenda. However, neither do we find any evidence of the type of newer, transgressive sexual practices described in detail in numerous Mahāyoga *sādhana* texts from Dunhuang, nor of the extreme, polyvalent language typical of the slightly later forms of Indian tantra such as the yoginī- and anuttarayoga-tantras, the latter of which did not emerge until the mid-tenth century. Even the several references to seals, or *phyag rgya*, in both the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and the *Lamp of the Mind* contain no evidence of intended allusion to partners in sexual yoga. Further, while the practice of meditatively

and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahayoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 2 (2007).

¹⁸⁸ van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection," 200.

¹⁸⁹ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 196.

¹⁹⁰ Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," 7.

cultivating the deity as oneself is central to the Vajrayāna path as defined by Pelyang, he does not mention any form of internalized, subtle body yogic activity involving channels, drops, and winds, or the *yab yum* pair of buddha and consort in sexual embrace, which also might be indicative of later developments in the practice of deity yoga.¹⁹¹ Indeed, in his doxography, the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang mentions only Kriyā-, Caryā-, and Yoga-tantra as alternative forms of tantra to Mahāyoga. In fact, Pelyang's definition of vajra in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, in which lies the best opportunity for the use of such polysemantics, appears to be completely uneroticized. He says, in answer to Question 1, “Unproduced, the spontaneously [arising] expanse of primordial wisdom, unchanging, indestructible—that is the definition of ‘vajra’.”

These absences are puzzling for a few reasons. Based on bibliographical evidence, Pelyang can be dated with some confidence to the ninth century. By the late ninth century, explicit sexual rites were being described fairly uniformly in the coeval Tibetan Dunhuang material.¹⁹² Furthermore, Pelyang also quotes from the *Mārgavyūha*, which, as I will describe later in this chapter, contains references to these later forms of esoteric practice. Finally, the fact that he is quoted as authoritative throughout the Mahāyoga chapter of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* would lead one to believe that *The Lamp Eye of Contemplations's* author, Nup, felt Pelyang's teachings were fully representative of Mahāyoga tantra during the period in which *The Lamp Eye* was composed. By viewing the religious context to Pelyang's work through this hermeneutic lens, his Mahāyoga seems to

¹⁹¹ References to practices involving subtle body technologies are, in fact, quite rare among the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts in general, though descriptions of sexualized rites are not. Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.: 11.

occupy the historical space between the emergence of early, institutionally-oriented Indian Yoga- and Mahāyoga-tantra and the full maturity of forms of sexualized tantra we see in many of the later Dunhuang texts.

We should be cautious in dating Pelyang's corpus according to these two poles of institutional and noninstitutional tantra interpreted as clear historical stages in the development of tantra. Although we cannot ignore the fact that the *Lamp of the Mind* and the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* fit fairly neatly into Davidson's first category of tantra with little hint of engagement with the second category, neither can we make the assumption that his work is, therefore, relatively early or that it was composed before the second form of sexualized and interiorized tantra appeared in Tibet. Davidson's templates, useful as they are in understanding the order of the emergence of certain practices, cannot be used to determine with certainty the date of any particular tantra or tantric exegesis subsequent to the earliest known examples, either in India or in Tibet. This is because both forms of esotericism—the institutional and the noninstitutional—continued to develop roughly contemporaneously from at least the eighth century onward. Although it seems as though Pelyang was aware only of the first type of esotericism, it is also highly likely that he consciously chose to omit discussion of the most transgressive features of the second, noninstitutional forms of tantric praxis for interpretive purposes in creating a more philosophically-oriented tantrism. This relative dating difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that Pelyang's primary objective was to present the views of Mahāyoga tantra, and that he shows little interest in presenting the details of the specific forms of tantric practice or rites in which he and his disciples might have been engaged, whatever those might have been.

Indian Tantric Origins: Mahāyoga, *Guhyagarbha*, and *Māyājāla*

The major tantric innovation in seventh-century India was the development of Yogatantra, which began with the key scripture, entitled the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*. It was out of the Yogatantra movement that a second form of esoteric Buddhism began to emerge, calling itself Mahāyogatantra, or Great Yoga Tantra. Whereas the Yoga tantras had begun to introduce descriptions of violent behavior in the service of Buddhist conversion in its narratives, and had made use of limited sexual imagery for illustrating concepts such as nonduality, the new Mahāyoga movement utilized these antinomian elements at a practical level, instituting sexual rites as part of its standard practices, and relied upon much more intense and graphically violent iconography and related imagery as the dynamic focus of its core literature. Yet, the newly emerging and rapidly developing Mahāyoga literary corpus was not a mere extension of the Yoga tantra material. Rather, it opened the sacramental horizon to include completely new elements of ritual, and this opening was paralleled by the creation of new avenues in the exegetical tradition. With these advances, Mahāyoga surfaced as the cutting edge of Indian tantra, forging its blades from an amalgam of Yogatantra and its own innovations, and all this at a time when esoteric Buddhism was at its peak on the subcontinent.

Though earlier and more general references to ‘*mahāyoga*’ were included in esoteric Buddhist literature beginning in the early seventh century,¹⁹³ we must look to the tantric literature produced almost a century later for the earliest uses of the term

¹⁹³ These include the *Mahāvairocanatantra*, which dates to the early seventh century, and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*, which dates to the late seventh century. As per Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 226.

‘mahāyoga’ to refer to a specific religious tradition. The author of a colophon to the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti*, which may have been written prior to the earliest appearances of such usage of the term, however, mentions ‘mahāyoga’ in a more ambiguous context,¹⁹⁴ perhaps indicating that a transformation in the semantics of the term was occurring. A copy of this tantra was found at Dunhuang,¹⁹⁵ and a version of the tantra can be found in editions of the *rNying ma rgyud ‘bum*. Ronald Davidson has given a date for this tantra of late-seventh to early-eighth century, based upon the dates of its earliest exegete, Mañjuśrīmitra.¹⁹⁶ The appearance of the term ‘mahāyoga’ in the text’s colophon occurs in a statement that the tantra has been taken from the larger “*mahāyogatantra*, the *Āryamāyājāla*,” a work that has not yet been identified.¹⁹⁷

This is an interesting claim. In its defense, it must be noted that the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti* is classified as a Mahāyogatantra in the *rNying ma rgyud ‘bum*, where it is given the characteristically Mahāyoga title *Mañjuśrī-māyājāla*. However, the text is asserted in more recent textual classification schemes as belonging to belong to both the Yogatantra and Mahāyogatantra traditions. In addition, the colophon lacks any contextualizing doxographical discussion. Thus, as Steven Weinberger has pointed out, the appearance of the term ‘Mahāyoga’ in this context thus does not assure us that the term was used to indicate a specific tantric tradition. Rather, as with earlier general usages of the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 221 and 26.

¹⁹⁵ PT 849.

¹⁹⁶ Ronald Davidson, "The Litany of Names of *Mañjuśrī*: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein, Mélanges Chinois Et Bouddhiques*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institute Belge des hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1981), 5.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 44. As per Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 226.

term and appearances of the term in non-tantric material from Dunhuang, it may have simply meant “great tantra,” or even more generally, “great yoga.” Weinberger has hypothesized that the colophon’s classification of the text as a ‘mahāyogatantra’ is indicative of the tantra’s provenance in a time when categorization of tantras into Yoga tantra and Mahāyoga tantra was still in its infancy, or perhaps not even yet realized.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, the fact that the term occurs only in a colophon and not in the body of the text leads one to believe also that the term was not central to the ideas of the tantra. Even beyond these possibilities, it may be that the colophon’s composition significantly postdates that of the tantra itself, and was composed during Mahāyoga’s zenith a century or more later.

Together with the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti*, four other tantras might be situated within the earliest stratum of Mahāyoga tantra development in India. These are the *Śrīparamādyā*, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, the *Guhyasamāja*, and the *Advayasamatāvijaya*.¹⁹⁹ These four tantras appear to have belonged to a corpus of eighteen central tantras established in India quite early in the development of tantric Buddhism, though it was not until later that a collection of these and other tantras into a group of eighteen texts was explicitly characterized as a Mahāyoga corpus. A variety of collections

¹⁹⁸ Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet".

¹⁹⁹ The final member of this list, the *Advayasamatā*, is a shortened version of the reconstructed Sanskrit title *Advayasamatā-yoga*. Rolf W. Giebel, "The *Chin-Kang-Ting Ching Yü-Ch'ieh Shih-Pa-Hui Chih-Kuei*: An Annotated Translation," *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995): 113. The tantra in Amoghavajra’s list has been associated with the extant *Advayasamatāvijayākhyāvikalpamahārāja* (P 87 [Toh. 452]; T. vol. 18, No. 887), and with less certainty, with the Sanskrit manuscript version of the *Advayasamatā-kalparāja*. Giebel, "The *Chin-Kang-Ting Ching Yü-Ch'ieh Shih-Pa-Hui Chih-Kuei*: An Annotated Translation," 196, fn. 238.

of eighteen tantras under the rubric of Mahāyoga most likely were assembled over a span of some decades, but the compilation including the core five Mahāyoga tantras into a collection of eighteen individual texts (a version of which later became known in Tibet as the *Eighteen Māyājāla Tantras*, or *sGyu 'phrul 'dra ba'i rgyud sde chen bco brgyad*) appears to have existed in India by the eighth century.

Kenneth Eastman has provided good evidence for this early canonical formation. Firstly, there are obvious and significant similarities between the eighth-century Chinese version of a set of eighteen *Vajraśekhara* texts “translated” by Amoghavajra (705-774) and introduced to China by Vajrabodhi (671-741) in a text called the *Jin-gang-ding jing yu-qie shi ba hui zhi-gui*²⁰⁰ and the Tibetan translations of the eighteen Mahāyoga tantras which are preserved in extant versions of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* and *Vairo rgyud 'bum*.²⁰¹ A second piece of evidence for this collection dating from before the mid-eighth century exists in the form of a commentary to the 150-stanza *Perfection of Wisdom*, written by Jñānamitra (late eighth century).²⁰² In it, Jñānamitra makes reference to the “collection of eighteen tantras which includes the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*.”²⁰³ Jñānamitra includes three of Amoghavajra’s eighteen tantras in this list of eighteen, which further correspond to texts in the later Mahāyoga collection of eighteen tantras. These are the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*,

²⁰⁰ Rolf Giebel explains that though the text is said to have been translated by Amoghavajra, various theories in China and Japan have arisen about whether Amoghavajra actually translated the text, or wrote it himself in Sanskrit and then translated it, or perhaps, as is the prevailing view these days, that he compiled the information available in Sanskrit and recorded it newly in Chinese. Giebel, "The *Chin-Kang-Ting Ching Yü-Ch'ieh Shih-Pa-Hui Chih-Kuei*: An Annotated Translation," 108-9.

²⁰¹ Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 257.

²⁰² Āryaprajñāpāramitānayaśatkā-ṭīkā P 3471.

²⁰³ *Sarba buddha sa ma yo ga la sogs pa sde chen po bco brgyad*

as described above, the *Guhyasamāja*, and the *Śrīparamādyā*. Being that Jñānamitra's reference to the eighteen tantras is datable to an equally early period to Amoghavajra's, and being that his list is headed with the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* as is the Mahāyoga version of the eighteen tantras, it seems all the more likely that at least these three members of the collection were assembled before the mid-eighth century in an early Vajrayāna set of eighteen scriptures. According to Eastman, based on these early references, the two tantra collections—one in Chinese and one in Tibetan—most likely share a common archetype of pre-eighth century, Indian origin.²⁰⁴

Thus, there is reason to suggest that the five tantras mentioned above—*Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* or *Mañjuśrī-māyājāla*, *Śrīparamādyā*, *Buddhasamāyoga*, *Guhyasamāja*, and *Advayasamatāvijaya*—might be ascribed the status of earliest Mahāyoga tantras, and that they might be posited as existing, at least in primitive form,²⁰⁵ prior to the mid-eighth century. However, despite their relatively early appearance on the Indian tantric scene, and despite their being categorized in later collections as such, none of these texts includes the term 'mahāyoga' in the body of their texts. That even the *Guhyasamāja* fails to do so is

²⁰⁴ Kenneth Eastman, "The Eighteen Tantras of the *Vajraśekhara*/Māyājāla," (Paper presented to the 26th International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, Tokyo, May 8th, 1981).

²⁰⁵ Eastman and Giebel make the point that Amoghavajra does not provide complete translations of the eighteen assemblies, but merely summaries of them, with the exclusion of an early section of the first text, the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. Furthermore, with the exception of that first text, the titles of all the remaining seventeen end not with the designation 'tantra' or even 'sūtra' but 'yoga'. This would indicate that the earlier versions of these texts were ritual manuals, and that they evolved into the narrative epic form of today's extant tantras. Giebel, "The *Chin-Kang-Ting Ching Yü-Ch'ieh Shih-Pa-Hui Chih-Kuei*: An Annotated Translation," 114.

instructive, given its importance among the early Mahāyoga tantras.²⁰⁶ It is apparent that all these texts were redacted prior to the Mahāyoga movement's taking concrete shape with self-consciousness of the early texts belonging together in ways that were collectively distinct from, and superior to, their immediate predecessor and all other forms of tantra.

The most important of the Mahāyoga tantras for the Tibetans of the early period, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, was most likely not among those earliest tantras to be redacted. It is significant that just subsequent to the first production of that text, however, we begin to see the term 'mahāyoga' being employed in Indian tantric literature with the clear referent of a specific tantric category of literature and practice.²⁰⁷ Although the term 'mahāyoga' does not appear in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* itself, the appearance of this tantra was obviously a turning point for the movement's own identity. Indeed, the tantra is regarded as the central Mahāyoga tantra by all later Ancients histories and lineages, and in fact, describes itself as the summary and summit of all tantras.²⁰⁸ The core concepts of the Mahāyoga tradition both as described by Pelyang and as understood by the later tradition of the Ancients—the indivisibility of the two truths, the mind as the foundation of all things,

²⁰⁶ An almost complete annotated manuscript copy of the *Guhyasamāja* was found among the Dunhuang manuscripts, and references to it abound in the Dunhuang literature. ITJ 438. In fact, it appears with far more frequency in those texts than does the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, which representation is quite limited.

²⁰⁷ Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet".

²⁰⁸ See, for example, the closing statements of the third chapter in which the tantra explains that its teachings summarize those of the six sages of the six realms as well as all Tathāgata. *Guhyagarbhatantra* Chapter 3: 23. That this tradition of describing the tantra continues is evident in the commentarial tradition. See, for example, Vilāsavajra's *Blazing Palace* ('*Grel ba spar khab*), P 4718: 131a.4-6.

the nonabiding nature of primordial wisdom, and so forth—are fully represented on its pages.

The *Guhyagarbha Tantra* exists only in Tibetan translation; a Chinese translation does not appear to have been undertaken, and no Sanskrit original has been found.²⁰⁹ The *Guhyagarbha Tantra* also was not included in the Dynastic period *lDan dkar ma* catalogue (though this was probably due more to editors unwilling or unable to admit representatives of the newer tantric forms). The great majority of its associated literature exists only in Tibetan, and of this, the earliest extant Indian commentary are attributed to late-eighth century exegetes such as Buddhaguhya, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vilāsavajra. For these reasons, though it is very difficult to provide a precise date for the first Sanskrit redaction of the earliest version of the text, it most likely appeared in written form sometime during the mid-eighth century.²¹⁰

The *Guhyagarbha Tantra* describes two *maṇḍalas* of forty-two peaceful deities and fifty-eight wrathful deities, and the text can be divided into two halves according to these differing *maṇḍalas*. The tantra is extant in three versions, commonly referred to as the

²⁰⁹ Despite the controversy in later centuries among followers of the Modernists, surrounding assertions of its Indian provenance, the *Blue Annals* asserts that there was a Sanskrit copy of the *Guhyagarbha* available in Tibet in the eleventh century. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 163.

²¹⁰ Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 69. Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet". Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra". Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*.

short, middle, and long versions.²¹¹ The longer versions contain at their core the chapters of the short version. They also extend the content of the short version's chapters on the wrathful deities of the *maṇḍala* to a much greater extent than they do with the peaceful deities. For example, the long version of the tantra includes only twelve additional chapters on the peaceful deities, but forty-six additional chapters on the wrathful deities.²¹² Therefore, it is the first half of the tantra which remains relatively unchanged no matter the version, and indeed Weinberger has offered the suggestion advanced by Nathaniel Garson that the first half of the short version—that dealing with the peaceful *maṇḍala*—is the oldest layer of the text.²¹³ I have been able to locate only passages from the short version of the tantra in Pelyang's works. Of these passages, all but one belong to the first half of the tantra, the final citation having been taken from the short version's concluding chapter.²¹⁴ Thus, it appears that Pelyang may have had access only to the short version. Indeed, it is the short version which enjoyed the greatest circulation in Tibet, was used as the basic text for most Indian and Tibetan commentary, and is even now regarded as the root text, or *mūla-tantra*, by all Ancients lineages.²¹⁵ For these reasons, and because of its particular relevance to the present study, the following discussion relates only to that version.

²¹¹ The *rGyud gsang ba 'i snying po*, the *sGyu'-phrul bzhi bcu pa*, and the *sGyu-'phrul brgyad bcu pa*, respectively. NGB. vol. 14.

²¹² Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 56.

²¹³ Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 235.

²¹⁴ Pelyang's citations are taken from Chapters Two, Three, Five, Nine, and Twenty-two.

²¹⁵ Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 57. Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 276.

With the appearance of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, Mahāyoga doctrine takes a sharp turn from the Yoga tantras and the earlier Mahāyoga tantras. Several aspects of its opening statement underscore its innovative character.

Thus, at the time of this explanation, the Tathāgata, genuinely perfect buddha and transcendent lord, was endowed with great rapture which is the identity of the indestructible body, speech, and mind of all the tathāgatal of the ten directionl and four times. This is the nature in which all of them without exception, none excepted and omitting none at all, are indivisible, without distinction or difference.

In the abode of Akaniṣṭha, without extremes or centre, on the radiant wheel of pristine cognitions that is the limitless ground, there is his celestial palace, blazing forth with jewels of pristine cognition, completely uninterrupted throughout the ten direction of space, fashioned as a square because it is vast in measureless enlightened attributes, and adorned with projecting bays of precious gems which are the superior pristine cognition. Its spire is the pristine cognition central to all, in which all maṇḍalas of the buddhas of the ten directions and four times without exception are not distinct from one another and are of a single essence. This inconceivable pristine cognition is extraordinary in its different details of shape, colour and so forth, which form the precious gems of pristine cognition.

The palace is superior and immeasurable in extent. ...These are indeed contained within (the celestial palace), without outer and inner (distinctions) in all respects.

Therein, on a lion throne of fearlessness, and elephant throne of power, a horse throne of miraculous abilities, a peacock throne of power, and a bird throne of unimpeded nature, on seat of precious gems endowed with solar and lunar disks of natural inner radiance, and with untainted lotuses, is the buddha-body without front or rear. In all directions his visage radiates penetratingly, and he is endowed with the major and minor marks. In every inconceivable (world-sytem) he appears universally as diverse buddha-body, speech and mind. His two legs of skillful means and discriminative awareness assume the posture of the ascetic disciple of equanimity. His hands, which are the six pristine cognitions, are endowed with blazing hand-implements or seals of precious pristine cognition; and he has three heads, which are the inconceivable buddha-body, speech and mind.

These novelties, known as “marvels” in the exegetical material, are the subject of much Tibetan exegesis. The introductory phrase, “Thus at the time of this explanation...” rather than the standard phrase, “Thus I have heard...,” serves to set the tantra itself apart from other *buddhavacana*, or buddha-voiced, literature, in that it is no longer subscribing to the classic literary convention in which a disciple such as Ānanda, or in later tantra Vajrapāṇi, relates an encounter scenario with a Buddha that provides the context of a sermon. The *Guhyagarbha Tantra*’s first words put the teachings directly before recipients of the tantra without any intermediary narrator. The opening scene also divorces the tantra’s initial teaching from the customary situation in which a buddha reveals the truth in historic India, under the canopy of a beautiful garden, or in a gorgeous palace set in a pure land by instead setting the teachings in a timeless moment, cycling through its telling infinitely in a nonlocalizable environment synonymous with primordial wisdom itself.²¹⁶ This universalization of the time and place of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*’s teachings, as well as the dismissal of the classical intermediate narrator, is mirrored in Pelyang’s own works, which include descriptions of the indwelling, spontaneously arising mind in place of any historically confined setting, and which describe reality directly from the perspective of a nonabiding primordial wisdom.

The identity of the main speaker of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* reflects shifts in Indian tantric literature as well. As the tantras developed, in the identity of the central deity

²¹⁶ The first chapter of the tantra sets the scene thus: “In the abode of Akaniṣṭa, without extremes or centre, on the radiant wheel of pristine cognitions that is the limitless ground, there is [Samantabhadra’s] celestial palace, blazing forth with jewels of pristine cognition, completely uninterrupted throughout the ten directions of space, fashioned as a square because it is vast in measureless enlightened attributes, and adorned with projecting bays of precious gems which are the superior pristine cognition.”

was a constant site of negotiation and dispute. In the early tantras, such names as Vajrasattva, Vairocana, Vajrapāṇi, and so forth are often used interchangeably to refer to specific speakers within the tantra's main narrative. With the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi tantra* (ca. 630-640), Mahāvairocana first appears as a meta-buddha, the primordial wisdom out of which all appearances arise. Even as late as the late eighth-century, characterizations of this figure as expansive and abstract were still being promoted. In one such characterization, Vairocana is contrasted with Mahāvairocana as being merely a Form Body emanated from the latter, cosmic buddha.²¹⁷ A century later, however, a further step in the development of this bifurcation of manifestation and source seems to have been taken. In another *Tattvasaṃgraha* commentary, by Ānandagarbha (late ninth century), Vairocana is still cast in the role of manifest, enlightened form, but Mahāvairocana has evolved to a position of even deeper and more significant foundation, as it comes to be identified with the nondual mind from which even the buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves emerge.²¹⁸

As part of these negotiations regarding the central buddha's identity, there were the issues involving the buddha families, populating the *maṇḍala* described in the tantras. The three-buddha family system, common to the earliest strata of Buddhist tantra, is comprised of the Tathāgata family headed by Śākyamuni or Mañjuśrī (and later Vairocana), the lotus

²¹⁷Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 332. Weinberger quotes a commentary by Śākyamitra on the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (late seventh century) to make this point. Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament, De kho na nyid bsdu pa'i rgya cher bshad pa ko sa la'i rgyan*, P3326 (Toh. 2503), vol. 70, 189.1.1–vol. 71, 94.2.6. As per Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 244.

²¹⁸Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 246.

family headed by Avalokitsvara, and the vajra family headed by Vajrapāṇi. These families are endowed with collective characteristics. The Tathāgata family is situated at the top of the hierarchy, as its members are the traditional buddhas and bodhisattvas. The lotus family follows, comprised as it is of originally non-Buddhist, peaceful deities. Finally, the vajra family occupies the lowest position as made up of originally non-Buddhist, wrathful deities. Out of this system emerged the five-buddha family system with the addition of two more families, headed and named variously depending on the text. The five-buddha family system held each family to be on par with the others, but was subsequently overtaken by a six-family structure in which the five buddha families are subservient to the ultimate sixth family. These latter developments are characteristic of the Mahāyoga tantras and the *Guhyagarbha* in particular, and were attended by a shift in power from the peaceful Tathāgata family to the wrathful vajra family, now headed by the blood-thirsty Heruka.

With the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, we also see the role of the central divinity expand to include its capacity as source and foundation not only for all ordinary appearances and divine emanations, but also for all phenomena. In addition, portrayals of the central deity in specific iconographic Form Body appear with far less frequency. That central divinity is consequently given new appellations that are often more like descriptive phrases than names. Whereas the earlier tantras had regularly depicted Vairocana and Akṣobhya as their central speakers, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*'s teachings are initially given by “the Tathāgata endowed with great joy” (*de bzhin gshegs pa dgyes pa chen po*), though this figure later reappears as Heruka.²¹⁹ Throughout the tantra, teachings are delivered by the

²¹⁹ *Guhyagarbhatantra* Chapter One: 332.

full array of assembled tathāgata or, for example, “the Tathāgata himself purposefully convers[ing] with the Tathāgata himself.” In the sixth chapter, the Dharmakāya gives the teachings wordlessly by means of his Buddha Body itself.²²⁰ The second chapter of the tantra employs an equally innovative method to the first of imparting the teachings: they are given by the indivisible *yab-yum* pair of female buddha Samanatabhadrī and male buddha Samantabhadra in sexual embrace.²²¹ Later in the tantra, this pair is also referred to with the type of descriptive phrases used in the opening chapter, and as the most inclusive pair of dichotomies possible, that of agent and object.²²² As Samantabhadra, the male agent, joins with his consort, the female object Samanatabhadrī, subjective awareness penetrates its objective sphere, and the two are as one in nonduality, a hallmark of Mahāyoga doctrine.

Though Pelyang asserts that the central deity is ultimately the nonlocalizable, universal source of wisdom, he does not follow the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in its creative nomenclature for the divine. His works also lack any reference to the *yab-yum* pair of supreme deities or to the wrathful Heruka, such as appear in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. Instead, Pelyang refers to individual, male deities with standard tantric names. For example, he portrays Vajradhara as the central deity to the project of becoming a *vidyādhāra*, characterizing that deity as a specific being with the agency to act on behalf of suffering beings.²²³ This portrayal corresponds with David Snellgrove’s observation that

²²⁰ *Guhyagarbhatantra* Chapter Six: 17.

²²¹ *Guhyagarbhatantra* Chapter Two: 437.

²²² Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet".

²²³ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers, Question 44. *Lamp of the Mind*.

the appellations Vajrapāṇi and Vajradhara are often used when a particular, individual deity is being discussed. The *Guhyasamāja* is a relevant example of this, as Vajradhara serves as a main speaker in the tantra, while Mahāvairocana is portrayed as an abstract being who serves as the source of illusory appearances.²²⁴

Pelyang also parts with the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* when describing the more universal nature of buddhahood by calling it Vajrasattva, or ‘Adamantine Being’. However, despite the absence of this term in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*,²²⁵ Pelyang’s use of the name Vajrasattva mirrors what we find in many of the other Mahāyoga tantras. Where a more abstract and universal image is sought in those tantras, the name Vajrasattva is commonly used, especially in those contexts calling for a peaceful depiction of the deity. In fact, historically, as the tantras moved beyond their early focus on specific iconographically identifiable deities to concentrate on the abstract nature of reality, Vajrasattva became an extremely common deity, eclipsing the previously prominent Vairocana and the later Mahāvairocana, and indeed all those deities which might be found in the exoteric Mahāyāna literature.²²⁶ Vajrasattva is the central deity in the majority of Vimalamitra’s Mahāyoga commentary, in which Vajrasattva is the deity to whom the author pays homage. He is also the central deity in a Mahāyoga treatise from Dunhuang,

²²⁴ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, 131.

²²⁵ And, indeed its unclear usage in the *Guhyasamāja*, where ‘vajrasattva’ seems to be a mere epithet rather than an iconographical identification. *Ibid.*, 132-33.

²²⁶ A notable exception to this use of the appellation Vajrasattva is Jñānamitra’s version of the story of King Dza, in which Vajrasattva acts, more or less, as a specific deity in passing on the knowledge required for interpretation of the *Guhyagarbhatantra*. Garson, *“Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra”*.

ITJ 508, in which the opening homage is also paid to Vajrasattva, and in the homage of the word-by-word commentary to the *Thabs kyi zhags pa*, ITJ 321 / P4717, both of which are important early Mahāyoga texts.²²⁷ Sūryaprabhāsimha's eighth-century *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary, the *dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa rgya cher bshad pa'i 'grel pa*,²²⁸ describes the teachings as that which evoke and clarify all that is hidden and secret within the heart of Vajrasattva.²²⁹ The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga tantra*, another mid-eighth century Mahāyoga tantra, describes Vajrasattva's transcendent role in the following way:

All the infinite objects

Of the spacious expanse

Are the sameness and variety of reality's expanse.

Glorious in the expanse of total space.

Vajrasattva is ever present.²³⁰

Thus, we see that Pelyang's usage of the term Vajrasattva, though it differs from the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, parallels other generally coeval Mahāyoga literature.

Questions regarding the individual versus the universal identification of the tantric deities are, in fact, paramount for Pelyang. His *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* opens with just such a question—who or what is the Vajrasattva?—to which he answers:

²²⁷ See P4723, P4725, P4732, P4738, P4742, P4746, and P4777.

²²⁸ P 4719.

²²⁹ *ston pa rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs la gnas pa'i don gab cing sbas pa thams cad 'byin cing gsal bar mdzad pa'i tshig thams cad brjod par byed pa nyid do/* P4719: 212b.1

²³⁰ *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* Toh 366-367. As per Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 679.

Unoriginated, the spontaneously [arising] expanse of primordial wisdom,

Unchanging, indestructible—that is the definition of ‘vajra’.

With a mind of adamantine primordial wisdom,

Having acted for the benefit of beings, Vajrasattva is defined.²³¹

Pelyang here asserts that Vajrasattva, while possessing supreme, universal qualities, is also defined by his acting for the benefit of beings, and it is this agency which lends the figure a clear iconographic aspect. However, Pelyang’s later characterizations in the same text unambiguously emphasize Vajrasattva’s identity with the vajra mind and the intrinsic nature of all the Tathāgata, and claim that Vajrasattva is the very foundation of the manifest emanations of all buddhas.²³² These depictions resemble those of Mahāvairocana in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Guhyasamāja*. In another text, the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang pays homage

[To] the Master of the Adamantine Body, Speech, and Mind

Of all the Tathāgata,

To the Enlightened Mind of the Great Vajrasattva

In which all phenomena is complete.²³³

Taking the universal identity of Vajrasattva further, in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* Pelyang describes Vajrasattva as the intrinsic nature not only of all buddhas,

²³¹ *skye myed ye shes rang gi dbyings/ myi ‘gyur myi shigs rdo rje’i don/ sems ye shes rdo rje ste/‘gro don rdo rje sems dpar bshad do/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers, Question 1.*

²³² *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers, Question 2.*

²³³ *Lamp of the Mind.*

but also of all beings and even of all phenomena. Here we are introduced to a new term for the divine: Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva.

What does it mean that Vajrasattva is “the intrinsic nature of all beings and phenomena?”

All phenomena and beings without limit,

Are of one flavor in the unoriginated, ultimate expanse.

Therefore, that itself is the reality of the Conquerors of the three times and

The sphere of Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva.²³⁴

This is similar to descriptions of Samantabhadra in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and other Mahāyoga tantras. In fact, in passages such as this in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, in which he evokes this final sense of the deity Vajrasattva as the intrinsic nature of all things, Pelyang uses both the names Vajrasattva and Samantabhadra seemingly interchangeably.

The figure Samantabhadra is present in the Yoga tantras, particularly in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, where the term is used both to identify the leader of the Tathāgata family and as an epithet for supreme enlightenment. However, the appellation is also used throughout the *Tattvasaṃgraha* seemingly synonymously with Vajrasattva, Vajrapāṇi, and Vajradhara.²³⁵ Descriptions of Samantabhadra find their most mystical form of expression in tantric literature only after the development of the Mahāyoga tantras in the emergence of

²³⁴ *rdo rje sems dpa' ni 'gro ba kun dang chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin yin no zhes bgyi ba'i don ci lta bu lags/ chos rnams thams cad 'gro ba mtha' dag ni/ skye myed don dam dbyings su ro gcig pas/ de nyid dus gsum rgyal ba'i chos nyid de/ kun tu bzang po rdo rje sems dpa'i ngang/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers, Question 3.*

²³⁵ Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet".

a new tradition in Tibet, *Great Perfection*. In a commentary from Dunhuang on the *Rig pa'i khu byug* belonging to the Great Perfection tradition, for example, the ascendancy of Samantabhadra is explained:

In all the tantras, it is stated that Vajrasattva is the chief of all yoga, but here Kun-tu-bzang po [Samantabhadra] is mentioned as the chief. What is the significance of this?

It is thought that Vajrasattva is mentioned when it is about seeking a desired goal and when there are different grades in the achievement. But here one does not seek any kind of goal like that. Taking into account this fact, Kun-tu-bzang po is even more suitable. This is very clear to those who are intelligent enough.²³⁶

This increasingly abstract character of the single central deity, and especially under the name Samantabhadra, may not have been fully complete when the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* was redacted, and thus the tantra may represent an intermediate stage between the active, sexualized image of the *yab-yum* pair of Samantabhadra and Samanatabhadrī and the mystic figure of Samantabhadra which is found in Great Perfection texts almost exclusively, mentioning as it does both the *yab-yum* pair and the single deity.²³⁷ The presence of both Samantabhadra and Vajrasattva in Pelyang's works, in addition to the prevalence of his characterizations of the central deity (whomever that might be) as thoroughly transcendent and foundational for all phenomena, would seem to place his works in the same historical strata as the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*.

²³⁶ ITJ 647 II. As per Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 46.

²³⁷ Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 29, fn. 46.

Pelyang's usage of the term Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva for the supreme deity appears to have been relatively uncommon. The only other example of this term I have been able to find in the Mahāyoga tantric material is in a commentary by Vimalamitra, entitled *Shi ba'i lha rgyud*, in which homage is paid to Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva.²³⁸ It bears mention that this latter text, as its title suggests, deals with the forty-two deities of the peaceful *maṇḍala* in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. Though in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* Pelyang pointedly denies any particular benefit to engaging in either peaceful or wrathful deity practice, this apparent connection between the peaceful *maṇḍala* of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and the figure of Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva fits with Pelyang's own focus in his *Lamp of the Mind* on those early chapters of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* which describe the peaceful *maṇḍala*.²³⁹ In Pelyang's case, the Vajrasattva suffix may serve as the term 'Bodhisattva' did when appended to a deity's name, indicating here that Samantabhadra is a tantric deity of the highest order, rather than identifying one being, Samantabhadra, with another separate being, Vajrasattva.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ P 4772.

²³⁹ Tanaka Kimiaki has remarked on the presence among the Dunhuang liturgical material of manuals which deal only with peaceful deity practices and others describing only rites centered on the inhabitants of the wrathful *maṇḍalas*. Tanaka Kimiaki, "A Comparative Study of Esoteric Buddhist Manuscripts and Icons Discovered at Dun-Huang," *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989* 1 (1992): 276.

²⁴⁰ There is an ancient tradition of glossing the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* phrase "ma lus mi lus lus pa med pa" as belonging to three separate forms of the divine including both Vajrasattva and Samantabhadra. It is described in the opening invocatory passage of kLong chen Rab 'byams pa's fourteenth-century commentary on the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, the *Phyogs bcu mun sel*. According to this commentary, the three buddha bodies—*dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*—are equated with Samantabhadra, the five buddha families, and Vajrasattva, respectively, and described with the terms *ma lus*, *mi lus*, and *lus pa med pa*. *Phyogs bcu mun sel*, 2.1-7.1. As per Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 313-14. However, this passage from Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* displays no familiarity with this set of

Despite the presence of general trends in the use of particular deity names in tantric literature as described above, the mere presence of a single name in any one text does not prove a particular tantric affiliation, however, nor does it place the particular work temporally with any great certainty. In many of the Mahāyoga tantras, as we have seen, the names of Vajrasattva, Vajrapāṇi, Vajradhara, Samantabhadra and so forth frequently are used interchangeably. Furthermore, there is seldom a clear trajectory exclusive of other usages in the development of these names, as even those figures whose presence is characteristic of the early tantras continue to appear in later tantras, either in the homage, as the central deity in one of several *maṇḍalas* that might be described in a single tantra, or as a speaker or central actor in the narrative.

A second, and perhaps more telling, iconographic element to these texts is their enumeration of the various buddha families. The move from classification of three buddha families as is found in the central Kriyā tantra, the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi Tantra*, to five families as is most common in the Yoga tantras, and then to six, with the sixth being represented by a supreme being such as Vajrasattva or Samantabhadra, provides another clue to the history of the tantras' development.

The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa Tantra*, one of the earliest tantras, is organized based on a three-family system.²⁴¹ In the Yoga tantra the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, there are mentions of both the three families and the five families. This first transition to a standard set of five

correspondences, nor any correspondence between the buddha bodies and Vajrasattva and Samantabhadra.

²⁴¹ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, 190.

families generally placed the buddha Akṣobhya at the center of the *maṇḍala* and transferred Vairocana, who had been central in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi Tantra*, to a satellite position in the east.²⁴² The five-family scheme is first articulated in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, and becomes standard in subsequent tantras, in effect eclipsing the earlier three-fold family system.²⁴³ The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* includes references to three families, but is organized around a five-family scheme. However, it also includes occasional mention of six families. This final elaboration to six families in the Mahāyoga tantras apparently was not yet complete in the early to mid-eighth century during the initial redactions of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. This is true of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* as well, as it also contains references to five and six buddha families, though it uses a different name for the sixth supreme deity compared to the *Guhyasamāja*.²⁴⁴ As the Mahāyoga tantras emerge and the six families becomes standard, Samantabhadra or the *yab-yum* pair of Samantabhadra-Samanatabhadrī moves to the center of the *maṇḍala* and takes up position as leader of the sixth buddha family.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Snellgrove David Snellgrove, "Categories of Buddhist Tantras," in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci*, ed. G. Gnoli and L. Larcioni, *Seie Orientale Roma Lvi*, 3 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il medio ed esteimo uniete (?), 1988), 1364.

²⁴³ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, 195. Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 130.

²⁴⁴ Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 241. The first chapter of the *Guhyagarbhatantra* describes five families within the *maṇḍala*, and the sixth chapter describes the "six sages" (*thub drug*) surrounding the Samanatabhadrī-Samantabhadra pair who are described as "subject and object" (*byed pa dang bya ba*). *Guhyagarbhatantra* Chapter Six: 7.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 290.

Using this general timeline, we can begin to see more plainly Pelyang's place in the stream of the historical development of tantric doctrine. It is interesting to observe, however, that it does not line up exactly in accord with the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. Pelyang mentions a five-fold lineage several times while failing to mention a sixfold lineage at all. In all of these discussions but one, the author speaks of the five as though that were the standard enumeration. In his *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Pelyang refers to the set of five buddha families thus:

What does it mean to teach that the five Primordial Wisdoms are the five (Conqueror) lineages?

Unoriginated primordial wisdom is equal to the expanse of reality, and

Its distinct attributes appear as fivefold.

Just those [appearances] are the defining characteristics of the five Primordial Wisdoms.

Those skilled in expedient means teach them as the five Conqueror lineages.²⁴⁶

And later:

The five lineages of the Conquerors and so forth,

And all the seals of expedient means without exception,

Are of one flavor in the adamantine Reality Body.

They are not as they appear, however [variously] that might be.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ *ye shes lnga rigs lngar bstan pa'i don ci lta bu lags/ skye myed ye shes chos kyi dbyings dang mnyam/ de'i yon tan khyad par lngar snang ba/de nyid ye she lnga'i mtshan nyid de/thabs la mkhas pas rgyal ba rigs lngar bstan/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers Question 4.*

²⁴⁷ *de ltar rgyal ba gcig bsgoms pas/gcig nyid ma yin kun gyi ngang/rnal 'byor rig pa 'dir ldan na/bder gshegs ma bsgoms gang yang myed/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*

From the above, we can see that Pelyang qualifies the standard assertion of five lineages as mere expedient means and as the mere appearance of multiplicity where there is actually only Oneness.

In the *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang refers to two sets of lineages as erroneous, one of four and one of five.

As for *Māyājāla* primordial wisdom,

The assertion of the sixteen [moments] as twofold,

The assertion of the transition of the four into two, and

The assertion of the four and five [buddha] lineages

Are said to be supreme forms of darkness

Because they [mistakenly] view [wisdom] as something to be conceptualized in discrete [moments, lineages, wisdoms, and so forth].²⁴⁸

Pelyang thus seems to be critiquing the overall literal understanding of the outer tantric systems. It might be guessed that he is referring to the Ubhayā tantra classification, as the set of four families is traditionally attributed to that class of tantra.²⁴⁹ The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra* represents this four-fold system, with Sarvavit at the center of its *maṇḍala*, and four buddhas organized around him.²⁵⁰ The *Tattvasaṃgraha* also contains a similar *maṇḍala*, with four buddhas, each leading a group of bodhisattvas

Question 6.

²⁴⁸ *sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i ye shes la/ bcu drug gnyis su 'dod pa dang/ bzhi dang gnyis su gnas 'gyur 'dod/ rig pa bzhi dang lngar 'dod pa/ rang rang rtags pa'i don mthong phyir/ mun pa'i rab mchog yin zhes brjod/ Lamp of the Mind: 283b.*

²⁴⁹ NSTB, vol. 2: 129.

²⁵⁰ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, 197.

gathered behind him in the four corners of the *maṇḍala*. Thus, such a rendering of the buddha families as four-fold may have been attributed to the Yoga tantra tradition as well.

Pelyang presents these sets of four and five buddha families as standard in the above passage, while simultaneously disavowing any belief in the illusory appearance of multiplicity, whatever its number. As he does in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, he here promotes the idea that the root and essential identity of all appearances, even of the divine lineages of buddhas, is spontaneously arising primordial wisdom.

Pelyang does not mention six families explicitly, nor does he refer to an ascendant, wrathful Vajra family as does the Mahāyoga literature which utilizes a six-family structure. It is therefore difficult to say that Pelyang was writing with an awareness of a tradition of six buddha families. However, Pelyang's remarks regarding the number of buddha families might be seen as indicative of the type of thinking that eventually codified the enumeration of six families. In those tantras that support such a scheme, the sixth family is not simply inserted into the panoply as another equal group, but rather it represents and leads the other families as a whole, and the leader of the sixth family may even be said to embody the other buddha figures. Given that Vajrasattva or Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva is the central buddha figure for Pelyang and that his characterizations of the supreme buddha match those works which assert a sixth family, the similarity between his works and those later Mahāyoga tantras with six buddha families cannot be denied. It might be surmised that Pelyang was writing at a time when the development of a sixth buddha family was in its infancy and perhaps not yet fully articulated as such, as it must have been during the final redactions of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in the mid to late eighth century. It is also

clear that the rise of the central wrathful deity goes unrecognized in Pelyang's *maṇḍalic* cosmology.

These innovations regarding the depiction of ultimate enlightenment in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* clearly were part of the Mahāyoga movement's coming to label itself as such. Shortly after the appearance of this tantra, we begin to see the term 'Mahāyoga' used in the Indian commentarial literature to refer to a specific tantric system, holding itself apart from, and superior to, Yoga and other tantric systems such as Kriyā and Ubhayā tantra.²⁵¹

Subsequent to the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, several other tantras were produced that are now classed as Māyājāla in the later *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections. These further elaborated and intensified the earlier tantras' advocacy of (Buddhist) violence on the part of its main deities in the soteriological service of subduing and converting heretical beings, and brought to the fore the sexualized figure of the *yab-yum* pair of deities with more direct and intricate imagery. Little work has been done on these texts, and in particular on those seven texts which are considered by the later tradition to be satellite or explanatory tantras to the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, and which contain innumerable passages borrowed directly

²⁵¹ There does not appear to be any historical interpretation of the differences between the tantras in the early Indian or Tibetan tantric commentary. Neither Yoga nor Mahāyoga tantric innovations are described as new, and conversely, the lower or outer forms of tantra do not seem to have been disparaged as older. Jacob Dalton asserts that the four-fold system of Kriyā, Yoga, Mahāyoga, and Atiyoga tantras is a Tibetan phenomena. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries." It appears that the categories of Kriyā and Caryā tantras were created simultaneously with, and perhaps even in the service of, the emerging distinction between Yoga and Mahāyoga tantras in the mid- to late-eighth century by tantric authors such as Buddhaguhya.

from the core tantra.²⁵² This smaller subset of the Eighteen Mahāyoga tantras are also referred to as the Māyājāla tantras. All the eighteen share several common elements: a five-buddha family structure, mentions of the three meditative stabilizations by which the *maṇḍala* is generated, and an emphasis on sexual rites of empowerment.²⁵³

Pelyang uses the term Māyājāla five times in his *Lamp of the Mind*, in addition to quoting from and mentioning by name its central text, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. In one such instance, he refers to the “Māyājāla tantras” (*sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i rgyud dag*), but it is not clear from the rest of these passages whether Pelyang is referring to a particular tantric set or more generally to the tantric tradition informed by these texts. He also fails to mention any group of eighteen authoritative texts. What is clear is that for Pelyang the terms Māyājāla and Mahāyoga are synonymous. Jacob Dalton has surmised that these eighteen texts most likely emerged out of a “common social and literary ‘matrix’,” making the distinction between texts and tradition less important than it might otherwise be.

Once the tantras that were later classed as Mahāyoga had been produced, at least in their germinal form, a categorizing intention emerged in the commentarial literature. As noted above, the term *mahāyoga* begins to appear in Indian treatises ascribed to mid-eighth century authors, not the least of whom is Buddhaguhya, who is so heavily quoted in Pelyang’s own work. Unfortunately, most of the early Indian Mahāyoga commentaries

²⁵² Dan Martin, "Illusion Web: Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," in *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History*, ed. Christopher Beckwith (Bloomington, IN: The Tibet Society, 1987), 188.

²⁵³ Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," 11.

available to us are extant only in the form of their Tibetan translations.²⁵⁴ The translation dates of these texts are as uncertain as the dates of many of their translators. The historical provenance of most of these texts is not provided in their colophons, and the purported dates for their origins are often unreliable due to the lack of corroborating texts or any other anchoring historical data. Thus, using Mahāyoga commentaries alleged to be of Indian origin in order to arrive at a date for the emergence of the Mahāyoga movement itself or to arrive at a definition of eighth-century Indian Mahāyoga is a precarious route on which to embark. However, they are among the little bits of historical evidence we do possess, so in the absence of better clues, we must take them as instructive.

Vilāsavajra, or Līlāvajra (sGeg pa rdo rje),²⁵⁵ is among the earliest of these Indian Mahāyoga authors, and one of the few for whom we can establish a reliable timeframe—of the late eighth century.²⁵⁶ Sixteen works, all in the *rgyud 'grel*, or tantra commentary, section of the Peking bsTan 'gyur, as well as a single work in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, are attributed to his authorship, and these include both general exegetical works and root commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* itself.²⁵⁷ His influential commentary to the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* names three distinct classes of tantra—Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga—

²⁵⁴ These commentaries comprise volumes 82 and 83 of the Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka.

²⁵⁵ Ronald Davidson argues that the correct rendering of the Tibetan translation sGeg pa'i rdo rje is Vilāsavajra. Davidson, "The Litany of Names of *Mañjuśrī*: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti*," 6, fn. 18.

²⁵⁶ Līlāvajra is said to have translated Buddhist tantric texts in India with rMa rin chen mchog when the latter was working in India, probably subsequent to his ordination in 779. Davidson 1981: 7, fn 19.

²⁵⁷ This latter group includes P 2413, 2577-2580, 2773, 2867, 4545, 4564, 4718, 4738, 4741, 4744, 4745, 4748, 4763, 4768, and 4791 from the Peking canon, and Tb.422 Volume 20 (wa), Text 8/ Kaneko Catalogue: Tk1.195 from the mTshams brag edition of the *Ancients rgyud 'bum*.

but omits any mention of Mahāyoga.²⁵⁸ However, in the most important and well-known of his works, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary entitled *The Blazing Palace* ('*Grel pa spar khab*),²⁵⁹ he lists Kriyā, Mūṇi (meaning 'Conqueror', i.e. Yoga), and Upāya (meaning 'Method') tantras as belonging to distinct tantric classes. Samten Karmay has pointed out the fact that the third of these, the Upāya tantras, are equated with Mahāyoga in another, generally coeval treatise attributed to Padmasambhava, the *Garland of Views* (*Man ngag lta ba 'i phreng ba*).²⁶⁰ The term is also equated directly with Mahāyoga in a treatise from Dunhuang, ITJ 508.²⁶¹ Indeed, Līlāvajra explains that the representative tantra for this final class of Upāya tantras is the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, which "completes and joins the aims of all the tantras, their causes and their effects."²⁶² Thus, it is safe to say that this commentary identifies Mahāyoga as the third and ultimate class of tantra. Pelyang also uses the term Upāya (Tb: *thabs*) synonymously with the term 'Mahāyoga'. However, his use of the term appears in a passage borrowed directly from Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, an even older source than the *Blazing Palace*.²⁶³

²⁵⁸ *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti-ṭīkā* P 3356: 31b2. As per Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 125, fn. 27.

²⁵⁹ P 4718. Nathaniel Garson provides an explanation for this translation. fsGarson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 10, fn. 9.

²⁶⁰ Karmay 1988: 165.

²⁶¹ *rnal 'byor chen po nang pa thabs kyi rgyud kyi tan tra las kun kyi nang nas bsdus pa 'i lus tshad/* ITJ 508.

²⁶² *thams cad kyi don dang rgyu 'bras tshang zhing 'brel pa*. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 125-26.

²⁶³ The *Blazing Palace* is not without its controversies, however. The fact that this commentary relies upon a distinction generally thought to have arisen much later than the eighth century—the mother/father tantra distinction—causes some scholars to place this commentary in the tenth century or later. Pelyang does not discuss tantras in this context.

At least one Mahāyoga text, the *Devījālamahāmāyā-tantra-nama*,²⁶⁴ is said to have been translated by both Vilāsavajra and rMa Rin chen mchog, and the latter is said to have translated Vilāsavajra's *Blazing Palace* commentary. If true, the two must have worked together in India in the late eighth century following rMa Rin chen mchog's ordination in 779, which helps place Vilāsavajra firmly within the late eighth century.²⁶⁵ Gö shyön nu pal relates that Vilāsavajra taught Buddhajñānapāda "many Kriyā and Yoga tantras" including the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* and the *Guhyasamāja* while the latter was studying with him in Oḍḍiyāna.²⁶⁶ His *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* was translated into Tibetan by Nyak Nyanakumara,²⁶⁷ who is said to have been Pelyang's own teacher. Ronald Davidson also points out the many references to *yoginī tantras* in his *Blazing Palace*, which is long prior to the earliest commentary on that class of text for which we have reliable dates.²⁶⁸ Vilāsavajra also is said to have taught the Māyājāla system to Buddhajñānapāda. As is clear from these brief biographical notes, the prominent Mahāyoga master was equally famed for teaching tantras that were considered by the later Mahāyoga tradition to be inferior systems, such as Kriyātantra, and for having taught them simultaneously with a Mahāyoga curriculum.

Certainly the Indian Mahāyoga exegete most important to the late Tibetan cultural imagination is the eighth-century figure Padmasambhava. He is one of the few Indian

²⁶⁴ mTshams brag edition of NGB: Tb.422 Volume 20 (wa), Text 8.

²⁶⁵ Davidson, "The Litany of Names of *Mañjuśrī*: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*," 6-7.

²⁶⁶ Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 367. NSTB: 464.

²⁶⁷ PTT v.67 251.3.4 As per Davidson, "The Litany of Names of *Mañjuśrī*: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*."

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

authors whose commentarial work on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* remains extant.²⁶⁹ The *Garland of Views* (P 4726) is a commentary to the tantra's thirteenth chapter, in which an ambiguous passage appears to categorize various religious views into nine groups based on realization.²⁷⁰ In seeking to explain this passage, the work also serves as a doxography, structured by nine categories of Buddhist and non-Buddhist views and vehicles.²⁷¹ The colophon to a recently published edition attributes the text to Padma 'byung gnas, or Padmasambhava,²⁷² and the Tibetan history of Padmasambhava, the *Pad ma dkar po'i rdzing bu*, describes him teaching the text to "ordinary disciples."²⁷³ The relatively early redaction of the *Garland of Views*, whether the text was actually written by Padmasambhava, is attested by the several citations of the work in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*.

²⁶⁹ We have not mentioned here Sūryaprabhāsimha's *rGya cher bshad pa'i 'grel pa* (P4719) is also a root commentary on the *Guhyagarbhatantra*. However, this work's authenticity has been called into question due to the overt reference to later Great Perfection ideas, as well as to his use of the term 'Anuyoga', which appears only much later in the Dunhuang materials, and to his citation of the works of Vilāsavajra himself. As per Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 128-29, fn. 35. Though Sam van Schaik has asserted the possibility that Sūryaprabhāsimha was a teacher of Pelyang, his primary evidence for such being the case is based on an unfortunate misreading of the text. van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection," 193. Thus, his relevance to our inquiry into the state of Indian Mahāyoga prior to Pelyang's lifetime is extremely limited, if not practically null.

²⁷⁰ *lma rtogs pa dang log par rtogs/ /phyogs rtogs yang dag nyid ma rtogs/ 'dul ba dgongs pa gsang ba dang //rang bzhin gsang ba'i don rnam ni//yi ge sgras btags ming tshogs la//brten pa'i tshig gis rang mtshon te/ Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 13: 192.1-3.

²⁷¹ The term *theg pa*, or 'vehicle', occurs in the opening lines of the text, but nowhere does the text mention nine vehicles as a group. Rather, the first six categories are called vehicles, and the last three are called *tshul*, or 'methods'.

²⁷² Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 138.

²⁷³ *Padma dkar po'i rdzing bu*: 75. As per Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 233, fn. 22.

Jacob Dalton has characterized the text as representing the historical transition from Indian to Tibetan doxography, as Padmasambhava is assumed to have authored the text in his mother tongue and then to have translated it in order to present his system to Tibetans.²⁷⁴ As with Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind*, the *Garland of Views* enumerates the three lower Buddhist vehicles of *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*, before launching into descriptions of the higher Buddhist teachings, the tantras. These are again as in Pelyang's doxography, Kriyā, Ubhayā, and Yoga tantra, and again, they are described in similar terms. The description of the final three systems, which the author calls 'methods', is the only site of significant difference from Pelyang's work. In the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng pa*, the Yoga tantra is divided into two groups, the outer and inner, which resembles Pelyang's division, though in the latter source, Yoga tantra is relegated entirely to the outer tantra category. In the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng pa*, the inner Yoga tantric practices are further divided into three types of ritual, those which employ: 1) development techniques; 2) perfection techniques; 3) and great perfection techniques.²⁷⁵ In the first type of Yoga practice, the practitioner performs the three meditative stabilizations, generating the *maṅḍala* meditatively. In the second, s/he regards the *maṅḍala* and its inhabitants as illusory. Finally, in the third type of technique, the tantric practitioner sees a more fundamental and primordially extant nonduality between appearance and emptiness. Neither these stages, nor any stages, in fact, are discussed in Pelyang's poems. However, the depiction in the *Garland of Views* of a deepening sense of nonduality as one approaches

²⁷⁴ Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 18.

²⁷⁵ David Germano also sees these as bibliographic categories, dividing an otherwise heterogeneous corpus. Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 236.

the goal of awakening is clearly portrayed in Pelyang's works.

Despite its attribution to Padmasambhava's teachings, we do not have any solid dates for the *Garland of View's* composition. Karmay bases his dating of the text—late ninth to early tenth century—on the fact that it is cited in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* and on the existence of an eleventh-century sub-commentary by Rong zom chos kyis bzang po. Thus, the text may evidence a later development of tantric thought than Pelyang's teachings. This development, mirrored in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, distinguishes between vehicles or meditative traditions based on their various views of nonduality. In *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, Mahāyoga is characterized as trying in meditation to unite the poles of appearance and emptiness, whereas the Great Perfection realizes their inherent nonduality, and thus allows all things to rest in that primordial state without the effort involved in unification. Pelyang's texts display no awareness of this subtle distinction between various views of nonduality, themselves embodying something more akin to the final state of awareness described in the *Garland of Views*.

A second text attributed to Padmasambhava is the *'Phags pa thabs kyi zhags pa zhes bya ba pad ma 'phreng gi don bsdus pa'i 'grel pa*. Two versions are extant: one canonical version (P 4717) and one version found at Dunhuang (ITJ 321).²⁷⁶ The work is a complete commentary on one of the Eighteen Māyājāla Tantras, the *Superior Noose of*

²⁷⁶ Sakai Shiro has published a comparison between the two versions, including the observation that the chapter divisions differ here and there. Shirō Sakai, "Shōhōbenjakurengemanki Ni Tsuite," *Mikkyō Bunka* 66 (1964). The Dunhuang version is the only one which attributes the text to "Padmarāja" and "Sambhava." Eastman, "Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-Huang", 37-38.

Praxis, a Garland of Lotuses ('*Phags pa thabs kyi zhags pa pad mo 'i phreng ba*),²⁷⁷ and mentions the eighteen in its first chapter.²⁷⁸ Kenneth Eastman has dated the text to sometime around or before 770,²⁷⁹ which would place it easily within the historical context in which Padmasambhava is said to have lived. If the text is as old as is currently thought, it must have served, together with the *Garland of Views*, as a vehicle by which Indian Mahāyoga was introduced to Tibet, perhaps contemporaneously with, or shortly prior to, the redaction of Pelyang's works.

The commentary addresses several scholastic issues presented in exoteric Mahāyāna texts, such as the two truths, the ten perfections, and the ten bhūmi, in a comparative context together with the tantric topics of the four samenesses, sudden enlightenment, and so forth. The text does not appear, however, to address these topics with the negative rhetoric or the transcendent philosophical stance that we see in Pelyang's works, or in the Mind Series. A forthcoming translation and analysis of the *Noose of Praxis* commentary by Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer which holds great promise for further illumination of the early stages of Mahāyoga's introduction into Tibet and for greater understanding of the system of thought of Padmasambhava.²⁸⁰

Given how large the figure of Padmasambhava looms in the Tibetan cultural, religious, and historical imagination, it is difficult to envision a time when he was seen

²⁷⁷ P 458. Ancients rgyud 'bum 223.

²⁷⁸ ITJ 321, 2a6-2b1. 'khor dang mya ngan las 'das pa la myi gnas pa'i don do/ /don bsdus pa ni gsung rab bcu gnyis dang tan tra sde bco brgyad la stsogs pa la bsdus pa'o.

²⁷⁹ Kenneth Wheeler Eastman, "Mahayoga Texts at Tun-Huang" (University of California, Berkeley, 1983).

²⁸⁰ Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, "A Critical Edition of the *Thabs-Kyi Zhags-Pa Padmo 'Phreng-Ba* and a Comparative Study of Its Commentary " (forthcoming).

merely as a visiting tantric specialist from India. The hagiographies relating his struggles to subdue and tame native spirits in the service of the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, his occult powers and skill in black magic, and so forth appear to have grown to exaggerated proportions sometime before the eleventh century. There have recently come to light four relatively early sources of information about Padmasambhava: PT 44; ITJ 644, which probably contains an earlier narrative of one in PT 44; PT 307; and the earliest version of the Dynastic history, the *dBa' bzhed*, which may date to as early as the eleventh century.²⁸¹ These texts provide evidence of an increasingly mythologized vision of Padmasambhava in which he subdues and converts demons and demonesses, helps to grant powers to the king, Trisong detsen, hides treasure texts (*gter ma*) for later generations, and achieves other miraculous accomplishments similar to those accounts provided in the later hagiographies.

However, in those areas where these early texts dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries differ from the later, highly mythologized versions of his life, they might provide a more realistic picture of the man. This portrayal appears to include a skill in water works and transformations of the physical landscape,²⁸² which talent fits well with the later narratives involving the physical and religious subjugation of autochthonous spirits. As Jacob Dalton reminds us, “whatever the historical realities of Padmasambhava, his legend

²⁸¹ Jacob Dalton, "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of Iol Tib J 644 and Pelliot Tibétain 307," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 4 (2004).

²⁸² Wangdu and Diemberger, *Dbā' Bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet, Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Tibetan Text*, 14. Dalton, "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of Iol Tib J 644 and Pelliot Tibétain 307," 22-23.

developed along the themes of subjugation.²⁸³ Such themes of subjugation run throughout the bibliographic attributions to Padmasambhava. Texts attributed in various hagiographies and Dynastic histories to his authorship, translation, or transmission uniformly include texts on the *ma mo* goddesses and gShin rje, or Lord of Death, wrathful forms of Mañjuśrī, Hayagrīva, and Phur pa, all wrathful Mahāyoga deities known for their violent actions in the service of Buddhism.²⁸⁴ In these texts, we see the very violent practices and wrathful iconographic forms for which the Mahāyoga movement is now known.

Most germane to the current study of all these Mahāyoga treatises is the *Mārgavyūha*, Buddhaguhya's Mahāyoga treatise which is so heavily cited in Pelyang's *Lamp of the Mind*. Its author, Buddhaguhya, is well-known for his Kriyā and Yoga tantra commentaries, and was considered a great master of tantra in general during his lifetime. While residing at Mt. Kailash, he is said to have been requested by King Trisong detsen to visit the capital to provide teachings to the court, a request which Buddhaguhya answered with the letter described in the previous chapter, the *rJe 'bangs dang bod btsun rnam la spring yig*, and with the gift of several Buddhist texts for the king's reference. His expertise reached beyond philosophical elucidation, however. Ronald Davidson has remarked that Buddhaguhya's most significant contribution to Indian tantric development was to integrate ritual and sacramental elements with mainstream philosophical systems in an attempt to define the newly emerging tantric corpus and practices, thereby making the

²⁸³ Dalton, "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of Iol Tib J 644 and Pelliot Tibétain 307," 24.

²⁸⁴ Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 235.

tantras acceptable to the larger, institutionalized monastic community.²⁸⁵ It may have been this ability of Buddhaguhya's which appealed to the Tibetan king at a time when the adoption and standardization of the tantric teachings was very much on the sovereign's mind. The same type of project of integration of practice and thought was central to Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, making him among the first Tibetans to do so, perhaps with the example of his master's master, the Indian Buddhaguhya.

In addition to these more institutionalized forms of tantra, Ancients histories also claim Buddhaguhya was involved with the transmission and exegesis of the early Mahāyoga material. He is said to have studied the *Guhyasamāja* under Buddhajñānapāda at Nālandā, and other Mahāyoga tantras under Vilāsavajra in Oḍḍiyāna.²⁸⁶ In fact, he is credited with the first translation into Tibetan of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. Ancients histories record the texts he taught during his residence at Mt. Kailash to visiting scholars from Tibet, including works of "secret internal *mantra*" from the Māyājāla cycle and others of his own esoteric precepts such as the *Man ngag rdo rje lam rim*, the *Khro bo'i lam rim*, and others.²⁸⁷ Ancients lineages include him as a teacher of such influential authors as Vimalamitra, Vairocana, and Padmasambhava. In addition to the Kriyā, Yoga, and

²⁸⁵ Ronald Davidson has asserted that Buddhaguhya was little involved with the Māyājāla movement. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 158.

²⁸⁶ Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 175. Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 229.

²⁸⁷ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 157 and 378, fn. 133. Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 229-30. Dan Martin provides the following list of Buddhaguhya's works in the Peking Tibetan canon on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*: P 4722, 4731, 4736, 4738, 4761, and 4762. Martin, "Illusion Web: Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 186.

Mahāyoga commentaries attributed to Buddhaguhya, there is, as mentioned in the previous chapter, a short text claimed by the Great Perfection movement entitled *Small Hidden Grain*, which is said to have been written by a Buddhagupta (Sangs rgyas sbas pa).²⁸⁸

This great diversity of interests and expertise has caused many scholars to doubt whether a single author could have accomplished the full corpus of literature attributed to Buddhaguhya. According to Stephen Hodge, the style of the Mahāyoga works attributed to Buddhaguhya is markedly different from his Kriyā and Yoga tantra exegeses, which has led to the commonly accepted theory that the two types of treatises—the Kriyā and Yoga tantra works and the Mahāyoga—were authored by different men.²⁸⁹ Davidson also asserts that both the texts Buddhaguhya cites and the texts he chose to elucidate in his commentarial works would indicate that his project was primarily to legitimate and institutionalize tantric Buddhism, and that such would problematize his supposed involvement with the then very controversial Mahāyoga and proto-Atiyoga movements. Yet, we do have Māyājāla and proto-Atiyoga works clearly attributed to a Dynastic-era Buddhaguhya, and given that the Ancients histories clearly include him in their lineages of the transmission of these texts, we must take seriously the possibility that his involvement with these less institutionalized movements was simply less well-publicized by the author himself, for which reasons we can guess due to the teachings' very controversial nature. As we have seen in the case of Vilāsavajra, one's interest and training in one cycle of texts does not necessarily conflict with study and writing on other types of tantra. Deeper

²⁸⁸ ITJ 594.

²⁸⁹ Leonard Van der Kuijp first offered this theory. Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, "Notes Apropos of the Transmission of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* in Tibet," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 16 (1992): 124-25, fn. 25.

inquiry into these questions regarding the nature of Buddhaguhya's extant corpus would greatly enrich our understanding of early Mahāyoga tantra.²⁹⁰

The *Mārgavyūha* is a self-described Mahāyoga treatise, which both names and cites the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, though, like Pelyang's texts, without clear attribution. The colophon in the Peking canon's version attributes the work's translation to the man reputed to have been Pelyang's own teacher, Nyak Nyanakumara.²⁹¹ A list of some of the topics addressed in the text reveals its overtly esoteric liturgical focus: the practices of the peaceful and wrathful deities, devotion to Vajrasattva and Samantabhadra, the details of *maṇḍala* and mantric letter practice, and tantric commitments. Buddhaguhya's comments in the *Mārgavyūha* must be among the earliest which use the term Mahāyoga to refer to a specific tantric category, comparing Mahāyoga views and practices to those of Kriyā and Yoga tantra in turn. The work also includes a chapter on Buddhist doxography, and treats such philosophical subjects as the intrinsic nature of *saṃsāra*, the nonduality of the expanse of reality, and so forth. Buddhaguhya's integration in this text of Mahāyoga ritual with philosophy is mirrored in Pelyang's own works, and show the latter's great debt to Buddhaguhya.

²⁹⁰ Steven Weinberger has offered one such text by Buddhaguhya as a possible source for the bridge between the Yoga tantras and the Mahāyoga tantras that Buddhaguhya was attempting to create, and to which his works taken all together bear witness. The text is the *Dharma Maṇḍala Sūtra*, described by Bu tön as a Yoga tantra but which includes explicit sexual references and mention of the sort of *yab-yum* pair we see in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, for example. Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 277.

²⁹¹ 506b.

The *Mārgavyūha* is organized around the stages of the Mahāyoga path. The initial two chapters provide a summary of the Mahāyoga view of reality as well as a brief history of how beings initially come to enter the Mahāyoga path. The second chapter closes with a doxography culminating in an explication of Mahāyoga doctrine. The following five chapters, Chapters Three through Seven, set forth the five Mahāyoga paths. These are the Paths of Great Emptiness (*stong pa chen po*), Great Compassion (*snying rje chen po*), the Single Seal (*phyag rgya gcig pa*), the Elaborate Seal (*phyag rgya spros bcas*), and the Accomplishment of the *Maṇḍala* Clusters (*tshom bu tshogs sgrub*). The eighth chapter elucidates the final stage of practice in Mahāyoga, the perfection stage. Finally, the ninth chapter describes the fruit of the Mahāyoga path, the accomplishment of *vidyādhāra*-hood.

The Mahāyoga view as it is described in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* is not significantly different from Pelyang's. In fact, several of Pelyang's summary statements about Mahāyoga and the Māyājāla are taken from the *Mārgavyūha*. What is remarkable is that these statements are taken only from the first eleven folios, which are within the first two chapters of the text. In fact, all but two of the citations are from the closing doxographical section of Chapter Two. This begs the question: Did Pelyang know only the introductory section of the text, or was he selectively citing only passages which fit his agenda?

In answering this question, we might first dispense with any suspicion that the *Mārgavyūha* consulted by Pelyang consisted of only the first two chapters. The text is consistent in its terminology, and employs throughout the same meter, grammatical structures, style, and viewpoint. Clearly the text was redacted as a piece; there are no

obvious marks of its having undergone any dramatic editing. This leaves us with the possibility that Pelyang had access only to its first chapters. Given the drastic shift in content between the second and third chapters, it is possible that the text circulated as separate texts after its composition. However, because Pelyang's own teacher translated the nine-chapter text, limited access for Pelyang seems unlikely.

Much more compelling an explanation is the one that takes into consideration Pelyang's purpose in citing the *Mārgavyūha*—to rely upon the writings of perhaps the greatest tantra scholar available to Tibetans during the Dynastic era, one who was deeply familiar with a wide variety of types of tantra. While elaborating on Buddhaguhya's vision of Mahāyoga, Pelyang further distanced himself from the latter's emphasis on ritual. That Pelyang borrowed only from the doxographical section and those brief philosophical discussions in the *Mārgavyūha* may also have served his greater purpose in composing his poems in the first place—to advance a new philosophical perspective on ritualistic Mahāyoga, which had just found a budding voice in the works of Indian master Buddhaguhya a few decades earlier.

However much Pelyang might have admired Buddhaguhya and borrowed from his texts, and however seamlessly Pelyang's own characterizations of the Mahāyoga view might merge with those of Buddhaguhya's, there are important distinctions to make between the two authors. Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* is primarily a ritual manual prefaced by an explanatory doxography. Its philosophical speculations are brief and relatively few. Furthermore, Buddhaguhya's project was apparently to transmit teachings regarding proper practice of the Mahāyoga rites. Pelyang differs on both accounts. His

texts eschew ritual description altogether and are comprised in the main of abstract and mystical pronouncements regarding the Mahāyoga view. Clearly, his project was not to advance technological acumen, but to stir his audience to look elsewhere for tantra's special workings.

Vimalamitra (Dri med bshes gnyen), whose ancient histories relate was a disciple of Buddhaguhya's, produced a great number of Mahāyoga treatises, though it appears as though many of the texts attributed to him were done so posthumously.²⁹² It is a testament to the significance of his role in the formation of early Tibetan Buddhism, and to the respect his name garnered, that so many texts were legitimated with the addition of his name as author. Among those works said to have been written by Vimalamitra, there are both Great Perfection texts and several Māyājāla and *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentaries attributed to him. This latter group includes the *Khog gzhung gsal sgron*,²⁹³ *sGyu 'phrul bla ma'i 'grel ba mun sel*, *rDo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i rgyud dpal gsang ba'i snying po zhes bya ba'i spyang 'grel pa*,²⁹⁴ *brGyad bcu pa'i bsdus 'grel*, *Rnal 'byor chen po shes rab spyang 'byed kyi man ngag*,²⁹⁵ *sGyu 'phrul bra'i man ngag rim pa gsum pa*,²⁹⁶ and *sNying po'i 'grel chung*.²⁹⁷ A thorough study of the Vimalamitra corpus has not been done. A

²⁹² Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 245-46.

²⁹³ P 4739.

²⁹⁴ P 4756.

²⁹⁵ P 4725

²⁹⁶ P 4742.

²⁹⁷ P 4755. Dan Martin provides the following list of texts from the Peking canon on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* attributed to Vimalamitra: 4724, 4725, 4729, 4732, 4738, 4746, 4747, 4755, 4759, 4764, 4765, 4769, 4772, 4776, 4777, and 4780. Martin, "Illusion Web: Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 186.

better understanding of this collection would greatly enhance the state of our current knowledge of this pivotal figure.

David Germano has investigated the available biographical and bibliographical materials in an attempt to assign dates to Vimalamitra and to untangle the knots of improbability in those histories. He concludes that Vimalamitra probably arrived in Tibet in the very late eighth century during the final few years of King Trisong detsen's reign or possibly even afterward, during which time he must have served as royal translator and written his Mahāyoga treatises.²⁹⁸ This timeframe may not allow him to have met Buddhaguhya while that master was in residence at Mt. Kailash in his later years, and to have received both the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and its satellite texts from him. It would also preclude him from being a member of the founding group of monks at Samye. However, it would place the tantric scholar much closer to those events which helped shape the later Great Perfection movement. In fact, Germano characterizes Vimalamitra's contribution to Tibetan Buddhism as being balanced between the two poles of proto-Great Perfection and Mahāyoga thought, though the scales may have tipped in favor of the latter, in that Vimalamitra was said to have been more inclined to scholarship and meditative exercise than to the rites and exhibitions of yogic accomplishments. It is remarkable that much of this might be said of our author, Pelyang. Regardless of the number of false authorial attributions, Vimalamitra's direct influence on the transmission of Mahāyoga from India to Tibet would be difficult to overestimate.

²⁹⁸ Germano, "The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying Ma Transmissions," 245.

There is one other ostensibly Indian commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, the *dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa rgya cher bshad pa'i 'grel pa* by Sūryasiṃhaprabhā.²⁹⁹ Little is recorded about this figure. Gos gzhon nu dpal relates that his *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary, translated by Vairocana, was found in Khams,³⁰⁰ though the Peking edition of the text records the translators as Padmaruche and Prasvatala. Gos also tells us that Sūryasiṃhaprabhā taught Nyak Nyanakumara, a disciple of his own student, Vimalamitra.³⁰¹ Because Nyak is said to have been Pelyang's own teacher, this figure appears to be directly related to Pelyang through the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* transmission lineage. There is also a three-folio fragment from Dunhuang of the *lTa ba'i rim pa* by a Sūryaprabhā (Nyi ma'i od),³⁰² which may be the same figure. Dan Martin has posited that this author is the same person who translated the Great Perfection text *Kun byed rgyal po* with Vairocana.³⁰³ Unfortunately, these few pieces of evidence comprise the full extent of our knowledge of this author's life. Evidently, considering both the scholars with whom he studied and translated and the texts he cites in his commentary, Sūryasiṃhaprabhā lived during the same general timeframe as did Pelyang—the late eighth to early ninth centuries—but beyond those general parameters, we cannot arrive at more precise dates for him.

²⁹⁹ P 4719. The Tibetan version of his name given in the colophon to the Peking canon edition is Nyi ma'i seng ge'i 'od, which translates literally to Sūryasiṃhaprabhā. The *Blue Annals* gives his name as Nyi ma'i 'od kyi seng ge and a shortened version of the same, Nyi 'od seng ge, which would be Sūryaprabhāśasimha. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 108 and 58.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 108.

³⁰² ITJ 607.

³⁰³ Martin, "Illusion Web: Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 204, fn. 66.

Sam van Schaik has hypothesized that Sūryasiṃhaprabhā was a teacher to Pelyang himself. In support of this theory, he cites a line in *The Lamp of the Correct View* which appears to mention the Indian master by name, though unfortunately, his argument is based on a mistaken transliteration of the line.³⁰⁴ Van Schaik also points out, however, some interesting conceptual parallels between Sūryasiṃhaprabhā's *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary and Pelyang's own works. These include their emphasis on spontaneous accomplishment, nonduality, and bodhicitta as the intrinsic nature of phenomena, as well as their interest in integrating these philosophical concepts with the practice of Mahāyoga.³⁰⁵ This leads van Schaik to assert that Pelyang was most likely influenced by Sūryasiṃhaprabhā's oral and written commentary.

The term 'mahāyoga' in Sanskritized Tibetan (*ma hā yo ga*) appears in Sūryasiṃhaprabhā's text in doxographical discussions comparing it with the lower sutric vehicles and lower forms of tantra, as well as in general exegetical passages on Mahāyoga thought. These characterizations fit well with Pelyang's own work, in which Mahāyoga is treated as the highest and final tantric form. However, Sūryaprabhāsimha elsewhere in the text compares four forms of Buddhism—Mahāyāna, Yoga, Mahāyoga, and Atiyoga—in which scheme Mahāyoga is only the penultimate tantric system.³⁰⁶ Here, Atiyoga is listed in a context that would seem to lend it vehicular status, given the inclusion of Mahāyāna as a member of that list, though the term vehicle (*theg pa*) is not used. While the term

³⁰⁴ The line reads: dpal ldan thugs kyi dkyil 'khor nyi ma'i 'od stong gis *shin tu 'bar ba'i zer tsam bdag blo mun par byung*. P5919. Van Schaik mistakenly reads *ston* for *stong* in the first line of the passage, thereby mistaking "empty" for "teacher." van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection," 193.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.: 194.

³⁰⁶ P 4719. 219b.1.

Atiyoga had already been used in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga Tantra* in the early eighth century, its appearance there is as a stage in the practice of yoga³⁰⁷ and not as we see here, treated as a separate vehicle. This single phrase most likely places Sūryasiṃhaprabhā's text later, in the ninth or even tenth century, when such usage of the term is commonly seen in the Dunhuang manuscripts. In fact, it is possible that this text postdates Pelyang's work. In any case, though there is similarity in approach, there is no established foundation upon which to assert that Pelyang was a disciple of Sūryasiṃhaprabhā.

Part of the reason for our ignorance regarding the early development of Mahāyoga tantra in India is that there is so little biographical data regarding its innovators there. This type of information, particularly regarding monastic or institutional forms of its development, is sparse perhaps because, as Ronald Davidson surmises, esoteric monks involved in its development were generally uninterested in self-promotion, although he does not provide any evidence to support this claim.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, the development of Mahāyoga is seldom recorded because its practices, by nature, were not open for public observation or official recording, and transmission of its corpus was carefully restricted, at least in the phase of its early development. In fact, the very identity of tantric society depends at least in principle upon such secrecy and the carefully guarded diffusion of its teachings. As a result, what emerges with regard to these figures often appears to be more hagiographical than historical in nature, written as it most likely was long after the figures in question had passed away and with more sectarian than historically-minded aims.

³⁰⁷ van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection," 201.

³⁰⁸ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, 160.

As Tibet opened itself to these and other Buddhist teachings in the eighth and ninth centuries, however, and as the Mahāyoga movement began to spread northward from India, tantric Buddhism was used both as a tool for promoting royal interests as well as for demonstrating individual master's talents and the power of their traditions to the court and to the general public. Although throughout the Dynastic era the royal court maintained relatively close control over the practice and transmission of tantric Buddhism, these activities appear to have continued outside the officially sanctioned institutions. As both Indians and Tibetans carried Mahāyoga tantra across the border into Tibet and promoted its acceptance there, Tibetan Mahāyoga developed its own exegetical tradition. The tradition appears to have flourished to such a degree that by the tenth century, royal limitations and proscriptions by regional kings were issued upon those particular Mahāyoga practices that were considered more socially transgressive or threatening to established order.

Translators and Transmitters: The development of Mahāyoga in Tibet

Mahāyoga, as a specific tantric tradition centering on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, was a vibrant and important tradition in Tibetan cultural areas during the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet during the Dynastic Period, and its legacy remains in the form of a vast literary contribution and enduring and continuing ritual innovations. Mahāyoga tantras began to enter Tibet from India in the middle of the Dynastic Era in the early eighth century. By the beginning of the eleventh century, Mahāyoga practices—specifically, the more transgressive “union and liberation” (*sbyor sgröl*) practices based on Chapter Thirteen of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*—had grown rooted in Tibetan soil deeply enough that they had been explicitly banned by royal decree at least in one part of the empire

transplanted to western Tibet.³⁰⁹ Due in part to these royal proscriptions against various tantric texts and practices, most of which appear to have been part of standard Mahāyoga praxis, and to the political and economic collapses of the Dark Period (842-978), as well as to the plurality of religious practices and affiliations that doubtlessly existed during both the late Dynastic period and the ensuing politically chaotic centuries, the course of Mahāyogatantra's development in Tibet during this interim has been largely obscured to later historians and modern scholars. What is clear is that Mahāyoga as a particular tantric tradition was the prevalent form of tantra during those centuries, not merely a blanket term used for whatever form of Buddhism was considered most prominent at the time, and that Mahāyoga texts and practices played an important role in other Tibetan Buddhist innovations of the period.

Shortly after its first appearance in India, sometime in the mid-eighth century, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* was most likely translated into Tibetan. According to Ancients tradition, the first translation was produced by Buddhaguhya with Vairocana, then by Padmasambhava with Nyak Nyanakumara, and finally by Vimalamitra and his team of

³⁰⁹ lHa bLa ma Ye shes 'od, late tenth and early eleventh-century king of mNga' ris in Western Tibet, issued an edict requesting that all liberation and union practices be abandoned immediately and that true tantric practice be sought by practitioners in India. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 121-23. Samten Karmay, "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-Ma Ye-Shes-'Od," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of H. Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 1979*, ed. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1980). ———, "An Open Letter by Pho-Brang Zhi-Ba-'Od to the Buddhists in Tibet," *The Tibet Journal* 5, no. 3 (1980). ———, "A Discussion on the Doctrinal Position of Rdzogs Chen from the 10th to the 13th Centuries," *Journal Asiatique* 263 (1975).

Tibetan translators, rMa Rin chen mchog and Nyak Nyanakumara.³¹⁰ The smaller constellation of tantras centering on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* which was known collectively as the *Collection of Eight Māyājāla Tantras* most likely had been translated by that time as well.³¹¹ Though there are few extant Indian commentaries on these texts, Tibetan commentaries began to appear almost immediately, and many survive. Clearly, the budding Mahāyoga movement in Tibet had a rich literary focus from its inception, and the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* was an inspiring, seminal text for those involved in its adoption and transmission.

Translating these tantras and their Indian commentaries and ritual texts was a complicated and difficult project, especially for a people who had only relatively recently developed a lexigraphical system.³¹² Texts dating from the earliest period of tantric transmission to Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries display both Sanskritized Tibetan technical terms as well as Tibetan neologisms coined to bear the fullest sense of original Sanskrit terms into a new language. Standardization of Buddhist terms was an obvious priority for the official translators, and a technical Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon, the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (Tib: *Bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen mo*) was quickly created to record

³¹⁰ ‘Jigs med gLing pa’s *Catalogue to the Collected Tantras of the Ancients pa* asserts that the definitive translation of the tantra was the final one, done by Vimalamitra with gNyags Jñānakumara and rMa Rin chen mchog. *sNga ‘gyur rgyud ‘bum rin po che’i rtogs pa brjod pa ‘dzam gling tha gyur khyab pa’i rgyan*. NGB vol 34 no 407. As per Dorje, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 80-81 and 1503. See also Martin, "Illusion Web: Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 187.

³¹¹ van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection."

³¹² Legend attributes the creation of the Tibetan script to Thonmi Sambhota, one of Song brtsan gam po’s ministers.

the suggested translations and transliterations.³¹³ One of the three compilers of the *Mahāvvyutpatti* is said to have been Mahāyogin sKa ba dPal brtsegs. In addition to a standard lexicon, the movement also required a catalogue and categorization of the imported texts. This need resulted in the production of the *IDan dkar ma* catalogue, which sought to provide official translations of those texts which had been authorized for translation by the imperially appointed religious council. Very few tantric terms and texts are included in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* and the *IDan dkar ma* catalogue, though surely translation, transmission, and production of tantric texts continued without official sanction through the end of the Dynastic period and into the dark period, as we shall see.

The first Tibetans to appear in Mahāyoga lineages are those who lived during King Trisong detsen's reign in the last half of the eighth century. These Tibetans often travelled to India to receive teachings and texts from teachers there, to study Sanskrit, to translate, and to escort teachers back to Tibet. Of those figures described in Ancient histories for their contributions to Mahāyoga during this period, most were translators, which further indicates the importance of text creation and translation to the movement.

The Tibetan credited with the earliest translation of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* is eighth-century monk Vairocana, about whose life very little is known, and about whom almost nothing attested is historically verifiable. He is commonly included in *se mi* lists and lists of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples. He also is said in the *Blue Annals* to have translated Sūryaprabhāsīma's *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary, though this is not supported by the colophon in the Peking canon. Outside the Buddhist tradition, he is said

³¹³ P 5832. Also Derge 4364.

to have translated Bon scripture, as well as medical and astrological texts, though these claims are more controversial.³¹⁴ Vairocana is much more important to the transmission of the eighteen Mind Series texts, about which more will be said later in this chapter. In fact, in the modern Ancients history by Dudjom Rinpoche, the biography of Vairocana discusses his contributions to Mind Series transmissions exclusively.³¹⁵ A full account of his life is given in the *Vairo 'dra 'bag*, but as the narrative is interwoven with other threads in the largely fabricated story of the transmission of Great Perfection to Tibet, Vairocana's biography is considered to be more legend than anything.³¹⁶ Very few men involved directly with Mahāyoga transmissions are mentioned in it—I have located only the already very prominent names of Nyak Nyanakumara, Padmasambhava, and Vimalamitra there. Aside from those figures' appearances, there is nothing in this mythic account to suggest that Vairocana had anything to do with Mahāyoga specifically. Dudjom Rinpoche's description of the transmission of Mahāyoga *sādhana* to Tibet includes mention of Vairocana as a practitioner of Malign Mahāyoga *Mantra*.³¹⁷ He is connected with the *Phur pa* lineage through Padmasambhava in one Dunhuang document.³¹⁸ He is also listed in the colophon to another Dunhuang document as translator, together with Śīlendrabodhi and Śākyaprabhā.³¹⁹ Śīlendrabodhi translated three other texts with dPal brtsegs, an important

³¹⁴ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 17-18.

³¹⁵ NSTB: 539-40.

³¹⁶ Samten Karmay has also noted the presence of this account in Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's (1136-1204) *Me tog snying po* and the *sBa bzhed*. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 18.

³¹⁷ NSTB I: 535.

³¹⁸ PT 44. As per Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 34.

³¹⁹ PT 7311. As per *Ibid*.

Mahāyoga translator, but the text from Dunhuang is a Perfection of Wisdom text and appears to have no tantric content. Given the lack of connection in any surviving text between Vairocana's name and the Mahāyoga movement, together with the fact that accounts of his life remain largely legendary, the attestation that Vairocana produced the first Tibetan translation of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* with Buddhaguhya is on uncertain ground, at best. However, as we shall see, the close historical and literary connection between the early Mind Series literature and early Mahāyoga during the Dynastic period may be the cause of the Mahāyoga attributions to Vairocana.

The second great translator of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Tibet was rMa Rin chen mchog. Rin chen mchog studied the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and the other Māyājāla tantras under Vimalamitra and later translated the text with that master. He is also listed as one of the *se mi* and one of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava. He worked on a translation of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra*,³²⁰ and produced more than a dozen translations of sutric texts with dPal brtsegs, Sarvajādeva, and Vidyākaraprabha. Among those Mahāyoga works he is said to have translated are the *Thugs kyi thigs pa*,³²¹ written by Vimalamitra, Vilāsavajra, and Buddhaguhya, and Vimalamitra's *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary, the *dPal gsang ba snying po'i don bsdus 'grel piṅḍārtha*.³²² From the bibliographical evidence, accounts of his involvement with Mahāyoga teachings and texts seems a great deal more reliable than those of Vairocana's.

³²⁰ P 116.

³²¹ P 4738.

³²² P 4755.

Nyak Nyanakumara was the third and final Tibetan involved in official translations of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, both with Padmasambhava, and with Vimalamitra, in what is now considered the standard Tibetan translation of the tantra. Like the other important Tibetan translators of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, Nyak is said to have been among the first Tibetans ordained, as well as among the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava. He translated Vimalamitra's commentaries *gSang ba'i thigs pa'i man ngag gi 'grel pa*³²³ and *Tshigs rkang bcu dgu pa*, and together with Rin chen mchog, translated Vimalamitra's *Guhyagarbha Tantra* commentary, the *dPal gsang ba snying po'i don bsdus 'grel piṅḍārtha*.³²⁴ His translations also include the Māyājāla tantra *rDo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba gsang ba thams cad kyi me long*,³²⁵ Vilāsavajra's Māyājāla treatise, the *sGyu 'phrul dra ba lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes snang ba*,³²⁶ and most significantly in the current context, his translation of Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*. Nyak is said to have studied the *bDud rtsi*³²⁷ and Māyājāla cycles with Padmasambhava, though he is known for having attained the signs of accomplishment from his studies in the Vajrakīla and Vajrāmṛta traditions with Vimalamitra.³²⁸ It is in this lineage of the transmission of Vajrakīla that Pelyang is mentioned, as a direct and early disciple of Nyak's, though no evidence survives of the latter's involvement with the Vajrakīla.³²⁹

³²³ P 4765.

³²⁴ P 4769.

³²⁵ P 456.

³²⁶ P 4763.

³²⁷ *bDud rtsi chen po mchog gi lung* (P 464), and *bDud rtsi thigs pa* (P 4716) are two texts from this tradition in the Peking canon said to have been translated by Nyak.

³²⁸ NSTB: 601-2.

³²⁹ NSTB: 605.

Judging from the sheer number of texts he is said to have translated and revised in the Peking Tibetan canon—nearly one hundred—dPal brtsegs was one of the most prolific Tibetan translators of the late eighth century. He is included in both *se mi* lists and in lists of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava in Ancients histories, and perhaps most importantly for the Mahāyoga movement, is said to have been sent by King Trisong detsen to India to invite Vimalamitra to Tibet. Despite this early association with the important master, he is not credited with any of the translations of Vimalamitra's work.³³⁰ The attributions in the Peking canon indicate that he most commonly translated with two other tripiṭaka scholars, Vidyākaraṇa and Sarvajādeva.³³¹ His interests appear to have been varied, including Vināya, Perfection of Wisdom literature, *dhāraṇī*, and Yoga, Ubhayā, and Mahāyoga tantra. He produced translations of three monumental tantras, the Yoga tantra *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*,³³² the Yoga/Mahāyoga tantra

³³⁰ The other official translator sent by Trisong detsen to invite Vimalamitra to Tibet was lCog ro kLu'i rgyal mtshan. Though more than two dozen works in the Peking canon are said to have been translated by him, none of these were written by Vimalamitra. Most of the translations attributed to kLu'i rgyal mtshan are categorized in the Vināya, sutra commentary, Yogācāra, or Mādhyamika sections of the canon, and only two works—by Sthiramati—are to be found in the tantric commentary section. Like dPal brtsegs, kLu'i rgyal mtshan is also quoted in the Chan section of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. The passage relates advice given by him to King Trisong detsen. *phyi nang gi chos 'di dag snang yang snang / mthong yang mthong / shes kyang shes la de ltar rnam par rtog pa ste gcig // phyi nang gi chos sgyu ma lta bu yod 'zhin / rang bzhin med par shes pa dang / ri bong rwa dang / mo gsham gyi bu lta bu chos med par shes nas / de ltar rnam par mi rtog pa dang gnyis / rnam par mi rtog pa zhes bya ba sa dang 'dra ba dran pa med pa ma yin te gsum / de ltar khong du chud na don dam pa zhes bya ba gzhan du btsal du med de bzhi / 'di bzhi dus gcig tu skad cig ma la bsgom du rung zhes gsungs / STMG: 149.1-4.*

³³¹ Sarvajādeva, also known as Sarvajñādeva, evidently was a Korean monk who was invited by King Trisong detsen to Tibet from India. NSTB: 515.

³³² Stephen Hodge, *The Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra,³³³ and the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.³³⁴ He also contributed as an editor to the compilation of the *Mahāvīyutpatti*.

At least two of the six works in the Peking canon attributed to dPal brtsegs, the *lTa ba rim pa bshad pa*³³⁵ and the *lTa ba rim pa'i man ngag snang ba bcu bdun pa*,³³⁶ discuss in doxographical terms the distinctions between the tantras of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga, and call them ‘vehicles’ (*theg pa*). For this reason, attribution of these works to his authorship has been controversial. dPal brtsegs’s works are quoted several times in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*’s chapters on Chan³³⁷ and Great Perfection,³³⁸ and in Ögyen lingpa’s *Ka tang de nga* in the section on the Simultaneists which borrows directly from *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*.³³⁹ However, the only Mahāyoga reference to him in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* occurs in the annotations, which were most likely not written by Nup himself.³⁴⁰

There are a great many other translators who are mentioned much less often than these, who also appear to have contributed to the development of Mahāyoga in Tibet, but about whose lives almost nothing is recorded. bSod nams rgyal mtshan, who was the primary translator of Vilāsavajra’s works, also himself authored a commentary on the

³³³ Tadeusz Skorupski, *The Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra* (Delhi Motilal Banarsidass 1983), xxiv.

³³⁴ Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 102.

³³⁵ P 5843.

³³⁶ P 4728.

³³⁷ *STMG*: 132.2-6; 151.6-152.5; 153.3-4.

³³⁸ *STMG*: 406.2.

³³⁹ Ögyen lingpa 1997: 463-464.

³⁴⁰ These notes call dPal brtsegs a ‘mantra master’ (*sgnags kyi dge bshes*). *STMG*: 200.6.

*Hevajra Tantra*³⁴¹ and translated another on the practices centered on Heruka,³⁴² both of which focus on the wrathful aspect of the central deity. Another of Vilāsavajra's main translators, rDo rje grags, translated four texts on Vajrabhairava,³⁴³ who is a wrathful manifestation of Yamantaka.

Although it may be obvious, it bears remarking that these translators are not revered by the Ancients tradition merely for their scholarly erudition, but rather the stress in their hagiographies is instead on their reputed supernatural yogic abilities. However exaggerated these reports might be, their very existence points to the dual role their religious careers were expected to fulfill, both scholastic and practical. In order for a translator to have been given permission to engage in the academic translation of an inner, secret tantric text, he first must have obtained permission to access the text and to receive oral teachings on its hidden meaning from the text's author or a respected exegete. According to these accounts, obtaining that access and receiving the teachings often took years, during which time the student engaged in intense religious practice and ritual, and underwent tests of accomplishment and realization. Thus, the seemingly straightforward task of crafting a Tibetan version of an Indian text often was not a merely intellectual achievement, but involved great effort in meeting and creating relationship with the master such that one might be entrusted with his or her precious knowledge. Although accounts of imbibing glowing iron shards and flying with *ḍākinī* are most likely later embellishments,

³⁴¹ P 2417.

³⁴² P 2391.

³⁴³ These are the tantra *Śrī-vajramahābhairava-nāma* (P 105), a *sādhana* by Mañjuśrīghoṣa, the *Vajrabhairavaikānanadvibhujasādhana nāma* (P 2839), Ratnākaraśānti's *Vajrabhairavagaṇacakra-nāma* (P 2848), and Amoghavajra's *Mahāvajrabhairavahomavidhi-nāma* (P 2850).

these translators were certainly tested as to their understanding of the teachings and required to display signs of their realization. It is wise to bear in mind that the list of works translated by these men does not reflect the sum total of their engagement with Mahāyoga. In fact, in the case of several of these scholar-adepts, they also wrote their own commentary or treatises, and many had their own disciples to whom they passed, in turn, the greater system represented by individual texts. This system includes liturgical and iconographic information, as well as the protocol for initiatory, sacramental, and devotional rites. In short, the texts are our only remaining clues to the much richer religious world in which Mahāyoga was studied, adopted, and propagated, and by which it in turned evolved.

The Mahāyoga Practice

In addition to the tantras and their commentary, there are also a great many texts describing tantric rituals and meditative praxis, describing the main phases of practice such as how to set up the ritual space, propitiate the tutelary deity, and engage in the meditational manifestation of oneself as that deity. These *sādhana* texts describe in detail the stages of the practice, as well as the implements to be used, the outline and inhabitants of the *maṇḍala*, the manta letters and their efficacy, initiation into the practice, and so forth. With the appearance of the first Mahāyoga tantras in the late eighth century, two elements begin to emerge in the Tibetan ritual manuals of the time: the sexualization and progressive interiorization of the rites.

In his analysis of these texts, Jacob Dalton sees three periods of Mahāyoga ritual development.³⁴⁴ The early period, beginning in the early eighth century, is characterized by the preeminence of the Yoga tantras. With the Yoga tantras, the object of propitiation and the site of one's practice are both moved inward, as the deity is seen to be one's own self and one's own body is both altar and object. Out of these Yoga tantras, the Mahāyoga tantra movement begins to emerge in the second half of the eighth century, coinciding with the redaction of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* and its translation into Tibetan. This intermediate stage, dominated by Mahāyoga development, is characterized ritually by its focus on both physical and psychophysical anatomy, especially sexual anatomy, and the increasing interiorization of the rites of the buddification of the practitioner as the subtle body becomes the very mechanism for achieving realization. Finally by the early ninth century, the later Mahāyoga tantras begin to appear. By the turn of the tenth century, the Mahāyoga canon and its rites as well as the Anuttarayoga tantras are fully formalized, with a newly developed technology of subtle-body manipulations involving winds, channels, and drops.³⁴⁵

From his texts, we can see clearly that Pelyang was writing during a period in which the preeminence of the Yoga tantras was beginning to give way to the dominant role of Mahāyoga, and thus at some point in time past Dalton's first stage. Furthermore, Pelyang's works lack any mention of the later subtle body practices that characterize Dalton's third stage. For these reasons, Pelyang's work seems to fit firmly within Dalton's

³⁴⁴ Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries."

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

intermediate stage, comprising the last half of the eighth and the first half of the ninth centuries. Indeed, as this was the most fertile period for innovations in Mahāyoga ritual, it makes sense that an author like Pelyang would seek to address questions regarding those innovations, promoting in the process his own view regarding their primacy, efficacy, and meaning. However, as we shall see, while Pelyang's texts might be situated chronologically within this period, they bear little resemblance to the majority of Mahāyoga texts from the intermediate period of Mahāyoga development found at Dunhuang.

Throughout the development of the Mahāyoga tradition, Dalton observes, this “tantric interiorization of Buddhist ritual was not a rejection of ritual. Nor was it a psychologization; it did not reduce ritual, ‘to the spiritual state of the faithful practitioner’.”³⁴⁶ Rather, tantric ritual continued to be central to the practice and understanding of Mahāyoga throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, and the definition of Mahāyoga itself was both driven and inspired by these transformations.

As we have seen in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Pelyang shares in this view of the benefit of tantric ritual to some extent. He states clearly that the mind will grow steady and powerful by the very fact of “possessing meditative stabilization, secret *mantra*, *mudrā*, and rites (*cho ga*)”³⁴⁷ accompanied by the correct view. Elsewhere in the same text, he states:

³⁴⁶ Ibid.: 2.

³⁴⁷ *gsang sngags phyag rgya ting 'dzin cho gar ldan/ /bsgoms bsgrub myi gtong yid ring mthu ldan 'gyur/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 42.*

A wise person possessed of such realization

Clearly cultivates the three seals of marks in meditation.

While persevering without distraction and never abandoning [the practice],

Employing all the rituals, s/he will approach the wisdom deity.³⁴⁸

Given Pelyang's exhortations regarding the importance of ritual, and his mentions of both *mudrā* and *samādhi* practice, some familiarity with these two tantric organizing structures will provide the necessary background to understanding our author's acknowledgement of their function as well as his final dismissal of their ultimate necessity.

1) Seals

The four seals, or *mudrā*, were used as a set of criterion early in Buddhist thought to determine whether a particular teaching was Buddhist. Those tell-tale characteristics effectively marked, or “sealed,” the teaching with the stamp of Buddhist truth. However, Pelyang's mention of the “three seals of marks” in the above passage is clearly a tantric one. In esoteric systems, the term *mudrā* was a polyvalent term, referring to hand symbols used in meditative practice, to consorts in sexual yoga, and to the deities thereby generated. Yoga tantras advocated a variety of schema involving the progression of three or four stages of *mudrā* practice. Those were taken up by the Mahāyoga movement in turn, and reinterpreted to fill the new requirements of that tradition. Throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, stages of *mudrā* praxis were central to descriptions of deity yoga in both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra literature.

³⁴⁸ 'di 'dra'i rtogs dang ldan pa'i blo can gyis//mtshan ma'i phyag rgya rnam gsum gsal bar bsgom//g.yeng ba myed par brtson zhing myi gtong la//cho ga kun ldan ye shes lha dang nye/ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 13.

In Yoga tantra, the stages of deity generation were marked by four *mudrā* practices. According to one such system, the *mahāmudrā* is the stage in which the practitioner's body is first seen as that of the tutelary deity. The *dharmamudrā* marks the generation of a mantric letter envisioned atop a moon disc at the practitioner's heart. In the *samayamudrā*, the practitioner's body is meditatively adorned with the royal ornaments of the deity. Finally, in the *karmamudrā*, the practitioner's body takes on the characteristic postures and activities of the deity.³⁴⁹ These four stages, or four similar stages, were the main system of deity generation in Yoga tantra during the eighth and ninth centuries.

The Yoga tantra program of the four *mudrā* was adopted by the Mahāyoga movement as well. An example of the way in which the four *mudrā* commonly were given particular Mahāyoga significance can be seen in an untitled Dunhuang Mahāyoga treatise, ITJ 419.³⁵⁰ In that text, the four *mudrā* are radically glossed in the context of sexual yoga. There, the *mahāmudrā* is equated with the real nature of self, the *bodhijñāna*, and the “vajra path,” while the *samayamudrā* is equated with the realm of Prajñāpāramitā, the *dharmadhatu*, and the “three-cornered space.” Interlinear notes further equate the *mahāmudrā* with the “*ling ka*” and the *samayamudrā* with the “*ba ga*,” namely the male and female sex organs, respectively. Their interaction in the meditative ritual is further clarified by the glosses of the remaining two *mudrā*. The *dharmamudrā* is equated with

³⁴⁹ For examples of Dunhuang documents describing these stages, see ITJ 447, 39a-b and ITJ 656.16-20. As per Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," 6. Dalton points out that at least two different interpretations of these *mudrā* stages of practice are evidenced in the Dunhuang literature, but that all of them refer to four *mudrā* stages and describe the same general progression of meditations.

³⁵⁰ Eastman, "Mahayoga Texts at Tun-Huang".

emanation and (re-)absorption, and the *karmamudrā* with bodhicitta. The latter term is commonly used as a polythetic term in tantric texts denoting, among other things, seminal fluid. Following its gloss of these terms, the text reads, “The vajra path strikes in the circle of space, and since they are as if dual, light rays are emitted. . . .”³⁵¹ From this we can see that what had been merely a contemplative exercise in taking on the regal appearance and divine agency of the tutelary deity in Yoga tantra has now become a fully sexual interaction between the practitioner as deity and his consort (or imaginary consort, as the extent to which this ritual was enacted is not made clear in the text).

The first of the four *mudrā*, the *mahāmudrā*, was deeply developed and in later centuries took on unique and highly complex functions. In this very early Mahāyoga example from Dunhuang, however, the term refers to the practitioner’s own body as it is transformed into the deity, and to that moment in which the full power and agency of that deity becomes his own. Elsewhere in ITJ 419, the term *mahāmudrā* is used to signify another ritual moment in which a spirit tamed in the ritual to become the practitioner’s servant begins to behave as he is commanded by the practitioner, who is acting as divine Lord.³⁵² Although in this case it is portrayed without the accompanying sexual dynamic, once again, we see the term *mahāmudrā* signifying the site and time of the full assumption of divine agency and subjectivity.

The *mahāmudrā* is of particular interest to us here, as Pelyang entertains a fairly detailed discussion on the topic in his *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. In Question 34,

³⁵¹ ITJ 419, IVd. As per Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid., 29.

the question is posed: “How ought one to view the appearance of one’s own body as the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) and the *maṇḍala* of one’s own meditative stabilization?” In other words, how is one to integrate one’s own seemingly real, physical body within one’s meditatively cultivated, and thus seemingly illusory, *maṇḍala*? Pelyang answers:

Because one’s physical body and the Great Seal alike

Are aspects of the mind, the body as such does not exist.

Though the emanations of the *maṇḍala* will bend and laugh,

Because they are aspects of one’s meditative stabilization, they are one’s own mind.

Though mind and the characteristics of its aspects are indistinguishable,

When the appearances of self and other are of exactly equal rank,

There is no asserting, “My own body is chief!”

Everything is [one’s own] body. Everything is seen as [one’s own] emanation.³⁵³

Later in the same text, Pelyang also associates attainment of the Great Seal with the ultimate accomplishment of highest *vidyādhāra*-hood.³⁵⁴ In neither of these cases is there anything to suggest that Pelyang is referring to a particularly sexual divine agency, as in the Dunhuang *sādhana* text above. Rather, for Pelyang, the stage of *mahāmudrā* merely appears to refer to one in which the practitioner has attained the full, dynamic agency of a buddha. This corresponds most closely with earlier characterizations of the *mahāmudrā*

³⁵³ *‘byung ba’i lus dang phyag rgya chen po yang sems kyi rnam pa yin phyir lus nyid myed/ /dkyil ‘khor sprul pa dgyed cing bkod pa yang/ /ting ‘dzin rnam pa yin pas bdag gi sems/ /sams dang rnam pa’i mtshan nyid dbyer myed la/ /bdag dang gzhan snang rnam par go mnyam na/ /bdag lus gtso bo ‘di zhes gzhas tu myed/ /kun kyang lus yin thams cad sprul par blta/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 34.*

³⁵⁴ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 48.*

one finds in the Yoga tantra tradition. However, Pelyang urges his interrogator to go beyond mere physical identification with the divine being to a transcendent state of utter oneness with Mind itself—and thus, with everything. The practitioner is indeed the deity, the *maṇḍala* is arrayed, and its residents appear fully animated, but all is as easily absorbed back into mind as it was initially emanated, and it is this latter point that is underscored by Pelyang. What had been a central focus—the divine body—is now surpassed by the doctrine of Sameness.

The only other specific reference to seals in Pelyang’s work is his reference to the three *mudrā* in the above-cited passage from the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. He may have meant by this the three generations of the marks of Body, Speech, and Mind of a buddha via *mahāmudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, and *samayamudrā* respectively, a system common to both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra.³⁵⁵ The term ‘seal’ (Skt: *mudrā*; Tib. *phyag rgya*) in this case is applied to describe their ‘sealing’ or securing a particular aspect of divine identification—physical, aural/oral, or mental—engendered in the practitioner during the meditative practice.

Another possibility is that these three are the coarse, subtle, and elaborated seals generated in stages three and four of the five yogas, also common to both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra of the period. A single, coarse deity is generated, followed by the subtle deities of the whole *maṇḍala*, and finally all the emanations of the central deity are generated. This system is clearly described in the *Mārgavyūha*, lending even more weight

³⁵⁵ For a later example, see the section on drawing the *maṇḍala* in Chapter Eight of mKhas grub rje’s doxographical work on the tantras, the *rGyud sde spyi ’i rnam par bzhag pa rgyas par brjod*. Toh 5489: 290.

to this theory. However, because Pelyang is almost studiously vague in his references, we cannot say with certainty which system he was intending.

2) Meditative Stabilization

Closely resembling the stages of *mudrā* practice are the various sets of three meditative stabilizations (Skt. *trisamādhi*, Tib. *ting nge 'dzin gsum*), which comprise the whole process of Yoga tantra deity generation, the generation stage of deity yoga in Mahāyoga, and later in a modified way, the perfection stage in Mahāyoga as well. Different versions of the three can be found in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, the *Guhyasamāja*, and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra*. The first and third of these tantras are claimed by the Yoga tantra tradition, and the latter two also are claimed by the Mahāyoga tradition.

In the Yoga tantra tradition, the most common terms given for each of the three *samādhi* are: 1) the Yoga of Insight into Great Emptiness (*shes rab stong pa chen po'i rnal 'byor*); 2) the Yoga of Method, Illusion [out of] Compassion (*thab snying rje sgyu ma rnal 'byor*); and 3) the Yoga of Coarse and Subtle Seals (*phyag rgya phra rags rnal 'byor*). This set of three was later expanded to that of the five yogas through the addition of a fourth—the Yoga of the Elaborated Mudrā (*phyag rgya sgros bcas kyi rnal 'byor*)—and a fifth—the Yoga of the Clusters of *Maṇḍala*.

As in the case of the four *mudrā*, the newly emerging Mahāyoga utilized Yoga tantra's three *samādhi* in its own practice of deity yoga, closely mirroring the specific practices entailed therein. In several Dunhuang *sādhana* texts explicating the Mahāyoga practice of deity yoga, three stages of *maṇḍala* generation via meditative stabilization are

described.³⁵⁶ According to those texts, the first of these practices, the Meditative Stabilization of Suchness (Skt. *tathatā samādhi*; Tib. *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*), is a meditation on emptiness, which is the expanse of reality. Out of that emptiness, the practitioner meditatively cultivates a clear moon disc in the stage called the All Appearing Meditative Stabilization (Skt. *samantāloka samādhi*; Tib. *kun tu snang gi ting nge 'dzin*). A syllable is then generated, out of which one or more deities is caused to appear in the stage called the Causal Meditative Stabilization (Skt. *hetu samādhi*; Tib. *rgyu 'i ring nge 'dzin*). All these are performed in order, and finally each appearance is reabsorbed in reverse order back into emptiness. Although not all the Dunhuang texts employing this type of terminology list all three meditative stabilizations by these names, these texts taken together clearly promote a threefold system of visualizing the deity, and in fact, the three are commonly mentioned as a set therein, even in cases where the individual members of the list are not provided. The three meditative stabilizations consistently appear in the first half of the *sādhana*, which comprises the generation stage (*skyed rim*) of the practice of deity yoga.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a few references in Pelyang's corpus to specific meditative stabilizations. These indicate that our author may have been

³⁵⁶ These three *samādhi* appear in several Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang, including ITJ 436, ITJ 437, ITJ 579, ITJ 716/1, PT 626, and PT 634. Although ITJ 436 calls the three meditations (bsgoms pa), they are clearly the same practices as the three *samādhi*, and even their names bear close resemblance. This alternative terminology is supported by the *Mārgavyūha*, in which the three meditations are enumerated as those of *de bzhin nyid*, *kun tu snang*, and *rgyu 'i*. *Mārgavyūha*: 475b3-4. In one of the Dunhuang texts listed above, ITJ 579, both the system of the four *mudrā* and the three *samādhi* are mentioned. ITJ 454 and ITJ 508 both mention a list of four *samādhi*, which may have included the original three plus one more.

writing in reference to one of the several rubrics of three *samādhi*. However, it is not clear which, if any, rubric he is drawing upon. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* contains a single reference to the “Meditative Stabilization of Suchness,”³⁵⁷ the precise term used for the first of the three Mahāyoga *samādhi*. Later in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* there are two references to “symbolic meditative stabilization.” This term suggests that Pelyang was referring to the type of practices that make up the second and third *samādhi* in both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra, in which an appearance of the deity is generated. The *Lamp of the Mind* mentions “yogic meditative stabilization” (*rnal ‘byor ting ‘dzin*) in a discussion of the Ubhayā and Yoga tantra systems.

The *Lamp of Method and Wisdom* includes the most extended discussion of meditative stabilization in any of Pelyang’s works. There, Pelyang explores the interrelated issues of the method of acting through compassion and the realization of illusory appearance.

When one is aware of such a method of Dharma,

Universal compassion toward all those who are unaware is generated.

Having generated such compassion, one practices meditative stabilization
on the illusory nature [of appearances].

Thereby, one teaches all manner of skillful practices to benefit [others].

What is the intention of the buddhas?

It is to meditate in accordance with the nonabiding intrinsic nature of mind.

What is [their] boundless compassionate endeavor?

³⁵⁷ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 18.

It is to emanate in accordance with the meditative stabilization of yogic skillful means.³⁵⁸

It seems clear from this discussion that Pelyang is describing the second of the Yoga tantra *samādhi*, the Yoga of Method, Illusion [out of] Compassion. Without naming that *samādhi* in so many terms, he clearly describes the workings of that stage of practice, and plays on the meaning of the individual words included in the name for that stage.

In summary, then, we have some general references, and two specific references, each belonging to a different schema of the *trīsamādhi*. It appears that Pelyang may have been familiar with at least two versions of the three, and perhaps with both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra versions. Indeed, the *Mārgavyūha* from which Pelyang quotes so extensively, is organized into nine chapters, the middle five of which are entitled with the names of the five Yoga tantra yogas. The second of those is the *thabs snying rje sgyu mar nal 'byor*. This might explain Pelyang's use of that term himself. However, as discussed previously, Pelyang only quotes from the first two chapters of Buddhaguhya's work, and not at all from the middle five chapters. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Pelyang was referring to any of these particular lists of *samādhi*, or to any program of progressive *samādhi* at all. No mention is made in any of his works of either generation or perfection stage meditations as such, or to the other two or three stages of meditative stabilizations known to us.

There is a text which might provide a clue to the background of Pelyang's thought, however. ITJ 579 is a complete ritual manual based on the *Sarvadurgatiparīśodhana*

³⁵⁸ *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom.*

Tantra. While it utilizes the three *samādhi* set commonly employed by self-described Mahāyoga texts, it also describes the central practice in terms of the four Yoga tantra seals, and in terms of the types of practices that are characteristic of Yoga tantra. Though there is no indication that Pelyang used the *Sarvadurgatiparīśodhana Tantra*, this manual's use of both Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra schemes suggests fluid exchange between the two systems.

3) Initiations, Consecrations, and Vows

Other elements of the practices of the early Mahāyoga movement which we see commonly described in the Dunhuang and canonical materials, such as tantric initiations, ceremonies of consecration, and the observance of vows, receive little to no attention in Pelyang's work. Aside from some brief mentions of rites in general and of the purificatory rituals he deems characteristic of the lower forms of tantra, Pelyang avoids specific reference to ritual activities. In this, his work is not only uncharacteristic of the early Tibetan Mahāyoga literature, it is remarkably unusual.

Perhaps the most important of the Mahāyoga rituals in this early period of Mahāyoga development is the initiation called the *shes rab ye shes dbang*, which Jacob Dalton has asserted as central to the development of Mahāyoga ritual. Following the reabsorption of the *maṇḍala* into emptiness at the end of the generation stage of his or her deity yoga, several Dunhuang Mahāyoga texts describe a second stage of practice, the *rdzogs rim*, or completion stage, in which the teacher engages in sexual yoga with a partner. This culminates in a moment of great bliss generated by the withholding of

orgasm, out of which the *maṇḍala* once again emerges, though this time spontaneously. The *maṇḍala* is then worshiped and dissolved in the concluding orgasm. Following this, a consecration of the mix of seminal fluid and cervical mucus is offered to the disciple. Later utilized as an initiatory rite only, this consecration of the disciple by the teacher of his or her own sexual fluids first appears in the Dunhuang literature as part of regular deity generation practice. The rite is duplicated when the disciple performs the ‘self consecration’ after engaging in the above completion stage practices with his or her own partner.³⁵⁹ Jacob Dalton has shown how this final ‘supreme bestowal’ constitutes the most innovative element of early Mahāyoga ritual.³⁶⁰ It is noteworthy that neither this, nor any, initiation is ever mentioned by Pelyang.³⁶¹

Likewise, the topic of the tantric vows and their controversial relationship with the Mūlasarvāstivādin vows, the mainstream monastic vows adopted at Samye with the first ordinations,³⁶² receives not a word of acknowledgement from Pelyang. In the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, he merely asserts that for one who has relinquished all attachment to self, keeping the vows becomes an irrelevant and unnecessary exercise.

³⁵⁹ Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries."

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid. The term *shes rab ye shes spyan*, or ‘eye of insight primordial wisdom’, appears only once, in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, but appears to have no relation to the initiation. *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 41.

³⁶² The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, one of the earliest Buddhist sects in India, has been used in Tibet from the first ordinations in the eight century to the present day.

Sameness, Spontaneity, and Transcendence: The Mahāyoga view

Though the majority of early Mahāyoga literature from Dunhuang deals with the practical aspects of real, structured praxis, such as those described above, there are a few texts which also systematically set forth the view of Mahāyoga tantra. These texts tend either to focus on the text of a particular tantra or to be based on one particular tantra's teachings in general. The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* is the most commonly discussed tantra in the Dunhuang material, though the Māyājāla and its central text, the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, also were used as exegetical foundations.

As we have seen in the corresponding iconography, Yoga tantra literature promotes its views through the symbol of the *maṇḍala*, inhabited in all corners by deities, with a single deity in the center, while Mahāyoga tantra literature tends to do so through *maṇḍala* at the center of which is the image of the central deity conjoined with his consort, the *yab-yum* pair. The yoga, or 'yoking', which occurs through their union involves the fusion of a primary dyad made up of the subjective, active, male method with the objective, passive female wisdom. In achieving a deep level of union in meditation between these two poles, the practitioner is able to see reality wholly, without the bias of a view polarized by the dichotomization of subject and object. A wide variety of pairs are subsumed within the central one, including the pairs of buddha and beings, of deluded and awakened states, of ultimate and conventional truths, of outer and inner, and of cause and effect, among others.

As a result of these equations of Sameness, all phenomena are asserted to be the spontaneous appearance of primordial wisdom (*ye shes rang snang*), and with no more individual characteristics than the sky. A commonly used term in these texts is 'one flavor'

(*ro gcig*), which signifies that all phenomena are of a single essence in the expanse of reality. Though they might appear to a deluded mind as separate and diverse, all phenomena appear spontaneously, arising out of the thoroughly pure primordial wisdom, and as such, all is thoroughly pure. However it might be defined in the *sādhana* literature, tantric texts do describe bodhicitta as simply nonconceptual intrinsic awareness, awakened primordially.

Clearly, these mainstream Mahāyoga tenets are fully present in Pelyang's works. Their applications vary throughout the early Mahāyoga literature, the most extreme examples being those works whose authors use the doctrine of Sameness to advocate sexual practices, and those who use the doctrine of skillful means and compassion to advocate the rite of 'liberation' or *sgrol ba*. Pelyang's works eschew these types of applications, emphasizing instead the transcendent, mystical aspect of these principles, as has been described in detail in the previous chapter.

The absence in Pelyang's work of any mentions of these more extreme applications of Mahāyoga thought has been noted already. Although many of the Dunhuang Mahāyoga manuscripts mentioned here have been dated with some certainty to a period after Pelyang's lifetime, in the late ninth to early tenth centuries, explicitly violent and sexual passages are present in the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* itself, which is quoted with some frequency in Pelyang's texts. In fact, some, if not all, of the original tantras later collected as the Eighteen Mahāyoga Tantras must have employed at least some of the same radical, erotic terminology and imagery found in the pages of the extant versions by Pelyang's

lifetime.³⁶³ The great majority of Dynastic-era canonical Tibetan Mahāyoga exegesis and *sādhana* manuals reflect this, focusing on both the wrathful and sexual aspects of the tantras, and of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in particular. Now that we have examined the Mahāyoga background to Pelyang's thought, it is even more evident that he was forging new paths and exploring themes that are not accentuated in his Mahāyoga contemporaries' teachings. Let us now look to another source for this type of thought in the Dynastic period, one which is not explicitly identified as Mahāyoga—the Mind Series material.

The Mind Series

It has become increasingly clear that some level of relationship existed between the developing Tibetan Mahāyoga tantric movement and the emergence of a new tradition in the eighth or ninth century also based on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* called the Great Perfection. Though there is no mention of Great Perfection as a distinct literary or practical tradition in the eighth century, a group of texts later called the Mind Series was evidently circulating during that time, simultaneously with the early Mahāyoga material. Samten Karmay describes the new developments characterized by the type of transcendent, mystical emphasis we see in both the Mind Series material and in Pelyang's work from the perspective of the developing Great Perfection tradition, as an innovative philosophical type of speculation on Mahāyoga which coincided with mainstream tantric developments.³⁶⁴ According to Karmay, the early Great Perfection literature is represented entirely by the Mind Series texts. This movement, undoubtedly underway in the ninth century, but not so

³⁶³ Eastman, "Mahayoga Texts at Tun-Huang".

³⁶⁴ Though Karmay identifies this type of 'proto-rDzogs chen' thought in only two of Pelyang's *Six Lamps*, I see no reason to separate these two texts from the rest, as I have explained in the previous chapter.

clearly identified in eighth-century literature, linked standard tantric teachings with new theories regarding primordially spontaneous presence and primeval purity. Examples given by Karmay of this new focus in tantric literature include two texts also found at Dunhuang: Buddhagupta's *Small Hidden Grain* and the *Rig pa'i khu byug*.³⁶⁵

The *Small Hidden Grain* appears to have been composed roughly contemporaneously with the early Mind Series literature. Though the text's preface identifies it (probably long past its first redaction) as an Atiyoga text, it thoroughly exhibits the characteristics of the early Mind Series literature. Given that self-described Mahāyogin Pelyang quotes directly from the *Small Hidden Grain*,³⁶⁶ and that Pelyang's thought intersects with so many of the principles found in the Mind Series material, an understanding of Mind Series principles will add to the emerging picture of Pelyang's religious milieu in general, and inform our understanding of the relationship between early Mahāyoga and Mind Series movements.

Like the Yoga and Mahāyoga tantra collections before it, Mind Series literature was collected into a canon of eighteen texts, the *Sems sde bco brgyad*.³⁶⁷ The first five are said to have been translated by Vairocana as the *sNga 'gyur lnga*, and the remaining thirteen by

³⁶⁵ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 10-13.

³⁶⁶ *The Lamp of the Precious View*, P 5923. *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*, P 5922. *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, P 5082.

³⁶⁷ For one list of these eighteen, see Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 23-24. A later collection of twenty-five Mind Series texts constitutes the third volume of the *mTshams brag* edition of the *Ancients rgyud 'bum*. David Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1994): 236.

Vimalamitra. The formal classification of these texts as Mind Series, and their collection as a set, appears to have occurred subsequent to the Dynastic period, as we find no references to the term ‘mind series’ (*sems sde*) in the Dunhuang literature, or in works known to have been written during the eight or early ninth centuries. Germano describes the collection as covering those developments toward the Great Perfection that occurred prior to the eleventh century.³⁶⁸

Germano characterizes the Mind Series as a “loose rubric,” consisting of a diverse collection of poems bound together in part by their general lack of descriptions of ritual and the techniques associated with meditative practice, and by their rejection of death-related Buddhist practice. Their content, much like that of Pelyang’s texts, is made up of “aphoristic philosophical poetry with terse experiential descriptions.”³⁶⁹ Germano also points out that the texts make none of the usual references to the circumstances of a particular buddha uttering the teachings comprising a particular sūtra or tantra, which distinguishes them from officially-sanctioned *buddhavacana* literature. Thus, though most of the eighteen texts are not appended with colophonic material which might identify a human author, they probably were understood to have been authored by one of the six men said to have founded Great Perfection in India and Tibet: Surativajra, Mañjuśrīmitra, Śrīsiṃha, Jñānasūtra, Vimalamitra, and Padmasambhava.

As their name implies, these texts emphasize the all-generative power of Mind, and the immediate nature of pure awareness. Whereas the mainstream Mahāyoga literature,

³⁶⁸ David Germano, "The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs Chen*)," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 1 (October) (2005): 10.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 3.

and tantric works in general, subvert normative Buddhist sutric principles, values, ethics, and practices, the Mind Series literature in turn subverts the principles in mainstream tantra by rejecting its formalized practices and, indeed, any effort made in realizing buddhahood whatsoever, as contrivances. In this, the Mind Series texts share with the mainstream Mahāyoga tantric literature an antinomian character, albeit with differing objects of refusal and thus, differing tones. Whereas the standard Mahāyoga material, through rejecting the more sedate and austere sutric principles, tends to revel in the rich imagery of wrathful demons and the passionate coupling of buddhas, the Mind Series texts are the aesthetic opposite, promoting the lightest and sparsest of views through an all-encompassing *via negativa* which David Germano has called ‘pristine’. Germano, and Matthew Kapstein following him, have explained the historical necessity of this sort of clearing of the tantric doctrinal and practical space through rhetoric in order for the spontaneous purity of Great Perfection to be allowed to take shape.³⁷⁰

Because of the texts’ outright rejection of any particular religious technique and because of the absence of any descriptions within them of those *sādhana* or *samādhi* the benefit of which they seek to discredit, it is difficult to surmise the precise nature of the religious life of those who disseminated the Mind Series teachings. Some headway might be made through the use of hagiography and lineage transmission records. A brief perusal of these histories reveals that many religious figures who were intimately involved in the transmission of Mahāyoga to, and within, Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries are also

³⁷⁰ Matthew Kapstein, "Samantabhadra and Rudra: Innate Enlightenment and Radical Evil in Tibetan Rnying-Ma-Pa Buddhism," in *Discourse and Practice*, ed. Frank Reynolds and David Tracy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

named in Mind Series transmission lineages. These include Vairocana, Vimalamitra, dPal brtsegs, rMa Rin chen mchog, and Nyak Nyanakumara, who was, in turn, teacher to Pelyang himself.

David Germano has offered a possible vision of the program of early Mind Series practice based upon the character of later developments.³⁷¹ If the nature of their practice might be gleaned from the literature of their successors, these early proponents and teachers of Mind Series were engaged in seated, calm abiding meditations (Skt: *śamatha*; Tib. *zhi gnas*), interspersed with concentrations on specific themes as dictated by the teachings of their particular lineage. The entire program was meant to culminate in the sort of spontaneous, natural, uncontrived experience of reality described in these texts, brought about without the use of meditative technique. Germano has posited that there was a wide range of conformity to this model; some groups may have adhered strictly to the program, while others most likely engaged in this program of speculation together with a more normative tantric practice of deity yoga and *maṇḍala* generation, or even while engaging in the wrathful and sexual practices of Mahāyoga. Indeed, Germano points out that twelfth-century author Nyi ma 'od zer makes a conscious effort to distinguish Great Perfection from wrathful Mahāyoga practices, which may indicate that by that time, threads of the two distinct views had come full circle, once again becoming intertwined and indistinguishable.³⁷²

³⁷¹ Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen)," 239-40.

³⁷² ———, "The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs Chen*)," 23-24.

Another Great Perfection scholar, Sam van Schaik, agrees with Germano that the early Mind Series was never a philosophically distinct movement from Mahāyoga, but rather that Mahāyoga and Mind Series literature developed simultaneously, and perhaps even through the work of common authors or groups of practitioners, in the eighth and ninth centuries, and that both sets of literature contributed equally to the development of Great Perfection. Van Schaik also sees mutual influence to the extent that Mahāyoga and Mind Series texts remained, in all practical terms, indistinguishable to their Dynastic-era exegetes. Two centuries prior to Nyi ma 'od zer's conscious separation of the Mahāyoga and Great Perfection traditions, Nup included citations from the work of the same author, Buddhagupta, in both the Mahāyoga and Great Perfection chapters of his *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. Furthermore, Vilāsavajra's commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, the *Blazing Palace* does not made any clear distinctions between Mahāyoga and Atiyoga, or Great Perfection, as tantric categories.³⁷³

In line with coeval works, Pelyang's poems contain no references to the Mind Series, and there is only a single inclusion of the term 'great perfection' (*rdzogs chen*), in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.

Then what is the distinction of the accomplishments attained through yoga?

For example, like a king appointing a minister,

The bequeathal of accomplishments from above is the outer method.

³⁷³ Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries."

Like gaining power through the people offering the kingdom [to the king's command],

[Their] self-emergence is great perfection (*rdzogs chen*), the unexcelled method.³⁷⁴

This reference to 'great perfection' in the final line of the answer is ambiguous.

Although it could be read as an official title for the unexcelled method outlined by Pelyang in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, in which case it is still merely a method and not a vehicle or type of tantra, it might just as well be an adjective describing the completeness of the spontaneous emergence of the tantric accomplishments. Clearly, this text predates any formal categorization of Great Perfection texts in general, and indicates no such affiliation for the particular text in question.

Despite the lack of concrete references to the Mind Series, Pelyang's texts nonetheless do display several of the same traits as those texts. Both Mind Series literature and Pelyang's works commonly include discussion of such concepts as intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin*), spontaneity (*lhun grub*), the uncontrived nature of reality (*bcod med*), the non-necessity of effort (the commonly employed '*bad rtsol med* appears as *brtsol med* in Pelyang's works), and pure awareness (*rig pa dag pa*) as highest Mind. In general, their views of reality, agency, and subjectivity mesh easily.

However, the two groups of texts are not indistinguishable. Pelyang does not use such common Mind Series terms as 'simple' (*spros med*), or 'naturally' (*rang bzhin gyis*).

³⁷⁴ /rnal 'byor pas dngos grub thob pa'i khyad par ci ltar mchis//dper na rgyal pos blon po bskos pa ltar//grub pa gong nas byin pa phyi'i tshul//'bangs kyis rgyal srid phul nas dbang sgyur ltar//rang 'byung rdzogs chen bla na myed pa'i tshul/ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 9.

His texts also lack any discussion of the Great Drop (*thig le chen po*), a central concept found in the five texts making up Vairocana's *sNga 'gyur lnga*, and later in the *Kun byed rgyal po*.³⁷⁵ Finally, and perhaps most significantly, on a soteriological level, while the Mind Series literature rejects contemplative techniques altogether, Pelyang allows for some form of contemplative practice and *maṇḍala* generation and deity yoga, albeit with very limited recommendation.

When all these points of comparison have been taken into account, Pelyang's work appears noticeably different from the Mind Series texts. As we have seen, it also differs in significant ways from representative coeval Mahāyoga texts. Against this literary background, a picture begins to emerge of Pelyang as a yogi who self-identified as a Mahāyogin, but found deficiencies in the tradition as it was most commonly presented. Taking cues from his teacher's teacher, Buddhaguhya, Pelyang applied the principles of immediate presence, spontaneous awareness, all-encompassing Mind, and so forth, to the system of rites and contemplative practices in which he was trained. In this aspect, his texts include a genuine *via negativa*. Pelyang also urges a shift in emphasis away from the cause and effect correspondences drawn by Mahāyoga teachings between rites and accomplishments and between meditations and realization, without going so far as to reject their importance outright, and in fact allows some discussion of their limited benefit. In this aspect, his works fall short of the fully negative rhetoric found in the Mind Series, and later the Great Perfection, literature.

³⁷⁵ It appears in the text *Pure Golden Ore*: 10. *Rdo la gser zhun*: Pure Golden Ore. TB vol. Ka ff. 96.4-98.6, and in the *Kun byed rgyal po* ch. 26. TB vol. Ka ff. 450.3-453.3; Mdo bcu, in the eighth sutra. The *Mārgavyūha* also includes discussion of the *thig le chen po* in its Chapter Two. P 4736: 474a.

Assuming that the early Mind Series literature was being redacted at roughly the same time that Pelyang was authoring his own texts, this comparison of them highlights the unique nature of Pelyang's position. He was able to engage tantric subjects such as universal intrinsic buddhahood with a new view and via a new rhetorical method, without rejecting the techniques of tantra out of hand. This allows him to explore new avenues of thought while remaining within the Mahāyoga fold. However, just what practice he advocated is not made clear in the texts themselves.

David Germano has laid out five possibilities for the actual contextualization and application of the negative rhetoric in the Mind Series texts by contemporary practitioners.³⁷⁶ These include their 1) reprioritizing the dissolution phase of deity yoga practice, 2) emphasizing calming meditations that serve to integrate and universalize, 3) focusing, perhaps only finally, on the emptiness meditation that occurs at the end of the perfection stage practice, 4) creating new practices of “poetically thematized meditation” in which one might be guided to speculate or analyze via the poetic language in the texts, and 5) simply leaving behind all formal practices and doing as one pleases.

Pelyang acknowledges some benefit to tantric practice, but does not advocated any specific form of mediation or deity yoga. His writings would seem to allow for all of Germano's possibilities, and in fact, they could all have been instituted at different stages in one's training. Given that both calming techniques and emptiness meditations are

³⁷⁶ Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen)," 228-29.

mentioned by name in his *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Germano's second and third possibilities are the most compelling.

Conclusion

It may be that Pelyang injected the sort of thought characteristic of the Mind Series texts, presaged in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* and Buddhagupta's *Small Hidden Grain* of half a century earlier, directly into presentations of his own form of Mahāyoga practice. However, Pelyang's project is distinct from both that of Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* and from that of the Mind Series. On the one hand, though the tantric elements of *maṇḍala*, *mudra*, *mantra*, the importance of the guru-disciple relationship, the royal depictions of buddhas, and so forth, form the foundation out of which Pelyang's exegesis grows, he clearly was not advocating mainstream tantric deity yoga. Indeed, much of what characterizes early Indian Mahāyoga—ritual orientation, wrathful deity propitiation, sexual iconographic depiction, and so forth—is intentionally left out of Pelyang's discussions. On the other hand, he did not intend to create a new Tibetan school, vehicle, or method, nor did he appear to identify with the Mind Series movement. Rather, Pelyang employed philosophical assertions to strengthen and hasten Mahāyoga's further blossoming in a direction all his own. This indicates that from its very inception, Tibetan Buddhist tantra was being reformed and reconceptualized by Tibetans themselves, based on Indian tantric methods and ideas and incorporating elements from native literary traditions such as the Mind Series. These developments in Tibetan tantra were sustained through the Dark

Period into the light of the Renaissance as they were transformed into the Great Perfection teachings upheld by the Ancients.

CHAPTER FOUR • PELYANG AND ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF BUDDHISM THROUGH DYNASTIC EYES

Introduction

As we have seen, while the Ancients' lineage accounts often mention the Mahāyogin Pelyang's legendary yogic feats, there is surprisingly little historical reference to his works, his teachings, or his legacy in any other form. Yet, judging from the unusual number of copies of his *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* found at Dunhuang and from the uniform inclusion of his texts in all the major editions of the Tibetan canon in addition to the deference with which Pelyang's authority is treated in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, it appears that his teachings were greatly valued and widely disseminated in Tibetan cultural areas during his lifetime and for some time following his death. This chapter seeks to explore Pelyang's legacy by presenting the references to Pelyang's teachings found in historical chronicles, and outlines the interpretation his works received posthumously by anonymous writers, as well as by the well-known author Nupchen Sanggye yeshe.

Three interpretive questions remain paramount in this discussion: What contributed to Pelyang's successes? What led to the demise of his popularity? Why were his texts so well preserved in the Peking and Derge versions of the canon and at Dunhuang, but elsewhere elided? The answers to these questions relate not only to Pelyang's teachings directly, but also to the particulars of historiography and the shift of interest represented by

the emergence of the new matrices binding the received tradition for the Ancients and the Modernists after the eleventh century.

From Zeitgeist to Cipher: The rise and demise of Pelyang's popularity

As outlined in Chapter One, Pelyang's place among the most revered yogis of the Dynastic period has been secured for centuries. His name is commonly included in lineage records of the transmission of the Māyājāla teachings. His yogic feats are also described in the Ancients' religious histories. Finally, though they lack descriptive elements tying him to the Mahāyoga tradition, accounts of the seven *se mi* and of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples very often include a Pelyang among them. These mentions portray a man skilled in tantric yoga and well-connected as a religious teacher. His historical place, as a Mahāyogin teaching during the era of Tibet's first introduction to Buddhism during the glorified Dynastic period, and his lineal position between the great figures of Buddhaguhya, Vimalamitra, and Nup no doubt assured these inclusions.

These legendary accounts aside, however, there are few references to him which include place names or dates or other specifically identifying historical elements. The successes he enjoyed as a well-known religious figure during the Dynastic period were apparently forgotten, and the details of his life were no longer considered worthy of retelling within a few centuries of his death.

Pelyang's writings and oral teachings, or *man ngag*, are described even less often in the historical materials. In perusals of several important histories belonging to the Ancients tradition, I found almost no mention of his teachings. Tenth-century author Pho brang Zhi

ba 'od opines in his *bKa' shog* that Pelyang's works are considered to be inauthentically attributed.³⁷⁷ Eleventh-century author Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo quotes from Pelyang's *Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, identifying the cited text as the *lTa ba rgum chung*,³⁷⁸ but says no more about its author. None of those six poems are mentioned or included by Bu tön in his religious history or its catalogue of Buddhist texts. And finally, the *Blue Annals* merely mentions that a twelfth-century scholar studied Pelyang's *Six Lamps* among other Mahāyoga texts.³⁷⁹ Clearly, from the eleventh century, the great appeal his teachings had held for so many during and immediately after his life—his literary successes—had been all but completely forgotten.

Several turning points might be identified as affecting Pelyang's waning popularity, both as a religious figure and as an author. The rise of the Great Perfection, and its steadfast claim to doctrinal superiority over Mahāyoga tantra, most likely pulled attention from the Mahāyoga teachings. In addition, the momentum gained by the revealed treasure tradition and the related proliferation of interest in practices involving wrathful deities in the eleventh century overshadowed almost all other developments in Mahāyoga tantra. Finally, the emergence of the Modernists traditions and their emphasis on new translations of Buddhist texts from India certainly influenced the way in which Pelyang's teachings were perceived by Tibetans of the eleventh century and later.

³⁷⁷ Karmay, "An Open Letter by Pho-Brang Zhi-Ba-'Od to the Buddhists in Tibet," 17, fn. 72.

³⁷⁸ ———, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 61.

³⁷⁹ Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 659.

Dunhuang Annotations

A rare glimpse of the way Pelyang's teachings were interpreted in the century after his death, when his works were still actively circulating, can be found in the form of annotations to his most famous work. Two of the manuscript copies of Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* found at Dunhuang, ITJ 470 and ITJ 837, contain interlinear notes which are nearly identical in content. These notes gloss terms, phrases, and whole lines within the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, and occur with almost every line of the root text. They differ entirely from those notes found in the Peking canon version of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, whose provenance cannot be established but whose collection dates to several centuries after the Dynastic Period. The third manuscript copy from Dunhuang of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* contains no notes whatsoever, perhaps indicating that it is an earlier edition than the others. From the Dunhuang notes to ITJ 470 and ITJ 837, we can see how Pelyang's teachings were interpreted by students there, approximately a century after his death.

There are a few peculiarities in the notes which might be instructive. They occasionally include Tibetanized Sanskrit technical terms, such as 'bu ta for buddha and badzra sad twa for Vajrasattva, where in such instances the main text uses Tibetan translations (*sangs rgyas* and *rdo rje sems dpa'*, for buddha and Vajrasattva, respectively), though the notes will sometimes employ the Tibetan translations of these terms as well. The notes also use highly variant, or even wrong, spellings of Tibetan words where the main text does not. It may be that the original author of the notes may have been less than fully fluent in Tibetan, or that the notes were written in haste and without the care taken in

copying more formal texts such as sūtras and tantras.³⁸⁰ Though Tibet lost control of Dunhuang in the mid-ninth century, Tibetan continued to be the language of both religious study and official communications even for non-Tibetan residents, so it is reasonable to imagine a Chinese student, for example, attending teachings and taking notes in Tibetan, which may have been his second language.

The annotations also might be used to date the particular manuscripts in which they are found. The notes to ITJ 837 appear to have been added after the main text was copied,³⁸¹ but the notes to ITJ 470 were written between the main lines as the main text itself was copied.³⁸² Both manuscripts' main text and notes are in a relatively even hand, and thus appear to be copies of a third text. Furthermore, the notes wrap naturally from line to line in ITJ 837, but are often squeezed together at the end of a line in ITJ 470 to match the point of carriage in ITJ 837. ITJ 470 also occasionally corrects errors in ITJ 837, though both also repeat errors such as mistakenly repeated terms. All this indicates that ITJ 470 is either a copy of ITJ 837, or that both are copies of a common, third text. Because of the even way in which they are copied, it seems unlikely that the notes originated with ITJ 837.

³⁸⁰ Tanaka Kimiaki has observed that Dunhuang manuscripts of texts found in the IDan dkar ma are usually in an elaborate script, but that manuscripts of texts not found in that catalogue are commonly in a rougher handwriting, suggesting that the latter type of manuscript were intended as personal notes for use by tantric practitioners themselves. He surmises that this is because the Mahāyoga movement, having been outlawed, went underground even at Dunhuang. Kimiaki, "A Comparative Study of Esoteric Buddhist Manuscripts and Icons Discovered at Dun-Huang," 275.

³⁸¹ See lines 93 and 94, for example.

³⁸² See the wider line allowances for longer notes, for example.

Our greatest clue to the age of the notes lies with two annotations in particular. The first is to the stanza which reads:

If, at the time of its very appearance as oneself, the Reality Body
 Comes to be understood as unchanging, like the sky, and
 When the approach is not perceived in terms of object and subject,
 There being neither toil nor exertion, this is the highest form of approach.³⁸³

The gloss to the final line reads, “the explanation of the Atiyoga view” (*a ti yo ga 'i lta ba 'i bzhed*). Later in the text, a similar gloss, “the aim of Atiyoga” (*a ti yo ga 'i don*), is given to the following passage:

Regarding that which is to be achieved,
 Having strived, one rests in meditative equipoise again and again.
 Then, having meditated and slowly entered the flow [of practice],
 It is accomplished without effort, spontaneously.³⁸⁴

The term Atiyoga does not appear to have been used until the late ninth or early tenth centuries. Furthermore, the manuscripts themselves have been dated to the early tenth century based on codicological evidence.³⁸⁵ It is illuminating to observe that a text explicating the views and practices of late eighth- or early ninth-century Mahāyoga should later be interpreted as Atiyoga based upon its portrayal of the culminating, spontaneous

³⁸³ *bdag tu snang ba nyid na chos kyi sku//gyur myed nam kar lta bur rtogs 'gyur cing/bsnyen pa bya dang byed par myi dmyigs na//tshogs dang 'bad pa myed pas bsnyen pa 'i mchog/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 13.*

³⁸⁴ *bsgrub par bya ba gang yin de la ni//rtsol bas yang nas yang du mnyam bzhag ste//goms pas klung tu gyur nas khad kyis ni//rtsol ba myed pas lhun gyis grub par 'gyur/ Vajrasattva Questions and Answers: Question 31.*

³⁸⁵ van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection."

accomplishment of awakening. This lends credence to Karmay's hypothesis that the term Atiyoga was initially used to describe the final stage of deity yoga in self-described Mahāyoga liturgical texts based on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*.

In light of this, the notes may represent an early period of transition between the emergence in Pelyang's works and elsewhere of those ideas and practices which would later be identified as Great Perfection, or Atiyoga, and their incorporation and solidification as a distinct vehicle. Two elements in these notes to the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* indicate a departure from Pelyang's system. The first is an emphasis on an image of meditative stabilization as both causal and emulative. Based on the notes, it is clear that their author understood that practitioners engage in the three *samādhi* in order to attain awakening, but also do so as part of their conscious emulation of buddhahood. This is an obvious departure from a tradition which expects an ultimate and unselfconscious spontaneity and assumes a universal intrinsic awareness. The second element is the introduction of a term which is absent in Pelyang's texts themselves: special insight (*lhag mthong*). Special insight is frequently mentioned in the notes in tandem with calm abiding (*zhi gnas*), which does receive a great deal of attention in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. This calm abiding meditation is said to be one in which the seals of Body, Speech, and Mind of the buddhas clearly appear. Such evidence of this practice is in keeping with Germano's description of early Great Perfection's practical interpretation of its own negative rhetoric, in which thematic meditations may have been undertaken in the context of a program of otherwise tantric practice.

Yet, these are minor divergences. In fact, there is almost nothing in the notes which indicates any meaningful development of Pelyang's philosophical innovations. A surprising conformity with his view reigns here, despite the appearance of the term Atiyoga. The author of the notes relies largely upon the same cosmological structure as does Pelyang, in which the five buddhas are gathered into the Dharmakāya, but in which the five buddhas as a set are still important objects of meditation, though the main deity is identified as the *yab-yum* pair in the notes.³⁸⁶ The classic tools of tantric Buddhism are still employed. For example, on the line which includes the term *rdzogs chen*, "The self-emergence [of accomplishments] is great perfection (*rdzogs chen*), the unexcelled method," the notes remark that these are accomplished by means of *mantra*, *mudrā*, and meditative stabilization.³⁸⁷ References to bodhicitta are, as in Pelyang's own works, straightforward references to a type of mind without any hint of polyvalency. There is one mention of 'great bliss' (*bde ba chen po*),³⁸⁸ but it appears without any further comment. The *ting nge 'dzin gsum* are mentioned,³⁸⁹ and there are enumerations of the *dbang gsum*, or *cho ga gsum*.³⁹⁰

It appears from these notes that the most widely-disseminated version of Pelyang's teachings did not veer far from its ideological origins. Furthermore, the notes indicate that

³⁸⁶ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 15.

³⁸⁷ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 9.

³⁸⁸ *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 23.

³⁸⁹ A single reference to the Subtle Vajra *samādhi* (*rdo rje phra mo 'i ting nge 'dzin*) may be a reference to the third of the three meditative stabilizations, *phyag rgya phra rags kyi rnal 'byor*. *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 31.

³⁹⁰ These are the divine empowerments, awareness empowerments, and empowerments conferred by a master. The final includes outer, inner, and secret empowerments. *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*: Question 49.

those Mahayoga views most characteristic of Pelyang's works maintained their Mahāyoga identity without significant modification or augmentation only for approximately a century, and by the tenth century, they had begun to be assimilated into, and redefined as, the new tradition of Atiyoga. These are significant findings for teasing out the links between Pelyang and the later Great Perfection tradition and for explaining the lack of interest in Pelyang's texts as such on the part of the later Ancients' tradition. Clearly, his teachings resonated with Tibetans of the tenth century and later, and his status was sufficient for honorable preservation in the sectarian historical chronicles. However, it appears that rather quickly Pelyang himself had been disassociated from his own teachings by the tradition who owes so much to his innovations.

As the Great Perfection was codified after the eleventh century and as the revealed treasure tradition gained in popularity, the focus of the Ancients school shifted to establishing Dynastic-era authors for their newly revealed texts. In so doing, teachings therein were glorified as duly ancient via their Dynastic-era attributions and as having adequate proximity to the most revered period in Tibetan history, the era of the introduction of Buddhism. It appears that none of those revealed treasure texts were posthumously attributed to Pelyang. Furthermore, Pelyang's own texts fell short of fitting the Great Perfection bill, being as they were explicitly human-authored, Tibetan in origin, and specifically associated with Mahāyoga, a lesser tradition in doxographical terms.

The Lamp Eye of Contemplation

Eugene Smith's discovery in the early 1970's of Nup's *Lamp Eye of Contemplation* was a watershed in Tibetan Buddhist studies. The text offers a very early view of a self-

identified Great Perfection proponent's position on the relative merits of four Buddhist schools present in Tibet from the late Dynastic period through the Dark Period. These four are the Indian 'gradual entrance' school (*rim gyis 'jug pa*), the Chinese 'sudden entrance' school (*cig car 'jug pa*), Mahāyoga, and the Great Perfection).³⁹¹ There is little mystery regarding the 'gradual entrance' tradition in Dynastic Tibet; this school later came to be regarded as the classic form of Buddhism by the Modernist sects that formed after the eleventh century, and it has been the primary object of Tibetan Buddhist study both inside and outside Tibet. There has also been a great deal of relatively recent interest in the various forms of Chan known to Tibetans during Tibet's Dynastic period, particularly in Japan. Furthermore, the work of such scholars as David Germano, Samten Karmay, Namkhai Norbu, Sam Van Schaik, and others has done much to further our understanding of the early Great Perfection tradition. Of the four schools discussed in Nup's *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, the one remaining in greatest obscurity is Mahāyoga, and thus his text provides a precious glimpse of the tradition's texts and teachings in the early tenth century.

Nup lived during a tremendously obscure period in Tibetan history—at most generous estimate, sometime between the early ninth and early tenth centuries. This makes the task of providing dates for his life quite difficult, for no contemporary biographical materials survive to illuminate such simple facts as his birth year or parentage. In addition, because he is the only known author of exegetical proto-Ancients material during Tibet's Dark Period, he has been especially revered and mythologized within the Ancients'

³⁹¹ See pages 65-118, 118-186, 186-290, and 290-494 respectively. As is clear from this list, Nup spent increasing numbers of pages on each sect, and more than all the first three topics together on the Great Perfection chapter.

hagiographical literature, further clouding what might otherwise be the historically verifiable details of his life. Full biographies are included in many Ancients histories, including in bDud 'joms Rinpoche's twentieth-century *History of the rNying ma School of Tibetan Buddhism*³⁹² and in Padma phrin las's seventeenth-century *bKa' ma mdo dbang gi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*.³⁹³ Mention of Nup is also included in Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer's twelfth-century *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsai'i bcub*³⁹⁴ and in the fifteenth-century Modernists history, the *Blue Annals*.³⁹⁵ All of the biographies give different dates for Nup's life, and even the historical markers present in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* itself are mutually contradictory.³⁹⁶

³⁹²Jigs bral Ye ses rdo rje bDud 'joms, Gyurme Dorje, and Matthew Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: its fundamentals and history*, ed. Jigs bral ye ses rdo rje Bdud 'joms, 1st ed., *Wisdom advanced book* (Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 607-614. This is a translation of his 1962 history in Tibetan, the *Gangs ljongs rgyal bstan yongs rdzogs kyi phyi mo snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i bstan pa rin po che ji ltar byung ba'i tshul dag cing gsal bar brjod pa lha dbang g.yul las rgyal ba'i rnga bo che'i sgra dbyangs*.

³⁹³rDo rje brag rig 'dzing Padma phrin las, *bKa' ma mdo dbang gi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (Leh: S.W. Tashiganga, 1972), Vol. 37, 160-167.

³⁹⁴Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer, *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsai'i bcub* (Paro: Ugyen Tempai Gyaltzen, 1979), 447.

³⁹⁵The *Blue Annals* mentions Nup twice. The first passage describes Nup's study tours in India, Nepal, and 'Bru sha (Gilgit), during the time of Tibet's 'general upheaval.' He mastered the Ancients *mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa*, excelled in achieving *siddhis*, and was served by all the god and demons of Tibet. According to Gö shyön nu pal, he lived 113 years, after which time the teachings of tantra and *sādhana* were taken up and spread by the two Zur, Senior and Junior. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 104-5.

The second passage merely mentions Nup's commentary on the *mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa*, his *Mun pa'i go cha*, as being among the minor texts studied in the 15th century by Sangs rgyas rin chen rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, a student of the Māyājāla. ———, *The Blue Annals*, 152-53.

³⁹⁶Karmay explains this in detail. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 101-2.

Nup is known best as a practitioner of ‘black’ mantric practice, but he is also renowned as an erudite scholar of a wide range of Buddhist thought, and furthermore, for his interest not only in Tibetan practice, but in Indian and Chinese Buddhism as well. Teachings from the two other major geographical sources of Buddhism known to Tibetans during the Dynastic period—India and China—must have been available to him, and he is said to have traveled to India and Nepal himself to obtain further tantric teachings.³⁹⁷

According to the preface of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* and to bDud ‘joms Rinpoche’s history of Ancients Buddhism, Nup wrote four important texts. The first is the *Mun pa’i go cha (Armour Against the Darkness)*, a highly complex and scholarly commentary on the general tantra of the Anuyoga class of the Ancients tradition, the *The Discourse Epitomizing All Enlightened Intention (mDo dgongs pa ’dus pa)*. The second is *A Weapon for the Exposition of Difficult Discourses (dKa’ gcod smra ba’i mtshon cha)*, and the third is the *Commentary on the Sādhana of the Eighty Māyājāla Tantras (sGyu ‘phrul brgyad cu pa’i mngon rtogs ‘grel)*. The second and third texts are no longer extant. Finally, these sources list as Nup’s fourth major work *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. A fifth work, whose colophon attributes it to Nup but which mention is otherwise absent from Ancients histories, is an eight-folio liturgical text called the *sDe brgyad gser skyems*.³⁹⁸ The *ger skyems*, or ‘golden libation,’ is a rite for an assembly of eight classes of wrathful gods, the *dregs pa sde brgyad*, in which deities are propitiated by means of libations of *chang*

³⁹⁷ NSTB: 608.

³⁹⁸ There are two redactions of this text. The first is from a blockprint found at mTho mthong Monastery in Nepal; the second is from a blockprint found at dBen dgon Monastery in Sikkim. The invocations and colophons of these two editions differ significantly, but the text itself appears nearly identical.

beer or tea, and occasionally, it is said, of sacrificial blood. The *sde brgyad gser skyems* is part of many hail-preventing rites, and the text seems a reasonable attribution to a Tibetan Buddhist yogi of the tenth century, especially in light of David Germano's supposition that "various evocation rituals and associated narratives of the 'eight precept deities' were presumably being elaborated" during the general period in which Nup is thought to have lived.³⁹⁹ In addition, several commentaries on the *Sems sde bco rgyad* which are attributed to Nup have been discovered and published in China quite recently. Future scholarship on these commentaries will do much to illuminate our understanding of the connection between the early Mind Series texts and the later Great Perfection movement.

The wide variety of texts attributed to Nup indicates that he was well-versed in the earliest strata of Great Perfection literature, was proficient in apotropaic ritual, and was a first-rank philosopher in all three of the highest tantric forms of what was later to become the Ancients: Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Great Perfection.⁴⁰⁰ It may not be quite as hyperbolic as it sounds to say that he was able to carry, as bDud 'joms Rinpoche asserts,

³⁹⁹ David Germano, "Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection," (forthcoming), 147. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, the best authority on all Tibetan things divine and demonic, describes several types of deities classed as *sde brgyad*. Renee de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (Gravenhage: Oxford University Press, 1956), 254. The *dregs pa ske brgyad* are an important group of lower-ranking gods and demons frequently invoked in the course of 'magic ceremonies', which in turn are comprised of numerous types of *sde brgyad*.

⁴⁰⁰ Guenther points out that in *Lamp*, lists including both Mahāyoga and Atiyoga do not mention an Anuyoga, nor is there any independent mention of that term in the work Herbert Guenther, "'Meditation' Trends in Early Tibet," in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, *Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), 363, fn. 26.

the entire teachings of the Ancients through the Dark Period.⁴⁰¹ Based on the biographical and bibliographical information available, we gain a picture of a tantric yogi engaged in classical tantric practices, fluent in the foremost forms of tantra practice of the period, and widely versed in the textual foundations for those practices, as well as those texts forming the basis for his own sectarian affiliation of Great Perfection. His characterizations of Mahāyoga during the early tenth century in his *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* can be taken, at the very least, as well-informed, if not entirely objective.

Thus, two lamps might be said to have led the way through the Dark Period to the new dawning of Buddhist teachings in the eleventh century—the teachings of Pelyang and the teachings of Nup. When their unique brilliance is thus revealed, the relationship that must have existed between them becomes clear. As will be explained forthwith, Nup was exceedingly aware of his debt to Master Pelyang and of the importance Pelyang had for the Mahāyoga tradition, and just as Pelyang plucked the most interesting filaments of thought from Buddhaguhya's texts, so Nup singles out the aspects of Pelyang's thought that presage the developments of his own Great Perfection tradition—the emphasis on view and the *via negativa* literary form as well as a variety of doctrinal assertions regarding the spontaneous nature of reality and so forth. From the biographical accounts of Nup that remain, we see that he was a character of multiple interests and abilities, and it might be asserted that this multiplicity was not only representative of tantric adepts during the ninth and tenth centuries and of the ecumenical attitude of the times toward study and practice of

⁴⁰¹ Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje Bdud-'joms and Gyurme Dorje, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism : Its Fundamentals and History*, ed. Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje Bdud-'joms, 1st ed., Wisdom Advanced Book (Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 607.

a variety of views, but might also represent an inheritance received from his teacher, Pelyang.

The only extant redaction of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* is not of entirely indubitable integrity. The preface to this version describes numerous reprintings over the past several centuries. In fact, the colophonist of the current version, printed in Ladakh, recorded the opinion that the former edition was “defective,” indicating that some editing was most likely done despite the numerous errors remaining in the current version.⁴⁰² Furthermore, there are no extant contemporary verifications of the text’s existence, though *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* itself includes quotations from several datable Chan texts which give, at the least, an earliest possible date. Considering these issues, several scholars have voiced reservations over depending entirely on *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* for information about ninth-century Buddhism in Tibet. However, the style and content of the work are quite uniform, which would indicate very little, if any, content-related tampering by later hands. Editing seems to have been limited to correcting copyist errors and making changes to accommodate shifting orthography.

The Lamp Eye of Contemplation is a unique comparison of the four main Buddhist schools of thought present in Tibet during Nup's lifetime, described in its Chapters Four through Seven: the Indian 'gradualists'; the Chinese Chan proponents of sudden enlightenment; Mahāyoga; and Great Perfection, respectively. Though his Mahāyoga

⁴⁰² This was the editor, ‘Jam dbyangs Blo gros rgya mtsho of Khams, of the block print version used as the basis for the current version. His comments were regarding the edition belonging to sMin gling Lo chen Dharma-śrī (1654-1718). The only other known version of this text belonged to Jo nang rJe btsun Tāranātha (b. 1575). *STMG*, Preface.

espouses doctrines similar to both Chan and Great Perfection (all three propound a non-dual view of reality and some form of sudden enlightenment, in addition to giving primacy to the non-conceptual (*mi rtog pa*)), the distinctive characteristics of Nup's depiction of Mahāyoga include a focus on a non-dual perception which nevertheless defies reification of non-duality, on the ineffability of mind, and on meditation (*bsgoms pa*) which by its nature is lacking in any thing to make its object (*dmigs su med pa*), among others. Nup makes comparisons between the four schools in his introductory chapters and in the summary, as well as throughout the four main chapters, though a large part of the commentary in those four are via citation of other works.

While Nup declares all four types of Buddhists--proponents of gradual entrance, of sudden entrance, of Mahāyoga, and of Great Perfection—to be Mahāyānists and to be promulgating the Middle Way, only adherents to the last two are for him 'nang pa,' or followers of inner tantra. In this way, he attributes to Mahāyoga a greater affinity with Great Perfection than with either Indian gradualism or Chan. Because *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* is often cited for its general acceptance of the validity of Chan teachings, this affirmation of the closer affinity of the final two traditions is highly significant.

Nup is said to have been a disciple of Nyak Nyanakumara and of Pelyang himself. Almost all the works attributed to a Dynastic-era Pelyang, including the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, *The Lamp of the Precious View*, *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*, *The Lamp of the Correct View*, *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*, and the *Letter*, are quoted in almost two dozen citations throughout the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. Many of these passages are neither identified by text name or by original

author, and thus have not been recognized as Pelyang’s works until now. Given these new identifications of the unnamed sources in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, it is clear that in his chapter on Mahāyoga, Nup defers to Pelyang’s texts more than to any other source. This indicates that for Nup, Pelyang was the foremost authority on Mahāyoga thought at the time of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*’s redaction, most likely a full century after Pelyang’s texts were composed. The following chart provides the location of those citations with their identifications in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, and the location in the corresponding works of Pelyang.

Pelyang Citations in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*

<i>STMG</i>	Source Identification in <i>STMG</i>	Root Text Title	Passage Location
Chapter 2			
30.3	“Master Pelyang said...”	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 20
35.4	“Ba Pelyang taught...”	<i>gCes pa bsdus pa’i ‘phrin yig</i> (P5842)*	127.1-4
Chapter 3			
49.5	<i>Khen po</i> Pelyang’s meditational instructions ⁴⁰³	<i>lTa ba yang dag sgron ma</i> (P5919)	285b4
Chapter 6			
195.3	<i>Man ngag</i>	<i>lTa ba rin po che sgron ma</i> (P5923)	287b
201.6	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 35
202.4	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 34
204.4	Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang (in notes only)	unidentified	
219.3	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 25
225.2	the oral instructions of Master Pelyang ⁴⁰⁴	<i>Zhus lan</i> *	Q. 32
228.1	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 28
240.1	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 19
241.2	Master Nyen (gNyen)	unidentified	

⁴⁰³ mKhan po Pelyang kyi bsgom lung

⁴⁰⁴ mKhan po Pelyang kyi man ngag

<i>STMG</i>	Source Identification in <i>STMG</i>	Root Text Title	Passage Location
	Pelyang's thought ⁴⁰⁵ (in notes only)		
255.6	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 13
256.2	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 10
269.3	<i>Rin po che'i sgro ma</i>	<i>lTa ba rin po che sgron ma</i> (P 5923)	288b2
275.1	<i>Rinpo che'i sgron ma</i>	<i>lTa ba rin po che sgron ma</i> (P 5923)	288a3
277.3	<i>Zhus lan</i>	<i>Zhus lan</i>	Q. 43
Chapter 7			
318.2	<i>Man ngag</i>	<i>mTha'yi mun sel sgron ma</i> (P 5920)	286b4
382.2	<i>rBum chung</i>	<i>bsGom thabs sgron ma</i> (P 5922)*	287b1
404.1	<i>rGum chung</i>	<i>bsGom thabs sgron ma</i> (P 5922)*	287b4
404.1	<i>rGum chung</i>	<i>bsGom thabs sgron ma</i> (P 5922)	287b3
404.6	<i>rGum chung</i>	<i>bsGom thabs sgron ma</i> (P 5922)*	287b4
440.5	<i>rGum chung</i>	<i>bsGom thabs sgron ma</i> (P 5922)*	287b2

* indicates identifications made by Samten Karmay⁴⁰⁶

In the second and third chapters which compare the methods and requirements of the four traditions, Nubs cites Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp of the Correct View*, calling them merely the work of "scholar dPal dbyangs."⁴⁰⁷ Nup also includes a passage resembling lines in the *Letter*, calling it the work of "Ba (dBa')

Pelyang."⁴⁰⁸ They relate the importance of the master's correction, explain the view of the body as a raft for the mind (if we include the quotation from the *Letter*), and stress the

⁴⁰⁵ *mkhan po gnyen dpal dbyangs na re sems las*

⁴⁰⁶ Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 69, fn. 41.

⁴⁰⁷ *STMG*: 30.3 and 49.5

⁴⁰⁸ *STMG*: 35.4.

equal contribution of scripture, oral instruction, and own awareness to one's confidence in the intrinsic nature of phenomena. All these points are general enough to be supportive of any of the four doctrines explicated in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*.

The Mahāyoga chapter includes twelve citations, taken from two of Pelyang's texts. Those from the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* are cited by name, or as from "the oral instruction of scholar Pelyang (*mkhan po dpal dbyangs kyi man ngag*)."⁴⁰⁹ Three more passages lacking any authorial attribution, said to be from the "*Rin po che'i sgro ma*," "*Rin po che'i sgröl ma*," or just the "*Man ngag*," are from *The Lamp of the Precious View*. Nup also ventures to provide summaries of the thought of "scholar Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang,"⁴⁰⁹ and twice summarizes teachings which are only identified in the notes as those of Nyen (gNyan or gNyen) Pelyang.⁴¹⁰ That Nup chose to include passages from these two texts, the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp of the Precious View*, in particular indicates that he felt them the best Mahāyoga representatives among Pelyang's texts. As explained in the previous chapter, these two texts are indeed quite similar in their approach, and together with the *Lamp of the Mind* include the most classically tantric elements of all Pelyang's works.

The citations Nup chooses from Pelyang's texts in this sixth chapter fit well within Nup's characterizations of Mahāyoga in general. While there are mentions of seals, *yab-yum* pairs, *maṇḍalas* of wrathful deities, absorptions and emanations, empowerments and vows, the main topic of Chapter Six, and indeed of the entire text, is the view of Mahāyoga

⁴⁰⁹ *STMG*: 278.2.

⁴¹⁰ *STMG*: 204.4 and 241.2.

as opposed to its ritual, and the deities and practices mentioned there are mere fodder for the inquiry into the nature of reality, sameness, and spontaneous presence.

There is evidence of tantric development beyond the period in which Pelyang was teaching, however. In a passage exemplifying how the tradition developed over the intervening period between Pelyang and Nup, particularly as the Anuttarayoga tantras emerged, Nup explains that those who rely on the “lower teachings” practice the subtle body manipulations of the drops and winds in the channels, attaining the goal gradually through these practices. However, ultimately, when the practitioner has grown familiar with primordial wisdom, s/he need no longer rely upon those methods.⁴¹¹ At this point of the practice, one’s perception of phenomena as external to the mind ceases, and one’s mind becomes “like a *garuḍa* soaring in the sky.”⁴¹² Closing this passage, Nup relates that teachings regarding this final stage of easy, spontaneous realization are provided in the orally transmitted instructions which teach freedom from specific meditations on Suchness, as in the first of the three *ting nge ‘dzin*. This stage is described as having been set forth “particularly in the Atiyoga,” but the implication is that these teachings are also fully of the Mahāyoga tradition.

Whether this type of accomplishment was identified as primarily Mahāyoga or Great Perfection in nature, Nup’s central point is that in Mahāyoga, familiarization leads to a different sort of view in which no effort is required. In this final state, the importance of the particulars of the previously performed rites and meditative generations fall away, the

⁴¹¹ *STMG*: 220.

⁴¹² *STMG*: 222.1

remainder of which is a bare awareness of the nonduality of deity and practitioner, of mind and appearances, and ultimately of Suchness and all things. The following passage demonstrates Nup's philosophical treatment of the practices of Mahāyoga's deity yoga:

You might ask whether, if Body, Speech, and Mind—all three—are Buddha, would they be cultivated as one or as three during meditative practice. The answer is as follows: Such is not perceived as subject and object. Rather, that meditator's awareness is that very Self, liberated from distinctions of Body, Speech, and Mind. Therefore, the mind, being similarly clarified, cannot be conceived in any way distinct from self-luminosity. Free and unobstructed by things which can be counted, Body, Speech, and Mind are also Suchness. That is the answer.⁴¹³

In support of this type of treatment, the quotations from Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* and *The Lamp of the Precious View* are also philosophically oriented. Furthermore, each topic of the chapter is introduced by attributing it to the saying of an unnamed Mahāyoga master, one of whom is identified in the notes as Nyen (gNyan) Pelyang. These topics—the two truths, nonduality, sameness, and so forth, are those same topics addressed with an equally clear format of introduction in the *Lamp of the Mind*. Clearly, Pelyang's authority on the subject of Mahāyoga is uncontested for Nup. Although obvious augmentations to Mahāyoga of Pelyang's day had been made by Nup's time, Pelyang's teachings appear generally intact within Nub's work.

The next chapter of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, the seventh, explains the view of Atiyoga, or Great Perfection, the ultimate system for Nup. Samten Karmay has already

⁴¹³ 'o na de ltar sku gsung thugs su ril sangs rgyas na/ bsgom pa'i dus na gcig tu bsgom mam gsum du bsgom zhes drin/ lan btab pa de ni yul dang yul can du mi dmigs te/ bsgoms po'i rig pa nyid sku gsung thugs mtha' las grol ba'i bdag nyid pas/ blo yang de ltar thag chod nas rang gsal ba las cir yang mi bsam ste/ grangs kyi rnam pa ma 'gags bral bas sku gsung thugs kyang de bzhin nyid do/ zhes lan btab bo/ *STMG*: 192.6-193.2.

identified some passages in this chapter taken from Pelyang's *The Lamp of the Method of Meditation*, which Pelyang himself appears to have borrowed from Buddhagupta's *sBa pa'i rgum chung*. In *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, Nup identifies these passages correctly as coming from the *Small (Hidden) Grain*. However, Karmay points out that Nup's citations of the *Small Hidden Grain* appear to be taken from Pelyang's text and not from the version represented by the extant Dunhuang text.⁴¹⁴ In addition, I have located another citation in the chapter on Great Perfection from a second of Pelyang's *Six Lamps*, *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes*. As with the passages discovered by Karmay, Nup also here fails to identify the author of this text. In this case, he calls it simply "oral instruction," as he does with the passage from *The Lamp of the Precious View* in the previous chapter on Mahāyoga. It may be that Nup received these oral teachings without the context of a titled text or reference to a titled text, and indeed independent of any explicit sectarian affiliation. There are a few other passages in both the Mahāyoga and Great Perfection chapters of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* which are said to be from "oral instructions" and whose sources are not identified therein. Although they do not match any extant passage from Pelyang's works, there is the possibility that some of these unidentified teachings are also from Pelyang's teachings which were not redacted or identified as having been authored by him, or that they are from the teachings of another Mahāyoga teacher in the lineage shared by Pelyang and Nup, such as Nyak Nyanakumara.

⁴¹⁴ For some reason, Karmay did not consider the possibility that Nup was quoting from a version of the *Small Hidden Grain* that Pelyang also consulted. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*.

The excerpts from Pelyang's work in Nup's Great Perfection chapter illustrate several important points. Mind, like space, does not abide in characteristics, or, indeed, anywhere. Suchness is ineffable. The body is ineffable like the sky, and is illusory. Thus, no meditation is done nor does it need to be done. However, these points are not different in any way from statements made in the rest of Pelyang's texts, including those with the strongest tantric focus, despite the fact that they are used by Nup to illustrate Great Perfection, rather than Mahāyoga, teachings. The interesting discovery of citations from Pelyang's texts in both Mahāyoga and Great Perfection chapters of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* fits well with David Germano's and Sam Van Schaik's depictions of the Mahāyoga movement of the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Rather than adding weight to Karmay's claim that these two of Pelyang's texts should be distinguished from the rest as primarily concerned with Great Perfection, rather than Mahāyoga, doctrine,⁴¹⁵ this double inclusion of Pelyang's works merely exemplifies the breadth of perspective which was considered to be Mahāyoga just prior to the redaction of *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, and the particular affinity between the Mahāyoga view as redacted by Pelyang and the thought of the early Great Perfection.⁴¹⁶

Conclusion

Pelyang's legacy is deeper than might be guessed based on historical accounts. He is the earliest known author to have applied the doctrines of spontaneous presence, intrinsic buddha nature, primordial purity, and others to the standard, mainstream Mahāyoga tantric

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁴¹⁶ Indeed, Karmay himself points out that Buddhagupta is also included in both chapters. Ibid., 63.

practices of their day in such a way as to shift the emphasis away from ritual and meditative practice and toward a view of reality untainted by logic, bias, social and moral stricture, and hierarchies of awareness. Considering that Pelyang never uses the terms *sems sde*, *rdzogs chen* (as a tradition), or *atiyoga*, and given that he clearly and in many ways and contexts self-identifies as a proponent of Mahāyoga thought, we must approach his works as nothing other than a systematic description of Mahāyoga tantra. The amalgam we find in Pelyang's works of a recognition of the tantric world with a recommendation to see more deeply into it was innovative in its day and influential throughout the decades following. These innovations—in perspective and literary form—certainly contributed most significantly to his most immediate successes. The success of his works throughout the century and a half following his life as represented by the manuscripts at Dunhuang and the collection of his texts in the Peking and Derge canons is evidence of the interest Tibetans had in tantra, and specifically in Mahāyoga tantra, thought to be on the cutting edge of tantric innovations coming out of India during the ninth century.

Yet, despite these relatively short-lived successes, Tibet's collective cultural memory of one of its main religious pioneers was lost over the tenth and eleventh centuries. As we see in Nup's *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*, Mahāyoga tantra was eclipsed by Atiyoga at the pinnacle of the Ancients's formal doxographical hierarchy in the late tenth century.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ We do see some remaining outposts of interest in the eleventh century. Śraddhākaravarman, an eleventh-century Indian author and translator of Yoga and Mahāyoga texts, presents a doxography in which Mahāyoga is the ultimate tantric vehicle. Śraddhākaravarman, *Yogānuttaratantrārthāvatārasamgrahanāma*, P4536, vol. 81, 155.1.6. As per Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasamgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet", 230. Furthermore, the Rong-Long and Zur traditions continued exegesis of Mahāyoga texts, albeit under the auspices of the Great Perfection tradition.

In the following decades, Mahāyoga underwent even further transformations that elided Pelyang's philosophical approach in favor of ritual development, wrathful deity propitiation, the revealed treasure tradition, and so forth. The rise of the Modernists contributed to the loss of general interest in Pelyang's Mahāyoga approach as such.

Simultaneous with these developments of Modernist forms of tantric exegesis and of new Mahāyoga movements involving *terma* and wrathful and sexualized deity propitiation, the Great Perfection movement, which owes its origins in large part to Pelyang, progressed along a separate trajectory, to become the most venerated of the Ancients teachings. It may be that the need for the creation of a form of tantra that was entirely Tibetan caused the founders of the Great Perfection to turn away from Pelyang's teachings as such, while carrying his innovations with them as their own into a new era. It is a tremendous debt that it owes the Mahāyogin author Pelyang, who stands revealed as a pivotal early figure in the birth of the Atiyoga tradition.

CONCLUSION

The transfer to Tibet of the Buddhist tantras from India in the eighth and ninth centuries was a watershed event for the plateau, as they eventually became the defining traditions for Tibetan Buddhism of all types. Mahāyoga was on the cutting edge of these early tantric imports in the Tibetan Empire during this period, and ultimately the dominant subject of text creation and ritual transmission by at least the ninth century. Understanding of the Tibetan adoption of Mahāyoga, thus, is crucial for comprehending the historical foundations of tantra in Tibet. This dissertation inquires into that process through an in-depth examination of one of the imperial period's most prolific and influential thinkers, Pelyang, and his predominantly tantric corpus.

During the period of Buddhism's earliest systematic introduction to Tibet, as Tibetans struggled to gain a foothold among the dizzying variety of practices and literary sources of religious authority flowing into the plateau, they engaged in a number of activities meant both to enhance religious understanding and erudition and to legitimate and establish their preferred forms of Buddhism. Tantra, at least in its mainstream forms, proved to be a useful tool for the political leaders of a large and expanding Asian empire, while Mahāyoga variants came to be considered the most effective means of attaining realization by at least some religious groups in Tibet. Tibetans had only just developed their own lexigraphical system a century or so earlier, and the complex strands of Buddhist teachings from all over Asia presented an extraordinary challenge for their newly established intellectual and literary traditions. Tibetan histories of the late Dynastic Era

provide detailed accounts of the variety of projects undertaken by the throne as they attempted to piece together the Buddhist puzzle of a bewildering array of practices, theories, and institutions. Royally-commissioned copyists set to work on official copies of scriptures and other Buddhist literature, while Tibetan translators were trained, and standards formed for translations of imported foreign-language texts. Scholars were sent to India and China to train with masters there in the received traditions, and foreign masters were invited to the Tibetan capital for teachings. Though the officially sponsored Samye debates may have represented a culminating historical moment in Tibet's standardization of religious activity and is certainly reflected upon with great pride, it is most likely that formal and informal religious debates were being held continuously throughout the eighth and ninth centuries between Tibetans and various foreign representatives. The period is collectively remembered as a whirlwind of importing, copying, translating, and standardizing newly received traditions in ways that preserved and transmitted them without innovation or corruption.

Right in the middle of this ferment, however, it appears that an adept named Pelyang was already engaged in radically reforming the very definition of a tradition that had just been formed and received in Tibet, and was still, even in India, in the process of becoming. While literary and doctrinal antecedents for his approach can be seen in two key Indian sources—the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and Buddhaguhya's *Margavyūha*—Pelyang was surprisingly already engaged in innovation, as he wove his own fabric by plucking very specific, but by no means dominant, strands of thought from the *Guhyagarbha* and the *Margavyūha*. The presence of such fundamentally creative thinkers suggests that the

retrojected image of a perfect preservation of the Indian Buddhist tradition verbatim in Tibet is mistaken, or at the very least, a partial picture of the historical reality. When we view the context in which Pelyang must have been writing, it suggests that from a very early period, tantra was a collective, international enterprise in which Tibetans took a vital and creative part. Pelyang's corpus does not seem to have sustained its popularity for more than a century or so following his lifetime, and certainly did not survive the Renaissance period's turbulence. However, his evocative language and focus on view rather than ritual came to form the visionary heart of the Great Perfection movement, which newly emerged out of the Dark Period as the highest of the Ancients' vehicles.

As for other, coeval representations of Mahāyoga, it is clear that most of the Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang were formed from a quite different mold. Very few of these texts focus on delineating a tantric view, and emphasize instead the workings and efficacy of the praxis. This would indicate either that Pelyang's work predates the original redactions of most of the Mahāyoga textual material at Dunhuang, or that Pelyang was concerned with an entirely new approach to Mahāyoga, or, as I have come to think, a bit of both.

As I have shown, all indications (literary, bibliographic, doctrinal, and colophonic) are that Pelyang was composing his corpus at a time before Mahāyoga tantra had developed into the highly sophisticated ritualized form we see at Dunhuang. In support of this theory, we might point out that his abbreviated mentions of tantric elements (deity worship, *maṇḍala* creation, wrathful deity evocation, and so forth, some of which are specific to Mahāyoga) lack the more transgressive, polyvalent tantric terms. However,

given his sources, this is both remarkable and puzzling. Even if his texts predate the most transgressive forms of Mahāyoga ritual, as I believe they do, he must have been aware of the sexualized practices described in the *Margavyūha*, or at the very least, of the sexually-nuanced and occasionally violent narratives in the *Guhyagarbha*. It seems reasonable to expect that some indication of his awareness of these features in texts he otherwise cites verbatim would seep through into his works. There must be another reason for the complete absence of any mention of these types of terms.

It has been surmised that the sexual, violent, and antinomian language characteristic of the Mahāyoga tantras was intended to shock its audiences, and buttressed its claims of being the newest and most powerful sources of soteriological technology available in Buddhism. Furthermore, the polyvalency of coded language in tantric literature required controlled transmission, further enhancing its elite, exclusive image. However, it also has been asserted that the power of the transgressive language found in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and its associated texts lies primarily in its connotative function. In other words, the transgressiveness itself works as the referent of a higher level of communication.⁴¹⁸ The intended effects of such semiotics were both to hold Mahāyoga apart, and to break open conceptual calcifications involving both outward limitations of caste, cultural norms involving sexual behavior, and the general mores involving right and wrong behavior, as

⁴¹⁸ On the interesting topic of using Roland Barthes's connotative semiotics to interpret tantric literature, see the following. Orzech, "The "Great Teaching of Yoga": The Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism." and Wedemeyer, "Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahayoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture."

well as more subtle conceptual constraints involving polarities of good and bad, true and false, conventional and ultimate, and so forth.

With Pelyang, we witness a leap even further outward from this type of discourse, to a position in which the efficacy of both the ritual practice itself and the rhetorical connotations of its transgressive language have ceased to be the central constituent. In fact, Pelyang deems even Mādhyamika presentations to be reifications of reality. For him, neither the rational force of analytic constructs, nor the shattering effect of the death dances and orgasmic exclamations of the Mahāyoga tantras are enough to break the surface of the self-bound mind. In their heuristic places, Pelyang ultimately motions toward the utter absence of anything limiting, a sky transcending all particulars, as he employs an effective *via negativa*. We can see the attractiveness Pelyang's approach had for at least some Tibetans in the regard with which his works were held during and just after his death, and more specifically in the emergence of two traditions centered on these themes—the Great Perfection and the Rong-Long exegetical tradition on the *Guhyagarbha*. Thus it seems that Pelyang succeeded in promoting his view, though it ceased to be known as Mahāyoga as such.

The attractiveness of Pelyang's particular approach to Dynastic-Era Tibetans begs the question: Why didn't his form of Mahāyoga develop in its own right instead of transforming into the rise of the Great Perfection while Mahāyoga itself continued to develop in other directions, especially when it is apparent that the Great Perfection adopted many of the most appealing aspects of early Mahāyoga traditions? Though the style and content of Pelyang's message resonated with Tibetans in the ninth and tenth centuries,

there is also a preponderance of Mahāyoga ritual manuals among the Dunhuang manuscripts dating to only a slightly later period which differ drastically from Pelyang's poems. It appears that Mahāyoga was variously depicted and represented in the early centuries after its introduction to Tibet. If Pelyang's approach was so attractive, why was it not preserved intact, as the dominant Mahāyoga approach? Why did Tibetans feel the need to fashion out of such an approach an entirely new and discrete tradition?

These questions are difficult, and as the field of early Mahāyoga studies advances, more nuanced answers will emerge. Certainly, the Great Perfection arose out of several foundations, but it would appear that Pelyang's Mahāyoga's exegesis was a central source. Perhaps as proponents of the texts finally classed as Great Perfection sought to legitimate these emergent developments as representative of a cohesive tradition, the philosophical speculation and apophatic expression of the Mahāyoga traditions proved too logically inconsistent with Mahāyoga's mainstream ritual technology and focus on forceful ideologies of subjugation and domination. This cognitive dissonance may have been led to a final decision to break away from the old labels, preserving the highest ritual forms and the most liberated language from the mature Mahāyoga under the name of a new tradition, a reworked lineage with direct connections to India, and texts claiming enlightened authorship in the form of buddha-voiced literature—The Great Perfection in a nutshell. In this new model, there would have been no room for a self-professing Mahāyogin master whose texts are clearly attributed to his humble, human, and Tibetan authorship. Pelyang's injunctions to leave off directed ritual and see reality immediately may have had the unintended consequence for Great Perfection founders of obviating a need for the

Mahāyoga designation itself. Indeed, the tension between these ritual and philosophical foci continue within the later contrasts, in part, between the Mahāyoga traditions of the “tantra series” and the “evocation series”.

Matthew Kapstein has described the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist cultural spheres as realms in which the value of orthopraxy has generally outweighed that of orthodoxy throughout their respective histories.⁴¹⁹ This is certainly true in Indian tantra, where we see an almost exclusive focus on establishing the levels of attainment, *maṇḍala* outlines, deity iconography, and the specifics of ritual. It is also mirrored in the central role of ritualized conduct within early Tibetan Mahāyoga liturgical materials from Dunhuang. In most Indian and much of Tibetan tantric literature, doctrine merely serves to support the import or function of the rites, without an independent function as a soteriological tool. This may be in part because it is easier to develop and accommodate a practical departure than an ideological one, such that doctrinal leaps were unusual enough as to entail the demarcation of an entirely new form of tantra. This was certainly the case with Mahāyoga tantra’s delineation from Yoga tantra in the former’s assertion of a potent new model of eroticism, subjugation, and antinomianism laced with an evolving motif of reality’s spontaneous presence. While his own masters and disciples and those practicing around him saw the dynamics of Indian and Tibetan tantra as adhering in its ritual dynamics played out in external, physical actions as well as in subtle, internal visualizations, the shift in attention represented in Pelyang’s texts can retroactively be seen to constitute another such fundamental turn of tantra, which issued forth in the uniquely Tibetan tradition of the Great

⁴¹⁹ Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory*, 119.

Perfection. These two traditions, then, came to constitute the unique character of the Ancients school, the avowed successors of late imperial practitioners of Buddhist tantra, in their fascinating blend of dense Mahāyoga ritual traditions governed by the central metaphor of demonic subjugation, and Atiyoga contemplative traditions organized around motifs of simplicity, naturalness, and spontaneity. This dynamic interplay between two extraordinarily divergent, and yet curiously complementary, esoteric traditions in fact is already strongly articulated in the innovative writings of Pelyang, as he traces a different path forward for tantra right amidst the newly minted literature and practices of Mahāyoga. This thesis's analysis of his early corpus, thus, sheds light not only on Tibetans' late imperial struggles with the newly imported forms of Buddhist tantra, but also points forward to the transformations of those traditions in the ensuing decades and their ultimate synthesis in the late tenth century to form the newly emergent "old school" of the Ancients.

NOTES TO THE CRITICAL EDITIONS

Where variations exist to the modern standards of applying *gi/kyi/gyi* and *pa/ba*, the critical editions generally reflect usage in PT 819 (in the case of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*) or in the Peking canon (for the rest of the texts). Given the numerable discrepancies between versions of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* in their punctuation of the prose questions, the critical edition has been punctuated following PT 819 where possible. *Shad* end markers are represented by a forward slash. Folio and scroll opening and closing marks have not been noted. Folio numbers in square brackets correspond to pagination in the Peking canonical version for all texts. Reverse *gi gu* are not noted, though they appear in all Dunhuang manuscript versions, generally in conformance to the system described by Fujieda Akira.⁴²⁰ Passages quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* are marked with bold font, with the corresponding passages transcribed in the footnotes.

⁴²⁰ Akira Fujieda, "The Tunhuang Manuscripts: A General Description," *Zinbun* 9 (1970): 128-29.

Vajrasattva Questions and Answers

A: ITJ 470

B: PT 837

C: Peking 5082

D: PT 819

STMG: The Lamp Eye of Contemplation

rnal 'byor chen po mchog gi lugs/
rigs bas shes par⁴²¹ 'dod pa'i phyir/
blo la snang ba'i the tshom rnams/⁴²²
slob mas dge ba'i bshes la dris/

Due to a desire for logical understanding of
Mahāyoga, the supreme system,
The student asked the spiritual guide
About doubts which appear in her/his mind.

nges pa'i lung dang myi⁴²³ 'gal zhing/
chos nyid rig pa'i rjes su 'gro/
rang⁴²⁴ rig 'brel bcas tshigs su bcad/
ci⁴²⁵ ltar gnas pa bzhin du bstan/

Without contradicting the definitive scriptures, and
Following an awareness of reality,
With intrinsic awareness, [these] verses were composed
To teach, according to the way things are.

rdo rje sems pa dpa' ci⁴²⁶ lta bu lags/

1) Who or what is Vajrasattva?

skye myed ye shes rang gi dbyings/⁴²⁷
myi 'gyur myi shigs rdo rje'i don/⁴²⁸
sems⁴²⁹ ye shes rdo rje ste/

421 C: shas par

422 A: the tsham dag; B: entire line is illegible.

423 C: pa'i lus mi

424 C omits rang.

425 C: ji

426 C: sems dpa' zhes bgyi ba'i don ji

427 AB: skye ba myed pa ye shes rang gyi dbyings

428 AB: myi 'gyur myi shigs pa'i rdo rje'i don no

429 C: sems dpa'i

‘gro don rdo rje sems dpar bshad do/⁴³⁰

Unoriginated, the spontaneously [arising] expanse of primordial wisdom,
Unchanging, indestructible—that is the definition of ‘vajra’.
As the Mind of adamantine primordial wisdom,
Having acted for the benefit of beings, Vajrasattva is defined.

rdo rje sems dpa’ ni dus gsum gyi de bzhin⁴³¹ gshegs pa thams cad kyi⁴³²
thugs rdo rje/ lags la/⁴³³

sku gsung⁴³⁴ thugs kyi bdag po lags so zhes bya⁴³⁵ ba’i don ci⁴³⁶ lta bu lags/

2) What does it mean to say that Vajrasattva is “the vajra Mind of all the Tathāgata of the three times,” and “is the Master of Body, Speech, and Mind?”

dus gsum rgyal bas skyed med rtogs par mnyam/⁴³⁷

[6] kun gyi⁴³⁸ rang bzhin bde bshegs⁴³⁹ rgya mtsho’i thugs/

sku gsung thugs kyi mtshan ma ci⁴⁴⁰ snyed pa’i/

dngos⁴⁴¹ gzhi nyid du gyur pas bdag por⁴⁴² bshad/

Because of being identical to the matchless realization of nonorigination of the Conquerors of the three times,

The intrinsic nature of all, Sugata, with a Mind like the ocean,

The very foundation of all the marks of Body, Speech, and Mind,

Vajrasattva is explained to be the Master [of Body, Speech, and Mind].

rdo rje sems dpa’ ni ‘gro ba kun⁴⁴³ dang chos [7] thams cad kyi rang bzhin
yin⁴⁴⁴ no zhes bgyi⁴⁴⁵ ba’i don ci⁴⁴⁶ lta bu lags/

430 AB: ‘gro ba’i don byed pas rdo rje sems par bshad do

431 C: gyi bde bar

432 AB: kyi yang

433 C omits lags la.

434 AB: gsungm

435 C: ‘byung

436 C: ji

437 A: dus gsum gyi rgyal bas kun skyed ba myed par rtogs par mnyam ba myed pa’i rang bzhin du mnyam; B: dus gsum kyi rgyal bas kun skyed ba myed par rtogs par mnyam ba myed pa’i rang bzhin du mnyam

438 AB: kyi

439 AB: bzhin bar gshegs pa

440 C: ji

441 AB: dngos po

442 B: po

443 C omits kun.

444 C omits yin.

445 C: bya

446 C: ji

3) What does it mean that Vajrasattva is “the intrinsic nature of all beings and phenomena?”

chos rnams thams cad ‘gro ba mtha’ dag ni/
 skye myed⁴⁴⁷ don dam dbyings su ro gcig pas/
 de nyid dus gsum rgyal ba’i chos [8] nyid de/
 kun tu bzang po rdo rje sems dpa’i ngang/

All phenomena and beings without limit,

Are of one flavor in the unoriginated, ultimate expanse.

Therefore, that itself is the reality of the Conquerors of the three times and

The sphere of Samantabhadra Vajrasattva.⁴⁴⁸

ye shes lnga rigs lngar bstan pa’i don ci⁴⁴⁹ Ita bu lags/

4) What does it mean to teach that the five Primordial Wisdoms are the five (Conqueror) lineages?

skye myed⁴⁵⁰ ye shes⁴⁵¹ chos kyi dbyings dang mnyam/⁴⁵²
 de’i yon [134b] tan khyad par lngar⁴⁵³ snang ba/

447 C: med

448 The names Rdo rje sems dpa (Vajrasattva), Kun tu bzang po (Samantabhadra), and Kun tu bzang po rdo rje sems dpa (Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva) appear to be used interchangeably in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*. In particular, question and answer pairs 3 and 22 are almost identical in their descriptions of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva, in whose sphere all emanations and absorptions are said to be of one flavor. Descriptions in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* of all three include both apparent references to a particular deity, as in the cases of question and answer pairs 17 and 36, and to a more abstract concept of the intrinsic nature of all, as in question and answer pairs 1, 2, 3, and 22. A similar equivalency between these terms can be found in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha sūtra*. Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet".

The author of PT 647, a commentary on the *Rig pa’i khu byug*, apparently felt the need for clarification on this issue. “In all the tantras, it is stated that Vajrasattva is the chief of all yoga, but here Kun-tu bzang-po is mentioned as the chief. ...It is thought that Vajrasattva is mentioned when it is about seeking a desired goal and when there are different grades in the achievement. But here one does not seek any kind of goal like that. Taking this into account, Kun-tu bzang-po is even more suitable.” Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*.

449 C: ji

450 AB: skye ba myed pa’i; C: med

451 AB: shes ni

452 AB: mnyam la

453 B omits lngar.

de nyid ye she lnga'i mtshan nyid de/
thabs la mkhas pas rgyal ba rigs lngar bstan/⁴⁵⁴

Unoriginated primordial wisdom is equal to the expanse of reality, and
Its distinct attributes appear as fivefold.

Just those [appearances] are the defining characteristics of the five Primordial Wisdoms.
Those skilled in expedient means teach them as the five Conqueror lineages.

chos kyi dbyings kyi⁴⁵⁵ [2] ye shes dang/ mye⁴⁵⁶ long lta bu'i ye shes la khyad
par⁴⁵⁷ ci mchis/ chos kyi⁴⁵⁸ dbyings la ji'i phyir⁴⁵⁹ ye shes kyis⁴⁶⁰ bgyi/

5) What is the difference between Expanse of Reality Primordial Wisdom and Mirror-like
Primordial Wisdom? Why is the Expanse of Reality called Primordial Wisdom?

ye shes chos kyi dbyings dang khyad myed⁴⁶¹ pas/
skye myed⁴⁶² [3] ye shes⁴⁶³ mye⁴⁶⁴ long lta bur mkhyen/⁴⁶⁵
ye shes rig pa'i ngang dang dbyer myed⁴⁶⁶ phyir/
chos kyi dbyings la chos nyid⁴⁶⁷ ye shes brjod/⁴⁶⁸

Because primordial wisdom and the expanse of reality are indistinguishable,
Unoriginated primordial wisdom is wisely known to be like a mirror.

Because primordial wisdom is indivisible from the sphere of awareness,
The expanse of reality is explained to be 'Expanse of Reality Primordial Wisdom'.

yi dam gyi lha geig bsgoms [4] pas de bzhin gshegs pa kun bsgoms par
'gyur ro zhes bgyi ba'i don ci lta bu lags⁴⁶⁹/

6) Through meditation on a single tutelary deity, it is said that one will be meditatively
cultivating all the Tathagata. What does this mean?

454 C: bstan

455 B omits kyi.

456 C: me

457 C omits par

458 B: nyid

459 C: ci'i slad du

460 C: zhes

461 C: med

462 AB: myed pa'i; C: med

463 AB: shes ni

464 C: me

465 AB: mkhyen no

466 C: med

467 AB: nyid kyi

468 A: shes zhes brjod; B: shes zhes brjod do

469 A: don ci lta ba lta bu lags; C: don ji lta bu lags

rgyal⁴⁷⁰ ba⁴⁷¹ rigs lnga la stsogs⁴⁷² pa/
 thabs kyi phyag rgya ma lus kun/
 chos sku⁴⁷³ rdo rjer⁴⁷⁴ ro [5] gcig ste/
 ji ltar snang ba de ltar myin/⁴⁷⁵

de ltar⁴⁷⁶ rgyal ba gcig bsgoms pas/⁴⁷⁷
 gcig nyid ma yin⁴⁷⁸ kun gyi ngang/
 rnal ‘byor rig pa ‘dir⁴⁷⁹ ldan na/
 bder⁴⁸⁰ gshogs ma bsgoms gang yang [6] myed/⁴⁸¹

The five lineages of the Conquerors and so forth,
 And all the seals of expedient means⁴⁸² without exception,
 Are of one flavor in the adamantine Reality Body.
 They are not as they appear, however that might be.

By thus meditatively cultivating a single Conqueror,
 The realm of all the Conquerors, rather than merely a single one,
 Is possessed within yogic awareness.
 When this occurs, there is nothing which is not a meditative cultivation of the Tathagata.

byang chub thob pa myed⁴⁸³ par bstan⁴⁸⁴ pa’i don ci⁴⁸⁵ lta bu lags/
 7) How is one to view the meaning of the teaching that there is no attainment of
 awakening?

rang bzhin nam kar⁴⁸⁶ PT 819 begins here gnas pa ni/

470 A: rgya

471 B: ba’

472 BC: sogs

473 AB: skur

474 AB: rje

475 C: min

476 C: bas

477 C: pa

478 C: men la

479 C: ‘di

480 C: bde

481 C: gcig kyang med

482 This term is also used in Buddhaguhya’s Margavyūha 472a8: mnyam pa nyi las ma
 g.yo bzhin/_/thabs kyi phyag rgya chen por ston.

483 C: med

484 AB: bsten

485 C: ji

486 AB: nam khar; C: namkhar; PT 819: begins with *gnas*.

/nam kar⁴⁸⁷ gyur⁴⁸⁸ pa'i⁴⁸⁹ rgyu ma yin/
 /sems nyid nam ka⁴⁹⁰ byang cub⁴⁹¹ [7] dbyings/
 /byang chub⁴⁹² grub⁴⁹³ pa'i rgyu ma yin/

gzhi rtsa myed pa'i⁴⁹⁴ sems nyid la⁴⁹⁵
 /bkruś pas myi⁴⁹⁶ 'dag⁴⁹⁷ nam ka⁴⁹⁸ bzhin/
 /skyed⁴⁹⁹ dang bral ba'i byang cub⁵⁰⁰ la/
 /[8] byang cub⁵⁰¹ rgyu 'bras yong gyis⁵⁰² myed⁵⁰³

One's own nature abides as the sky. This means that
 There is no reason to transform oneself into the sky.
 The mind itself is the sky, the expanse of awakening;
 There is no cause of the attainment of awakening.

Without ground or root, the mind itself,
 Like the sky, is not [made] pure by cleansing.
 Awakening, free of origination,
 Is without any cause or fruit of awakening whatsoever.⁵⁰⁴

487 AB: nam khar; C: namkhar

488 C: 'gyur

489 ba'i

490 AB: nam kha; C: namkha'

491 ABC: chub

492 D: beginning of line illegible.

493 AB: bsgrub; C: 'grub

494 C: med pa

495 AB: ni; C: de

496 C: mi

497 AB: dag

498 AB: nam kha; C: namkha

499 C: skye

500 ABC: chub

501 ABC: chub

502 D: kyis

503 C: med

504 As has been pointed out by Samten Karmay, these two stanzas are taken almost verbatim from Buddhagupta's *Small Hidden Grain*, which Karmay tentatively has dated to the eighth century. The lines correspond to verses 19-26 in the Dunhuang version, ITJ 594. The *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* differs only in the sixth line, where it reads "bkruś pas myi 'dag" instead of ITJ 594's "btsal bas myi rnyed," meaning "it cannot be sought and found." Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*.

/‘o⁵⁰⁵ na sngags spyod pas dngos grub tshul ci ltar thob/⁵⁰⁶

8) Then, in what manner does a mantric practitioner attain achievements?

rang bzhin gnas pa nyid⁵⁰⁷ kyi phyir/
/thob pa rdul tsam⁵⁰⁸ [135a] myed⁵⁰⁹ mod kyi/
/rtsol⁵¹⁰ dang mos pa ci⁵¹¹ bzhin du/
/byin rlabs⁵¹² yid bzhin nor bu’i tshul/

Because intrinsic nature abides just as it is,

Indeed, there is not one iota of attainment.

However, in accordance with one’s effort and devotion,

Blessings [appear in the] manner of a wish-fulfilling jewel.

/rnal⁵¹³ ‘byor pas⁵¹⁴ dngos grub thob pa’i khyad par⁵¹⁵ ci ltar⁵¹⁶ mchis/

9) Then what is the distinction of the accomplishments attained through yoga?

/[2] dper na rgyal pos blon po⁵¹⁷ bskos⁵¹⁸ pa ltar/⁵¹⁹
/grub pa gong nas byin⁵²⁰ pa phyi’i tshul/⁵²¹
/‘bangs kyis rgyal⁵²² srid phul nas dbang sgyur⁵²³ ltar/
/rang ‘byung [3] rdzogs chen bla na myed⁵²⁴ pa’i tshul/

For example, like a king appointing a minister,

The bequeathal of accomplishments from above is the outer method.

Like gaining power through the people offering the kingdom [to the king’s command],

505 AB: rgyu ‘bras myed pas ‘o.

506 AB: grub tshul ci ltar ‘thob; C: grub ci lta bu ‘thob

507 D: gnas pa nyid is illegible.

508 C: rtsam

509 C: med

510 AB: rtsol ba

511 C: ji

512 C: brlabs

513 AB: ‘o na rnal

514 A: bas; D: pa

515 D: bar

516 ABC omit ltar.

517 D: po is illegible.

518 C: blon por bsgos

519 AB: na; C: bzhin

520 BC: ‘byin

521 AB: tshul lo

522 AB: rgyal ba’i

523 AB: bskur

524 C: med

[Their] self-emergence is great perfection, the unexcelled method.⁵²⁵

/rnal ‘byor⁵²⁶ gsal na⁵²⁷ rtags dang mtshan ma ma byung na yang dngos grub
tu myi rung ba’i tshul ma lags sam/⁵²⁸

10) When one’s yoga is luminous and yet the signs and marks do not emerge, is that not a method unsuitable for [attaining] accomplishments?

/rgyal ba’i rang bzhin [4] shes rab⁵²⁹ ting⁵³⁰ ‘dzin kho na⁵³¹ bas/
/de yod⁵³² phyi rol⁵³³ rtags dang mtshan ma’i khar ma lus/⁵³⁴
/dper na mye⁵³⁵ ‘dod⁵³⁶ mye⁵³⁷ ni rnyed ‘gyur⁵³⁸ na/
/mye⁵³⁹ rtags du ba yod dang⁵⁴⁰ myed⁵⁴¹ pa’i khar ma⁵⁴² lus/

The intrinsic nature of a Conqueror is just insight and meditative stabilization.
With those, the issue of external signs and marks is extraneous.
For example, in the case of wanting fire, once the fire is found,
The issue of there being smoke as the sign of fire is extraneous.

/[5] de bas⁵⁴³ rtags dang mtshan mar ‘phros shing zhen pa’i blos/⁵⁴⁴

525 This distinction between inner and outer is made more explicit in Pelyang’s *Lamp of the Mind*, in which the outer forms are said to be Kriyā and Yoga tantras, and the inner, secret method is identified as Mahāyoga tantra. P 5918, 278b.

526 AB: ‘byor pa lta ba

527 AB: na yang

528 A: mtshan ma ma byung na ‘grub tu myi btub pa’i ci lags; B: mtshan mas byung na ‘grub du myi btub pa’i ci lags; C: mtshan ma ma byung na ‘grub tu ma gtub ba’i tshul lags sam

529 AB: rab dang

530 B: ting nge

531 AB: na yin

532 AB: yod dang

533 AB: rol gi

534 AB: ma lus so; C: ma las

535 D: na mye is illegible.

536 C: me long

537 AB: pas ni mye; C: pas ni med

538 AB: par gyur

539 C: med

540 C: kyang

541 C: med

542 C omits ma

543 AB: bas na

544 C: mar zhen cing ‘phros pa’i blos

/gzhan nas nam⁵⁴⁵ 'byung snyam du re ba myin bya'i/⁵⁴⁶
 /dus sum sangs rgyas⁵⁴⁷ dngos gzhi rnal 'byor⁵⁴⁸ rnam gnyis po/
 /rang la⁵⁴⁹ byung bar rig nas sems [6] nyams lta zhing 'brtson/⁵⁵⁰

Consequently, do not hope, with a mind that clings to the emanation of signs and marks, Wondering whether “one day [they] will arise from elsewhere.”

The foundation of the Conquerors of the three times—the two yogas—⁵⁵¹

Arise within oneself. Having perceived this, strive to view the mind's experience.⁵⁵²

/shes rab dang ting nge 'dzin bsgoms 'ba' zhig gis 'grub bam/⁵⁵³ / lhas
 kyang byin gyis rlabs par 'gyur/⁵⁵⁴

545 AB: nam zhig na

546 AB: re bar myi bya zhing; C: re ba mi bya'i

547 AB: dus sum du rgyal ba; C: dus gsum sangs rgyas

548 C omits rnal 'byor

549 ABC: las

550 C: 'brtshon

Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

*rgyal ba'i rang bzhin shes rab snying rje kho na bas/
 /de yod phyi rol rtags dang mtshan ma'i khar ma lus/
 dper na mi 'dod pa'i me ni rnyed gyur na/
 /me rtags du ba yod dang med pa'i khar ma lus/
 /de bas rtags dang mtshan mar zhen pa'i blos/
 /gzhan nas nam 'byung snyam du re ba mi bya'o/_
 /dus gsum sangs rgyas dngos gzhi rnal 'byor rnam gnyis po/
 rang las byung bar rig nas sems mnyam lta zhing brtson/
 ces gsungs so/ STMG 256.2.*

551 The referents of this term ‘the two yogas’ (*rnal 'byor rnam gnyis po*) are not clear. In his *Lamp of the Mind*, Pelyang mentions three yogas (*rnal 'byor rnam gsum*), but in neither text is there any description of either system of yogas. For a roughly coeval explication of a system of three views or methods (*tshul*) of inner yoga (*rnal 'byor nang pa thabs kyi rgyud kyi theg pa la zhugs pa rnam kyi lta ba ni rnam pa gsum*), see the *Garland of Views*, transcribed and translated in Karmay's *Great Perfection*. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*. For descriptions of a system of four yogas among the Dunhuang Mahāyoga texts, see ITJ 454 and ITJ 508.

552 A similar term, to ‘view the mind’ (*sems la lta*) appears in PT 626 and PT 634, which are commentaries on an early Chan text. As has been pointed out by Van Schaik and Dalton, the term bears remarkable similarity to the Northern Chan term *kan xin* (看心). Dalton and van Schaik, "Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Buddhist Syncretism in Dunhuang."

553 AB: 'dzin ba zhig bsgoms pas 'grub; C: 'dzin bsgoms ba 'ba' zhig gis 'grub bam

554 A: lhas kyang byin gyis rlabs bar 'gyur; C: byin gyi brlabs kyis kyang stong par 'gyur;
 D: byin gyi brlabs kyis kyang stong bar 'gyur

11) Does one accomplish only by means of insight and practicing meditative stabilization, or will there be blessings as well?

/‘khrul⁵⁵⁵ rtog rtas nas⁵⁵⁶ [7] thams cad snang ba bzhin/
 /shes rab⁵⁵⁷ ting⁵⁵⁸ ‘dzin⁵⁵⁹ kho nas ‘grub mod kyi/
 /dang ba’i chu la nyi zla’i gzugs⁵⁶⁰ brnyan bzhin/
 /thugs⁵⁶¹ rje’i⁵⁶² byin brlabs⁵⁶³ sdod⁵⁶⁴ pa myed⁵⁶⁵ [8] par ‘byung/

Mistaken conceptions having proliferated, all things are like an appearance.
 Though there will be accomplishment only by means of insight and meditative stabilization, indeed,
 Like reflections of the sun and moon in clear water,
 Blessings of compassion continuously emerge.

/byin⁵⁶⁶ ‘byung bar bgyi na re ba bskyed dam ci⁵⁶⁷ ltar bgyis na ‘byung bar
 ‘gyur/

12) When blessings are evoked, have they been evoked as a result of having generated aspirations, or by what means are they evoked?

/ci⁵⁶⁸ ltar chu la rnyog pa dangs gyur⁵⁶⁹ na/
 /gnyi⁵⁷⁰ zla’i gzugs brnyan ‘char [135b] ba bstsal myi dgos/⁵⁷¹
 /rang sems rnal ‘byor dag par gyur pa⁵⁷² na/
 /rgyal ba’i byin rlabs⁵⁷³ ‘byung bar brtsal myi⁵⁷⁴ dgos/⁵⁷⁵

555 AB: ‘khrul pa’i

556 AB: brtas pas

557 AB: rab dang

558 AB: ting nge

559 A: ‘dzin rtse gcig pa; B: tse gcig pa

560 AB: gzus

561 AB: ye shes kyi lha’i thugs

562 D: rje

563 AB: brlabs kyang

564 B: sdig

565 C: med

566 AB: byin brlabs; C: byin gyi

567 C: ji

568 C: ji

569 AB: rnyog pa dangs par ‘gyur; C: rnyog ma dangs ‘gyur; D: rnyog pa dang ‘gyur

570 C: nyi

571 AB: brnyan ‘byung ba bstsal myi dgos pa bzhin; C: brnyan ‘char ba brtsal mi dgos

572 C: ba

573 C: brlabs

574 AB: ba bsgrub pa myi; C: ba brtsal mi

575 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

In the same way as when sediment settles and water becomes clear again,
 One does not need to strive for the manifestation of the sun and moon's reflections.
 When the yoga of one's own mind is pure,⁵⁷⁶
 There is no need to strive for the arising of the Conqueror's blessings.

/bde bar gshegs pa la bsnyen pa ci⁵⁷⁷ ltar bgyis na nye/
 13) How does one ritually approach the Sugata?

/[2] bdag tu⁵⁷⁸ snang ba nyid⁵⁷⁹ na chos kyi⁵⁸⁰ sku/
 /'gyur myed nam kar lta bur rtogs 'gyur cing/⁵⁸¹
 /bsnyen pa⁵⁸² bya⁵⁸³ dang byed par⁵⁸⁴ myi dmyigs⁵⁸⁵ na/⁵⁸⁶
 /tsheds dang 'bad pa myed⁵⁸⁷ pas⁵⁸⁸ [3] bsnyen pa'i mchog/⁵⁸⁹

/'di 'dra'i⁵⁹⁰ rtogs⁵⁹¹ dang ldan pa'i blo can gyis/⁵⁹²
 /mtshan ma'i phyag⁵⁹³ rgya nmam⁵⁹⁴ gsum gsal bar bsgom/⁵⁹⁵

zhus lan las/_

*ji ltar chu la rnyog ma dngas 'gyur na/
 /nyi zla'i gzugs brnyan 'byung ba btsal mi dgos/
 /rang sems rnal 'byor dag par gyur pa na/
 /rgyal ba'i byin rlabs 'byung ba btsal mi dgos/
 /zhes pa dang/ STMG: 255.6.*

⁵⁷⁶ The phrase 'the yoga of one's own mind' (*rang sems rnal 'byor*) also occurs in Pelyang's *Lamp of the Precious View*.

⁵⁷⁷ C: ji

⁵⁷⁸ A: du

⁵⁷⁹ AB: nyid kyi dus

⁵⁸⁰ AB: gyi

⁵⁸¹ AB: 'gyur ba myed pa nam ka lta bur rtogs par 'gyur cing; C: 'gyur med namkha' lta bur rtogs 'gyur cing

⁵⁸² AB: pa don dam par

⁵⁸³ AB: bya ba

⁵⁸⁴ ABC: pa

⁵⁸⁵ AB: byed par myi dmyis; C: byed pa mi dmigs

⁵⁸⁶ D: kyang

⁵⁸⁷ C: med

⁵⁸⁸ CD: pa

⁵⁸⁹ AB: mchog go

⁵⁹⁰ Illegible in D.

⁵⁹¹ AB: rtogs pa

⁵⁹² D: kyis

⁵⁹³ AB: phag

⁵⁹⁴ A: mams

⁵⁹⁵ AB: bsgom mo

/g.yeng ba myed⁵⁹⁶ par⁵⁹⁷ brtson⁵⁹⁸ zhing myi⁵⁹⁹ gtong la/⁶⁰⁰

/cho [4] ga kun⁶⁰¹ ldan⁶⁰² ye shes lha dang nye/⁶⁰³

If, at the time of its very appearance as oneself, the Reality Body
Comes to be understood as unchanging, like the sky, and
When the approach is not perceived in terms of object and subject,
There being neither toil nor exertion, this is the highest form of approach.

A wise person possessed of such realization
Clearly cultivates the three seals⁶⁰⁴ of marks in meditation.
While persevering without distraction and never abandoning [the practice],
Employing all the rituals, they will approach the wisdom deity.

/ye shes kyi lha'i bsnyen ba byed pa'i tshe/⁶⁰⁵ _/las phra mo rtsom ba sgrib

'am myi⁶⁰⁶ bsgrib/⁶⁰⁷

14) When one draws near to the wisdom deity, if one engages in trivial activity,⁶⁰⁸ will there be defilement or not?

/sku gsung⁶⁰⁹ thugs su goms pa ma gtogs par/⁶¹⁰

596 C: med

597 C: pas

598 A: brtson grus; B: brtson 'grus

599 C: mi

600 C: na

601 AB: kun dang

602 AB: ldan ba na

603 AB: nye'o

604 This may be a general reference to the three tantric seals of Body, Speech, and Mind, to be cultivated with *mudrā*, *mantra*, and concentration. For an example, see Sakyaprabha's 'Od ldan P. 4125. As per Bdud-'joms, Dorje, and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, 70-71.. The Yogatantra tradition also uses a system of four *mudrā* to describe the classic progression of the generation of the deity in deity yoga. Those four *mudrā* are *mahāmudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, *samayamudrā*, and *karmamudrā*.

605 ABC: kyi lha la bsnyen pa bgyid pa'i dus su

606 C: sgrib bam mi

607 ABC: sgrib

608 This term appears to refer to tantric ritual activity meant to bring about yogic abilities, perhaps as part of the preliminary exercises of deity yoga. I would like to thank Matthew Kapstein for his suggestion that this may refer to ritual activity.

609 AB: sku dang gsung dang

610 ABC: pa

/bsgrub par bya [5] ba'i dngos grub⁶¹¹ gzhan myi⁶¹² tshol⁶¹³/
 /gnas dang gnas myin⁶¹⁴ 'gal bar⁶¹⁵ ma bstams⁶¹⁶ na/
 /goms myed gud na myed pas 'gal ba myed/⁶¹⁷

Except for meditatively cultivating Body, Speech, and Mind,
 Do not seek achievement of any other accomplishments.
 If one does not begin by setting up abiding and non-abiding in mutual contradiction,
 There will be no meditating, nothing separate, and therefore, no contradiction.

/yi⁶¹⁸ dam kyi⁶¹⁹ lha ni long⁶²⁰ spyod [6] rdzogs pa'i sku/_/zhi ba'i⁶²¹ cha lugs
 su bsgom/_/las kyi lha ni khro bo la bstogs⁶²² par bsgoms⁶²³ zhes 'chad
 pa dag mchis na/ 'di ltar nges sam ma nges/

15) When it is said that “The tutelary deity involves meditation upon the Complete Enjoyment Body in its peaceful aspect, and the active deity⁶²⁴ involves meditation upon the wrathful form, and so forth,” is that definitive or not?

/gtso dang sprul pa zhi khro la bstogs⁶²⁵ kun/⁶²⁶
 /chos skur [7] ro gcig thabs mkhas 'gro don bsnyams/⁶²⁷

611 AB: grub ni

612 C: mi

613 AB: tshol lo

614 AB: myed; C: min

615 C: par

616 AC: brtsams

617 AB: goms byed gud na myed pas sgrib pa myed do; C: goms byed gud na med pas sgrib pa med

618 AB: yid

619 ABC omit kyi.

620 C: longs

621 C: ba

622 AB: bo las btsogs; C: bo la sogs

623 A: par sgom mo; B: par bsgom mo

624 The active deities, or las kyi lha, are also mentioned in Buddhaguhya's Margavyūha 487b4: phyogs being brgyad kyi rim rdzogs nas/_/las kyi lha'i rnal 'byor gyis/_/mchod rdzas byin gyis brlab par bya/

625 C: sogs

626 AB: gtso bo dang sprul pa 'khor dang beas pa'i zhi khro las stsogs pa kun

627 AB: chos skur ro gcig thabs la thugs rje dbang gis mkhas mkhas 'gro don bstan par mnyam mo; C: chos skur ro gcig thabs mkhas don bstan par mnyam

/de bas⁶²⁸ bder⁶²⁹ gshegs⁶³⁰ gzhi rtsa⁶³¹ ma⁶³² nges te/⁶³³

/skal ba dang ni mos ba ci ltar ‘tsham bar zad/⁶³⁴

The principal [deities] and their emanations, the peaceful and the wrathful, and so forth,
Are of one flavor in the Reality Body. They are equal in their skill in means and in acting
for the benefit of beings.

Therefore, without having ascertained the root and ground of the Sugata,
[Choosing a particular peaceful or wrathful practice] will be merely a matter of according
with one’s fortune and affinities.

/[8] yi dam kyi⁶³⁵ lha bzhag ste⁶³⁶ gzhan bsgoms⁶³⁷ na nyes myi mchis/⁶³⁸

16) Having established the tutelary deity, if one meditates on another, is this not a moral
offence?

/thabs kyis⁶³⁹ so sor bstan kyang dbyings gcig la/
/dngos rtog⁶⁴⁰ spong [136a] len sgrib⁶⁴¹ pa mu mtha’ myed/⁶⁴²

/dbyer⁶⁴³ myed⁶⁴⁴ rtogs par⁶⁴⁵ las rgyud ‘tsham ba bzhin/
/sangs rgyas kun bsgoms nyes⁶⁴⁶ myed⁶⁴⁷ dge rtsa ‘phags/
In utilizing expedient means, the teachings are given separately, but the expanse is only
one.

In concretely conceptualizing and abandoning, defilement is endless.
Realizing [their] indivisibility, one’s continuum of action is concordant [with that
realization].

In such a way, meditation on all the buddhas is faultless, the root of virtue, sublime.

628 AB: bas na

629 AB: bde bar; C: bde

630 AB: gshegs pa’i

631 D: rtsa yi dam

632 C: pa

633 C: te

634 AB: ‘tshal bar zad do; C: ‘tshal bar zad

635 ABC: gyi

636 AB: bzhag nas lha; C: bzhag nas

637 AB: bsgos

638 ABC: nyes pa mchis sam ma mchis

639 B: kyis don; C: thab kyi

640 AB: dngos por rtog cing; D: rtoggs

641 AB: spong ba dang sgrib

642 C: med

643 AB: dber

644 C: med

645 ABC: pas

646 D: nyen

647 C: med

/lta ba [2] mtho na yi dam kyi⁶⁴⁸ lha myed⁶⁴⁹ kyang rung ngo zhes bgyi ba'i
don⁶⁵⁰ ci⁶⁵¹ lta bu lags/

17) What does it mean to say, “If one possesses an elevated view, it is suitable even to be without a tutelary deity”

yi dam lha la rten pa'i bdag nyid myed⁶⁵² pa dang/
/rdo rje sems dpa'i⁶⁵³ rang bzhin ye nas yin [3] rtogs na/
/rtogs pa de nyid rgyal ba kun kyi ngang yin bas/⁶⁵⁴
/gzhan du yi dam⁶⁵⁵ bsnyen bar⁶⁵⁶ bya dang byed⁶⁵⁷ pa myed/⁶⁵⁸

/dper na rdo rje sems dpa'⁶⁵⁹ yi dam⁶⁶⁰ lha myed na/⁶⁶¹
/[4] rtogs ldan bdag kyi⁶⁶² dbyings las gzhan ba'i⁶⁶³ lha dmyi dmyigs/⁶⁶⁴
/'gro don⁶⁶⁵ 'dul ba'i 'phrin las rgyal bas ci⁶⁶⁶ mdzad bzhin/
/sangs rgyas [5] gya mtsho'i⁶⁶⁷ ting⁶⁶⁸ 'dzin sna tshogs⁶⁶⁹ snyoms par 'jug/

When one realizes that there is no self to depend on a tutelary deity, and that
The intrinsic nature of Vajrasattva has been present primordially,
That very realization is the sphere of all the Conquerors, and thus
There is no act or actor to draw near to a remote tutelary deity.

For example, if she is without Vajrasattva as a tutelary deity,

-
- 648 ABC: gyi
649 C: ba mthon yi dam gyi lha med
650 AB: bgyi ba
651 C: zhes bya ba'i don ji
652 C: la rten pa bdag med
653 D: pa'i
654 AB: kun kyi rang bzhin bas; C: kun gyi ngang yin pas
655 AB: dam lha la
656 AB: ba
657 C: dbyed
658 C: med
659 AB: sems pa la; C: sems dpa; D: pē
660 AB: dam gyi
661 AB: lha myed pa ltar; C: lha med par
662 AB: rtogs pa dang ldan ba bdag gyi; C: gi
663 C: ma'i
664 C: lha mi dmigs
665 AB: 'gro ba don; C: 'gro ba
666 AB: ci ltar
667 AB: gya mtsho; C: rgyas mtsho'i
668 B: ting nge
669 'dzin sna tshogs is illegible in D.

The realized yogi does not observe any deity other than the expanse of Self.
 In the same way that the Conquerors tame beings for the benefit of all,
 Just so, one is absorbed in manifold meditative stabilizations on the ocean of awakening.

/de⁶⁷⁰ bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin ci⁶⁷¹ ltar bsgom/⁶⁷²
 18) How does one cultivate the meditative stabilization of Suchness?⁶⁷³

/dus sum⁶⁷⁴ rgyal bas ma bcos⁶⁷⁵ te/
 /rang⁶⁷⁶ sems gdod⁶⁷⁷ [6] nas skye ba myed/⁶⁷⁸

670 C: deng

671 C: ji

672 AB: sgom

673 The *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*, or *tathata-samadhi*, is associated with the generation stage of Mahāyoga tantra practice. The *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*, or a similarly titled meditation, is described as the first *samadhi* in an ordered progression of three *samadhi* in several Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang, including ITJ 436, ITJ 437, ITJ 579, ITJ 716/1, PT 626, and PT 634. ITJ 454 and ITJ 508 both mention a list of four *samādhi*, which may have included the original three plus one more. In many of these texts representative of early Mahāyoga, the generation and perfection stages are described as a continuum of practice, as opposed to later texts in which there is a clear break between the two stages of practice or even a singular focus on one or the other stage. In these early texts, in the *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*, one meditates on emptiness before meditatively constructing the *maṇḍala*. Dalton 2004. An example of an early canonical text's usage of a similar term, *de bzhin nyid du bsgom pa*, can be found in Vimalamitra's *Guhyagarbha* commentary, the *Māyājālopadesakramatraya*, in which the author distinguishes two types of meditation. "The stages of symbolic meditation, and meditation on Suchness are said to be the two types." *mtshan mar bsgom pa 'i rim pa yang/ /de bzhin nyid du bsgom pa yi/ /byed brag rnam pa gnyis su gsungs/* P. 4742, 568a1. A similar set of three *samādhi* was promulgated by texts in the Yogatantra tradition. These were the *shes rab stong pa chen po 'i rnal 'byor*, the *thab snying rje sgyu ma rnal 'byor*, and the *phyag rgya phra rags rnal 'byor*. Garson: 108. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Pelyang was referring to any of these particular lists of *samādhi*, or to any system of meditative stabilizations in stages at all. No mention is made in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* of either generation or perfection stage meditations as such, nor to the other two or three stages of meditative stabilizations that are described in the above Mahāyoga texts.

674 AB: gsum gyi; C: gsum

675 B: bcongs; D: cos

676 AB: rang gyi

677 C: bzod

678 C: med

/rang⁶⁷⁹ sems ma skyes⁶⁸⁰ chos nyid na/⁶⁸¹

/chos nyid bsgom par⁶⁸² bya ba myed/⁶⁸³

The Conquerors of the three times do not contrive;
From the beginning, one's own mind is unoriginated.
If one's own mind, unoriginated, is reality,
Reality is not something to be meditatively cultivated.

/'o na bsgom⁶⁸⁴ du myed⁶⁸⁵ par bzhag na⁶⁸⁶ rung 'am myi⁶⁸⁷ rung/

19) Then, is it suitable to rest in 'non-meditation'?⁶⁸⁸

/gal [7] te brjod gzhi⁶⁸⁹ yod na ni/

/bsgom⁶⁹⁰ pa po yang yod par 'gyur/

/sems ni skye ba myed⁶⁹¹ bden na/

/bsgom⁶⁹² du myed⁶⁹³ par 'jog pa gang/⁶⁹⁴

If the topic of your question existed [i.e. meditation],

679 AB: rang gyi

680 AB: skyes pa

681 AB: yin

682 AB: bsgoms pa

683 C: med

684 AB: sgom

685 C: med

686 AB: gzhag du; C: gzhag tu

687 AB: rung ram myi; C: rung ngam mi

688 mnyam par gzhag pa for gzhag.

689 D: zhi

690 C: sgom

691 C: med

692 D: bsgom is illegible.

693 C: med

694 AB: gang gang yin

Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin ltar bsgom/

dus gsum/_ rgyal bas ma bcos te/

rang sems gzod nas skye ba med/

rang sems ma skyes chos nyid la/

/chos nyid bsgom par bya ba med/

/'o na bsgom du med pas bzhag du rung lags sam/

/gal te brjod gzhi yod na ni/

/bsgom pa po yang yod par 'gyur/

/sems ni skye ba med bden na/

bsgom du med par 'jog pa gang/

/zhes 'byung/ STMG: 240.1.

There would also be a meditator.
 If it is true that mind is without origination,
 What is it that rests in ‘non-meditation’?⁶⁹⁵

/slob dpon gyis⁶⁹⁶ sems [8] bcos pa gces sam myi⁶⁹⁷ ces/
 20) Is it important for a master to correct one’s mind?

/bdag tu ‘rdzin pa’i sems ni tshad mar gzhir bzhag nas/⁶⁹⁸
 /rtsa ba⁶⁹⁹ ma gtogs⁷⁰⁰ rnam shes lo ma⁷⁰¹ lta bu/⁷⁰²
 /rdeng myed⁷⁰³ [136b] dbang gyis chos⁷⁰⁴ ‘dod slob dpon⁷⁰⁵ ma yin na/
 /blo ldan ma nor don bcos shin tu gces/⁷⁰⁶

With regard to the mind that clings to self, having taken logic as its base,⁷⁰⁷
 The discriminating consciousness will be like a [mere] leaf without a root.⁷⁰⁸
 If, lacking assurance,⁷⁰⁹ one desires the teachings and is not a master,
 Then an intelligent person will value greatly correction [in] the unmistakable meaning.

/rnal ‘byor pa shes rab dang ting nge ‘dzin las su rung na/_/[2] sangs rgyas
 dang mnyam mo zhes ‘byung ba’i don ci lta bu/⁷¹⁰

⁶⁹⁵ This stanza is similar to one in *The Lamp Illuminating the Extremes: brjod pa’i rtsa ba sems nyid ni ma skyes dngos gzhi yod min na/_/sgom dang bsgom du med pa yi/_/tha snyad gang zhig gang la ‘jug.*

⁶⁹⁶ AB: ‘o na slob dpon gyis; D: slob pon kyi

⁶⁹⁷ C: pa gcos sam mi

⁶⁹⁸ AB: bdag dang bcas pa’i sems ni rnam par shes pa tshad ma; C: bdag dang bcas pa’i sems ni tshad ma

⁶⁹⁹ AB: ba ni

⁷⁰⁰ AB: rtogs la; C: rtogs

⁷⁰¹ AB: shes pa la

⁷⁰² AB: bu la

⁷⁰³ AB: myed pa’i; C: med

⁷⁰⁴ AB: ‘cos; C: bcos

⁷⁰⁵ AB: ‘dod pa’i slob dpon; D: slobbs pon

⁷⁰⁶ AB: nor don bzhin bcos pa shin tu gces so; C: nor tshul bzhin ‘chos pa shin tu gces

Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

mkhan po dpal dbyangs gyis kyang/

blo ldan ma nor don bzhin bcos pa shin tu gces/ STMG 30.3.

⁷⁰⁷ *bzhag* is *tha dad pa*, past tense.

⁷⁰⁸ The term *lo ma* refers to the leaves of a tree, and by extension, also can connote something that is without its own essence or substance, i.e. insubstantial, worthless, hollow.

⁷⁰⁹ This is assurance which comes from having received the empowerment from a qualified master.

⁷¹⁰ AB: zhes bgyi ba’i don ci lta bu lags; C: zhes bgyi ba’i don ji lta bu lags

21) What does it mean to say, “When a yogin becomes competent in insight and meditative stabilization, that yogin is equal to a buddha”?

/thugs kyi rang bzhin skye myed dbyings su rtogs/
 /sku’i rang bzhin⁷¹¹ mtshan dang dpe⁷¹² byad gsal/⁷¹³
 /gsung [3] gi rang bzhin sprul pa’i yig ‘brur ldan/⁷¹⁴
 /myi⁷¹⁵ mnyam⁷¹⁶ mnyam pas⁷¹⁷ sang rgyas mnyam par⁷¹⁸ gsungs/

The intrinsic nature of Mind is the realization of the unoriginated expanse.

The intrinsic nature of Body clearly appears with well-proportioned marks.

The intrinsic nature of Speech possesses emanation syllables.

By means of the Sameness of that which is not the same, [one] is said to be equal to the buddhas.

/'phro ‘du gces so zhes byung ba/⁷¹⁹ /chos kyi skus khyab [4] pa la spro⁷²⁰
 zhing bsdu ba chos nyid kyi rigs pa dang myi ‘gal lam/⁷²¹

22) It is said, “Emanation and absorption are important.” If the Reality Body is all-pervasive, then aren’t emanation and absorption contrary to the principle of reality?

/gang nas gang zhig gar ‘phro ‘du ba dag/
 /kun tu⁷²² bzang po’i ngang du⁷²³ ro gcig phyir/
 /dbyings la dbyings nyid ‘du ‘phro myi dmyigs⁷²⁴[5] kyang/⁷²⁵
 /thabs la myi⁷²⁶ ‘gog gtan tshigs de nyid yin/

That which emanates from, and is absorbed into, everything

Is of one flavor in the sphere of Samantabhadra.

Therefore, though one cannot perceive the expanse being absorbed into, or emanating from, itself,

711 AB: bzhin ni

712 AB: dppe

713 B: byed lags

714 A and B present these lines in the following order: Body, Speech, and Mind.

715 C: mi

716 AB: mnyam ba’i

717 AB: bas

718 AB: bar

719 AB: ‘phro ‘du bgi ba’i don ci lta bu lags; C: ‘phro ‘du bgyi ba gces so/_zhes ‘byung ba; D: ‘du ‘phro gces so zhes byung ba

720 C: sbro

721 AB: ‘gal ‘am; C: dang mi ‘gal lam

722 AB: ‘du

723 C omits du.

724 AB: ‘phro ‘du myi dmyigs; C: ‘phro ‘du mi dmigs

725 D: myid dmyigs kyang is illegible.

726 C: mi

It is not at odds with expedient means, for that very reason.

/‘phro⁷²⁷ ‘du bgyi ba na⁷²⁸ yon tan ci mchis/

23) If one performs emanation and absorption, what are its good qualities?

/ci yang myed⁷²⁹ la cir⁷³⁰ yang snang ba’i phyir/
 /cis [6] ‘dus⁷³¹ spru/⁷³² zhing ‘phro ba ‘gro ba’i don/
 /bder⁷³³ bshegs mang po slar yang ‘du ba⁷³⁴ bdag/
 /rgyal ba’i gzi ‘drar gyur te bdag gi don/

Given that there is appearance as something where there is nothing at all,
 However absorption⁷³⁵ occurs, emanation is carried out for the benefit of beings.
 The reabsorption of the many Sugatas, oneself
 Growing brilliant as the Conquerors, is for one’s own benefit.

/sngags spyod⁷³⁶ pa la rnal ‘byor⁷³⁷ dbu ma dang/_/[7] mdo sde dbu ma
 gnyis⁷³⁸ gang ltar bltas na bde/

24) For the mantric practitioner, how is it best to view [the distinction between] the two—
 Yogā[ra]-Mādhyamika and Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika?⁷³⁹

727 AB: ‘o na

728 AB: ‘du bgyid par ’tshal na; C: la

729 B: mye; C: med; D: myin

730 B: ci; D: ci

731 AC: ‘dul

732 D: spre

733 C: bde

734 C omits ba

735 Taking ‘dus instead of ‘dul.

736 AB: sngags sbyod

737 ABC: ‘byor spyod pa’i

738 AB: mdo sde’i dbu ma; C: mdo sde spyod pa’i dbu ma gnyis

739 These were two early subforms of Mādhyamika thought in Tibet, and are described by Zhang Ye shes sde in his eighth-century *lTa ba’i khyad par*, PT 814, 5a-9b. The former is also mentioned in Nyi ma’i ‘od’s *lTa ba’i rim pa*. ITJ 607, 6v4.

Yogācara-Mādhyamika was founded by Śāntarakṣita and promulgated by his disciple Kamalaśīla at bSsam yas, where it appears to have been the reigning philosophical system during the Dynastic era. The founding of Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika is attributed to Bhāvaviveka. The first of these terms does not appear in any known Indic literature. Differences between the views of the two schools are rooted in their approaches to conventional truth regarding external objects. Vimalamitra also mentions “the two forms of Mādhyamika in his *Rim gsum*, P. 4742567b7 “*dbu ma rnam gnyis yin te...*” David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), 59. Kennard Lipman, "A Study of Śāntarakṣita’s *Madhyamakālamkāra*" (University of

/gsang sngags⁷⁴⁰ spyod pa rnams kyi tshul gyis⁷⁴¹ ni/
 /mtshan ma'i ting 'dzin thabs la dbang sgyur⁷⁴² bas/
 /rnam rig tsam du⁷⁴³ [8] ma bltas ting 'dzin kun/
 /sems dang 'brel ba myed⁷⁴⁴ pas gcig myi⁷⁴⁵ 'grub/

One gains mastery in the method of the meditative stabilization of marks

Through the method of secret *mantra* practices.

All the meditative stabilizations which fail to view those marks as merely aspects of consciousness

Will lack a connection to the mind, and therefore will fail to accomplish the One.⁷⁴⁶

/kun rdzob tu sems tsam du ma bltas⁷⁴⁷ na/_/yang/_/chos ci yang myed par
 [137a] rig na⁷⁴⁸_/ting nge 'dzin kyis ci ste sgyur du myi rung⁷⁴⁹

25) If one does not view those marks conventionally as merely mind, and yet is aware of there being no phenomena whatsoever, is it not still possible to achieve transformation through meditative stabilization?

/'brel myed⁷⁵⁰ ting⁷⁵¹ 'dzin gzhan na sgom⁷⁵²
 /gzhan kyi⁷⁵³ yul la⁷⁵⁴ 'gyur ba myed [2]⁷⁵⁵
 /ci yang myed⁷⁵⁶ pa nyid la yang⁷⁵⁷

Saskatchewan, 1979).

740 AB: sgags

741 AB: gis

742 B: bsgyur

743 AB: rig tshul; C: rig tsam

744 C: med

745 C: mi

746 This is referring to the Reality Body.

747 A: rdzob du sems pa tsam du ma bltas; B: rdzob du sems du sems pa tsam du bltas; C: rdzob tu sems tsam du yang ma bltas

748 A: chos ci yang ma yang par na; B: chos ci yang ma yang ma yin na; D: chos su yang myin par rig na

749 AB: gyis bsgyur du ci ste myi; C: gyis ci ste dbang bsgyur du mi

750 C: med

751 B: ting nge

752 AB: bsgom

753 AC: gyi; B: gi

754 AB: na

755 AB: gyur pa myed; C: 'gyur ba med

756 C: med; D: myin

757 AB: pa'i yin na yang

/sems kyis⁷⁵⁸ de phyir snang myi⁷⁵⁹ nus/⁷⁶⁰
 [If there were] an unrelated meditative stabilization, on something other [than mind],
 That object other [than the mind] would not be transformed,
 And in the case [of a meditative stabilization] upon there being nothing existent
 whatsoever,
 Mind would be unable to appear outside itself.

/sngags⁷⁶¹ spyod pa la mdo sde'i⁷⁶² gtan tshigs bslab pa ci⁷⁶³ tsam du gces/
 26) In practicing *mantra*, how important are the axioms taught in *sūtra*?

/mnyam [3] zhing dag pa'i tshig tsam smras pa⁷⁶⁴ yis/
 /nyon mongs zil gyis⁷⁶⁵ myi⁷⁶⁶ non grol myi⁷⁶⁷ 'gyur/
 /rtsing chos nga rgyal spangs⁷⁶⁸ pa'i blo ldan⁷⁶⁹ la/
 /ci⁷⁷⁰ bzhin rig pa'i⁷⁷¹ gtan tshigs [4] shin tu⁷⁷² gces/
 By means of uttering mere equinimous and pure words,
 One's afflictive emotions will not be outshone, and liberation will not be attained.
 Intelligent ones who have relinquished coarse behavior and pride
 Cherish the axioms, understanding them precisely.

758 AB: nyid

759 C: mi

760 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

zhus lan las/

ci'ang med pa nyid la'ang/

/sems nyid de phyir snang mi nus/

'brel med ting 'dzin gzhan na bsgom/

/gzhan gyi yul na 'gyur ba med/

/ces 'byung/ *STMG*: 219.3.

761 AB: sangs ngags

762 B: sde

763 AB: tshigs ci; C: tshigs ji

764 AB: tsam smras pa; C: tsam smra ba; D: tsam spa smras pa

765 ABC: gyi; D: kyis

766 C: mi

767 C: mi

768 C: spyod

769 C: can

770 C: ji

771 C: ba'i

772 AB: du

/‘phags pa kun⁷⁷³ dang myi⁷⁷⁴ mnyam pa’i⁷⁷⁵ skyon kyi⁷⁷⁶ rtsa ba gang⁷⁷⁷ lags/
27) What is the root of the defect of not being equal to all of the Superior Ones?

/srid⁷⁷⁸ rgyu nyes pa’i rtsa ba gcig pu pa/
/rang sems⁷⁷⁹ ma rig bdag tu⁷⁸⁰ [5] bzung ba⁷⁸¹ ste/
/‘gro ba’i snying la dug chen ‘di⁷⁸² yod pas/⁷⁸³
/thar lam myi⁷⁸⁴ thob skye dang ‘chi⁷⁸⁵ la rtag/

The sole cause of becoming is the root of negative actions—
One’s own ignorance, which is clinging to the self.
Because this great poison exists in the hearts of beings
They cannot attain the path of liberation, and [the cycle of] birth and death will be endless.

/phyi’i⁷⁸⁶ yul la myi⁷⁸⁷ rtog par zhi gnas⁷⁸⁸ las⁷⁸⁹ su rung na/ [6] bdag tu⁷⁹⁰ ‘dzin
pa lta zhig mchis na yang myi⁷⁹¹ grol lam/⁷⁹²

28) If one engages in calm abiding without conceptualizing external objects, but still possessing a view which clings to self, will there be no liberation?

/bdag tu ‘dzin pa⁷⁹³ yongs su spangs nas⁷⁹⁴ ni/
/chos su ‘dzin par⁷⁹⁵ byed pa gang yang myed/⁷⁹⁶

-
- 773 C: rnam
774 C: mi
775 AB: ba’i
776 C: gyi
777 AB: ba ci lta bu
778 AB: srid pa’i
779 AB: gyis
780 AB: du
781 ABC: ‘dzin pa
782 AB: de
783 AB: pa; D: pa’
784 C: mi
785 AB: skye dang ‘ci; C: skye zhing ‘chi
786 C: phyi rol gyi
787 AB: yul myi; C: yul mi
788 C: zhig nas
789 B omits las.
790 AB: bdud du
791 C: mi
792 C: grol lags sam
793 AB omit pa.
794 AB: na
795 D: pa
796 C: med

/[7] ngar ‘dzin sgyu⁷⁹⁷ mkhan yod kyi bar du ni/
 /ri ‘dra’i zhi gnas thob⁷⁹⁸ kyang grol myi⁷⁹⁹ ‘gyur/⁸⁰⁰
 Having completely abandoned attachment to the self,
 There is no clinging to [external] phenomena anywhere.
 As long as there is a deceiver clinging to self,
 Though one attains an abiding calm as a mountain, there will be no liberation.

/bsam gtan kyis⁸⁰¹ mngon par shes pa dang rdzu ‘phrul ‘thob⁸⁰² ces ‘byung/
 na/⁸⁰³ /zhi [8] gnas kyis ma ‘tshal ba ci mchis/
 29) If it is said that, “clairvoyance and magical powers are attained through
 concentration,” why not seek them through calm abiding?

/tshangs ris las⁸⁰⁴ stsogs⁸⁰⁵ bsam gtan lhun grub cing/
 /‘od dang⁸⁰⁶ khad dog mngon shes⁸⁰⁷ gsal ‘gyur kyang/⁸⁰⁸

797 AB: bdag ‘dzin sems la sgyu; C: bdag ‘dzin rgyu

798 C: bsgoms

799 C: mi

800 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

*bdag ‘dzin sgyu mkhan yod kyi bar du ni/
 ‘di ‘dra’i zhig nas yod kyang grol mi ‘gyur/
 /bdag tu ‘dzin pa yongs su spangs nas ni/
 /chos su ‘dzin par byed pa gang yang med/
 ces ‘byung ngo/ STMG: 228.1.*

The first two lines of this stanza, in addition to two lines that do not appear in any other version of the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, are also quoted in the interlinear notation of PT 699, a Mahāyoga commentary on a Chan text. The text reads “In the *rDo rje sems pi [sic] zhul lan* as well it is said, “As for that which clings to self, it is not abandoned completely. As for that which clings to phenomena, it is without an independent self. Abiding in view of this, neither does one abide in external objects, nor in the internal—the mind—nor anywhere at all.” *rdo rje sems pi zhus lan las kyang/ bdag du dzin pa’i de ni yongs ma spangs/ chos su ‘dzin pa de ni rang dbang bdag myed par mthong zhing gnas pa de ni phyi’i yul la yang myi gnas/ nang gi sems la yang myi gnas gang la yang myi gnas sho//* PT 699, 4b. Dalton and van Schaik, “Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Buddhist Syncretism in Dunhuang.”

801 AB: rtan gis; C: gtan gyis

802 AB: thob

803 ABC: bas

804 D: ris las is illegible.

805 C: la sogs

806 AB: ‘on tang

807 D: mngon shes kha dog

808 C: shes ldan gyur kya

/bdag rtog⁸⁰⁹ bag la nyal ba⁸¹⁰ ma [137b] spangs phyir/⁸¹¹

/sems dmyal lhung bar ‘gyur ba ma⁸¹² thos sam/

Even though in the *Brahmakāyika*⁸¹³ and other such places, concentration is spontaneously achieved, and

Lights and colors may appear clearly to a clairvoyant consciousness,

Haven’t you ever heard that by not abandoning latent concepts⁸¹⁴ of self,

[One] will fall into hell?

/'o⁸¹⁵ na rtse gcig pa'i zhi gnas pa'i⁸¹⁶ ting nge ‘dzin yongs su⁸¹⁷ myi ’tshal⁸¹⁸

lags sam/

30) Then, does one not seek a one-pointed calm-abiding type of meditative stabilization?

/ma nor rtogs [2] dang ldan pa'i zhi gnas dang/

mtshan ma'i phyag⁸¹⁹ rgya gsal ba'i ting nge ‘dzin/

/'di⁸²⁰ ‘dra'i don ldan byang cub⁸²¹ lam mchog ste/

/yang nas yang tu⁸²² khyad par⁸²³ ‘gro bar [3] bya/⁸²⁴

Calm abiding based on nonmistaken realization and

Meditative stabilization [in which] the seals of marks clearly [appear]—

Such a meaningful superior path of awakening

Is bound to lead to excellence time and again.

809 AB: sdog

810 D: ba'i

811 AB: pas

812 A: sems can dmyal lhung bar lhung bar ‘gyur gsungs ma; B: sems can dmyal ba lhung bar ‘gyur gsungs ma; C: dmyal lhung bar gsungs ba

813 In Indian Buddhist cosmology, the *Brahmakāyika* is considered to be the first and lowest realm of the twenty-one highest Form and Formless Realms of cyclic existence. Through meditating with tranquility and renouncing conflicting emotions, one is said to advance to this realm and upward.

814 Taking *rtog* instead of *sdog*.

815 C: ‘on

816 AB: kyī; C: sam

817 D: yong

818 A: ‘dzin yong myi ‘tshal ba; B: ‘dzin yongs myi ‘tshal ba; C: ‘dzin yongs su mi’tshal

819 C: phyags

820 AB: de

821 ABC: chub

822 ABC: du

823 AB: bar

824 C: ‘gyur

/ting nge ‘dzin⁸²⁵ lhun kyis grub pa pa de/ rtsol⁸²⁶ bas ‘grub ‘am/⁸²⁷ rtsol ba
med pas ‘grub/

31) Does that one for whom meditative stabilization spontaneously arises accomplish through effort or effortlessly?

/bsgrub par bya ba gang⁸²⁸ yin de la ni/
/rtsol bas yang nas yang du mnyam [4] bzhag ste/
/goms pas klung tu⁸²⁹ gyur nas⁸³⁰ khad kyis⁸³¹ ni/
/rtsol ba⁸³² myed⁸³³ pas lhun gyis⁸³⁴ grub par ‘gyur/

Regarding that which is to be achieved,
Having strived, one rests in meditative equipoise again and again.
Then, having meditated and slowly entered the flow [of practice],
It is accomplished without effort, spontaneously.

/rtsol ba myed⁸³⁵ pa’i rgyu/_/rtsol ba las grub⁸³⁶ par bshad pa⁸³⁷ myi⁸³⁸ ‘gal
lam/

32) Because [meditative stabilization] is effortless, isn’t it contradictory to explain that accomplishment will be met through effort?

/sems can [5] rtsol ba dgos pa⁸³⁹ mngon sum na/
/rgyal ba lhun kyis⁸⁴⁰ grub pa brdzun⁸⁴¹ nam ci/
/yi ge la stsogs⁸⁴² rtsol bas yang nas yang⁸⁴³

825 C omits ‘dzin.

826 AB: lhun gyis grub par rgyur ba de; C: lhun gyis grub pa’i rgyu rtsol

827 ABC: bam

828 D: gang is illegible.

829 ABC: du

830 AB: pas

831 AB: gyis

832 D omits ba.

833 C: med

834 AB: kyis

835 C: med

836 ABC: rtsol bas ‘grub

837 AB: de

838 C: mi

839 AB: can ‘bad rtsol ‘dod pa; C: can rtsol bas ‘grub par

840 ABC: gyis

841 C: rdzun

842 C: la sogs; D: las tsogs

843 C: rtsol ba yang dang yang

/goms pas ‘bad pa myed⁸⁴⁴ par⁸⁴⁵ [6] ‘byung ba bzhin/⁸⁴⁶
 If it is obvious that sentient beings must strive,
 Is it false [to say that] Conqueror-hood is spontaneously accomplished?
 It is like the letters and so forth: with diligence, again and again,
 Having grown to be proficient, [literacy] comes to one without effort.

/dam tshig bsrung myi⁸⁴⁷ dgos zhes mchi⁸⁴⁸ ba ‘gal lam myi⁸⁴⁹ ‘gal/
 33) Is it contradictory to say that, “The commitments do not have to be kept?”⁸⁵⁰

/nga myed⁸⁵¹ thub pa’i dgongs dang mdzad pa bzhin/
 /bdag tu ‘dzin myed⁸⁵² [7] sgo⁸⁵³ gsum nyes pa’i tshe/⁸⁵⁴

844 C: med

845 AB: pas

846 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

/mkhan po dpal dbyangs kyi man ngag las/
 /bsgrub par bya ba gang yin pa de la ni/
 /rtsol bas yang du mnyam bzhag ste/
 /goms pa klong du gyur cing gang kyis ni/
 /rtsol ba med par lhun gyis grub par ‘gyur/
 /zhes pa dang/ /yang/
 rtsol ba med pa’i rgyu rtsol bas/
 ‘grub par bshad pa mi ‘gal lam/
 /sems can rtsol ba dgos pa mngon sum na/
 /rgyal ba lhun gyis grub pa rdzun nam ci/
 /yi ge la sogs btsal bas yang nas yang/
 /goms pas ‘bad pa med par ‘byung ba bzhin/
 /ces ‘byung ngo/ STMG: 225.2.

847 C: mi

848 AB: bgyi

849 C:mi

850 These generally refer to the commitments undertaken in empowerment ceremonies, though their content and the context for receiving them in this case are not made explicit. Another Dunhuang text, ITJ 647 Part II, a commentary on the *Rig pa khu byug*, discusses the commitments in a similar fashion, rejecting the very possibility of transgression for those who have realized suchness. Like the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, it describes a state of natural, spontaneous compliance with the deeper principles of the vows. “When one is dwelling upon the authoritative sources, the practice of one’s vows also resides totally in spontaneity.” *ji bzhin pa’i ngang las myi g.yo bar bzhag pa yin te/ gza’ gtad kyi rtsol sgrub myed do zhes bya ba’i don to/*

851 C: med

852 C: med

853 AB: sko

854 ABC: gsum nyes pa’i cha; D: gsum ye nyes pa’i tshe

/rdul tsam myi⁸⁵⁵ ‘byung sdom srung⁸⁵⁶ myi dgos pas/
 /ngar⁸⁵⁷ ‘dzin⁸⁵⁸ ‘gal ba yod myed⁸⁵⁹ rang la dris/

Like the thoughts and acts of a Sage who is free of self,
 [For those] free of attachment to self, occasions of transgression [by way of] the three
 gates⁸⁶⁰

Do not arise in the slightest, and there is no need to keep the vows.

Therefore, ask yourself whether you have committed the transgression of being attached to
 self.

bdag gi⁸⁶¹ lus phyag rgya chen por snang ba dang⁸⁶² /bdag gi ting nge ‘dzin
 kyi⁸⁶³ dkyil ‘khor la [8] ci⁸⁶⁴ ltar blta bar bgyi/

34) How ought one to view the appearance of one’s own body as the Great Seal
 (*mahāmudrā*) and the *maṇḍala* of one’s own meditative stabilization?

/‘byung ba’i lus dang phyag rgya chen po yang
 sems kyi rnam pa⁸⁶⁵ yin phyir⁸⁶⁶ lus nyid myed⁸⁶⁷
 /dkyil ‘khor sprul pa dgyed cing bkod⁸⁶⁸ pa yang/
 /ting ‘dzin [138a] mam pa yin pas⁸⁶⁹ bdag⁸⁷⁰ gi sems⁸⁷¹

Because one’s physical body and the Great Seal alike
 Are aspects of the mind, the body as such does not exist.

855 C: mi

856 AB: bsdam srung myi; C: bsrung sdom mi

857 C: rang

858 D: ‘tshin

859 C: med

860 Taking *sgo* for *sko*.

861 AB omit gi.

862 AB: yang

863 ABC: gyi

864 AB: ji; C: ‘khor ji

865 AB: par

866 ABC: mnyam pas

867 C: med

868 AB: pa dgye zhing dgod; C: pa ‘byed cing ‘god

869 AB: bas

870 ABC: rang

871 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

de nyid las/

‘byung ba’i lus dang phyag rgya chen po yang/

sems kyi rnam par mnyam pas lus nyid min/

/dkyil ‘khor sprul pa dgye zhing dgod pa yang/

ting ‘dzin rnam pa yin pas rang gi sems/ STMG: 202.4-5.

/zhes ‘byung

Though the emanations of the *maṇḍala* will bend and laugh,
Because they are aspects of one's meditative stabilization, they are one's own mind.

/sems dang nam pa'i mtshan nyid dbyer⁸⁷² myed⁸⁷³ la/
/bdag dang gzhan snang nam par go mnyam na/⁸⁷⁴
/bdag lus⁸⁷⁵ [2] gtso bo⁸⁷⁶ 'di zhes gzhas tu⁸⁷⁷ myed/⁸⁷⁸
/kun kyang lus yin thams cad sprul par blta/

Though mind and the characteristics of its aspects are indistinguishable,
When the appearances of self and other are of exactly equal rank,
There is no asserting, "My own body is chief!"
Everything is [one's own] body. Everything is seen as [one's own] emanation.

/ci⁸⁷⁹ lta spyad na ma ha⁸⁸⁰ yo ga'i gzhang dang mthun/

35) How should one act in order to conform to the authoritative Mahāyoga scriptures?

/rtogs dang ting 'dzin rgyal ba'i [3] thugs dang sku/
/rtag tu zhum pa⁸⁸¹ myed⁸⁸² pas smon pa myed/⁸⁸³
/rgyal po chen po lta bu'i⁸⁸⁴ sa mnan nas/⁸⁸⁵
/ma lus kun la sgo zhing dbang du byed/⁸⁸⁶

[Through] realization and meditative stabilization [one achieves] the Mind and Body of the Conqueror.

Constantly, with neither timidity nor aspiration,

872 AB: dber

873 C: med

874 C: pas

875 D: lu

876 AB: bor

877 AB: du

878 C: med

879 C: ji

880 AB: omit ma ha; C: ma ha'

881 AB: ba

882 C: med

883 C: med

884 BC: ba'i

885 C: bas

886 Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

zhus lan las/

rtogs dang ting 'dzin rgyal po'i thugs dang sku/

/rtag tu zhum pa med cing smon pa med/

/rgyal po chen po ltu bur sa mnan nas/

/ma lus kun la bsgo zhing dbang du byed/

/ces gsungs te/ STMG: 201.6-202.1.

Like a Great Conqueror who has subdued the earth [deities],
One commands and reigns over all without exception.

/rnal 'byor pa⁸⁸⁷ [4] dag bod khams kyi lha ma srin dag⁸⁸⁸ la mchod pa bgyid
pa⁸⁸⁹ mchis na/_/gzhung⁸⁹⁰ dang mthun⁸⁹¹ nam myi⁸⁹² mthun/

36) If yogins provide offerings to Tibetan gods and demons, are these acts concordant with the scriptures?

/kun bzang⁸⁹³ rdo rje sems par⁸⁹⁴ khas 'ches⁸⁹⁵ la/
/'jig rten lha klu⁸⁹⁶ dag la yar mchod pa/
/[5] rgyal po dmangs⁸⁹⁷ kyi spyod⁸⁹⁸ pa byed pa bzhin/⁸⁹⁹
/rkyen du myi 'tsham⁹⁰⁰ rnal⁹⁰¹ 'byor don dang 'gal/

To worship mundane gods and nāga

Despite making vows to Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva,

Is like a king conducting himself as though he were a commoner—

It does not fit the circumstances, and contradicts the aim of Yoga.⁹⁰²

887 AB: ba

888 AB: omit ma srin dag; C: omits dag

889 ABC: pa dag

890 A: rnal 'byor gi gzhung; BC: rnal 'byor gyi gzhung

891 C: 'thun

892 C: mi

893 AB: bzangs

894 C: dbar

895 D: 'ches is illegible.

896 C: 'dre

897 ABD: rmangs

898 C: sbyod

899 C: ltar

900 C: tu mi 'tshal

901 A: rnal

902 This passage is quite similar to one found in the *Spyi bcing*, as quoted in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. “In the *sPyi bcings* it is said, “Having claimed rDzogs chen as the unsurpassed [teaching], they take the sTon men meditation as their base. [Like] a prince descending to [the position of] a commoner, it contradicts the teachings.” *sbyi bcings las kyang / rdzogs chen bla na med par khas 'ches nas // ston med bsam gtan tsam la rten 'cha' ba // rgyal (311.6) po'i sras 'bangs babs pa lung dang 'gal // STMG: 311*

/khro bo rnams kyi⁹⁰³ zhabs ‘og tu/_/‘phags pa’i sku brdzis par ‘byung
na/⁹⁰⁴_/‘di⁹⁰⁵ ltar bsgoms pa ‘gal [6] ba mchis sam ma mchis/⁹⁰⁶

37) If the Body of a Superior (*ārya*) is crushed beneath the feet of the wrathful deities, is it contradictory to meditatively cultivate like this?

/don dam ro gcig mthon dman myed⁹⁰⁷ pa la/
/bdag dang gzhan du zhen rtog⁹⁰⁸ spangs pa’i blos/⁹⁰⁹
/thams cad thabs su shes na myi⁹¹⁰ ‘gal te/
/[7] rtog⁹¹¹ pa’i khyad par brtsan pas nges⁹¹² pa myed/⁹¹³

Being that the ultimate is of a single flavor, without high and low,⁹¹⁴
If the mind, which has abandoned conceptual attachment to self and other,
Understands all to be skillful means, there is no contradiction, but
Through forcefully acting in the particulars of conceptualization, there is no definitive
[realization].

/de bzhin gshegs pa gcig la bsnyen pa bgyis na/⁹¹⁵_/kun kyi⁹¹⁶ ‘phrin⁹¹⁷ las kyi
rgyud rnams/ ‘grub ‘am⁹¹⁸ myi⁹¹⁹ ‘grub/

38) By drawing near to a single Sugata, are the activities of all [Sugata] accomplished?

/bde bar gshegs pa ‘ga’⁹²⁰ zhig [8] bsnyen byas la/
/lta ba zab cing yangs pas⁹²¹ ‘phang chod na/⁹²²

903 B: bo rnams gi; C: bo dag gi

904 ABC: ba

905 AB: de

906 ABC: bsgoms pa la ‘gal ba

907 C: med

908 ABD: rtogs

909 AB: byos

910 C: mi

911 ABC: rtogs

912 AB: des

913 C: med

914 Taking *mtho* instead of *mthon*.

915 ABC: pas

916 ABC: gyi

917 A: pa bgyis pas/_kun kyi ‘phrin; B: pa bgyis pas/_kun kyi kyi’i ‘phrin; C: pa byas bas
kun gyi ‘phrin

918 C: bam

919 C: mi

920 D: ‘ga

921 D: sa

922 D: na is illegible.

/rgyal ba mang po'i lam⁹²³ rgyud kun brtsams kyang/
/thams cad 'grub par 'gyur zhes mkhas pas⁹²⁴ bshad/

In drawing near to a particular Sugata,
By means of a view profound and vast, if one deeply comprehends,
Though all the paths of many Conquerors might be undertaken,
The wise explain that one will accomplish all [Conquerors' activities].

/nang pa'i dam rdzas⁹²⁵ la [138b] brtul zhugs che slan chad/_/ma bsgoms
kyang myi 'grub 'am⁹²⁶

39) Though one does not meditate thereafter, [if] one conducts oneself with great discipline with regard to the sacramental substances of inner [tantra], is there no accomplishment?

/grub⁹²⁷ pa'i rdzas su gsungs pa nams la ni⁹²⁸
/grub⁹²⁹ byed shes rab ting 'dzin bsgom⁹³⁰ pa⁹³¹ ste/
/'di myed⁹³² grub⁹³³ par [2] myi⁹³⁴ 'gyur dud 'gro bzhin/
/de phyir rnal 'byor yo byad ldan par bya/

Regarding the so-called 'materials of accomplishment',
The accomplishments are the meditative cultivation of insight and meditative stabilization,
And without these, one will not attain accomplishments, and will be like a beast.
Therefore, acquire the requisites for [practicing] yoga.

/mthu che slan cad⁹³⁵ chos myi⁹³⁶ mkhas na yang myi rung/ lags sam⁹³⁷

40) Once one [has] great power, does it matter that one does not develop skill in the Dharma?

923 ABC: las

924 AB: par

925 C: zas

926 A: zhugs ches sla chad/_ma bsgom kyang myi 'grub lags sam; B: zhugs ches sla chad/_ma bsgoms kyang myi 'grub lags sam; C: zhugs chen slan chad ma bsgoms kyang 'grub pa ma lags sam; D: zhugs che slad cad/_/ma bsgoms kyang myi 'grub 'am

927 C: bsgrub

928 B omits ni

929 C: 'grub

930 AC: sgom

931 AB: ba

932 AB: de myed; C: de med

933 C: 'grub

934 C: mi

935 C: chad

936 C: mi

937 AB: mkhas kyang myi rung/_lags sam; C: mkhas kyang rung/_mi lags sam

/srid gsum ‘gran zla myed⁹³⁸ pa rgyal [3] ba’i mthu/
 /chos kyi rang bzhin mkhas shing rtogs las ‘byung/
 /de myed⁹³⁹ byang cub⁹⁴⁰ sems dang ma⁹⁴¹ ldan na⁹⁴²
 /gnod sbyin srin po’i mthu ‘dra⁹⁴³ ci ru rung/

The power of a Conqueror, unrivaled in the three realms of existence,
 Arises from wisely realizing phenomena’s intrinsic nature.
 Without that, if one does not have a mind of awakening,
 Where is the suitability in something like the powers of *yaksa* or *raksasa*?

/rnal ‘byor rig pa can [4] kyi⁹⁴⁴ tshad mar ‘dzin⁹⁴⁵ pa gang lags/_/dmyig⁹⁴⁶
 rnon la stsogs⁹⁴⁷ pa la⁹⁴⁸ bgyi’am myi⁹⁴⁹ bgyi/

41) What is held as the standard measure of one who possesses yogic awareness? Is it keen sight and so forth?

/skye myed⁹⁵⁰ don rtogs shes rab ye shes spyang/
 /rnal ‘byor mthu las lha dmyig⁹⁵¹ rnam par dag/
 /gzhan du ‘jig rten phal las [5] myi dkon ba’i⁹⁵²
 /dmyig⁹⁵³ rnon la stsogs⁹⁵⁴ rnal ‘byor tshad ma myin⁹⁵⁵

The Eye of Primordial Wisdom through Insight, which realizes the meaning of non-origination, [and]
 By means of yoga, the purified Divine Eye [are obtained].
 But other, common, worldly people’s nonrare types of vision—
 Keen vision and so forth—are not the standard measures of yogic [knowledge].⁹⁵⁶

938 C: med

939 C: med

940 ABC: chub

941 AB: myi; C: mi

942 D: na is illegible.

943 AB: lta

944 ABC: gyi

945 ABC: gzhag

946 C: dmig

947 C: sogs

948 C omits pa la

949 C: mi

950 A: skyed myed; B: skyed; C: skye med

951 C: mig

952 C: la mi bkon pa’i

953 C: dmig

954 C: sogs

955 AB: myed; C: min

956 Though the system of the Five Eyes (Tib. *spyang lnga*; Skt. *pañca-cakrāḥ*) is more common in tantric Tibetan literature and appears as an entry in the *Mahāvīryūtpatī*,

/ci⁹⁵⁷ ltar spyad na mthu che bar ‘gyur/
42) How is one to act in order to gain great power?

/lta ba ma nor bden gnyis don rtogs shing/
/bdag dang sangs rgyas dbyer⁹⁵⁸ [6] myed⁹⁵⁹ mnyam pa’i blos/
/gsang sngags phyag⁹⁶⁰ rgya ting ‘dzin cho gar ldan/
/bsgoms bsgrub myi⁹⁶¹ gtong yid ring⁹⁶² mthu ldan ‘gyur/
[With] a nonmistaken view and realization of the significance of the two truths, and
With a mind of equanimity, knowing oneself and Buddha to be indistinguishable,
Possessing meditative stabilization, secret *mantra*, *mudrā*, and rites,⁹⁶³
Without casting away the accomplishments of meditation, the mind will grow steady and
powerful.

/sangs rgyas⁹⁶⁴ tshe gcig gis ‘grub pa’i⁹⁶⁵ don ci⁹⁶⁶ lta bu/⁹⁶⁷
43) What does it mean that one might achieve awakening in one lifetime?

/lhag [7] mar bcas pa’i lus nyid kyis/

Pelyang appears to be referring here to the less referenced system of the Three Eyes (Tib. *spyang gsum*; Skt. *trayah cakrah*). The Three Eyes are mentioned in various sūtra and exegetical texts, including the *Samgītiparyāya*, the *Itivuttaka sūtra*, the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*, the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the *Avataṃsakasūtra*. The three therein described are the Physical Eye (Tib. *lus kyi spyang*; Skt. *mamsa-cakrah*), the Divine Eye (Tib. *lha’i spyang*; Skt. *livya-cakrah*), and the Wisdom Eye (Tib. *shes rab kyi spyang*; Skt. *prajña -cakrah*) or, alternately, the Noble Primordial Wisdom Eye (Tib. *‘phags pa’i ye shes kyi spyang*; Skt. *arya-prajña cakrah*). Pelyang employs a combination of the latter two terms for the ultimate Eye. References to the Eye of Insight (*shes rab spyang*) in Pelyang’s *Lamp of the Mind*, identify the *shes rab spyang* as the ultimate eye (*mchog gi spyang*). P. 4446, 284b. Despite the similarity of this term to the name for an empowerment ceremony described in many Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang, the *shes rab ye shes dbang*, I see no reason to suspect a connection between them.

957 C: ji

958 AB: dber

959 C: med

960 C: phag

961 C: mi

962 AB: ris

963 See Davidson 2002, 198, on *mudrāvidhi*, or *phyag rgya cho ga*. This doesn’t appear to be a single rite, but it could be.

964 AB: rgyas sku

965 AB omit pa’i.

966 C: ji

967 C: bu lags

/tshe la dbang ba'i rigs 'dzin 'thob/⁹⁶⁸
 /rig pa 'dzin pa'i tshe⁹⁶⁹ nyid kyis⁹⁷⁰
 bla myed⁹⁷¹ byang cub⁹⁷² thob par bshad/⁹⁷³

It is explained that, by means of the remainder body itself,
 [The stage of] Immortal Vidyādhāra is obtained;
 By means of the [immortal] life of a vidyādhāra,
 Unexcelled awakening is obtained.

/rig⁹⁷⁴ 'dzin zhes⁹⁷⁵ bgyi ba ci⁹⁷⁶ [8] lta bu la bgyi/⁹⁷⁷ /gnas gang na mchis/
 44) What is the so-called vidyādhāra? Where is his or her abode?

/shes rab rig pa'i mtshan⁹⁷⁸ nyid de/
 /rtogs pas sngags spyod rig pa 'dzin/
 /lha las stsogs⁹⁷⁹ pa rdo rje 'chang/
 /rigs [139a] mthun smyin pa⁹⁸⁰ rigs 'dzin gnas/

Insight is the very definition of awareness (*vidyā*).
 Realizing that, the practice of *mantra* is to hold awareness (vidyādhāra).
 The abode of the lineage holder is his ripening in a lineage
 Concordant with Vajradhara,⁹⁸¹ who is the final essence of the deities and so forth.

968 ABC: thob

969 C: che

970 AB: gyis

971 C: med

972 ABC: chub

973 C: 'gyur

Also cited in the *Lamp Eye of Contemplation*:

*de yang zhus lan las/
 sangs rgyas tshe gcig gis 'grub pa'i don ji lta bu lags/
 /lhag mar bcas pa'i lus nyid kyis/
 /tshe la dbang pa'i rig 'dzin 'grub/
 /rig pa 'dzin pa'i tshe nyid kyis/
 /bla med kun tu bzang por bgyur/
 /zhes pa'i phyir 'dis bgrub ste/ STMG: 277.3.*

The final line replaces 'awakening' with 'Samantabhadra'.

974 ABC: rigs

975 C: ces

976 C: ba'i don ji

977 AB omit la bgyi.

978 D: mthad

979 C: lha la sogs

980 C: rigs 'thun smin pas

981 These two lines may be based upon a passage in Buddhaguhya's Margavyūha 500a4:
 mkhas rtogs goms spyod rig pa 'dzin/_/lha la sogs pa'i rdo rje 'dzin.

/rigs 'dzin gyi gnas su tshul ci⁹⁸² ltar bgrod cing mchi/⁹⁸³
45) How is one to approach, and then to reach, the abode of the vidyādhāra?

/sems kyi gnas su snang ba gang yang rung/
/rang sems nam pa yin phyr sems gnas myed/⁹⁸⁴
/[2] gang na myi⁹⁸⁵ gnas sems te gang tu⁹⁸⁶ 'gro/
/skal pa mthun bar smyin cing snang bar zad/⁹⁸⁷

Because any given appearance, as the abode of mind,
Is an aspect of one's own mind, there is no abode of mind.
Not abiding anywhere, wherever that mind goes,
It is merely an appearance, which has ripened according to karmic fortune.

/ma ha' yo ga'i tshul bzhin/ ci ltar⁹⁸⁸ bsgoms pa'i mtha' / rigs 'dzin ci⁹⁸⁹ lta bu
[3] zhig du 'gyur bar⁹⁹⁰ bzhed/⁹⁹¹

46) According to the correct Mahāyoga way, what is the pinnacle of meditative practice?
How is one posited as becoming a vidyādhāra?

/rang lugs⁹⁹² rgyal ba'i phyag rgya⁹⁹³ che/
/bsgoms pas mngon sum⁹⁹⁴ gyur pa'i lha/
/mtshan dang dpe byad⁹⁹⁵ mngon shes ldan/
/phyag rgya chen po'i rigs 'dzin [4] grags/

[According to] our own system, the Great Seal of the conquerors [is the pinnacle].
Having been meditatively cultivated, the deity perceived directly,
Possessing the primary and secondary marks of perfection and clairvoyance,
Is known as the Great Seal Vidyādhāra.⁹⁹⁶

982 AB: su ci; C: su ji

983 ABC: mchi bar bgyi

984 C: med

985 AB: na myi; C: na yang mi; D: na yang myi

986 ABC: sems de gang du

987 AB: skal pa mthun bar smyin cing snang ba kho nar zad; C: skal 'thun par smin cing snang bar zad

988 C omits ci ltar.

989 C: tshul ji

990 C: bu 'byung par

991 D is missing the end of this line, beginning with *tshul* and ending with 'gyur bar.

992 D: lugs

993 A: ba'i phag gya; B: ba'i phag; C: ba'i phag rgya

994 C: pas mdon du

995 B: byed

996 *Guhya garbha tantra*, Chapter 11.22. 'od 'phro 'bar ba rab tu sgom/ /tshogs med tshul gyis bstim par bya/ /gnyis med gyur nas phyag rgya che/ "The yogin should

dge ba'i rtsa ba gzhan gyi⁹⁹⁷ rnam par smyin⁹⁹⁸ pa ni tshe phyi ma la 'byung
na/_/sngags spyad⁹⁹⁹ pa'i 'bras bu'i¹⁰⁰⁰ rigs 'dzin tshe 'di la 'grub pa ci'i
phyir/

47) If the ripening of other roots of virtue arise in a later/future life, how is the fruit of mantric acts—vidyādhāra—achieved in this life?

/dge ba dang ni sdig pa khyad par can/
/gnyi [5] ga'i¹⁰⁰¹ 'bras bu skye ba 'di la smyin/¹⁰⁰²
/de bas gsang sngags spyod pa'i¹⁰⁰³ khyad par che/¹⁰⁰⁴
/rnam smyin¹⁰⁰⁵ phyi mar myi¹⁰⁰⁶ sdod 'di las¹⁰⁰⁷ 'byung/

Regarding special virtues as well as special sins,

The fruit of both ripen in this life.

Therefore, secret mantric acts are distinctive—

Their full ripening does not lie in a later life, but arises from this one.

/dge ba'i rtsa ba gzhan ni mthu chung phyir/
/'bras bu drag por [6] 'byin par¹⁰⁰⁸ myi¹⁰⁰⁹ nus kyi/

excellently meditate that they emanate light and blaze forth, and this should be dissolved without attachment. Transformed, without duality, that one obtains the Great Seal.” This comment is embedded in a discussion of attaining vidyādhāra.

Jacob Dalton has argued that the normative formulation of the four *vidyādhāra* levels of Mahāyoga, in which the *vidyādhāra* of *mahāmudrā* is only the second highest level, placed below that of spontaneous accomplishment (*lhun grub*), is a later version. The earlier version placed the *vidyādhāra* of *Mahāmudrā* at the pinnacle. Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries."

997 AB: gi

D is missing a section comprising the beginning of this line and part of the two preceding it, beginning with *ldan/* and ending with *gzhan gyi*.

998 C: smin

999 C: spyod

1000 ABC: bu

1001 A: gnyig ga'i; C: gnyi ka'i

1002 C: smin.

D is missing a section beginning with *dang ni sdig pa* and ending with *la smyin*.

1003 ABC: pa

1004 ABC: can

1005 C: smin

1006 C: mi

1007 ABC: la

1008 AB: ba

1009 C: mi

/rang gi¹⁰¹⁰ rnal¹⁰¹¹ ‘byor rgyal pa’i byin kyi¹⁰¹² brlabs/¹⁰¹³

/dge rtsa¹⁰¹⁴ dpe zla myed¹⁰¹⁵ pas¹⁰¹⁶ mngon par ‘grub/¹⁰¹⁷

Regarding other virtuous roots [not created through mantric practice], because they are weak,

They cannot actualize an intense fruit.

However, through one’s own yoga, the Conqueror’s blessings, and

Incomparable, unrivaled virtuous roots, *vidyadhara* will be actualized.

/slob dpon¹⁰¹⁸ la dbang ma thob¹⁰¹⁹ par [7] dngos grub thob myi¹⁰²⁰ thob/

48) Does one attain accomplishments without obtaining empowerments from the master?

/dus gsum¹⁰²¹ rgyal bas sbas ba’i¹⁰²² gsang chen la/

/gzu lums¹⁰²³ rang byan ‘grub¹⁰²⁴ par bshad pa ni/

/gsung rab¹⁰²⁵ rgya mtsho ma lus kun btsal yang/¹⁰²⁶

/myi¹⁰²⁷ [8] rnyed snyed¹⁰²⁸ par ‘os pa ma yin no/

With regard to the Great Secret concealed by the Conquerors of the three times,

An assertion that achievement occurs by means of a false [mastery] on one’s own,

Though one searches the entire ocean of sacred discourse,

Will not be found, nor should it be.

1010 C: sems

1011 D is missing a section beginning with *mthu chung phyir* and ending with *rang gi rnal*.

1012 ABC: gyi

1013 AB: byin rlabs kyis

1014 AB: dge ba’i rtsa ba

1015 C: med

1016 AB: par

1017 AB: mngon bar grub

1018 AB: slobs dpon; D: slobs pon

1019 AB: mnos; C: nos

1020 C: bam mi

1021 AB: gsum gyi

1022 D is missing a section, beginning with *par dngos grub* and ending with *sbas ba’i*.

1023 C: lu

1024 AB: byan kyis grub; D: rang byan is illegible

1025 AB: rabs; C: ba

1026 C: kyang

1027 C: mi

1028 C: rnyed

/slob dpon¹⁰²⁹ gyi dbang ma thob par/¹⁰³⁰ slob dpon¹⁰³¹ bgyid na nyen ci
 tsam/¹⁰³² _/des dbang bskul pa pas dbang thob pa la sman nam myi [139b]
 sman/¹⁰³³

49) How great is the risk of acting as a master without obtaining a master's empowerments,? Is it beneficial for one who has requested empowerments in this way [without the master having received empowerments himself] to obtain them?

/nong bus blon gral bskos pa gang yin te/¹⁰³⁴
 /btsan¹⁰³⁵ par myi¹⁰³⁶ 'gyur rang¹⁰³⁷ nyid nyams par nges/¹⁰³⁸
 /rdo rje rgyal po yon tan dbang myed¹⁰³⁹ pas/¹⁰⁴⁰
 /go 'phang bskos pas [2] bdag gzhan brlag par bshad/¹⁰⁴¹

However a criminal might appoint a minister to his rank,
 There will be no power gained, and s/he is certain to be defiled.
 Because one does not possess the resources or powers of a vajra-king,
 Having been appointed to [such a] rank, it is said that both oneself and others will be forsaken.

/slob dpon¹⁰⁴² la dbang nod¹⁰⁴³ pa'i dus su/ yon dbul 'tshal lo¹⁰⁴⁴ zhes bgyi ba
 rang bzo¹⁰⁴⁵ ma lags/ _/sam/

1029 AB: slob pon

1030 D is missing the previous passage, beginning with *kun btsal* and ending with *dbang ma thob par*.

1031 A: slob dpon; BD: slob pon

1032 A: bgyid pa pa'i sdig ci tsam; B: bgyid pa'i sdig ci tsam; C: bgyid pa'i nyes pa dzi tsam mchis; D: tsam is illegible

1033 A: des dbang bskur na dbang thob pa la sman nam myi sman; B: des dbang bskur na dbang thob pa la sman myi sman; C: des dbang bskur bas dbang thob pa la sman nam mi sman

1034 AB: nong bus byon ba'i gral bsgom pa gang yin ba

1035 AB: brtsan

1036 C: mi

1037 AB: de

1038 AB: nges so; D is missing the previous passage, beginning with *nong bus* and ending with *mnyams par nges*.

1039 C: med

1040 C: par; D: myed pas is illegible

1041 AB: go 'phang bskos pas bdag dang gzhan brlag par 'gyur; C: go 'phang bskos pas bdag gzhan rlag par bshad; D: go 'phang bskos pa 'ang bdag gzhan brlag par bshad

1042 A: slob dpon; B: slob; D: slob pon

1043 AB: mnod

1044 C omits lo

1045 D is missing the previous section, beginning with *dbang nod* and ending with *rang bzo*.

50) Is it a self-serving fabrication to say that, “When one receives empowerments from a master, one is requested to offer gifts?”

/bskal pa grangs med ‘khor bar lam stor gzod rnyed pa’i/¹⁰⁴⁶
 /[3] bla myed byang cub¹⁰⁴⁷ thar lam¹⁰⁴⁸ g.yung drung gter/
 /des¹⁰⁴⁹ ni lus srog bye bas gcal kyang ma ches na/¹⁰⁵⁰
 /gzhan lta bden rdzun ci smos gsang ba’i¹⁰⁵¹ rgyud kun ltos/¹⁰⁵²

Having been lost in *saṃsāra* for innumerable kalpa, and now, having found
 The path of liberation to unsurpassed awakening, it is an enduring treasure.
 Therefore, if it is not extreme even [to offer] an array of tens of millions of lives,
 Anything else goes without saying! Look to all the secret tantra for what is true and what
 is false!

/slob dpon¹⁰⁵³ kyi¹⁰⁵⁴ bka’ bcag pa’i sdig ci¹⁰⁵⁵ tsam/

51) How much is the sin of disobeying one’s master?

/srid [4] gsum sdig par byas pa ci¹⁰⁵⁶ snyed gyis/¹⁰⁵⁷
 /slob dpon¹⁰⁵⁸ bka’ bcag pa’i sdig pa’i¹⁰⁵⁹ char myi¹⁰⁶⁰ phod/¹⁰⁶¹
 /dmyal pa’i nges rgyu [5] la stsogs pa’i ‘dra pas/¹⁰⁶²

1046 AB: skal pa grangs myed ‘das par lam skol gdod snyed pa; D: lam skol gzod rnyed pa

1047 ABC: chub

1048 C: bla med thar lam byang chub

1049 C: de

1050 D is missing the previous passage, beginning with *myed byang cub* and ending with *ma ches na*.

1051 D: gsang ba’i is illegible.

1052 AB: lta ci smos bden rdzun gsang ba’i rgyud la kun ltos; C: lta ci smos gsang ba’i rgyud kun ltos

1053 AB: slobs pon

1054 B: kyi

1055 C: ji

1056 C: bya ba ji

1057 C: pas

1058 AB: slobs dpon gyi; C: slob dpon gyi; D: slobs pon

1059 B: gyi

1060 C: mi

1061 D includes an illegible passage between *sdig pa’i* and *char myi ‘phod*. Following *char myi ‘phod*, the rest of the text is largely illegible. The text ends with this illegible section.

1062 AB: rgyu ‘dra la stsogs pas; C: rgyu ‘di ltar bas gas pa bas

/gdod nas ma thos nyen myed¹⁰⁶³ shin tu¹⁰⁶⁴ dge//¹⁰⁶⁵
 Whatever the sin committed in the three realms,
 It is not a fraction of the sin of disobeying the master.
 Because it is similar to certain causes for [rebirth in] Hell and so forth,
 Never having heard [the teachings] and being without suffering would be extremely
 pleasant [by comparison].

/zhus lan rdzogs s.ho//¹⁰⁶⁶
 The Vajrasattva Questions and Answers is here complete.

[Colophon]

slob dpon dpal dbyams kyis mdzad/ mtshan don las btags/ phyogs ma ha yo
 gar bsdu zhing rgyud ni/ gcig gzhung gcig nas bsdus pa ma mches ste/
 rgyud kyi nad myi gsal zhing the tsom du gyur pa bsal ba'i phyir
 gsungs/ dgos ched ni sna nam ldong khyu'i don du 'am/ phyi rabs kyi
 rnal 'byor pa blo la myi gsal zhing the tsom dang sdug par gyur pa'i
 gags¹⁰⁶⁷ bsal ba'i don gsungs/ mgo mjug du bsdus pa'i don zhus pa'i
 tshig lnga bcu rtsa gsum lan btab pa la/ bcu rtsa gsum/ de yang de yang
 zhus pa dang lan btab pa gnyis su 'dus so//¹⁰⁶⁸

Composed by Master dPal dbyams. As should be understood from the title, [these teachings] have been gathered into the Mahāyoga position, and are not asserted¹⁰⁶⁹ as having been taken from a single tantra or from individual scriptures. They were given to cure the illness of hazy doubt regarding the tantras. This text was written for the benefit of sNa nam lDong khyu,¹⁰⁷⁰ and to set forth the meaning, which will clear away from the mind hazy doubt and obstructions causing suffering for yogins of later generations. All together, from beginning to end, there are 53 answers to 53¹⁰⁷¹ questions regarding meaning. Each question and answer is collected into a pair.

1063 C: nyen nyes med

1064 AB: du

1065 PT 819 ends with this line.

1066 CD omit this line.

1067 gnas.

1068 ITJ 470 appends the following scribal attribution: *Copied by Phu shi Meng Wei's servant (phu shi meng hwe'i 'gyog kyis bris)*. Meng Wei appears to be a Chinese name.

1069 Taking 'che instead of mches.

1070 'Khyu' also means tribe, so this line might variously read: for the benefit of the sna nam and lDong clans. Both clans belonged to the *g.yon ru* administrative district, at Lung pa and Nyang, respectively. Eastman, "Mahayoga Texts at Tun-Huang", 27.

1071 The copyist appears to have left out the 'fifty' (*lnga*) in both editions.

THE LAMP OF THE MIND • TRANSLATION

[Homage]

I pay homage to the Master of the Adamantine Body, Speech, and Mind
Of all the Tathāgata,
To the Enlightened Mind of the Great Vajrasattva
In which all phenomena is complete.

[Intent]

For the benefit of those disciples¹⁰⁷² who are lacking in supreme vision,
Like lips continuously speaking¹⁰⁷³
From the Māyājāla Tantras,
That Māyājāla Lamp of the Mind
Is presented as a remedial technique for the purpose of abandoning the two wrong views,¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁷² The term *shishi* does not appear in either the *Bod rgya tshigs mdzod chen mo* or the *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*. Although I cannot account for the general usage of this term during the Dynastic period, it does appear in another Mahāyoga text by Vimalamitra, the *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag* in the following passage. Vimalamitra's usage seems to match the alternative reading from the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, meaning 'disciple' (*slob bu*), in addition to employing roughly the same grammatical structure as that in *The Lamp of the Mind*. "The five, free of the four, reverses the offering. Thereby, for the benefit of the *shishi* of the Mahāyoga adherents, it will be explained briefly here." (*bzhi bral lngas dbul las bzlog pa yis/ rnal 'byor che la mos rnams kyi/ shi shi'i don phyir mdo tsam brjod*) *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag*, P. 4725, 413a6.

The alternate reading for this term, 'shi sha', from the sDe dge edition of *The Lamp of the Mind*, can also be found in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: *de bas rdo rje gnyer ldan pas/ rgyang drung sems spra mkha' 'gro yi/ gsang sngags ltas ston sphyo ba yis/ ci nas brtags te bzang ldang na/ mi ldog brtan byas rtas pa yi| shi sha gang yin lag tu gtad/ ngan pa'i ltas mthong mngon shes pas/ 'dod pa 'phra mo'i rgyur byed dang/ khe dang grags pa chen ba'i rgyu*. *Mārgavyūha*, P4736 466a4.

¹⁰⁷³ This term, the *'khor lo ngag*, is similar to a phrase in Chapter Ten of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, in which one is instructed to visualize a celestial palace of "the wheel-shaped tongue" (*'khor lo'i gzhal*). *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter Ten, stanza 6.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Pelyang does not identify these two wrong views. Although elsewhere, he appears to use this term to refer to the wrong views of eternalism and nihilism or the mistaken aims of abandoning or obstructing, because this is a text aimed at further elucidating Mahāyoga views to Mahāyoga proponents, the two wrong views are more likely polarized notions of true and false or ultimate and conventional truths.

Which are due to the suffering of grasping,
Such as the three-fold wavering grasping and [275a] the nine-fold unwavering grasping.

[The Variety of Views]

The eighty-four thousand [Buddhist] views,¹⁰⁷⁵
[285] The collection of those inconceivably [vast teachings],
Are collected into two,¹⁰⁷⁶ and the four certainties are one as the fruit (of Buddhahood).
They are the five common and five supreme paths.¹⁰⁷⁷

[Non-Buddhist Views]

Although one might cast away attachment to objects of desire, and
Attachment to [any of] the thirteen eternalist and nihilist positions
Devoid of the concentrations, absorptions, and discriminative consciousness,
Even with regard to the discordant twenty-one [thousand] deeds,¹⁰⁷⁸
Differentiating and abandoning the first clinging¹⁰⁷⁹ [will bring about only] a moment of
equanimity.

¹⁰⁷⁵ These are the *brgyad khri bzhi stong theg pa'i chos* or eighty-four thousand teachings of the Buddhist vehicles. *Abhidharmakosa-bhārya*, Toh. 4089, Chapter 1, v. 25. They are also mentioned in Chapter Three of the *Guhyagarbha tantra* in the section on the arising of the five vehicles: “They have taught, are teaching, and will teach the eighty-four thousand doctrines as an antidote for the eighty-four thousand conflicting emotions, which are conceptual thoughts of ignorance.” (*ma rig pa'i rnam par rtog pa nyon mongs pa stong phrag brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i gnyen por/_chos stong phrag brgyad cu rtsa bzhi gsungs so/*)

¹⁰⁷⁶ The Hinayana and Mahāyāna Buddhist vehicles.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Although this passage might be taken to read, “They are the five paths, common and supreme,” in reference to the five bodhisattva paths of which two are ordinary and three transcendent, it is more likely that Pelyang here is referring to five paths common to Mahāyāna schools and five supreme paths which are unique to Mahāyoga. The five paths of the causal vehicle which are shared by all Mahāyāna schools are the Paths of Accumulation, Joining, Seeing, Cultivation and Being Beyond Training (*tshogs lam, sbyor lam, mthong lam, bsgom lam, and mi slob pa'i lam*). The five paths of the Mahāyoga are the Paths of Great Emptiness, Great Compassion, the Single Seal, the Elaborate Seal, and Accomplishment of the Clusters of Mandala (*stong pa chen po, snying rje chen po, phyag rgya gcig pa, phyag rgya spros bcas, and tshom bu tshogs sgrub*). Buddhaguhya dedicates a chapter to each of these Mahāyoga paths in his *Mārgavyūha*, 475b1-498b6.

¹⁰⁷⁸ These are the twenty-one thousand types of conduct resulting from the twenty-one thousand kinds of desire, hatred, and delusion (*dug gsum ka cha mnyam pa la nyi khri chig stong*) in equal proportion. NSTB, vol. 1: 77.

¹⁰⁷⁹ According to the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, the primary clinging is to the conception of self. *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 3.

One who is devoid of any basis formed out of having clung to activity, and
 Is devoid of clinging to views of subtle¹⁰⁸⁰ and profound substance, and
 [286] Of clinging to conceptualization of the [mental] continuum
 In a fragmenting apprehension of that which is without such fragmentation, and
 Of clinging to classification of the two truths
 [Dwells at] the peak of the lower realms of worldly existence.¹⁰⁸¹

Quiescence is the disengagement from extremes and
 The definite emergence of the interdependence of cause and effect,¹⁰⁸² but
 The non-Buddhists, the followers of the two gods,¹⁰⁸³
 Are resolutely attached to characteristicless, clear light,¹⁰⁸⁴
 And resolutely grasp at rejection or acceptance of that which is the foundation of grasping
 at a self.

Although one will be raised and supported by the path of the highest vehicle,
 [746] Because of the obstructions that arise from having ascertained things on one's own,
 One will not gain competence in the supreme scriptures.

Therefore, the system of Mahāyoga
 Does not reject the attachments to the ten, two, and one.¹⁰⁸⁵
 It is nondual and devoid of acceptance and rejection.
 The intrinsic nature of this method is the manifestation of this freedom.

This supreme system thus described

¹⁰⁸⁰ Taking *phra* for *'phra*.

¹⁰⁸¹ The peak of worldly existence is the highest level of the four formless realms, the activity field where there is neither discriminative awareness nor non-discriminative awareness (*'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched*).

¹⁰⁸² The terms *rgyu 'bras kyi rten 'brel* and *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba* both refer to *pratityasamutpada*, the interconnectedness of cause and effect, or literally, 'the emergence of dependent connection'.

¹⁰⁸³ Pelyang most likely is here referring to followers of Viṣṇu and Śiva.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Clear light pervades the formless realm.

¹⁰⁸⁵ The two attachments are to a self in persons and in objects, or to extreme views of existence and emptiness. The single attachment is to one's own sense of self.

Includes the three continua¹⁰⁸⁶ and stages of yoga.¹⁰⁸⁷
 Based on those, the dimension of complete transcendence
 Is luminously clear in the mind of the most excellent yogin.

What is that [mental luminosity]? Having brought desire to mind,
 The five poisons,¹⁰⁸⁸ together with the subject-object dichotomy, manifest.
 Magical apparitions appear because they are mind, but
 No object of such clinging to the three appearances¹⁰⁸⁹ exists,
 [287] Such that the six continuums of consciousness,¹⁰⁹⁰ together with their conditions,
 Do not result in objects or objectification. Thus, neither are they perceived.

¹⁰⁸⁶ The *rgyud gsum*. According to Gyurme Dorje, the *Guhyagarbha tantra* contains twenty-two chapters, structured according to the dynamic of three continua: the continuum of the ground (*gzhi'i rgyud*), which is the abiding nature of reality; the continuum of the path (*lam gyi rgyud*), which is the means of realizing that nature; and the continuum of the result (*'bras bu'i rgyud*), which is the culmination of that path—a buddha body and primordial wisdom. This rubric of three “continua of meaning” is basic to all Tibetan tantric literature. Commentators within the rNying ma tradition disagree on how the individual chapters of the *Guhyagarbha tantra* are to be divided with regard to this system of three continua. Gyurme Dorje’s *The Guhyagarbha tantra and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, phyogs bcu mun sel Dorje, "The Guhyagarbhatantra and Its Xivth Century Commentary, Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel", 20-21.*

¹⁰⁸⁷ The *rnal 'byor gsum*. A very similar passage occurs in Vimalamitra’s *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag ces bya ba*. “The highest dynamic of the Mahāyoga tantras/ Is to be made manifest through intrinsic nature. Therefore, the three tantras’ appearance [is to be manifested in] the three yogas” (*rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud don mchog/_rang bzhin rkyen gyis mngon bya'i phyir/_rgyud gsum snang ba rnal 'byor gsum*). P4725: 3. Buddhaguhya also mentions the three yogas in his *Mārgavyūha*. Unfortunately, he does not explain what they entail. *rnal 'byor rnam gsum mngon rdzogs nas/_sa la sogs pa phyag rgyar byas/_ri mo rgyu'am 'bur lugs sam/_'jim pa las byas dkyil 'khor ni/_lhag pa gzugs brnyan khung bu dngos/_ye shes byin ldan rten par bya/ Mārgavyūha P 4736: 487b2. As pointed out by Dalton, the three stages of Mahāyoga (*ma ha yo ga'i rnam gsum rims*) are mentioned in a Mahāyoga treatise from Dunhuang based on the Māyājāla entitled the *Ma ha yo ga'i lung du bsdu pa*, ITJ 436, 3v.7. There, the three stages accord with the three stages in the *Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba* of generation, perfection, and great perfection. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries."*

¹⁰⁸⁸ The five poisons, also known as the five conflicting emotions (*nyon mongs lnga*) are desire, aversion, ignorance, pride, and envy (*'dod chags, zhe sdang, sti mug, nga rgyal, phra dog*). The *Mārgavyūha* also asserts that the manifestation of these five poisons occurs at an initial stage of the development of delusionment that causes a lower rebirth. *Mārgavyūha*, 471b.

¹⁰⁸⁹ There are various lists of the three appearances (*snang ba gsum*), but in general, these refer to the object, the subject, and the body (*gzung bya'i yul, 'dzin pa'i sems, and 'gro*

[The Five Migrations of Beings in *Saṃsāra*]

Visual consciousness and its sensory faculty do not see this.
 Thus, the five afflictions¹⁰⁹¹ [arise].
 Later, these strengthen and ripen in the five migrations of beings.¹⁰⁹²
 Just as they **come to experience pleasure and pain in discordance**¹⁰⁹³ [from the wholly
 transcendent dimension],
 So they are disconnected from the path, defeated by foes, and
 There is not even any escape; [275b] they need for the authentic path to be shown them.

Consequently, they behave as serfs¹⁰⁹⁴ and
 See horses where there are stick fences, snakes where there are ropes, and people where
 there are cairns.¹⁰⁹⁵
 Because such delusory understanding appears, though indeed, falsity
 Is not renounced either, there is no truth.

Although spontaneously arisen primordial wisdom has neither limit nor center,
 Unwavering, self-luminous, and free of grasping,
 Such people conceive of self in the practice of

ba'i lus). These are further described as the appearance of body, speech, and mind to those in the Desire, Form, and Formless Realms, or as appearing to sentient beings, bodhisattvas, and buddhas, respectively. Bdud-'joms, Dorje, and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, 109.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The six sense consciousnesses (*rnam shes tshogs drug*): visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and intellectual (*mig gi rnam shes*, *rna ba'i rnam shes*, *sna'i rnam shes*, *lce'i rnam shes*, *lus kyi rnam shes*, and *yid kyi rnam shes*).

¹⁰⁹¹ The five afflictions (*nyon mongs lnga*) are: desire, hatred, pride, ignorance, and envy (*'dod chags*, *zhe sdang*, *nga rgyal*, *gti mug*, and *phrag dog*).

¹⁰⁹² The five realms of living beings (*'gro ba lnga*) are mentioned in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 3. These are the realms of gods, humans, animals, preta, and hell beings. In this scheme, aśura are considered either gods or nagas, and so do not comprise a separate realm.

That this passage appears in *The Lamp of the Mind* while a similar passage listing nine vehicles or ways, thought to be a later addition to the tantra, does not appear may indicate that Pelyang only had access to an early version of the tantra. Garson, "Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahayoga System of Rnying-Ma Tantra", 312.

¹⁰⁹³ This line also appears in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 3: *mi mthun bde sdug myong bar 'gyur*.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Class-related simile is also used in Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, where he compares those who worship worldly deities to commoners, and Mahāyoga followers to kings. *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, P5082, 138a.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Taking *tho yo/tho bo*, a stack of rocks in the shape of a person. Dudjom Rinpoche uses this image to describe views of the two truths. *NSTB*, 233.

The four immeasurables¹⁰⁹⁶ and the four concentrations,¹⁰⁹⁷ and
 All forms are conceptualized as having a self.¹⁰⁹⁸
 Thus, the secret truth—the three samenesses¹⁰⁹⁹—is not seen.

All [these beings] lack intelligence, and thus
 They are without discriminative thinking and hold false views.
 Because they are blind to the three samenesses,
 They grasp at the four unwavering absorptions.¹¹⁰⁰

[288] Consequently, when the contemplative body disintegrates,

- ¹⁰⁹⁶ The four immeasurables (*tshad med bzhi*) are loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (*byams pa, snying rje, dga' ba, and btang snyoms*). These are part of the extraordinary path of enlightened attributes in the Brahma vehicle. They are also attributed to those in the lower three form realms. NSTB, 61-62.
- ¹⁰⁹⁷ The four meditative concentrations (*bsam gtan bzhi*) are commonly considered to be: the meditative concentration which possess both ideas and scrutiny; the meditative concentration which possesses no ideas but scrutiny alone; the meditative concentration of mental action which is devoid of ideas and scrutiny; and the meditative concentration of mental actions which is united with delight. NSTB vol. 2, 134. See also MVT 1481-1494.
- ¹⁰⁹⁸ These three lines are from Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, which themselves may be based on a passage from the *Supplementary Magical Net*, NGB vol. 14. (*tshad med bzhi dang bsam gtan bzhi/ /rim pas so sor bdag 'dzin cing/ / gzugs rnams kun la bdag du rtogs/*) *Mārgavyūha*, 472a1.
- ¹⁰⁹⁹ The three samenesses also are mentioned in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, but they are not enumerated or explained. (*bden pa'i tshul gyis skyon brjod pa/ /dag pa'i ye shes gnas yin par/ /tan tra nyid las grags pa dang/ /bder gshegs mi gnas mnyam pa'i/ /ngang du byon gsung brjod pa'ang/ /mnyam pa gsum pa yin pa'i phyir/ /nges bar rgyud 'dres ma 'dres pa'i/ /tha snyed bral ba'i tshul du gnas*). *Mārgavyūha*, 505b2. There are several enumerations of the Samenesses, including that of two and that of four. The *Guhyagarbha tantra* mentions the two Samenesses and the two superior Samenesses. *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter Eleven. Gyurme Dorje glosses these, based on kLong chen pa's *Phyogs bcu mun sel*, as: 1) emptiness; 2) the coalescence of appearance and emptiness; 3) freedom from conceptual elaboration; and 4) sameness itself. Dorje, "The Guhyagarbhatantra and Its Xivth Century Commentary, Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel", 116.
- Mi pham Rin po che's definition is said to differ from kLong chen pa's, in that there are said to be two ordinary Samenesses (that all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and nirvana are the same in their uncreated disposition and relatively the same in the manner of a magical apparition) and two superior Samenesses (that the five components are buddhas, and the eight aggregates of consciousness are pristine cognition). As per ———, "The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and Its Xivth Century Commentary, *Phyogs Bcu Mun Sel*", 172, fn. 203 and 932.

The dreadful fruit falls.¹¹⁰¹

Therefore, the meditative stabilization of those with weak mindfulness¹¹⁰²
Lacks any reliable object.

Intrinsic nature is the nonduality of transcendence and cyclic existence and
Is spontaneously present. It transcends objects of expression and thought.
Yet, because they have not seen this before,
They mistakenly see objects as the foundation. Accordingly, their awareness is mistaken.

Having embarked [747] on a road ascending and descending through precipitous places,
They will experience pleasure and pain in all the variety—
How could this be the desired fruit?
Consequently, there is no distinction between the three.¹¹⁰³

[Eternalism and Nihilism]

The infinite illogical views of
Those who follow that which is taught in the sixty-two [false views]¹¹⁰⁴

¹¹⁰⁰ The four formless absorptions (*gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug bzhi*) correspond to the sense fields of the four formless realms, culminating with the peak of samsaric existence: infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither existence nor nonexistence (*nam mkha' mtha' yas skye mched*, *rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched*, *ci yang med pa'i skye mched*, and *yod min med min skye mched*). MVT, 1495.

¹¹⁰¹ This refers to the descent to lower rebirths of the gods in the higher Form and Formless Realms when the karmic causes of their rebirths in those realms are exhausted.

¹¹⁰² The *gCes pa bsdus pa'i 'phrin yig bod rje 'bangs la brdzangs pa* also has reference to the *dran pa can*.

¹¹⁰³ This may refer to the three types of experience in *samsāra*: pleasurable, painful, and neutral.

¹¹⁰⁴ The sixty-two false views (*lta bar gyur pa drug cu rtsa gnyis*) is a common enumeration of non-Buddhist views. There are several versions. The locus classicus for this list is the *Tshangs pa'i dra ba'i mdo* (*Brahmajala sūtra*). Its list includes the following two general categories. Views regarding the past (eighteen views in five categories) are: four views of eternalism; four views of partial eternalism; four views regarding the finitude and infinity of the world; four views of endless equivocation; and two views regarding fortuitous origination. Views regarding the future (forty-four views in five categories) are: sixteen views that the self survives percipient after death; eight views that the self survives non-percipient after death; eight views that the self survives neither percipient nor non-percipient after death; seven views by nihilists on the annihilation, destruction, and extermination of an existent being; and five views regarding nirvana here and now. The *'Phags pa yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo* (*Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*) enumerates the sixty-two based on analyses of the

Are actually divided into two—eternalism and nihilism.
The principle mistaken view has a dreadful causal impetus.¹¹⁰⁵

Although there are views which split the whole of the fifth [aggregate],¹¹⁰⁶
They resolutely assert the four reasonings¹¹⁰⁷ belonging to the view which does not preserve
a mindfulness of the past,¹¹⁰⁸
And thus their own minds are in error.

If that [consciousness] has color and shape,
It follows that it is form, and so is plural.
Thereby, [correct contemplation of reality] is vitiated, and mindfulness is not generated.
How could fruition be experienced?
Otherwise, it follows that form [289] experiences cognition.¹¹⁰⁹
If that is taken as true, everything is falsely ascertained.

The acting subject is likewise [falsely ascertained].
If they say that is true [ascertainment],
Then by whom has the subject been established?

five aggregates in the past (whether permanent, impermanent, both, or neither), with regard to space (whether finite, infinite, both, or neither), and with regard to their perpetuity (whether each is perpetual, does not continue, both, or neither). The final two views are with regard to the unity of body and mind. The sixty-two are also mentioned in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. Tokunō Oda, "六十二見," in *Oda Bukkyō Daijiten* (織田仏教大辞典), ed. Tokunō Oda (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1980). Sūryaprabhasiṃha discusses the sixty-two in his *Guhyagarbha tantra* commentary, the *dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgya cher bshad pa'i 'grel pa*. "Because of being based on an afflicted mind, the scriptures of the sixty-two mistaken views are gathered into the two—eternalism and nihilism, and all the latter sixty subsections are gathered into the two—self and characteristic. Therefore, together with those [sixty] are the two views on self and characteristic (*nyon mongs pa can gyi yid kyi dbang gis/_phyin ci log gi lta ba drug cu rtsa gnyis bur yang/_mdo'i rtag chad gnyis su 'dus la/_phyi ma yan lag drug cu thams pa yang/_bdag dang mtshan ma gnyis su 'dus pas/_de'i grogs bdag tu lta ba dang mtshan mar lta ba gnyis te bzhi'o*). P4719, 234a2.

¹¹⁰⁵ Pelyang uses the term 'dreadful' (*ya nga*), to refer to the result of clinging to concepts of self, which is descent to a lower rebirth.

¹¹⁰⁶ This refers to the aggregate of consciousness (*rnam shes phung po*).

¹¹⁰⁷ Pelyang does not make clear what these four reasonings are.

¹¹⁰⁸ Those who do not preserve a mindfulness of the past are nihilists, who assert no continuum of time, and thus no causality.

¹¹⁰⁹ This is a criticism of the nihilist views which hold that mind is merely made up of physical matter, which would then be unable to experience or perceive.

Either the subject has been formed from [material] particles,¹¹¹⁰
 Or else it was created by karma,¹¹¹¹ or
 It is originated within the subject itself, or
 Arises by means of its own intrinsic nature,
 The subject [in this case being] nothing more than just [something that] naturally occurs.¹¹¹²

Being originated within the subject itself, it has the defect of being without Mind.
 [276a] If [they say the subject is formed from] particles, it has nothing upon which to
 depend.
 Although [if they say it is formed from] karma, that is my assertion,
 [If they say it is formed from] its own intrinsic nature, it also follows that it occurs
 naturally.

Where is the truth in something that is like an appearance [to]
 An eye occluded¹¹¹³ by a fever epidemic, a masked [face], and so forth?
 What is improved? Boiling fish [and] burning wood
 Are not originative, but destructive. This is logical.

Even a view with truth that [recognizes] neither past nor future¹¹¹⁴
 Is false. Like a deer[-horned] dragon, if the present
 Is said to naturally occur,
 Then how could it be that past and future do not naturally occur?
 If those [past and future] do not arise, then neither does the present
 Arise. What else is there to say?

If that is the case, they will say
 [290] There is no imputation of a continuum of naturally-occurring appearances
 Of self and other throughout the three times.

Although [such an explanation] is suitable with regard to form, it is by means of the four
 aggregates of name [that the subject forms and persists].¹¹¹⁵
 Thus, if true, even a dream
 Consciousness will be destroyed like fish and wood.

¹¹¹⁰ The Cārvāka nihilists assert that consciousness emerges from space, and is merely an amalgum of physical elements.

¹¹¹¹ Both the Vaiśeṣika and Jain, though considered by Buddhists to hold wrong, eternalist views, assert the functionality of karma in the creation of consciousness.

¹¹¹² Lokāyata nihilists assert that all phenomena arise from intrinsic nature without cause.

¹¹¹³ Taking 'bras for bras.

¹¹¹⁴ Nihilists recognize neither past nor future lives, and hence do not recognize rebirth.

¹¹¹⁵ The four aggregates of name (*ming bzhi'i phung po*) are the aggregates of the mental body: perception, conception, formation, and consciousness (*tshor ba*, 'du shes, 'du byed, rnam shes). Together with the aggregate of form (*gzugs*), these make up the five aggregates of which a person is comprised.

When you analyze the continuum of the arising of dream imputations,
The aggregate of form will be deconstructed. However, though this is true indeed,
Nevertheless, just as the present exists,
So the existence of past and future [748] go without saying.

If the mind clings to the two, eternalism and nihilism,
It will stray from the heart of the matter.¹¹¹⁶

Intrinsic awareness [perceives] appearance and emptiness without objectifying them.
It is an awareness intrinsically radiant, transcending thought and expression.
Therefore, it does not fixate on things dualistically, nor on specific objects, and
Thus, there is none of the one-sided grasping involved in accepting and rejecting.

Those [non-Buddhist systems], with their individual fixations,
Consider with doubt that things are established by the mind.

[The Five Vehicles]

As for the intentional rejection which rejects [those wrong views],
The particulars of the five [vehicles] are [mutually] distinct,¹¹¹⁷
And were taught to accommodate various mindsets.
The specifics [of each] will be explained in brief.

The first vehicle¹¹¹⁸ observes the sixteen.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹¹⁶ These two lines also appear in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: rtag chad gnyi gar blo zhen pa/ / don gyi snying po nyid las gol bar gsungs/ *Mārgavyūha*, P4736: 472a2-3.

¹¹¹⁷ The five vehicles are described in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* as follows: the vehicle of gods and humans; the śrāvaka vehicle; the pratyekabuddha vehicle; the bodhisattva vehicle; and the unsurpassed vehicle (*lha dang/_ mi'i theg pa dang/_ nyan thos kyi theg pa dang/_ rang byang chub kyi theg pa dang/_ byang chub sems dpa'i theg pa dang/_ bla na med pa'i theg pa*). *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 3. ITJ 384, r61 also mentions five vehicles. Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 32, fn. 49. A similar five-vehicle scheme is propounded in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, in which the five vehicles are those of gods, Brahma, śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and Tathagata.

¹¹¹⁸ This seems to be the vehicle of gods and humans, though Pelyang does not explicitly call it such. He most likely borrowed this assignment of the first vehicle to gods and humans from the *Guhyagarbhantra*.

¹¹¹⁹ The sixteen pure human laws (*mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*) are said to have been instituted by Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century, though this may be a later attribution. The sixteen are also mentioned in Pelyang's *gCes pa bsdus pa'i 'phrin yig*, where they are described as follows. "The sixteen human laws are as follows: [1] to have single-minded faith in the Three Jewels; [2] to be pious toward virtuous

The second¹¹²⁰ preserves conduct stemming from a view of the four.¹¹²¹

The third¹¹²² teaches the twelve¹¹²³ as definitive.

The fourth¹¹²⁴ [291] [upholds] the two truths (taking *bden*).

The fifth¹¹²⁵ [is comprised of] the secret and the outer [tantras].¹¹²⁶

The first [of the outer tantras—Kriyātantra—aspires to] completely pure intrinsic awareness.

The second [Upatantra/Ubhayātantra/Caryātantra] follows the former and latter.¹¹²⁷

The third, [Yogatantra,] regards the clear light of the expanse itself.

The seven grounds¹¹²⁸ are arranged in stages.

renunciants and [3] Brahmins, [4] to be honest and [5] have the nature of honesty; [6] to repay past deeds and [7] actively help others, [8] to be filial to one's father and [9] mother; [10] to have faith in the elders of one's lineage; and [11] to be expert in the [astrological?] dates; [12] to support the passing yearly periods; [13] to assess without deception weights and [14] measures; and [15] to do no harm to one's friends and [16] rivals." (*mi chos bcu drug ni /dkon mchog gsum la gcig tu dad/ /dge spong 'dzin cing bram zer 'dzin/ /drang zhing drang ba'i rang bzhin can/ /byas gzo byas la phan 'dogs dang/ /pha dang mar ni 'dzin pa dang/ /rigs kyi rgan rims gus par byed/ /tshes grangs rgyud la mkhas pa dang/ /dus tshigs gso spyod byed pa dang/ /bre srang 'jal lugs g.yo sgyu med/ /phan tshun 'gran sems gnod mi byed/*). D 4355, 453.

¹¹²⁰ This is the śrāvaka vehicle.

¹¹²¹ These are the four noble truths.

¹¹²² This is the pratyekabuddha vehicle.

¹¹²³ The twelve are the modes of dependent origination, which are analyzed in reverse order in meditation, thereby reversing the cycle of becoming, and thus, escaping *samsāra*.

¹¹²⁴ This is the bodhisattva vehicle.

¹¹²⁵ This refers to the tantric vehicle.

¹¹²⁶ Vimalamitra in his *rNal 'byor chen po shes rab spyan 'byed kyi man ngag* also refers to outer and inner tantra. "There are two paths: the common causal paths and the highest. The highest also has outer and inner. Via the two paths [one obtains] method and insight, [but] before ascertainment, one [must] become skilled in the lower and upper." (*lam gnyis thun mong rgyu dang mchog /mchog la phyi dang nang la 'ang/ thabs dang shes rab lam gnyis kyi/ nges byed sngon la steng 'og thabs*). P 4725: 413a5

¹¹²⁷ The second of the outer tantras, generally referred to as either the 'tantra of conduct' (Tib: *spyod pa'i rgyud*; Skt: *Caryātantra*) or the 'tantra of both' (Tib: *upa'i rgyud*; Skt: *ubhayātantra*). The latter term refers to the ambiguous nature of this form of tantra, in that its view commonly is said to resemble that of Yogatantra and its conduct, that of Kriyātantra.

¹¹²⁸ Pelyang may be describing the seven impure bhumis (*ma dag sa bdun*) here. These are the bodhisattva grounds from the first, Joyful, to the seventh, Far-Reaching. For a bodhisattva abiding on this level, it is called impure because s/he has impure subtle

However, regarding the path to the Secret Nucleus,
Although one renounces *saṃsāra* via the four vehicles,
One abides in the fruit by means of the One Vehicle.¹¹²⁹

The final [form of the fifth vehicle] is the ultimate resting place.
[276b] Thus, that final [form] is explained here, too, as the principle and highest form.

According to that [final vehicle], the various methods of abandoning—
The acts of abandoning and blocking desire—are cleared away.
Knowing [the] fruit, one speaks [of them] with equanimity, and
[Such] one-sided activities are accepted now as play.
Because [all] are oneself, there is nothing to accept or reject.
Thus, it is great. Accordingly, [the other vehicles' paths] are like the rungs of a ladder.¹¹³⁰
The vehicles of the eight, two, and ten¹¹³¹ deeds, and so forth,

pride. Krang dbyi Sun, *Bod Rgya Tshigs Mdzod Chen Mo* (Kansu: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996), 2042. However, it seems more likely that this line is an amalgam of two lines, one from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* regarding general stages of the path, which is provided in the following footnote, and one from the *Mārgavyūha*. The line from the *Mārgavyūha* describes the Great Vehicle of Method and reads, “Ultimately, there are seven aspects. Conventionally, they are equal and perfect. (*don dam du ni skor bdun no/ /kun rdzob tu ni mnyam rdzogs so/*)” *Mārgavyūha*, 472a.

¹¹²⁹ This stanza is a slight adaptation of a stanza in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*: *sa rnam khyad par bskod ba yang/ /gsang ba’i snying por ‘gro ba’i lam/ /theg pa bzhi’i nges ‘byung la/ theg pa gcig gi ‘bras bur gnas*. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 468a2. The passage in the *Mārgavyūha* is itself made up of two separate passages from the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. The first two lines are from Chapter 22 of the tantra. “Although the grounds are arranged distinctly, they are paths which lead to the Secret Nucleus. (*sa rnam khyad par bkod pa yang/ /gsang ba’i snying por ‘gro ba’i lam/*)” *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 22.3. The last two lines of Pelyang’s stanza are from Chapter 3 of the tantra: *theg pa bzhi yis nges ‘byung la/ /theg pa gcig gi ‘bras bur gnas/*

¹¹³⁰ Hence, for Pelyang, the lesser Buddhist vehicles do not lead necessarily to soteriological dead-ends, but can be followed sequentially, each one leading to the next, until the practitioner reaches complete and perfect awakening.

¹¹³¹ The ten virtues are the renunciation of the ten nonvirtues (murder, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, slander, irresponsible chatter, verbal abuse, covetousness, vindictiveness, and holding wrong views), and the practice of their opposite. NSTB, vol. 2, 166. The ten virtues are mentioned by Pelyang in his *gCes pa bsdus pa’i ‘phrin yig*. Buddhaguhya also discusses the significance of the ten deeds to the realm of gods and humans, in his *Mārgavyūha*. “Asserting mainly the ten virtues while failing to see the virtues and the nonvirtues as equal, they take birth in the realms of gods and humans, but not realizing Sameness, they are reborn in the desire realm.” (*dge bcu dag la gtsor len cing/ /dge dang mi dge mi mnyam pas/ /lha dang mi’i skye gnas te/ /mnyam nyid ma rtogs ‘dod khams ‘khor/*). *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 471b8.

Are called the common paths, of which there are nine.¹¹³²

[Vehicle of Gods and Humans]

In the first existence [of gods and humans], seeing [phenomena] as real,
Beings are separated from yoga by the six distractions,¹¹³³ but
Having known cause and effect, they overcome the terrible [fruit]
And desire the first foundation of the [path] to ripen.

[292] Such an action in that very mistaken understanding itself
Does not waver at all toward something else.

The eight concentrations and meditative absorptions
Are [inadvertently] counteracted through deeds such as desirous activity, sinful activity,
and so forth, and
Are [inadvertently] counteracted through thought such as the six distractions of the first
[existence].
Meditative stabilization is [inadvertently] counteracted by means of subtle grasping.
With such dualistic counteractivity,
They acquire a basis, a root [for their wrong views].

The four mistaken views¹¹³⁴ [749] perceive [reality] dualistically.
Therefore, entering into the wrong path results in the terrible fruit.
The first stage of [those] paths is based on grasping at things as though they are real.

¹¹³² The nine uninterrupted paths (*bar chad med lam dgu*) are often called mundane paths because they overcome the afflictions by means of mundane paths of meditation. Leah Zahler, *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997), 108.

¹¹³³ The six distractions refer to the objects of the six consciousnesses—shape, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, and mental phenomena.

¹¹³⁴ The *Guhyagarbha tantra* lists four types of beings who wrongly perceive reality: those of no understanding; those of wrong understanding; those with partial understanding; and those who have not (quite) understood genuine reality. *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter Thirteen.

The roughly contemporaneous, doxographical *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng pa* lists the four categories of wrong views of sentient beings as follows: “The scriptures of the innumerable wrong views of sentient beings in the worldly realms are collected into four: the apathetic, the Cārvāka materialist, the nihilist, and the eternalist.” (*jig rten gyi khams na sems can phyin ci log gi lta ba grangs med pa'i mdo rnam pa bzhir 'duds te'o/ phyal ba dang rgyang 'phen dang mur thug pa dang mu stegs pa'o/*) Several early Mahāyoga authors, including Sūryaprabhasiṃha, Lilavajra/Vilāsavajra, and Vimalamitra, further categorize these four into two groups—those of wrong understanding and those of no understanding—though this is done variously. NSTB, vol. 2, 63.

The four paths of *saṃsāra* [result in] the tainted fruit.
 Such people are deluded with regard to the highest three.¹¹³⁵
 Therefore, they lack understanding [or] have wrong understanding.¹¹³⁶

The two fools who abandon and obstruct
 Block reality by their training in ethics.
 In practicing [special] insight using insight and meditative stabilization,
 [They] view meditative stabilization as “free of abandoning and obstructing.”

Those who cling to a profound and subtle [dichotomy of] object and subject
 Are bound by the lasso of acceptance and rejection.

In those very mistaken conceptions

There is no subtlety or profundity.¹¹³⁷

At the extreme, the sixty-two [schools of non-Buddhists] assert an emptiness of the external.

By clinging to a biased emptiness¹¹³⁸ [293], there is defilement.

¹¹³⁵ This may be a reference to the *dkon mchog gsum*, the three jewels of Buddhism—the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—which would not be recognized by any of the four types of followers of wrong views described above.

¹¹³⁶ These two classifications, of those who lack understanding and those with wrong understanding, appear to have been taken from a more extensive, though obscure, doxographical passage in Chapter Thirteen of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. This passage has been variously interpreted by rNying ma exegetes. Vilāsavajra, in his *Blazing Palace*, explains that these two categories refer to non-Buddhists with worldly views: the apathetic, who are uninterested in reflection of any kind, and the nihilists and eternalists, who hold heretical views. *ma rtogs pa dang log par rtogs/ /phyogs rtogs yang dag nyid ma rtogs/ /'dul ba dgongs pa gsang ba dang / /rang bzhin gsang ba'i don rnams ni/ /yi ge sgras btags ming tshogs la/ /brten pa'i tshig gis rang mtshon te/ Guhyagarbha tantra: 192.1-3. As per Dalton 2005 Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 128, fn 35. Unfortunately, Pelyang fails to use all the terms from this passage, and in particular, omits any mention of the last two terms, secret and natural secret meaning. Because these two terms are matched with the Mahāyoga and Atiyoga positions by Līlavajra in his *Blazing Palace* commentary, Pelyang's failure to utilize these latter terms in such a way may support the theory of those believing the *Blazing Palace* to be a later composition than is commonly supposed.*

¹¹³⁷ These two lines are from the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, and are also quoted in the *STMG*. *Guhyagarbha*, Chapter Three. *STMG*, 187.1.

¹¹³⁸ This term, bias (*phyogs*), appears to have been taken from a rather cryptic doxographical passage the thirteenth chapter of the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. Līlavajra interpreted this term as applying to lower Buddhist vehicles of śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva, whose partial realization prohibits them from seeing the full reality of Mahāyoga. See the above footnote regarding this passage in the

Because the four dependent arisings¹¹³⁹ appear [as in] a dream,
A false self-emergent wisdom is their lot.

With the two authoritative scriptures of the vehicle which lacks [correct] explanation,
[That lowest vehicle] asserts [the existence of] particles and the four [types of]
codependent arising, and thus
Having transcended bias and entered the final path,
They attain merely the result of the first stage.

[The Unsurpassed Vehicles]

4) [Sautrāntika]

As for those on the unsurpassed paths,¹¹⁴⁰
The assertion that they purify objects of abandonment and
Past deeds through the three disciplines¹¹⁴¹
Is made by the Sautrāntika [practicing] the yoga of cognition.

[277a] Because initially they do not perceive

Guhyagarbha tantra. Guhyagarbha tantra 192.1-3

¹¹³⁹ According to the *Śālistambā sūtra*, translated into Tibetan in the seventh century, the four aspects of interdependence (*rten 'brel gyi yan lag bzhi*) are: 1) the projecting causes (*'phen pa'i yan lag*); 2) the projected effects of those (*'phangs pa'i yan lag*); 3) the actualizing causes (*mngon par 'grub par byed pa'i yan lag*); and 4) the actualized effects of those (*mngon par grub pa'i yan lag*). The twelve links of interdependence are arranged sequentially within this system, with the first three links (ignorance, mental formations, and consciousness) belonging to the first aspect, the second four links (name and form, the sense gates, contact, and feeling) belonging to the second aspect, the third three links (attachment, grasping, and becoming) belonging to the third aspect, and the final two links (birth and aging and death) belonging to the fourth aspect. *'Phags pa sa lu'i ljang ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo / Ārya-śālistambā-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* P876, vol. 34, p. 303. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), 279.

¹¹⁴⁰ According to the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, the Unsurpassed Vehicle (*bla na med pa'i theg pa*) is the tantric vehicle in general. Buddhaguhya, in his *Mārgavyūha*, uses the term in a more ambiguous way, though he does make a distinction between lower forms of tantra and an even higher vehicle, the Great Vehicle of Method, Mahāyoga. *Mārgavyūha*, P4736, 472a5-7. Pelyang here does not seem to be describing the tantric paths. It appears that he intends for this term to refer to specifically non-tantric Buddhist paths, as distinct from those paths followed by gods and humans.

¹¹⁴¹ The three trainings (*bslab pa gsum*) are the trainings in moral discipline (*tshul khrims*), insight (*shes rab*), and meditation (*ting nge 'dzin*). These are undertaken on the Buddhist paths, beginning with the śrāvaka vehicle.

The dynamic of self-emergent primordial wisdom,
 They debate whether aspects¹¹⁴² exist within one's own mind.
 In any case, though they debate, theirs is the extreme of delusion.

Illusory appearance is that which has the aspect of an object.
 Mistakenly perceiving intrinsic nature, they do not experience its [mode of] existence.
 Intrinsic awareness without aspects
 Is pure, like a glittering crystal.

However, because [they assert that] causality is eternal, [but] individual moments [of
 consciousness] are impermanent,¹¹⁴³
 They never come into contact
 With unoriginated, unceasing primordial wisdom, and thus,
 (Theirs is) the extreme of encountering total cessation.

Utterly pure primordial wisdom free of aspects
 [294] Is the continuum of each sentient being. Thus,
 Debates regarding whether the continuum is apprehended, whether it is objective, whether
 it involves dualistic representation,
 Or whether it is unwavering are simply mistaken.

Fools debate about space and
 The aspects it may or may not possess. All are part and parcel of Self.

That path which endeavors with regard to the four mental continuums¹¹⁴⁴
 [750] Does not perceive the three excellent actions¹¹⁴⁵ which
 Result in an awakening concordant with them.
 Even their best knowledge is false.

5) [Yogācāra]

Because the Yogācāra [view] is similar to that,¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴² The term 'aspect' (*nam pa*) here refers to the mental representation of an object.

¹¹⁴³ The Sautrāntika assert that there is no continuum of objects or consciousness through time, but still hold individual time moments of consciousness to be ultimately real.

¹¹⁴⁴ These are the four aggregates of name (*ming bzhi*), which are aspects of consciousness. The Sautrāntika posit that all appearances are merely consciousness.

¹¹⁴⁵ This may be a referent to the above-mentioned three trainings of moral discipline, insight, and meditation, though of course, with a Mahāyoga interpretation. An alternate possibility is the triad of yogas called the *rnal 'byor gsum*, which Pelyang has already mentioned.

¹¹⁴⁶ The Yogācārins also accept dualistic appearances conventionally while claiming that ultimately such appearances are merely aspects of consciousness. They also agree

Based on the afore[-mentioned] first cause [of *saṃsāra*],
 Their own bodies are destroyed and born over and over again.
 Thereby, according to their highest false views,
 All is mind, so they do not perceive that [destruction and origination].
 Non-origination—emptiness—is ineffable, inconceivable.

Ultimately, [the Yogācāra] view of ultimate truth
 Is without debate over whether aspects exist.
 Their biased view of consciousness without origination
 Is the extreme of encountering that which is free of extremes.

Free of the extreme of the biased [view regarding] the non-origination [of consciousness],
 [Yogācārin]s cling to that very view of the highest [reality].
 Because they do not see the non-dual indivisible [reality],
 [Theirs] is the path of playfully enjoying the four emptinesses [of] the mind.¹¹⁴⁷

The result [of that path], as with the previous [Sautrāntika path], is an extreme of [focus on]
 transcendence.

Its tenet system [is comprised of] erroneous [295] thought. By means of insight,
 [Yogācārin]s are diligent and thus attain confidence, but because of that [erroneous
 thought],

Their [confidence] is not true, and so [that tenet system] is not true [either].

Even according to the scriptural tradition of the Sautrāntikas,
 Imputations belong to this conceptual sphere of appearances.
 They are only an illusory manifestation of the ultimate other-powered nature.
 Consciousness is not an appearance; the conglomerate is an appearance.¹¹⁴⁸
 The ultimate is unoriginated, ineffable, and inconceivable.

6) [Mādhyamika]

By means of [Supreme] Relativity, the [Absence of] the Singular and the Multiple,
 [277b] The Four Vajra Fragments, and

with the Sautrāntika view of the impermanence of individual moments of
 consciousness.

¹¹⁴⁷ The four levels of emptiness (*stong pa bzhi*) are realized simultaneously with
 enjoyment of the four joys (*dga' ba bzhi*) on the Paths of Desire and Skillful Means.
 They are emptiness, great emptiness, extreme emptiness, and total emptiness (*stong
 pa, stong pa chen po, shin tu stong pa, and thams cad stong pa*).

¹¹⁴⁸ The Sautrāntika hold that the conglomerate of atoms does not hold up to analysis, so
 does not ultimately exist, but that subjective consciousness does. This consciousness
 also perceives itself in a form of intrinsic awareness (*rang rig*) which is not an
 appearance as such.

The Refutation of the Four Limits of Production, and so forth,¹¹⁴⁹
 [The Mādhyamika] dismiss the particulars of the extreme [positions].

In so doing, topics such as meditation, great nirvana,
 The existence and nonexistence of appearances, and
 Accomplishment and non-accomplishment by means of reasoning, and so forth
 Are debated, and the extremes are examined.
 [Yet,] from such verbal conventions,¹¹⁵⁰ they thereby establish [those very extremes], and
 [create] subject-object dualism.

Debating whether the two truths are of one entity,
 [Some would claim that true and false] are one, and in so doing,
 They are attached to a partial, logical view of true and false.
 If they are one, it is entailed that one would see truth where there is falsity.
 Furthermore, one would see falsity where there is truth.

Such would entail the five [patterns of seeing falsity as truth], such as being deceived into
 thinking the four fallacies are true.
 [Furthermore,] in accordance with truth, falsity
 Would be entailed in the four [truths], such as the absence of origination and cessation
 [296].

Furthermore, when in meditative equipoise,
 It is reasonable to see the two truths simultaneously.

If one concludes that true and false are distinct from one another
 Because of a contradiction due to their mutual exclusion,
 [751] Then one will never realize the ultimate in dependence upon a sense of the illusory
 nature [of such a dichotomy], and
 Although one might exert oneself [in trying to understand] the illusory [nature of
 phenomena], one will tire needlessly.

The ultimate, having no abode which might be sought,
 Cannot be explained, and thus is immutable.
 Even that which is without origination
 Cannot be established as unoriginated.

¹¹⁴⁹ These are four of the five syllogisms of Mādhyamika, used to establish emptiness. They are as follows: 1) Supreme Relativity (*rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs*); 2) Absence of the Singular and the Multiple (*gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs*); 3) Vajra Fragments (*rdo rje gzegs ma'i gtan tshigs*); 4) Refutation of the Four Limits of Production (*mu bzhi skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*); and 5) Refutation of Production from Entities or Non-Entities (*yod med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*). Hopkins details the later Tibetan Prasangika use of these logical arguments. Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 127-96.

¹¹⁵⁰ Taking *snyad* for *snyed*.

Abandoning attachment cannot be an antidote, and
Because that itself comes to have its own continuum,
Everything is affected.

Considering thusly, they experience doubt.
There is no assurance, and they are attached to [mere] sounds.¹¹⁵¹

Thus, [for] those following the Unsurpassed Vehicles,
In the ultimate, [all] is indivisible, and
In the merely conventional, all [things]
Are grasped, both the pure and impure.

7) [Great Vehicle of Method]

As for the Great Vehicle of Method,
Ultimately, there are seven aspects.¹¹⁵²
Conventionally, [all] are completely equal.
The utterly pure and the samsaric,
Even in the conventional [view of reality], are indivisible.
The higher and lower views are just as such.¹¹⁵³

[297] The definition of the fruit of that vehicle [of method]
Is that it is the cause of the ultimate essence.
Its characteristic is said to be excellent truth.
Primordial wisdom itself, however it appears,
Is not trapped in characteristics, however they appear.

[The conventional view of the Great Vehicle of Method] is beneficial [even] without
ascertainment of the essence [of the ultimate truth],

¹¹⁵¹ In other words, they are attached to the words comprising their logical arguments.

¹¹⁵² This is the Mahāyoga seven-fold collection of aspects of the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa dkor bdun*), in which all phenomena are considered to be the secret treasury of the Tathagata. The seven are: the ultimate truth of the expanse, and the ultimate truth of primordial wisdom, together with the fivefold ultimate truth of fruition into buddhahood—the ultimate truths of body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities of the buddha. NSTB, vol.1, 248-9.

¹¹⁵³ These lines appear in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, though the order of the lines has been changed somewhat, and two lines have been omitted here. *bla med theg pa 'i nang nas ni/ /don dam du ni dbyer med 'ang/ /kun rdzob tu ni thams cad la/ /dag dang ma dag gnyis kar 'dzin/ /thabs kyi theg pa chen po ni/ /rnam par byang dang sdug bsngal dag/ /kun rdzob tu yang dbyer med de/ lta ba mthon sman de tsam mo/ /thabs kyi lta spyod chen po ni/ /bla med theg pa las 'phags pa/ /don dam du ni skor bdun no/ /kun rdzob tu ni mnyam rdzogs so/ Mārgavyūha, P4736, 472a5-7.*

Is distant from the two types of permanence,¹¹⁵⁴
 Is harmonious with the purpose of highest yoga, and
 [278a] Lacks [any assertion of] an origination or cessation of appearances.
 Thus it is known as the “superior conventional [truth].”

Although the intrinsic nature of everything
 Appears [as] primordial wisdom, it is without causes and conditions,
 Without origination or destruction. The five [primordial wisdoms] are the fruit [of the
 Great Vehicle].

The expanse and primordial wisdom are complete and unperceivable.

Performing good works for the benefit of all [while still] fulfilling one’s own aim
 Is to be separated from all [while still] working for [their] benefit,
 And thus, is to be free from any notion of intentional permanence as well.

Through intrinsic nature, definition, essence,
 Good qualities, good works, and examination, it stands alone.
 Because of possessing [these] six dharmas,¹¹⁵⁵ it is proclaimed to be superior.

Accordingly, due to [possessing] the three—intrinsic nature, fruit, and
 Primordial wisdom—it is the highest meaning, and
 Because it is the highest of the inner meanings of insight,
 It is called “meaning.”¹¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, [298] though the dynamic of the unoriginated expanse
 Is ascertained via its ground, distinctions emerge—
 Wrong thought, [various] spheres of activity, [752] and so forth.

The intrinsic nature of all is unfragmented.
 The seven essences are complete and imperceptible.
 Liberated [from] all [limiting] definitions, all is self, but
 This is not to say that a nullification of the extreme of emptiness exists.

Everything is waves imbued with grace.¹¹⁵⁷ In appearing,

¹¹⁵⁴ The two types of permanence (*rtag pa gnyis*) are the permanence of all aspects of a thing, and the permanence of only some of its aspects (*rnam pa thams cad kyi rtag pa* and *re ‘ga’ ba’i rtag pa gnyis*). *Sun, Bod Rgya Tshigs Mdzod Chen Mo* 1064.

¹¹⁵⁵ The six dharmas are also mentioned in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*: “If the jewel of the six dharmas are expressed, [Samantabhadra] is free of any distinction between the one and the many.” (*chos drug nor bus mtshon pa na/_gcig dang du ma kun bral ldan*) *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736, 503b8.

¹¹⁵⁶ This is an etymology of the term *don dam*, or ultimate. It is the highest (*dam*) of the inner dynamic (*don*) of insight.

¹¹⁵⁷ This is a play on the word for blessing, *byin rlabs*, or ‘waves of grace’.

[That intrinsic nature] becomes the essential cause of [seemingly] dualistic entities.
 So being, it hinders nothing.
 Thus, it is like ocean water and waves.¹¹⁵⁸

Wishes are granted in the manner of a wish-fulfilling gem.
 They appear in order to complete all enlightened attributes.¹¹⁵⁹

The common are not objects of the ultimate, and thus,
 They are not free from the extreme of bias.
 Through common examples and reasonings,
 [The matter] cannot be settled.

Thus, because the seven [aspects of ultimate truth] and so forth are the essence,
 Even the excellent is expressed in the corresponding enumerations themselves.
 Rest and so forth are not its spheres of activity.

As for mind itself, without foundation or root,
 It is neither gendered nor neutral,
 Not without attributes, nor of any type,
 Neither color nor shape,
 Neither in an abode nor anywhere.
 That primordial wisdom [299] of the expanse of reality
 Is the cause of all the seals of method.¹¹⁶⁰

All things without exception in the ten directions
 Are pervaded entirely by the great spontaneous emergence.
 Because that very spontaneous emergence is without substance—
 Neither phenomena nor beings [278b] have self—
 It is the cause of the seal of everything.¹¹⁶¹

¹¹⁵⁸ Taking *rlab* for *brlabs*. Pelyang is once again playing with the individual components of the word ‘blessing’ by emphasizing the metaphor of water and its implications with regard to the ocean mind of the Buddha.

¹¹⁵⁹ This is also an epithet of the Buddha, the Completion of All Enlightened Attributes (*yon tan kun rdzogs*).

¹¹⁶⁰ This passage appears in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 5: *gzhi rtsa med pa'i sems nyid ni/ //pho mo ma yin ma ning min/ //mtshan med ma yin rigs rgyud min/ //kha dog ma yin dbyibs ma yin/ //gnas su ma yin gang yang min/ //de bzhin nyid dbyings yes shes te/ //thabs kyi phyag rgya kun gyi rgyu.*

The last two lines of this passage are also quoted in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*. *de bzhin nyid dbyings ye shes te/ //thabs kyi phyag rgya kun gyi rgyu*. *Mārgavyūha* 467b2.

¹¹⁶¹ This passage is an amalgam of passages from Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*. The first three lines and the fifth line of Pelyang’s here are as follows in the *Mārgavyūha*: *phyogs bcu ma lus thams cad la/ //rang ‘byung chen pos kun tu khyab/ //rang ‘byung de nyid dngos med par/ kun gyi phyag rgya ‘i rgyu yin phyir*. *Mārgavyūha*, 467b1.

On the paths progressing to the four nonoriginations,
The fruit of any kind of abandonment or attainment
Is that things are not seen as they really are, and thus
That fruit is merely an imputed awakening.

Accordingly, the secret to be ascertained from the tantras
Regarding the particulars of definite emergence
Also is said to be taking the fruit as the path
Because cause and effect are indivisible [from] the start.

a) [Outer Tantras]

i) [Kriyātantra]

However, by means of the three-fold observation¹¹⁶² and its branches
Based on a one-sided view of pure reality
And on the six [modes of the] deity¹¹⁶³ and so forth [issuing] from that [view],
The result will be a dichotomization of subject and object.
By clinging to hollow views and practices,
The Great Identity¹¹⁶⁴ is not seen within.

The fourth line here appears later in the *Mārgavyūha*, and appears to be interjected into Buddhaguhya's stanza by Pelyang: *chos dang gang zag bdag med na. Mārgavyūha*, 472a5.

- ¹¹⁶² The three-fold observation (*dmigs pa gsum*), according to Kriyātantra, is observation of the physical image of the deity, observation of the moon disc upon which the deity sits, and observation of the spoken *mantra*. These are described in Buddhaguhya's Kriyātantra commentary on the *Dhyānottarapatalakrama*, the *bSam gtan phyi ma rim par phye ba rgya cher bshed pa*, P 3495, 75.2.3. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (Valois, NY: Snow Lion, 1981), 146.
- ¹¹⁶³ The six deities (*lha drug*) of Kriyātantra are the deity of emptiness, the deity of letters, the deity of sound, the deity of form, the deity of seals, and the deity of signs (*stong pa'i lha, yi ge'i lha, sgra'i lha, gzugs kyi lha, phyag rgya'i lha, mtshan ma'i lha*). They are not to be confused with enumerations of the buddha lineages as six (*rigs drug*). These are listed in Buddhaguhya's Kriyātantra commentary on the *Aryavajravidāranātantra*, the '*Phags pa rdo rje rnam par 'joms pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs kyi rgya cher 'grel pa rim po che gsal ba zhes bya ba*, P. 3504. *Ibid.*, 109.
- ¹¹⁶⁴ The term 'Great Identity' (*bdag nyid chen po*), a general epithet for the Buddha, is used commonly in tantric contexts because of its regal connotations, but is used especially in the later rDzogs chen literature. For an example of an earlier reference, see PT 647.

[On the other hand] one who possesses the level of the three Vajras¹¹⁶⁵
 [On] the path of endeavoring toward pacification of a pure mind
 Is like a leader of the blind.
 That is the aim of [300] Mahāyoga's [great] compassion.

ii) [Ubhayātantra and Yogatantra]

The view and action of Ubhayā[-tantra]
 Which follows [753] Kriyātantra and Yogatantra,¹¹⁶⁶
 Are both hollow, as with that previously described;
 Those [practitioners] themselves are attached to the four.¹¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, abiding in outer [tantric views],
 They cling to yogic meditative stabilization.

Ultimately, they focus on the clear light of intrinsic awareness and on
 The expanse itself, which is utterly pure primordial wisdom, but
 Conventionally, they focus on blessings and *maṇḍalas*, and on
 The verbal expressions of the appearance of primordial wisdom.
 Consequently, their views and intention¹¹⁶⁸ are outward.

As a result of that, they grasp at pure vows and speech,
 Like cleaning a sword made of water.
 They cling to a timidity of action, and
 That is precisely why [their] behavior is external [to inner, secret tantra].

Without realizing the exceedingly inner meaning,
 They are bound by that which is external.

¹¹⁶⁵ The indestructible Body, Speech, and Mind of a buddha.

¹¹⁶⁶ These schemes are explained by Buddhaguhya in his *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* commentary. They are also mentioned in Dunhuang manuscript copies of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-sādhanaṣṭayika*, a passage of which discusses the distinctions between Kriyā and Yoga tantra. ITJ447, r19.2-r20.4. As per Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries," 9.

¹¹⁶⁷ These may be the four attributes of primordial wisdom, mentioned in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* 472b.

¹¹⁶⁸ The *Guhyagarbha tantra* lists intention (*dgongs pa*) as one class in a controversial doxographical passage in Chapter Thirteen. Līlavajra, in his *Guhyagarbha tantra* commentary, *Blazing Palace*, explains that this term corresponds to the main characteristic of the Yogatantra vehicle, its inward intention. *Guhyagarbha tantra*: 192.1-3. *sPar khab* 186b.3-5. As per Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th-12th Centuries."

They deviate from the four clear lights¹¹⁶⁹ to marks.

By means of five paths, training in [a meditation on] appearance and emptiness
alternatively,¹¹⁷⁰

Even their highest attainment is [merely] a resting place.

Because the two outer [tantras] and so forth [grasp at] the fruit,
They are like trinkets in the place of precious jewels.
They are simply mistaken, not having connected path and fruit.

Those who accept the central superior explanation,
Acting with confidence in the extensive precepts,
[Know] the intent of the Mahāyoga view.

When one searches among existents, this is reification.
When one searches among nonexistents, this is deprecation.
When one searches among the two [279a; 301]—existents and nonexistents—
That is not taught in the scriptures.¹¹⁷¹

Even were there something other than those, they are unrelated [to reality],
So nothing will ever be found.
All the debates over extremes are like that.
Thus, [reality] is free of the three and of biased extremes.

They are [merely] appearances to one's own mistaken awareness.
Therefore, attend to the ultimate.
Although all [of these views establish themselves] as free [from extremes] by means of
[positing] extreme [views], that is still an extreme.

¹¹⁶⁹ The four clear lights correspond to realization of the four emptinesses: emptiness, extreme emptiness, great emptiness, and total emptiness (*stong pa'i 'od gsal, shin tu stong pa'i 'od gsal, stong pa chen po'i 'od gsal, thams cad stong pa'i 'od gsal*).

¹¹⁷⁰ Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha* includes a similar description of this type of meditation in Kriyātantra. "Not knowing the nonduality and sameness [of appearance and emptiness],/ The stage of Kriyā [-tantra] involves alternating meditation on/ Ultimate truth, which is simply pure Reality,/ And on a conventional view of the four attributes of primordial wisdom." (*gnyis med mnyams pa ma shes pas/ /don dam dag pa chos nyid tsam/ /ye shes bzhi yon kun rdzob lta/ /re sgom bya ba las kyi sa/*). *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736, 472b.

¹¹⁷¹ This stanza is from Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, in which context the passage refers to the search for mind and awakening. *yod las btsal ni sgros brtags te/ /sgro btags brgyad du ltung bar 'gyur/ /med las btsal na bkur btab ste/ /bskur pa bcu 'i gnas su ltung/ /yod med gnyis las btsal byas nas/ /de snyid lung du ma bstan bgyur*. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4738, 472b7-473a1 The passage is also included in Nup's *STMG* Ch6, 197, where it is glossed appropriately to the context in the *Mārgavyūha*.

Therefore, they never reach certainty.

b) [Secret Tantra]

i) **[Mahāvajrayāna]**

See that non-duality is ineffable and inconceivable.
Distinct from any concordance with words and sounds,
It is said to be a method of exposing wrong views and conduct.
That is why it is the Mahāvajrayāna.

By means of the dynamic of a single sound, one has a particular realization.
[In] the first [sound lies] the very totality of all phenomena and abodes.
[Yet] once having been named, what is real is reversed, and
Consequently, takes on a completely [754] fallacious meaning.

The unoriginated thusness
Is empty and without appearance,
Nondual and equal,
Nothing at all, ineffable and inconceivable,
Unabiding, unobservable, without thought, and
Beyond extremes, utterly pure and
Without [302] characteristics or aspirations.
In the dharmatā, the dharmadhātu itself,
There are no elaborations, no going or coming,
No obstructing appearances, nor any attainment.

There is no freedom, liberation, or attainment,
No conventional or ultimate truths,
No nonattachment or intrinsic nature,
No immateriality, desirelessness, or logic,
No selflessness, otherlessness, nor any sphere of activity.

The terms used to indicate
Views, knowledge, primordial wisdom, and so forth,
Are distinct from the meaning of each individual phenomena.
They are to be illuminated as utterly unmixed.
Therefore, having understood this, one tends to speak concisely.

[Mahāyoga Views]

[Nonorigination]

First, regarding continually misunderstood phenomena,

By asserting: nonorigination by rejecting origination;
 The nonorigination of the bias of clearing obstruction;
 The nonorigination of defilements; and the nonorigination
 Of intending there to be no characteristics, and so forth,
 One simply will become ensnared like a worm in wool fleece.

By means of nonduality, without accepting or rejecting anything,
 Whatever distinct phenomena there may be,
 There will be excellent nonorigination. The highest meaning
 Is that [279b] in origination itself, there is no origination.
 The expanse is without origination [303] in any direction, just as it is.

They assert primordial wisdom and knowledge itself, [but]
 The tathatā is without accepting or rejecting,
 Nondual, without action or correction,
 The principle and highest of that which is ineffable and inconceivable.¹¹⁷²

[Great Emptiness]

Although they cling to emptiness itself,
 Greater than the emptiness of extremes, luminous emptiness, and so forth
 Is the Great Emptiness of innumerable aspects.
 Existence itself is emptiness.

Because it is in the center between existence and nonexistence, it is ineffable and
 inconceivable.
 Essence, intrinsic nature, definition,
 Blessings, and so forth are most distinguished.

[Nonappearance]

Although they use the term “nonappearance,”
 It is not like the lack of appearance to
 Ignorance or wrong understanding.
 It is being without biased appearance, without partiality.

The nonappearance [755] of clarifying fallacy,
 Appearance without taint,
 The nonappearance of characteristics, and so forth,
 Are completely without any signs of the appearance of intentional activity.

¹¹⁷² The Derge version gives “Lake-Born” (*gtso mtsho skyes*) in place of “highest” (*gtso mchog go*). Lake-Born refers to the lotus, and sometimes, by extension, to Padmasambhava. Such reference, however, is the only one of its kind in any of Pelyang’s texts.

With regard to this highest [type]—
 Nonappearance together with appearance of the variety—
 That which is said to appear in this way is inconceivable,
 Because appearance and nonappearance are indistinguishable.

[Nonduality]

Although there is the teaching of [304] nonduality,
 The nonduality which is an emptiness of extremes, the absence of [the dichotomy of]
 object and mind, and
 The nonduality which is free of bias,
 All of those are [in fact] the supreme, central dualities
 Because they assert an ultimate.

Although cause and effect are nondual,
 Despite the fact that Kriyā[-tantra] and Yoga[-tantra]
 Readily accept nonduality as the ultimate,
 Their [view] is a biased one because of their dependence upon alternating between
 [meditations upon conventional and ultimate reality].¹¹⁷³

By means of nonduality which pertains to
 All phenomena renown as dualistic,
 There is spontaneous presence beyond acceptance and rejection,
 As exemplified by the reflective capacity of a jewel.

[Sameness]

Sameness, like the very sameness which is said to stem from existence,
 Is a phenomena which lacks sameness.
 As for the biased sameness that is free of nonsameness,
 It is erroneous, because it is the extreme of sameness.

As for the Great Sameness¹¹⁷⁴ of Great Secret [Tantra],

¹¹⁷³ This is a reference to the Kriyātantra practice in which practitioners alternate between meditative focus upon ultimate and conventional realities. Buddhaguhya also uses this technique to characterize Kriyātantra. Not knowing the nonduality and sameness [of appearance and emptiness], the ground of Kriya[-tantra] involves alternating meditation on ultimate truth, which is merely pure reality and on a conventional view of the four attributes of primordial wisdom (*gnyis med mnyams pa ma shes pas/ /don dam dag pa chos nyid tsam/ /ye shes bzhi yon kun rdzob lta/ /re sgom bya ba las kyi sa/*). *Mārgavyūha*, 472b3.

¹¹⁷⁴ The term ‘Great Sameness’ (*mnyam pa chen po*) also can be found in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*. Great Sameness is the highest Mind./ It is connected with great compassion, and/ Not distinct from the Expanse of Reality.” (*mnyam pa chen po mchog gi thugs/ /thugs rje chen pos ‘brel ba dang/ /nyid kyi dbyings las mi zhan*

Although all nonsame phenomena are self itself,
 There is no partial knowledge of sameness and nonsameness.
 It is pinnacle of all the Samenesses.
This is because its intention is to clear away ‘other’.¹¹⁷⁵

[Nothingness]

Although there is a scriptural teaching [280a] regarding nothing existing whatsoever,
 [Followers of the lower tantras] understand [305] logically that there is nothing, but
 [They conceptualize] a polarized nonexistence which excludes the extreme of a faulty view
 of appearance as though there is something and
 A nonexistence of any object of observation. All of these are also extremes.

Although they may say, “There is nothing whatsoever,”
 And apply the three phrases, “beyond accepting or rejecting” and so forth,
 [Nevertheless, their assertion] has an actual basis in there being something.

Existence and nonexistence are undifferentiable, and hence, there is freedom from partial
 knowledge.
 Within this [undifferentiability], one never encounters any segmentation.
 The necessity being, as before, that reality is ineffable and inconceivable,
 Like the color of the center of a peacock feather’s eye.¹¹⁷⁶

Such a partial truth
 Is like pouring water down a hole.¹¹⁷⁷
 It is a type of bias toward being beyond the realm of expression or mental conception, and
 thus
 It is said to be in the realm of speculation.

As for the highest meaning of “the three phrases,”
 The reality of all expressions and mental concepts is difficult to express or conceive.
 [756] Because it cannot become the object of a base mind,
 It is as difficult as saying, “Here is the sky.”

The yoga of biased, wrong understanding and

phyir) *Mārgavyūha*, P 4738, 504b7.

¹¹⁷⁵ A similar line appears in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*. *gzhan sel phyir dang don nyer phyir*. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4726: 476b6.

¹¹⁷⁶ The colors in the eye of a peacock feather deepen to a purplish black in an infinite regression into iridescent darkness at the center. The exact location of the center of the eye is inconceivable, and the color is ineffable.

¹¹⁷⁷ Taking *khung po* for *khung ba*. This expression might also have something to do with tears on the cheeks (taking *mkhur bar*), or pouring out water in scorn (taking *‘khu bar*), but the first reading seems most tenable.

Dependence upon nonabiding [as a] one-faceted luminosity
 Possess a foundation held even by non-Buddhists.
 I say these are the principle form of abiding.

[Nonabiding]

[306] Nonabiding without accepting and without rejecting
 Is not fixed, because the focus of meditation is mind.
 There is no abandoning or accepting abiding and nonabiding.

Because it is not asserted that there is any intellectual support,
 One does not abiding in nonabiding itself.
 As for the absence of support and that which is supported,
 It is the highest Great Nonabiding.
 Therefore, it is free of fixation, like the sky.

[No Observation]

Although they might say there is, “no observation of anything” [in the ultimate truth],
 The three—wrong and worldly meditative stabilization,
 Abiding in the extreme of the two cessations, and
 The nonobservation [of] the Proponents of Mādhyamika—
 Are observations which eliminate desire.
 They are biased, unsupportable observations.

There is no observation which observes self, but
 Even that expression with regard to the great exemplification
 Is without attachment to the assertion of nonobservation.
 The transfer of observation is without hatred or envy.

As for nondual nonobservation,
 It is like being free of observing, “Here is the sky.”

[Nonconceptuality]

Although one might speak of nonconceptuality—
 [280b] The nonconceptuality which is the various types of clinging to worldly things,
 The nonconceptuality of wrong meditation, and
 The two nonconceptualities of foolish negation and affirmation [307]:
 Nonconceptuality which illuminates partiality and
 Nonconceptuality which illuminates utter purity—
 Nevertheless, while saying that those four are nonconceptual,
 [The foolish] look to negate that which is discordant with nonconceptuality.
 In so doing, that activity of negating and affirming, accepting and rejecting,
 Is endowed with the conceptualization of these four supreme ascertainments.

The nonconceptuality of the Great [Vehicle] of Method,
 As a mere name for this collection of realizations, is primordial wisdom.
 Therefore, it does not originate in conceptualization itself,
 And thus, it is not a category of idea involving representations.

Nonconceptuality that neither negates nor affirms
 Is without conceptualization, even in nonconceptualization itself.
 Therefore, just as there are no concepts in [the reflected image in] a mirror,
 Because liberation is to be realized, it is free of extremes.

[Overcoming the Extremes]

As for what are renown as [methods of] overcoming the “extremes”—
 Formlessness free of the two wrong extremes,¹¹⁷⁸
 Freedom from partial knowledge of origination and cessation,
 Intrinsic awareness that is freedom from the eight,¹¹⁷⁹ four,¹¹⁸⁰ and two extremes, and
 [757] Obtaining the good quality of being free from extremes
 While simultaneously conceptualizing the extremes as defects—
 These are methods of overcoming [the extremes] while depending [upon the existence of
 the extremes themselves].
 Therefore, even [this] very freedom from extremes is the chief of all extremes.
 Having made the conventional into an object of knowledge, they are mistaken.

Although absolute freedom from the extremes¹¹⁸¹ should be understood,
 [308] Those known as the eight extremes and so forth
 Are [mere] appearances to intrinsically aware primordial wisdom.
 Therefore, elaborations at the very moment of compassion
 Are merely nominal at that time, because they don't exist.

Nonduality is free of extremes.
 It is just like when camphor is called ‘medicine’,
 [Although] it is nondual with cool poison,
 That is merely an expression of freedom.

Although it is undifferentiable from the contacted extreme,
 There is no contact with anything whatsoever.
 Therefore, it is explained as the highest form of freedom from the extremes.

¹¹⁷⁸ The two extremes are eternalism and nihilism.

¹¹⁷⁹ These are creation, cessation, nihilism, eternalism, coming, going, diversity, and identity (*skye ba*, ‘*gog pa*, *chad pa*, *rtag pa*, ‘*ong ba*, ‘*gro ba*, *tha dad*, and *don gcig*). *NSTB*, vol.2, 158.

¹¹⁸⁰ These are being, nonbeing, both being and non-being, and neither being nor nonbeing (*yod*, *med*, *yod-med*, and *yod-med min*). *NSTB*, vol.2, 128.

¹¹⁸¹ This is a reference to emptiness, the ultimate end.

[Purity]

Those things which are to be purified in pure yoga,
 Those things which are to be abandoned on the paths of seeing and of meditation, and
Mantra and seals and the stages of activity,
 Are bound by desire for purity and by attachment to the untainted.

Those who cling to pure contact
 Are bound by conceptualizing every individual thing.
 A stain, which is despised because of being lower,
 Is utterly pure in the very stain itself.

[281a] In neither accepting nor rejecting
 There is impartiality toward purity and nonpurity, and thus
 It is the pinnacle of all the vehicles,
 The lotus rising from the mud.

[Signlessness]

Although there are stages of signlessness,¹¹⁸²
 Through desire for that which is known as signlessness,
 They practice abandoning and increasing, and so there is bias.
 Mistakenly considering the realm [309] of discriminative consciousness,
 Although there is none, they apply themselves diligently to the highest [aim].

As for the dichotomization of subject and object in desire and clinging,
 Even the outer [tantric vehicles of] *Kriyā* [and] *Yoga*
 Are false because they display the characteristics corresponding to that [dichotomization].

The “highest signlessness”
 Is without object and without grasping at objectlessness.
 All discriminative consciousness is self because it is intrinsic awareness.
 Thus, it is free of holding to individual characteristics.

[Aspirationlessness]

Similarly, though there is no aspiration,
 The three forms of aspirationlessness—
 Being without the aspiration by small-minded people, eliminating, and accepting—
 These are clinging aspirations because they are desires.

Completely perfect aspiration is intrinsic awareness itself.
 Because it is the real substance [758] of the path and fruit,

¹¹⁸² Signlessness (*mtshan med*), aspirationlessness (*smon med*), and emptiness (*stong pa*)
 are the three gates to liberation (*rnam thar sgo gsum*).

As with the type of enjoyment appropriate in the Realm of Enjoying Emanations,¹¹⁸³
Hope for something else simply does not arise.

[The Expanse of Reality]

Although they use the term “the Expanse of Reality,”
It is the luminous, free, empty Expanse of Reality,
Which is without these objects of activity, empty.
It is intrinsically aware, pure reality, and
The expanse of characteristiclessness, and so forth.
It is whole, beyond the extreme of desired object and subject.

Emptiness itself is said to be without boundaries, limits, [310] and so forth.
It should be known as the intrinsically aware expanse in which characteristics are
perceived,
The Expanse of Reality of Great Secret *Mantra*,

Without even a non-deviating subject or observation,
Without action or activity and untainted,
Without partiality to “this and that,”
It is Reality, the Ultimate, Suchness.

It is the source of everything, boundless and all-pervasive,
Neither abandoning nor isolating anything,
Unlimited. It cannot be reached by the mind.
Therefore, it is called the Secret Expanse.

[Nonelaboration]

Because all those phenomena have space and
Power, they are closely associated [with the Expanse].
Although one should know them without elaboration,
In clinging to wrong understanding there is elaboration.

The learned [281b] possess the bias of elimination, and
Are fettered in their reaching the extreme of biased elaborations.
If [they assert that] intrinsically aware primordial wisdom
Rejects and accepts elaborations as well, that is the extreme of elaborations.

Just as drops [of dew] condense from everywhere,
Elaborations are spontaneously free from elaboration.
However much elaborations [proliferate], because they are mind itself,
They are the spontaneously arising mind of awakening.

¹¹⁸³ This heaven, the Nirmāṇarati (*'phrul dga'*), is the fifth of the six heavens in the Desire Realm, in which deities' desires are satisfied at will.

As for Fivefold Wisdom,
 That itself is the self-arisen Expanse of Reality.
 [311] Thus, that very nonabiding, spontaneous insight
 Is the ultimate reality.
 Because there is no elaboration by objects and entities,
 The unelaborated is the highest of all.

[No Coming or Going]

Although there is no coming or going,
 Coming and going which reverse clinging is not the ultimate.
 Common bias has neither coming nor going.
 Purity and clear light have neither coming nor going.

They deprecate coming and going, and
 Adhere to the absence of coming and going.
 The object of knowledge and the knower are hollow [concepts].
 On the ultimate path, what is transformed?
 The great absence [759] of coming and going
 Which is not distinct from all coming and going.

In coming and going itself, there is nothing.¹¹⁸⁴

There is neither the presence nor absence of coming or not coming.
 Like the stream, which is connected to the ocean,
There is no absence of the extremes of existence and nonexistence.

They seek illusory appearance of permanence, wrong appearance,
 Subtle, empty, illusory appearance,
 The stages of phony magical appearance,
 The collected appearances [of] existent appearance and so forth, and
 The vessel [of] self-aware intrinsic nature, and
 They desire the appearance of the deity—these are mistaken perceptions.

[312] All appearance of nonappearance is self.
 The magical display of intrinsically aware primordial wisdom
 Is like ocean water and waves;
 The mind of awakening itself dawns everywhere.

¹¹⁸⁴ This line appears in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 2: 'gro 'ong nyid na 'gro 'ong med. It also appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, where it is part of a larger quotation from the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. 'gro 'ong med las 'gro dang 'ong/_/'gro 'ong nyid na 'gro 'ong med/ *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 479a2.

[Nonhindrance]

As for the distinction of its being unhindered,
 There are the two forms of resultant adamantine unhinderedness:
 Unhindered in the form of being indispensable,¹¹⁸⁵ and
 Nonobstructing of merely incidental appearance.

If one desires to be free of abandoning that hindrance,
 That is just clinging to the extreme of unhinderedness.
 Nonduality is unhindered
 Because **spontaneously arisen primordial wisdom is spontaneously manifest.**¹¹⁸⁶

That very hinderedness is unhindered, and thus
 Like the sky, it is unoriginated and undestroyed.

[Nonattainment]

Having desired attainment [282a] of one's desires and attachments, and
 Having desired progression in one's attainment of buddhahood and purity, and
 Having desired attainment of a functioning self,
 All these are attainments of abandonment, and hence they are false.

As for the attainment which is nonattainment,
 Like a genuinely blind person opening¹¹⁸⁷ her eyes [to see],
 The fruit of that very insight, based on method,¹¹⁸⁸
 Dawns spontaneously, and that is all.

The two nonattainments—nonattainment which is just fundamental abandonment, and
 Purposeful nonattainment—
 Are forms of appropriating attachment, and thus
 They are shackled [313] by ceaseless clinging.

As for the nonattainment of Great Identity,
 Because there are the two fruits—Master of All and intrinsic awareness—
 There is no thing to attain, and thus
 It is like a poor woman's treasure and wealth.¹¹⁸⁹

¹¹⁸⁵ The text reads, literally, “If it does not exist, the other does not arise.”

¹¹⁸⁶ This line also appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*. *rang 'byung ye shes rang snang zad*. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 467b4.

¹¹⁸⁷ Taking *'byed* for *phyed*.

¹¹⁸⁸ This phrase also appears in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 9: *thabs la brtan pa'i shes rab nyid*. It also appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: *thabs la brten pas shes rab nyid*. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 503b2.

¹¹⁸⁹ Meaning it is not to be found.

Liberation by an agent and liberation from hindrance, and
 Liberation by means of purification are biased.
 Liberation by means of an extraordinary view
 Is fettered because one views bondage and liberation as two.

Indistinguishable [760] from Great Identity,
 That unboundedness bound by no one,
Without anything to be bound¹¹⁹⁰ is liberation [from] both [bondage and liberation].
 There is no knot in space. How is that?

Emancipation from the four currents¹¹⁹¹
 Of suffering due to the affliction of ignorance,
 Although it may take an extremely long time, and
 Emancipation through clearing away hindrance and abandoning, and
 Emancipation through joining with splendor—
 Because desire for all these is entering the ocean of desire,
 One will be carried off in a single direction by the stream of [one's] effort.

[However, though one] possesses the highest and longest wrong views,
 Those very four streams are the path and fruit.
 Therefore, by playing directly in the current
 Flowing from method and insight,
 There is complete emancipation [314] without crossing over,
Like a great fish gliding through the water,¹¹⁹² or
 The poisoning of a person who possesses the curative *mantra*.

The two types of erroneous conventional truth, and
 Conventional truths which mistake the other powered [nature],
 Even a true view which has been scooped up by the four types of reasoning—

¹¹⁹⁰ This passage can also be found in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*. However, it is clear from a citation later in *The Lamp of the Mind* that this passage has actually been taken from Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*. (470b4.)

¹¹⁹¹ The four currents (*chu bo bzhi*) are: ignorance, [wrong] view, existence, and desire (*ma rig pa'i chu bo, lta ba'i chu bo, srid pa'i chu bu, and sred pa'i chu bo*). Alternatively, they are the four currents of birth, old age, sickness, and death (*skye ba, rga ba, na ba, and 'chi ba*). Sun, *Bod Rgya Tshigs Mdzod Chen Mo* 805.

¹¹⁹² This resembles a line from the *Mārgavyūha* describing the Mahāyoga view, though it does not appear to have been taken from that text. “What are views and practices of Mahāyoga? No matter how you practice, there is no intrinsic nature. Like a great bird soaring in the sky, like a great fish gliding through the water, like a great wind blowing in the air, see yogic views like this.” *rnal 'byor chen po'i lta spyod ni/ji ltar spyad kyang rang bzhin med/ mkha' la bya chen lding ba bzhin/ chu la rkyal chen 'phyo ba bzhin/ mkha' la rlung chen 'phyo ba bzhin/ rnal 'byor lta ba de ltar lta. Mārgavyūha* 489b7.

Are *maṇḍalas* of deities bestowing enlightened attributes.

[The Indivisibility of the Two Truths]

With correct reasoning, one perceives the fruit.
The two [truths], the superior conventional and the ultimate,
Should be known as explained.
Even the details of common and ultimate
Are to be known in part by means of explanation.

Like the planets and stars [reflected] on a calm sea,
The two truths, appearance and emptiness [282b], are not divisible.
Never reaching the extreme limit of biased views,
In just that is the very continuum of intrinsic nature.

[Nonattachment]

Although there is nonattachment to the object of clinging,
Mistaken and wrong nonattachment that
Interferes with satisfaction and with the heart, and so forth, and
One-sided attachment to abandonment and hindrance,
Nonattachment to opposition and equanimity, and
Nonattachment to the four¹¹⁹³ are bound by attachment.

Nonattachment without acceptance or rejection
Is nonattachment in attachment itself.
Therefore, having confidence [315] with regard to method and insight,
[Attachment] will be like the swamp to the lotus.

[Intrinsic Nature]

As for imputing an intrinsic nature of phenomena,
The bias of abandoning the continuums is without intrinsic nature.
The intrinsic nature of the extreme of bias, and
The intrinsic nature which is the characteristic [761] of reality, and so forth
Exist because there is accomplishment without abandoning.
They have the intrinsic nature [of] reaching the limit of abandoning and appropriating.

It is like the intrinsic nature of the sky when it clears and
Iridescent clouds accumulate.

¹¹⁹³ The four attachments (*nye bar len pa bzhi*) are: attachment to desire, attachment to views, attachment to a wrong understanding of the precepts and corrent conduct, and attachment to assertions of self ('*dod pa nye bar len pa dang, lta bu nye bar len pa, tshul khriims brtul zhugs nye bar len pa, bdag tu smra ba nye bar len pa bcas bzhi*). *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi bshad pa* (*Abhidharmakosa-bharya*), D 4090: 131a.

Because all imputed intrinsic natures
Appear [as] reality, they are not distinct.

Thus, what are known as ‘nonentities’ and
‘Without clinging’
[Belong to] a view that asserts primordial nonexistence, no prior existence,
The nonexistence of a single thing in relation to another, and nondestruction.¹¹⁹⁴

The assertion that [those] four are nondual
Illustrates the four impossibilities by example.
Such an assertion, discordant with the pattern of appearance,
Is a view such as those previously mentioned, the reasons for which were already given.

There are two stages of the view that ‘just that’ is the fruit.
Clinging to the extreme of transcending the six [realms],
The view that all is in the foundation of one side [of the transcendence]
Does not accord with the foundation of the appearances of the variety.

[316] Accordingly, when a butter lamp burns brightly,
Its luminosity is seen as nondual
Without ever mentioning the nonapproach of darkness.
Primordial wisdom does not recognize clinging to things.

Not abiding in abandonment, without contradiction,
Like the good qualities of a wish-fulfilling jewel.
Two things can spontaneously appear anywhere
Because there is a “foundation of all phenomena.”

¹¹⁹⁴ These are positions held by the Vaibhāṣika School, according to Tsongkhapa’s commentary on Maitreya’s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, the *Legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba*. (*des na rtog gi ‘bar bar byed brag smra ba’i gzhung gis bshad pa/ dus ma byas pa ‘gog gnyis dang/ nam mkha’ dang ni de bzhin nyid/ ces bkod nas de’i grel par/ de bzhin nyid ni snga na med pa dang/ zhig nas med pa dang/ gcig la gcig med pa dang/ gtan med pa ngag gis mtson pa dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid do/ de dag ni rtag pa yin te mi ‘gyur ba’i ngo bo yin pa’i phyir ro zhes so.*) Śāntaraksita also discusses these positions though without reference to the Vaibhāṣika in his *Tattvasaṃgraha-karika*: *bdag nyid yongs su ma gyur [60b] pa’am/ dngos gzhan rnam par rig pa’am/ tsad ma med pa’i dngos po rnams/ dngos po med par rtog par byed/ snga na med pa la sogs pa/ ‘di ni rnam pa bzhi ru dbye/ zho sogs ‘o ma la med gang/ de ni snga na med par brjod/ zho la ‘o ma med pa nyid/ zhig nas med pa’i mtsan nyid do/ rta sogs ba lang la med gang/ gcig la cig med par brjod de/ de las gzhan dngos med cing de’i/ bdag nyid gzhan la med pas so/ mgo yi cha ni dma’ mo la/ ‘brel dang sgra sogs ngo bo yi/ ri bong rva dag med gyur pa/ ‘di ni shin tu med par ‘dod/ gal te snga ma med pa sogs/ dbye bas dngos med yod min na/ rgyu la sogs pa rnams dbye ba’i/ tha snyad ‘di yang med par ‘gyur. *Tattvasaṃgraha-karika*, D 4266: 60a.*

As for types of knowledge which are false and so forth,
 A true view asserting a causal foundation
 Establishes them with certainty as biased (forms of knowledge)
 Without doubt about the fundamental root of arising.

All is primordially [283a] indivisible, but
 Without acceptance or rejection of suitability or unsuitability,
 By knowing the oral transmissions and instructions that teach nonduality,
 What is suitable is distinguished.

As with a hero's tools,
 Even all the enumerations can be means of realization.
 Even without knowledge, one [can] excel with those means.
 One does not debate the existence or nonexistence of phenomena.

[No Self]

As for the nonself in phenomena and beings, [views asserting]
 The nonself of views of the substantiality [of phenomena],
 The nonself of phenomena which is empty of the partiality of the Śrāvaka,¹¹⁹⁵
 The nonself of the obstruction of the dynamic of continual appearance,
 The nonself [317] of the extreme of manifestation, and
 The nonself of the appearance of awareness
 Are the root forms of grasping at a conception of self
 Because they engage in dualistic rejection and acceptance of the three appearances¹¹⁹⁶ [of]
 primordial wisdom.

Although primordial wisdom [762] spontaneously arises throughout the ten directions,

¹¹⁹⁵ This is a reference to the pratyekabuddha view of selflessness of phenomena, which is said to be a partial understanding of the selflessness of things that transcends the śrāvaka view. NSTB, vol. 1, 227-8.

¹¹⁹⁶ The *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* describes the three primordial wisdoms (*ye shes rnams gsum*) thus: “The three primordial wisdoms are: the worldly, the transcendent, and the supremely transcendent” (*ye shes ni rnam pa gsum ste/ 'jig rten pa dang/ 'jig rten las 'das pa dang/ 'jig rten las 'das pa'i mchog go*). *'Phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo*, P775: 187a. Later in the text, it gives a different list of the three: freedom from appearance, sustaining power, and realization of one's own sublime pristine cognition. NSTB vol. 2, 116.

The three appearances are sometimes given as: object, subjective consciousness, and body (*gzung ba'i yul, 'dzin pa'i sems, 'gro ba'i lus*). Alternatively, they are: impure appearances to sentient beings, pure appearances to bodhisattvas, and utterly pure appearances to buddhas (*sems can la ma dag par snang ba, lam skabs byang sems la dag par snang ba, and sangs rgyas la shin tu dag par snang ba*). NSTB, vol. 2: 109.

Phenomena and beings do not exist
 Because they are not entities which spontaneously arise in such a way.
 To some, it is as though even the sun is a cause of darkness.

Selfless primordial wisdom possesses all selves.
 Nondual non-self is the Great Identity.
 The extreme of non[-self] is not encountered here.

[No Other]

Although there is a non-otherness in which there is no sphere of activity,
 Asserting that there is no movement of an other because it is subtle,
 No conceptual analysis because it is profound,
 Non-otherness because it is empty of other,
 Non-otherness because it is mistaken, and non[-otherness] because it is false,
 Non-otherness due to awareness, or even non-otherness due to primordial wisdom,
 Are all just like that.

They are bound in iron chains because they desire freedom from that [other].
 As [explained] before, all is primordial wisdom, but
 Because it is a single entity, there is no insight into one part.
 Because the one is limitless, it dawns as everything.

Being nondual, it has no alternate.
 Because it is inexpressible and [318] inconceivable,
 It is unfettered by the iron [chains] of the dichotomy of subject and object.
 As for the former mention of the [followers of] the two gods,
 In their desire, they perceive a distinct object.

The essence of the Eye of Insight¹¹⁹⁷
 Is nothing more than a particular explanation.

Although they say that on the Path of Seeing, all is One,
 If perceived with one's own clairvoyance
 Without the mantric perception [gained by] encountering a renowned spiritual friend,
 It might be [considered] reasonable to acquire ten.

Because of the distinction based on the view's defilement,
 [283b] The difference between a deed and its fruit is great.

¹¹⁹⁷ The Eye of Insight (*shes rab kyi spyan*) or alternately, the Noble Primordial Wisdom Eye (*'phags pa'i ye shes kyi spyan*) is one of the Three Eyes (*spyan gsum*), the other two of which are the physical eye (*lus kyi spyan*) and the Divine Eye (*lha'i spyan*). For more on Pelyang's use of this term, see the footnotes to Question 41 in Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*.

[Primordial Wisdom]

As for *Māyājāla* primordial wisdom,
 The assertion of the sixteen [moments] as twofold,
 The assertion of the transition of the four into two,¹¹⁹⁸ and
 The assertion of the four and five [buddha] lineages¹¹⁹⁹
 Are said to be supreme forms of darkness
 Because they [mistakenly] view [wisdom] as something to be conceptualized in discrete
 [moments, lineages, wisdoms, and so forth].

The eight and six, together with the four appearances,¹²⁰⁰
 All things which appear [as their] objects of analysis,
 Their appearance as though powerful because they are cognized,
 Their appearance in the manner in which each is analyzed, and
 The appearance of mind as just one
 Due to its not having been ascertained by means of its essence—
 Even when such mistaken appearances [arise], the intrinsic nature is not mistaken.
 [319] Because the individual consciousnesses are eight phenomena,
 The consciousness with three names is [but] one.

Thus, because all of them—the one and the many—are real,
 Primordial wisdom [763] is the identity of all.
 Its divisions are expressed [as] five and eight.
 Its root is self-arisen primordial wisdom.

To that primordial wisdom itself
 All phenomena known as empty appearance
 Spontaneously appears [with] color, shape, and so forth
 As though viewed [in] a mirror.

[Enumerations]

As for the enumerations of the mistaken eternalists and nihilists—
 The real and the eternal, the continuum of single moments,

¹¹⁹⁸ According to the rNying ma interpretation, the causal vehicles assert that there are sixteen moments of primordial wisdom, four distinct moments applied to each of the Four Truths. At the end of the path, Śrāvakas become arhats endowed with a twofold primordial wisdom, “which perceives the cessation [of corruption] and perceives that it is not recreated.” Bdud-'joms, Dorje, and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, 226-27.

¹¹⁹⁹ These are the enumerations of buddha lineages, attributed in later rNying ma tradition to the Ubhayātantra and Yogatantra vehicles respectively, though it is not at all clear that Pelyang intends these specific attributions.

¹²⁰⁰ The eight consciousnesses (*rnam shes tshogs brgyad*). The former six (*rnam shes tshogs drug*) arise from the latter two.

Matchless, eternal essence,
 All that the lesser vehicles assert to be highest,
 Indestructibility, primordial nothingness, and
 The interruption of the long [chain of] causes [of suffering], and so forth—
 Even the expressions, “It is as if nonexistent,” or “It is as before,”
 Are just intentionally imputed appearances.

As for the thirty extreme [conceptual elaborations], the eight,¹²⁰¹ and so forth,
 The desire for freedom from abandoning and accepting is an attached clinging.
 A proponent of selflessness who rejects and accepts
 Is a master of the extremes of rejection and acceptance.

Even those enumerations of the extreme [conceptual elaborations] in this supreme [vehicle]
 Are uttered for the purpose of reversing discriminative consciousness.
 [320] Other than that, there is no assertion of those [extremes].
 Because they are mind, there is no abandoning [to be done]. Even a pickpocket¹²⁰²
 Does not reach every single direction, and thus
 This is the essence of the *Māyājāla*.

However, though it is said that “All is pure,”
 Entities are not clear and pure;
 In the very enjoyment of appearance, there is utter purity.
 Therefore, it is said to be superior.¹²⁰³

Intrinsic nature is the import of the *Māyājāla*.
 Buddhas and sentient beings, all of everything,
 Are Suchness of a single essence.
 It [284a] stretches to the limits of that Oneness.

Primordial wisdom itself, however it appears,
 Is uncontrived, definitive Suchness.
 That supreme magical display is originated of primordial wisdom.¹²⁰⁴
 Thus, without moving, whatever [appearances there are] have strayed.

¹²⁰¹ These are the eight extremes of conceptual elaboration (*spros pa'i mtha' brgyad*):
 origination, destruction, nihilism, eternalism, coming, going, distinction, and identity
 (*skye*, *'gog*, *chad*, *rtag*, *'ong*, *'gro*, *tha dad*, and *don gcig*).

¹²⁰² This also might read “Even a mouse.” Neither term seems to make much sense in this
 context.

¹²⁰³ These lines appear in the *Mārgavyūha*: thams cad dag ces bya ba'ang/_/dngos po gsal
 dag ma yin te/_/snang spyod nyid na nam par dag_/de phyir kun rdzob brdzun mi lte/
Mārgavyūha, P 4736: 472b1.

¹²⁰⁴ The magical display of primordial wisdom (*ye shes sgyu ma*) is also mentioned in the
Blazing Palace commentary, in the *Mind Series* text the *rTse mo byung rgyal*, and in
 Pelyang's own *The Lamp of Method and Wisdom*.

[Oneness]

Magical emanations in space are like ocean [water and] waves;
 While appearing [variously], they are without [distinct] appearance.
 They are undifferentiable, and the process [of their emanation] is not in distinct stages.
 Therefore, calling it “One” is an illustrative expression.
 It is the highest, like Suchness.

Assertions of a “one” which has abandoned something distinct from itself
 Are clinging to the extreme of “one,” and are thus erroneous.
 Assertions of incidental, impure appearance
 Which is less pure than the “one,” and
 Assertion of the existence of a fruit without a seed
 [Are like] seeing horses [where there are] branch fences, people [321] [where there are]
 cairns, and snakes [where there are] ropes.

Because they are nonexistent like the optical illusion of the moon [in] water,
 Even though they are established as “appearances” with [764] knowledge [of their illusory
 nature],
 That is a mistake, and in that, even regarding the arising of the horns of a rabbit,
 There is no doubt.

Because similarly illusory phenomena exist in the foundation [of the expanse],
 It is as though there are no such illusory phenomena.
 Appearances from within the spontaneous, undifferentiable sphere,
 Even the appearances of cyclic existence and *saṃsāra*, are not established.

[The Mistake of Refutation]

With regard to these phenomena whose existence is refuted,
 It is a foolish mind that claims they are nonexistent.
 With regard to those phenomena whose nonexistence is refuted,
 Those asserting, “They are like existents,” are also wrong.
 With regard to those phenomena whose neutral position is refuted,
 Those twisting the view of the One are also mistaken.

Because the refutation of grasping at freedom from extremes
 Is defiled, it is an erroneous vision, like a di-vision.
 [These] serve as the origin of all [wrong assertions].
 If that is not done, there is nothing at all.

The variety of color and shape are all real, and
 There are no varieties of color or shape at all.

It is extremely difficult to conceptualize,¹²⁰⁵ it is not known by anyone.
All appears from [within] the nonconceptual sphere.

[The Mind of Awakening]

As for that which is called “the mind of awakening”¹²⁰⁶
Because the momentary manifestation of all is without continuum,
It is not coming [322] from anywhere nor going anywhere.
It is the nonconceptual intrinsic awareness of Suchness.¹²⁰⁷

Because all phenomena which becomes an object of knowledge
Is aware and primordially, spontaneously luminous,
Observation of an object of knowledge does not arise for intrinsic awareness, and
Even so much as an actual object is not asserted.

The seminal nucleus of the mind of awakening,
[284b] Pervading everywhere, abides nowhere.
There is no existence of the abode of color [or] of the varieties of shapes.
The heart of the highest enlightened attributes¹²⁰⁸
Is not in that realm of philosophizing.

[The Dynamic of Sameness]

What is the dynamic of Sameness?
The intrinsic nature of Sameness is not anything at all.
The saying that it is not one-sided surpasses
The saying that it is not anything because it is dual.

Its conditions are explained in order to block clinging, [but] they are not realized.
Although in the realm of phenomena it is ineffable and inexpressible,
Without abandonment or elimination, observing the three partial wrong [views],¹²⁰⁹
They deviate from the highest characteristic of the essence of intrinsic nature;

¹²⁰⁵ Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*: shin tu brtag dka’ gting zab pas. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 472b6

¹²⁰⁶ Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*: byang chub sems zhes brjod pa ni. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 472b5.

¹²⁰⁷ Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha*: gang nas ma ’ongs gar mi’ ‘gro/_/rtog med rang rig kho na tsam/ *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 472b5.

¹²⁰⁸ This heart is variously described as the heart of awakening (*byang chub snying po*), the heart of the Tathāgata (*de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po*), the heart of intrinsic luminosity (*rang gsal snying po*), and so forth. The first term, the ‘heart of awakening’, is used in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha* to refer to this unchanging, uncreated foundation from which deluded beings have strayed. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 471b.

The misunderstandings regarding abandonment held by the lower [vehicles] are numerous.

Because it is infinite, unabandoning, intrinsic awareness,
 The phenomena of appropriation are not appropriated.
 The highest meaning [765] of nonacceptance and nonrejection
 Is freedom from clinging, transcendence of extremes, liberation [from] bondage, and so
 forth,
 The highest of all that is to be cultivated.
 Thus, that very thing is Self.
 It is the foremost method of taking up the unsurpassed.

[323] That unboundedness, bound by no one,
 Has nothing to be bound.
 Neither bound nor utterly liberated,
 The Buddha Dharma is primordially, spontaneously complete.¹²¹⁰

The dynamic of the three truths¹²¹¹ appears
 Like the good qualities of a wish-fulfilling jewel.
 There is no natural conceptualization into the two—
 ‘True’ and ‘false’—with respect to meaning.

[The Eye of Highest Insight]

Some assert that the Eye of Highest Insight, which perceives that [dynamic of the three
 truths],
 Sees by means of its object of observation.
 However, such people will never perceive its most excellent workings
 Because they have stepped onto the path [of assuming a dichotomy of] subject and object.

With regard to the conceptual intellect and the adamant intellect,
 The former is neither abandoned nor accepted.

¹²⁰⁹ These may be the three lower Buddhist vehicles of śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva.

¹²¹⁰ This passage appears in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter 2: *sus kyang ma bcings/‘ching bcings med de/_/bcing bar bya ba yod ma yin/_/rnam rtog bdag tu 'dzin pa yis/_/nan gyis mkha' la mdud pa 'dor/_/bcings med rnam par grol med pa'i/_/ye nas lhun rdzogs sangs rgyas chos/*

The first three lines of this stanza also appear in Buddhaguhya’s *Mārgavyūha* in the same order as that in *The Lamp of the Mind*, and which also omit the same two lines from the *Guhyagarbha tantra* passage as are omitted from *The Lamp of the Mind*: *sus kyang ma bcings bcings med de/_/bcing bar bya ba yod ma yin/_/bcings med rnam par grol med pas/ Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 470b4.

¹²¹¹ The three truths are the ultimate truth, the conventional truth, and the unity of the two. *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi bshad pa (Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya)*, D 4090: 13b.

Because it is without the eight types [of consciousness],
The sets of eight [consciousnesses] and four [aggregates]¹²¹² are one.

Intrinsic awareness is a unitary set. The supreme of the six sense faculties
Are undifferentiable within each individual continuum.
Having examined this, when verbal conventions appear,
The essence is the adamant One.

To the self-luminous Eye of [Highest] Insight, which has no object,
Consciousness and the sphere of activity are nondual.
The lamp of primordial wisdom,
Which is without [285a] [the dualism of] a consciousness and that which is perceived by
consciousness, is lit.
Having spontaneously dawned in a causeless continuum,
Everything throughout the realms [324] of the ten directions is perceived.¹²¹³

Regarding that which has omniscient insight,
The terms given for this phenomena are understanding, satisfaction, experience, contact,
knowledge, and so forth, and
They are enumerated as six, four, and two.
Views which ascertain in such a way
On the path of clinging have nowhere to go.

At the time of entering [that path], the One
Is certainly self-luminous and unwavering.
However, in the case of those dialecticians,
Because they do not doubt
The saying that benefit and good qualities will be blocked,
Theirs should be called a dualistic teaching.

Through profound mental acuity, one comes to realize
The sphere of activity of the Tathāgata.¹²¹⁴
Certainty originates with knowledge that accords with one's expression.
Therefore, profound certainty originates with profound expression.

[766] When [one's certainty] is profound, **the intelligent**
Clearly realize the intrinsic character [of that sphere of activity].¹²¹⁵
Therefore, when incidental benefit and so forth

¹²¹² The four are the four aggregates of name, the components of the mental body (*ming bzhi'i phung po*).

¹²¹³ This line appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: phyogs bcu'i zhing khams thams cad mthong. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 473b2.

¹²¹⁴ This line appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: de bzhin gshegs pa'i spyod yul te/_/skyes bu blo rtsal rab kyis rtogs. *Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 473a5

Arise without desire for them, they are unwavering.

When the path of yogic method and insight
 Becomes manifest and strengthens,
 Like a wish-fulfilling tree and jewel,
 The wondrous and marvelous five fruits¹²¹⁶
 Are not from elsewhere, nor do they come [at all].
 Insight itself, relying upon method,
 Arises in a realm [325] **such as that.**¹²¹⁷
 It should be known as complete and perfect awakening.

That third [level] *vidyādhāra*,
 Having reached and completed his or her final existence,¹²¹⁸
 Thereby realizes the conferral of empowerment and is awakened.
 In Vajradhara, there is no doubt.

Know it as a vessel of fortune. Know faith and diligence.
 All the highest have undertaken to examine it.
 It is not an object of reversal. Exaggeration and depreciation
 Are the workings of mere words. Therefore, it is not something that should be taught.

Like finding precious treasure in a dark age
 With the light of an offered lamp dispelling [the gloom],
 This good fortune is the precious treasure of the mind.
 May you discover it by means of this lamp of teachings!

¹²¹⁵ This line appears in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*, 473a5: *de phyir blo can rnam kyis brtson/_/shes pa'i mtshan nyid dngos mi grangs. Mārgavyūha*, P4736: 473a5.

¹²¹⁶ These are the five types of fruition (*'bras bu lnga*): 1) fruits in accordance with their cause; 2) fruits of mastery; 3) fruits of the activity of beings; 4) fruits ripening variously; and 5) fruits of emancipation (*rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu, bdag po'i 'bras bu, skyes bu byed pa'i 'bras bu, rnam smin gyi 'bras bu, and bral ba'i 'bras bu*). *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi bshad pa (Abhidharmakosa-bhārya)*, D 4090: 96b-97b.

¹²¹⁷ This stanza is taken from the *Guhya garbha tantra*, Chapter 9: *dpag bsam shing dang yid bzhin gyi/_/rin po che dang 'byung ba kun/_/de dag rdzas yod ma yin te/_/rang sems bsod nams brtan pa yin/_ngo mtshar cho 'phrul smad kyi chos/_/gzhan nas yod 'ongs ma yin te/_/thabs la brtan pa'i shes rab nyid/_/de lta bu yi ngang du byung*. It is also quoted in part in Buddhaguhya's *Mārgavyūha*: *dpag bsam shing dang rin chen ltar (Mārgavyūha 467a7)*; and continues much later in that text: *gzhan nas yod 'ongs ma yin te/_/rang 'byung ye shes gnas med yin/_/de bas ngo mtshar cho 'phrul chos/_/gzhan nas yod thob ma yin phyir/_/thabs la brten pas shes rab nyid/_/de lta bu 'i ngang du byung. Mārgavyūha*, P 4736: 503b1.

¹²¹⁸ The Immortal Vidyadhara (*tshe la dbang ba 'i rigs 'dzin*) level is described in Pelyang's *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers*, Question 43.

Here ends the *Thugs kyi sgon ma*, by Pelyang.

THE LAMP OF THE MIND • CRITICAL EDITION

P: Peking 5918, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos*, mo 274b6-285a8 (vol.150, p.230-234)

D: sDe dge, *sna tshogs*, no 373a2-383b4 (745.2-766.4), Toh. 4446

K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, vol. 56, 283-325

thugs kyi sgron ma bzhugs so¹²¹⁹

[Homage]

de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi
sku gsungs thugs kyi¹²²⁰ rdo rje'i bdag
chos kun rdzogs pa'i thugs rdo rje
sems dpa' che la phyag 'tshal lo

[Intent]

spyen mchog dbul ba'i shi shi'i¹²²¹ phyir
sgyu 'phrul dra¹²²² ba'i rgyud dag las
'khor lo ngag¹²²³ mchu'i¹²²⁴ tshul bzhin du
sgyu 'phrul thugs kyi sgron ma de
'dzin pa'i dbang gis¹²²⁵ sdug bsngal bas
g.yo 'dzin gsum dang mi g.yo ba'i
[275a] 'dzin dgu log lta de bzhin pa'i
rnam gnyis spang phyir gnyen por brjod

[The Variety of Views]

bsam mi khyab dang de sdus [285] pa
brgyad khri bzhi stong de¹²²⁶ lta bas
gnyis bsdus nges bzhi¹²²⁷ 'bras¹²²⁸ bur gcig

1219 DK: omit so

1220 P: kyis

1221 D: dbul ba'i shi sha'i; K: dbul ba'i slob bu'i

1222 K: drwa

1223 D: dag

1224 P: chu'i

1225 P: gi

1226 D: da

1227 K: bzhin

1228 P: 'bas

thun mongs mchog gi lam lnga po

[Non-Buddhist Views]

'dod pa'i yul la zhen pa dang
 bsam gtan¹²²⁹ snyoms¹²³⁰ 'jug 'du shes med
 rtag chad¹²³¹ bcu gsum zhen pa rnam
 ring du gtong¹²³² la mi mthun pa'i
 spyod pa nyi shu rtsa¹²³³ gcig la'ang
 dang po phyed¹²³⁴ spong gcig btang¹²³⁵ snyoms

byed pa'i zhen pas gzhi byed dang
 'phra zab dngos lta'i¹²³⁶ zhen pa dang
 phyogs stong de bzhin¹²³⁷ phyogs 'dzin pa'i
 [286] rgyud 'dzin zhen pa bden¹²³⁸ pa gnyis
 rigs 'byed zhen pa'i stong pa can
 'jig rten ngan song khams su rtse

zhi ba phyogs las¹²³⁹ nges 'byung dang
 rgyu 'bras pa¹²⁴⁰ la nges¹²⁴¹ 'byung ba'ang
 phyi pa dag lha gnyis rjes 'brang
 mtshan med 'od gsal nges zhen pa'i
 spong len nges 'dzin bdag 'dzin gzhi¹²⁴²

theg mchog lam gyis¹²⁴³ stegs gyur [746] kyang
 rang rang nges pas bsgribs pa yis¹²⁴⁴
 mchog gi gzhung lugs gdeng¹²⁴⁵ ma gyur

1229 D: btan; K: bstan

1230 K: snyams

1231 D: tshad

1232 P: ci du btong

1233 K: omits rtsa

1234 P: phyid

1235 D: gtang

1236 KP: lha'i

1237 K: ni

1238 K: 'den

1239 K: la

1240 K: sa

1241 D replaces rgyu 'bras pa la nges with rgyu 'bras rten 'brel.

1242 KP: bzhi

1243 DK: gyi

1244 D: min; K: yi

1245 K: gdengs

de bas mal¹²⁴⁶ 'byor chen po'i lugs
 bcu gnyis gcig gi zhen la¹²⁴⁷ dag
 mi spong gnyis med blang dor¹²⁴⁸ med
 thabs kyi rang bzhin bral mngon byed

de bzhin pa¹²⁴⁹ yi lugs mchog 'di
 rgyud dang mal 'byor gsum rim pa
 de las kun nas spags pa'i don
 yang rab mal 'byor blo la gsal

de gang zhe na 'dod¹²⁵⁰ bsams pas
 dug lnga dngos dang yul shes bcas
 sems phyir cho 'phrul snang ba la
 gsum snang zhen pa'i yul med par
 [287] rgyud¹²⁵¹ drug shes pa¹²⁵² rkyen¹²⁵³ bcas kyis
 yul med mi dmigs phyir mi mthong

[The Five Migrations of Beings]

mthong shes dbang bcas rang ma mthong
 de bzhin pa¹²⁵⁴ yis lnga nyon mongs
 rjes 'brangs¹²⁵⁵ stobs gyur 'gro lngar smin
 mi mthun bde sdug myong gyur bzhin
 lam bral dus dgras bcom pa dang¹²⁵⁶
 thar med yang [275b] dag lam ston dgos

de phyir mi rtsa du¹²⁵⁷ spyod dang
 sab rta thag sprul mtho mi ltar
 mi bden shes snang phyir rdzun pa'ang

1246 K: mam

1247 K: pa

1248 D: blang ba

1249 K: sa

1250 D: gdod

1251 P: brgyud

1252 DP: ba

1253 P: chen

1254 K: sa

1255 K: 'brang

1256 K: dngas

1257 DK: gtsang rus

mi spong mod kyang bden pa med¹²⁵⁸

rang byung ye shes mtha' dbus med
 mi g.yo rang gsal 'dzin bral la
 tshad med bzhi¹²⁵⁹ dang bsam gtan bzhi
 rim par¹²⁶⁰ so sor bdag rtog cing¹²⁶¹
 gzugs rnams kun la bdag rtog pas
 gsang ba'i bden gsum mnyam ma¹²⁶² mthong

thams cad mkhyen ldan 'bral¹²⁶³ ba yis
 'du shes med lta sho bar ba¹²⁶⁴
 mnyam pa gsum la mdongs pa yis
 mi g.yo snyoms 'jug bzhi¹²⁶⁵ 'dzin can

[288] thal 'byung¹²⁶⁶ ting 'dzin lus zhig na
 ya nga'i 'bras bu¹²⁶⁷ lhung yod phyir
 dran pa nyams pa'i ting 'dzin te
 yid rton¹²⁶⁸ bya ba'i yul ma yin

rang bzhin 'das dang 'khor ba dag
 gnyis med lhun grub brjod bsam yul
 'das dang sngon bzhin ma mthong bas
 'khrul yul gzhir mthong ltar¹²⁶⁹ blo 'khrul

g.yang [747] sa¹²⁷⁰ mtho dman lam zhugs pas
 zad par bde sdug myong bar 'gyur
 'dod pa'i 'bras bu ga la yin
 de phyir gsum la khyad par med¹²⁷¹

1258 K: min

1259 P: 'zhi

1260 K: pas

1261 P: bdag cing; K:so sos bdag 'dzin cing

1262 K: mi

1263 P: bral

1264 K: sho sar pa

1265 K: gzhi

1266 D: 'gyur

1267 K: bur

1268 D: brton

1269 K: gzhir lta ra; P: mthong lta rang

1270 K: ba

1271 P: mod

[Eternalism and Nihilism]

drug gnyis ston pa'i rjes 'brangs pa'i
 rigs min lta ba¹²⁷² bsam yas pa
 gnyis sdus¹²⁷³ rtag dang chad pa dngos
 log lta'i gtso bo ya nga'i rgyu

Inga pa ril po 'byed lta ba'ang
 snga¹²⁷⁴ ma dran pa'i byed lta ba'i
 rigs bzhi nges 'dod rang blo log

de la kha dog dbyibs yod na
 gzugs su thal bas mang nyung gis
 'gal dang dran pa skye mi 'gyur
 rnam smin myong ba ga la rung
 'on te gzugs kyis shes [289] myong thal
 des na¹²⁷⁵ ril po¹²⁷⁶ rdzun par nges

byed pos byas pa'ang de bzhin te
 de kho gal te bden zhe na
 byed por grub pa su yis byas

byed po rdul las 'grub gyur¹²⁷⁷ ram
 'on te las kyis¹²⁷⁸ byed 'gyur¹²⁷⁹ zhe'am
 byed po nyid la byed yod dam
 rang bzhin nyid kyis 'byung bar 'gyur
 byed po stes¹²⁸⁰ dbang tsam du zad

byed la byed yod thugs med skyon¹²⁸¹
 [276a] rdul na byas 'dra rag lus med
 las yin kho bo'i 'dod pa mod¹²⁸²
 rang bzhin stes¹²⁸³ dbang byas pa'ang thal

1272 K: min nang lta

1273 DK: bsdus

1274 P: sa

1275 K: de la

1276 K: so

1277 DK: 'gyur

1278 K: kyī

1279 DK: 'byung

1280 P: stegs

1281 K: skyen

1282 D: med

tsha rims a bras chod pa'i mig
 'bag sogs snang ltar ga la bden
 cis shos nya shing btsos¹²⁸⁴ bsregs pas
 mi skye rlag¹²⁸⁵ 'gyur rigs pa yin

snga phyi med par bden lta ba'ang
 mi bden da lta sha 'brug ltar
 stes¹²⁸⁶ dbang snang du btub zhe¹²⁸⁷ na
 snga phyi'ang stes¹²⁸⁸ dbang cis mi 'byung¹²⁸⁹
 de mi 'byung na da lta'ang¹²⁹⁰
 mi 'byung de min smos ci dgos

de¹²⁹¹ ltar de na bdag dang gzhan
 [290] stes¹²⁹² dbang snang ba dus gsum du
 rgyun brtags med pa zhes¹²⁹³ pa¹²⁹⁴ 'gyur

gzugs la rung yang ming bzhis so¹²⁹⁵
 de ltar bden na rmi lam gyi
 shes pa'ang nya shing mtshungs brlag 'gyur

rmi lam btags ldang zhing rgyun brtags¹²⁹⁶ na
 gzugs phung zhig kyang de 'dra mod
 'on te da lta yod pa bzhin
 snga phyi yod [748] pa smos ci dgos

rtag chad gnyis kar blo zhen na
 don gyis snying po mchog las gol

1283 P: steng

1284 P: rtsos

1285 DK: brlag

1286 P: stegs

1287 K: ce

1288 P: stegs

1289 K: 'gyur

1290 K: lta yang

1291 D: da

1292 P: stegs

1293 KP: cis

1294 K: nges

1295 K: po

1296 D: brtag; K: rtag

rang rig snang stong yul min¹²⁹⁷ par
 rig pa rang gsal bsam brjod 'das
 de phyir gnyis dang der mi 'dzin
 de la blang dor phyogs 'dzin med

de dag so so zhen yul bcas
 blos bzhag med A¹²⁹⁸ yod brtags pa

[The Five Vehicles]

spong byed chad du byas spong ba'ang
 lnga yi bye brag mi mthun pa
 mos pa tha dad phyir gsungs pa
 bye brag mdo¹²⁹⁹ tsam bshad par bya

theg pa dang po bcu drug mgon¹³⁰⁰
 gnyis pa bzhi yi lta spyod bsrungs
 gsum ba bcu gnyis nges par bstan
 bzhi pa [291] bdan¹³⁰¹ pa rnam pa gnyis
 lnga pa gsang ba'ang phyi pa'ang¹³⁰²

dang po rang rig rnam par dag
 gnyis pa snga phyi rjes su 'brangs¹³⁰³
 gsum pa dbyings nyid 'od gsal ba'i
 sa bdun rim par bkod pa yang

gsang ba'i snying por 'gro ba'i lam
 theg pa bzhi¹³⁰⁴ yis¹³⁰⁵ nges 'byung la¹³⁰⁶
 theg¹³⁰⁷ pa gcig gis¹³⁰⁸ 'bras bur gnas

tha ma'ang bsti¹³⁰⁹ gnas mthar thug [276b] ste

1297 K: mi

1298 K: ma

1299 P: mod

1300 D: 'gran; P: 'gon

1301 DK: bden

1302 gsang ba phyi pa yang

1303 K: 'brang

1304 D: bzhis

1305 K: yi

1306 K: las

1307 K: thegs

1308 K: gcig gi; P: cig gi

1309 P: sti

tha ma'ang gtso mchog 'dir bshad do

de la spong thabs mi mthun pa
 'dod dang 'gog spong spyod sel¹³¹⁰ byed
 'bras shes btang snyoms ngag¹³¹¹ byed dang
 phyogs spyod dang len da rol dang¹³¹²
 bdag phyir blang dor med pa yis
 che bas skas gdang¹³¹³ lta bur 'gyur
 brgyad gnyis bcu spyod theg sogs pa
 thun mong¹³¹⁴ lam brjod rnam pa dgu¹³¹⁵

[Vehicle of Gods and Humans]

srid pa dang po dngos lta ba
 rnal 'byor g.yeng drug gis bral yang
 rgyu 'bras shes pas ya nga spong¹³¹⁶
 bsti¹³¹⁷ gnas dang po smin par 'dod

log rtog [292] nyid la nyid spyod de
 gzhan du g.yo ba ci yang med

bsam gtan¹³¹⁸ snyoms 'jug pa¹³¹⁹ brgyad po
 'dod spyod sdig sogs spyod pas 'dor
 dang po'i g.yeng drug bsam pas 'dor
 'dzin pa phra bas ting nge 'dzin
 dor ba gnyis mthun¹³²⁰ dor ba yis
 sa stegs rtsa gcig thob¹³²¹ byed pa'o

log lta bzhi po gnyis [749] mthong bas
 log pa'i lam zhugs ya nga'i 'bras

1310 DP: sol

1311 K: dag

1312 D: phyogs spyod dang len da ro la; K: phyogs spyod dang len da rol dang; P: phyogs
 dang spyod dang len da rol

1313 K: gdangs

1314 DK: mongs

1315 D: nam + dgu

1316 K: spongs

1317 P: sti sti

1318 K: stan

1319 K: sa

1320 P: 'thun

1321 K: 'thob

lam rim dang po dngos 'dzin gzhi
 'khor ba'i lam bzhi zag bcas 'bras
 de dag mchog gi gsum la rmongs
 de phyir ma rtogs log rtogs¹³²² pa'o

spong bgegs¹³²³ byed pa'i byis pa gnyis
 tshul khirms bslab pas dngos 'gog cing
 mthong goms shes rab ting 'dzin gyis
 spong bgegs¹³²⁴ med smra ting 'dzin lta

zab phra'i gzung 'dzin zhen pa can¹³²⁵
 blang dor¹³²⁶ zhags pas bcings pa yi
 log par rtog pa tsam nyid las
 phra zhing zab pa'ang yod min¹³²⁷ te
 lhag par drug gnyis phyi stong 'dod

phyogs stong [293] zhen pas sgribs¹³²⁸ pa¹³²⁹ te
 rmi lam rten 'bral bzhi¹³³⁰ snang bas
 mi bden rang byung ye shes skal

bshad¹³³¹ med theg pa'i gzhung gnyis pos
 rdul dang rten 'brel bzhir 'dod pas
 phyogs gcig¹³³² 'das mtha' lam zhugs pas
 sti¹³³³ gnas dang po 'bras bu tsam

[The Unsurpassed Vehicles]

8) [Sautrāntika]

bla na med pa'i theg ba pa
 bslab pa gsum gyis spang bya dag

1322 K: rtog

1323 K: 'gegs

1324 K: 'gegs

1325 D: gzung 'dzin bya ba bar; K: gzung 'dzin zhen pa bcas; P: bzung 'dzin zhen pa can

1326 D: brtag dngos

1327 KP: ma yin

1328 K: bsgribs

1329 DP: pas

1330 D: gzhi

1331 DP: bshed

1332 P: cig

1333 DK: bsti

sol spyod dag pas thob¹³³⁴ 'dod pa
rnam rig rnal 'byor mdo sde'o

[277a] dang po rang byung ye shes don
mi dmigs¹³³⁵ phyir¹³³⁶ na rang sems la
rnam pa yod med rtsod pa byed
gang ltar rtsod kyang 'khrul pa'i mtha'o

'khrul snang yul gyi¹³³⁷ rnam pa can
rang bzhin 'khrul mthong yod ma myong
rnam pa med pa'i rang rig pa
'od gsal shel ltar dag pa'ang

rgyu rtag skad cig mi rtag pas
skye 'gag med pa'i ye shes la
nam yang reg par mi 'gyur te
rnam par 'gog par thug pa'i mtha'o¹³³⁸

rnam dag ye shes rnam bral [294] ba
sams can rgyud re de yin te
rgyud 'dzin yul med gzung 'dzin can
g.yo med rtsod pa 'khrul par zad

byis pa mkha' la rtsod dang mtshungs
rnam pa yod med kun bdag skal

shes rgyud bzhi la rtsol ba'i lam
[750] de¹³³⁹ thun mong sangs rgyas de'i 'bras bur¹³⁴⁰
byed kyi lhag pa'i gsum ma mthong
dam pa'i shes pa'ang rdzun¹³⁴¹ pa'o

9) [Yogācāra]

rnal¹³⁴² 'byor spyod pa'ang de 'dra'i phyir

1334 K: theb

1335 K: ma rig; P: mig

1336 DP: phyir mthong

1337 P: gyis

1338 K: mtha'

1339 DP: de dang

1340 K: de'i 'brur

1341 D: brdzun

1342 K: rnam

snga ma'i dam pa rgyu rkyen la
rang lus zhig dang skyes dang skyes
de bas brdzun lta dam par ni
thams cad sems te de ma dmigs
ma skyes stong pa smra bsam 'das

mtha' la dben pa'i don du lta
rnam pa yod med rtsod dang bral
shes pa ma skye phyogs lta ba
mtha' dang bral ba thug pa'i mtha'

skye med phyogs gcig¹³⁴³ mtha' dang bral
de kho mchog lta'i zhen pa can
gnyis med dbyer med ma mthong bas
sems stong bzhi la¹³⁴⁴ dga' spyod lam

'bras bu sngon bzhin 'das pa'i mtha'
grub mtha' nor [295] rtog¹³⁴⁵ shes rab kyis
'bad pas brtan thob de yi¹³⁴⁶ phyir
de mi bden pas de mi bden

mdo sde pa yi gzhung lugs kyang
kun brtags¹³⁴⁷ snang ba'i spyod yul 'di
dam pa gzhan dbang sgyu ma tsam
shes snang ma yin 'du snang yin
dam par skye med smra bsams¹³⁴⁸ 'das

10) [Mādhyamika]

rten 'brel gcig¹³⁴⁹ dang du ma med
[277b] rdo rje gzegs¹³⁵⁰ ma rnam bzhi dang
mu bzhi skye 'gog¹³⁵¹ la sogs pas
mtha' yi¹³⁵² bye brag sel byed cing

1343 P: cig

1344 D: pa

1345 K: rtogs

1346 KP: yis

1347 P: rtags

1348 K: bsam

1349 P: cig

1350 D: gzig

1351 DP: 'gag

1352 D: yas; P: yis

de 'dra bsam gtan¹³⁵³ 'das chen cing
 snang ba yod dang med pa dang
 rigs¹³⁵⁴ pas 'grub dang ma grub¹³⁵⁵ sogs
 de dag la rtsod mtha' tshol ba
 snyed nas des¹³⁵⁶ 'jog bzung 'dzin can

bden gnyis ngo bo gcig¹³⁵⁷ mi gcig
 rtsod cing gcig¹³⁵⁸ la bden dang rdzun
 rigs lta cha shes¹³⁵⁹ zhen pa can¹³⁶⁰
 gcig na rdzun mthong bden thal 'gyur
 yang na bden mthong brdzun¹³⁶¹ par 'gyur

brdzun bzhi¹³⁶² bden par bslu sogs lngar
 thal 'gyur bden bzhin brdzun¹³⁶³ pa'ang
 skye 'gag [296] med sogs bzhir¹³⁶⁴ thal 'gyur

yang na mnyam bzhag¹³⁶⁵ tshe na'ang¹³⁶⁶
 bden gnyis dus gcig mthong bar rigs

bden brdzun¹³⁶⁷ phan tshun spangs pas 'gal
 tha dad gyur na sgyu ma la
 [751] brten nas don dam mi rtogs shing
 sgyu mar 'bad pa'ang tshi chad¹³⁶⁸ 'gyur

dam pa btsal ba'i gnas med cing

1353 K: stan

1354 D: rig

1355 K: 'grub

1356 K: nges

1357 DP: cig

1358 P: cig

1359 K: shas

1360 K: bcas

1361 K: rdzun

1362 D: brdzun zhen; K: rdzun zhing

1363 K: bden zhing rdzun

1364 D: bzhin

1365 D: gzhag

1366 K: tshe na yang

1367 K: rdzun

1368 D: tshad

'grel¹³⁶⁹ pa med pas mi 'gyur ro¹³⁷⁰
 gang la¹³⁷¹ ma skyes pa'ang
 skye ba med par 'grub mi 'gyur

zhen spong gnyen po mi btub cing
 de nyid rang rgyud can gyur bas
 gang la phan gnod med 'gyur ro

de ltar rtog cing¹³⁷² the tshom za
 khas blangs med sgra phyogs la zhen

11) [Great Vehicle of Method]

de bas bla med theg pa pa
 don dam du ni dbyer med de
 kun rdzob tsam du thams cad la
 dag dang ma dag gnyis kar 'dzin

thabs kyi theg pa chen po¹³⁷³ ni
 don dam du ni kor bdun no
 kun rdzob du¹³⁷⁴ ni mnyam rdzogs so
 rnam par byang¹³⁷⁵ dang sdug bsngal dag
 kun rdzob tu'ang dbyer med te¹³⁷⁶
 lta ba mtho dman de tsam mo

de [297] nyid 'bras bu'i mtshan nyid la
 don dam ngo bo nyid kyi rgyu
 lhag pa'i bden par mtshan brjod do¹³⁷⁷
 cir yang snang ba'i ye shes nyid
 mtshan mar ma 'gags cir yang snang

ngo bo ma nges don mdzad dang
 rtag pa gnyis las ring ba dang

1369 K: 'brel

1370 DK: omit final ro

1371 DP: omit la

1372 K: rtogs shing

1373 K: por

1374 K: tu

1375 K: byad

1376 D: dbye rigs te; K: rdzob tu yang dbyer med de

1377 K: de

rnal 'byor dam pa'i yul mthun¹³⁷⁸ dang
snang la [278a] skye 'gag med ba'i phyir
lhag pa'i kun rdzob zhes¹³⁷⁹ su grags

thams cad kun gyi rang bzhin pas
ye shes snang ba'ang rgyu rkyen med
skye 'jig med do lnga 'bras bu
dbyings dang ye shes rdzogs mi dmigs

phyogs med re skong 'phrin las ni
kun nas mtshams¹³⁸⁰ pas don mdzad de
ched du byas pa'i rtag pa'ang bral

rang bzhin mtshan nyid ngo bo dang
yon tan 'phrin las brtags¹³⁸¹ pas dben
chos drug ldan phyir lhag par bsgrags

de bzhin rang bzhin 'bras bu dang
ye shes gsum phyir don dam pa'ang
shes don nang nas mchog gyur pas
don gyi ming du 'grub pa yin

de'ang ma¹³⁸² [298] skyes dbyings kyi don
gzhi yis¹³⁸³ nges la khyad¹³⁸⁴ gyur pa
log rtog spyod yul la¹³⁸⁵ sogs [752] pa

kun gyi rang bzhin phyogs bkol med
ngo bo bdun rdzogs dmigs pa med
mtshan nyid kun grol kun bdag la
phyogs stong chad¹³⁸⁶ par yod pa med

kun byin ldan pa'i brlabs snang la
dngos po gnyis kyi ngo bo'i rgyur
gyur pas ci yang mi 'gog ste
rgya mtsho'i chu dang brlabs bzhin no

1378 P: 'thun

1379 K: ces

1380 K: 'tshams

1381 DP: rtags

1382 K: de'ang ma ma

1383 K: bzhi yi

1384 K: chad

1385 D: las

1386 K: khyad

yid bzhin nor ltar re bskong ba'o
yon tan kun rdzogs phyir snang ba'o

thun mong dam pa'i yul min te
phyogs gcig¹³⁸⁷ mtha' bral ma yin te
dpe dang gtan tshigs thun mong pas
gtan la 'bebs pa ma yin te

bdun sogs ngo bor gnas pa'i phyir
lhag pa'ang¹³⁸⁸ grangs mthun nyid du brjod
rnal sogs spyod yul ma yin no

gzhi rtsa med pa'i sems nyid ni
pho mo ma yin ma ning min
mtshan med ma yin rigs¹³⁸⁹ rgyud med
kha dog ma yin dbyibs ma yin
gnas su ma yin gang yang med
de bzhin nyid [299] dbyings ye shes te
thabs kyi phyag rgya kun gyi rgyu

phyogs bcu ma lus thams cad la
rang byung chen pos kun tu khyab
rang byung de nyid dngos med pas
chos dang gang zag bdag [278b] med pa
kun gyi phyag rgya'i rgyu yin no

ma skyes bzhi la bgrod pa'i lam
gang spangs gang thob de'i 'bras bu
dngos po ji bzhin mi mthong bas
'bras bu btags pa'i sangs rgyas tsam

de ltar nges 'byung bye brag gi¹³⁹⁰
rgyud nas¹³⁹¹ nges pa'i gsang ba'ang
dang po rgyu 'bras dbyer med¹³⁹² pas
'bras bu lam du byed zhe'ang¹³⁹³

1387 P: cig

1388 K: pa

1389 D: rig

1390 K: gis

1391 D: mas

1392 DP: 'bras dbye byed

1393 DK: ce'ang

a) [Outer Tantras]

i) [Kriyātantra]

phyogs gcig dag pa'i¹³⁹⁴ chos nyid la
 lta zhing de las lha drug sogs
 dmigs pa gsum dang yan lag gis
 bsgom¹³⁹⁵ byed 'bras bu gzung¹³⁹⁶ 'dzin can
 lta spyod ya cha'i zhen pa yis
 bdag nyid chen po nang mi mthong

dag pa'i sems zhi rtsol ba'i lam
 rdo rje gsum kyi sa 'dzin pa
 dmus¹³⁹⁷ long 'dri mkhan dang mtshungs te
 rnal 'byor chen po'i thugs [300] rje'i yul

ii) [Ubhāyatantra and Yogatantra]

gnyi ga¹³⁹⁸ ba yi bya ba [753] dang
 rnal 'byor rjes su lta spyod 'brang
 gnyis po ya cha sngon bzhin te
 de nyid bzhi yi zhen pa¹³⁹⁹ can

de'ang phyi rol pa la gnas
 rnal 'byor ting 'dzin zhen pa can

dam par¹⁴⁰⁰ rang rig 'od gsal ba
 dbyings nyid rnam dag ye shes la
 kun rdzob byin brlabs¹⁴⁰¹ dkyil 'khor dag
 ye shes snang smra de la dmigs
 de phyir lta dgongs phyi rol 'gyur

de phyir¹⁴⁰² khas len gtsang smrar len¹⁴⁰³

1394 P: omits pa'i

1395 K: sgom

1396 P: bzung

1397 D: rmus; P: rmu

1398 K: ka

1399 D: par

1400 K: pa

1401 K: rlabs

1402 K: gtogs

1403 K: gtsang dmer lta

chu yi ral gri phyis¹⁴⁰⁴ pa bzhin¹⁴⁰⁵
 spyod par mi phod 'dzin pa can
 de nyid sgo nas¹⁴⁰⁶ phyi rol spyod

shin tu nang don ma rtogs¹⁴⁰⁷ pas
 phyi rol cha yis bcings pa yin
 'od gsal bzhi las mtshan mar g.yo

snang stong res slob lam lnga yis
 thob pa dam pa'ang sti¹⁴⁰⁸ ba'i gnas

phyi rol gnyis sogs 'bras¹⁴⁰⁹ bu'i phyir
 'ching¹⁴¹⁰ bu rin chen ji lta bar
 lam 'bras¹⁴¹¹ ma 'brel 'khrul par zad
 gtso mchog bshad par khas blangs pa

rgyas par gdams kyi gdeng¹⁴¹² du bgyis
 rnal 'byor chen po'i¹⁴¹³ lta ba'i don

yod las btsal na sgros btags te
 med las btsal na skur¹⁴¹⁴ btab 'gyur
 yod med gnyis [279a; 301] las btsal¹⁴¹⁵ byas na
 de ni lung du ma bstan¹⁴¹⁶ 'gyur

de las¹⁴¹⁷ gzhan 'ang¹⁴¹⁸ 'brel med pas
 nam yang brnyed¹⁴¹⁹ par mi 'gyur te
 mtha' la rtsod kun de lta bas

1404 KP: byis

1405 K: yin

1406 K: de nyid nas ni

1407 K: rtogs

1408 DK: bsti

1409 K: 'brus

1410 D: mching

1411 DK: 'bas

1412 P: gdengs

1413 DP: po

1414 P: bkur

1415 DP: rtsal

1416 P: stan

1417 DP: la

1418 D: yang; K: pa'ang

1419 K: rnyed

gsum bral phyogs gcig¹⁴²⁰ mtha' bral ba

rang blo 'khrul pa snang ba yin
de bas mthar thug ltos yod pa
kun kyang mtha' yis bral ba'ang mtha'
yin phyir nges pa'i blo mi bzhag

b) [Secret Tantra]

i) [Mahāvajrayāna]

gnyis med smra¹⁴²¹ bsam bral ba ltos
tshig dang sgra mthun¹⁴²² tha dad pa
lta spyod log par drangs thabs su
gsung phyir rdo rje theg chen po

sgra gcig¹⁴²³ don gyis¹⁴²⁴ khyad par rtogs
dang po chos kun gnas bubs¹⁴²⁵ nyid
dang por mtshan cing dngos bzlog dang
gnyis par yang dag [754] bden bral don

mtshon phyir ma skyes de bzhin nyid
stong pa nyid dang snang ba med
gnyis su med dang mnyam pa nyid
chi'ang¹⁴²⁶ min dang smra¹⁴²⁷ bsams 'das
mi gnas mi dmigs mi rtog dang
mtha' bral nam par dag pa dang
mtshan [302] med smon pa med pa dang
chos nyid chos kyi dbyings nyid dang¹⁴²⁸
spros bral 'gro 'ong med pa dang
snang dang 'gag med thob pa med

grol dang thar dang thob pa dang
kun rdzob don dam bden pa dang

1420 P: cig

1421 DP: smras

1422 P: 'thun

1423 P: cig

1424 K: gyi

1425 K: lugs

1426 K: ci yang

1427 P: smras

1428 K: du

ma chags pa dang rang bzhin dang
 dngos med zhen med rigs¹⁴²⁹ pa dang
 bdag med gzhan¹⁴³⁰ med spyod yul med

lta ba rig pa ye shes sogs
 mtshon pa'i sgra grags chos rnams kyi
 rang rang don rnams tha dad pa
 khyad par ma 'dres gsal bya'i phyir
 rig pas mdo tsam phyogs brjod pa

[Mahāyoga Views]

[Nonorigination]

dang po rgyun gyis¹⁴³¹ log rtog chos
 bkag bsal¹⁴³² phyogs gcig ma skyes dang
 dri mar ma skyes mtshan mar min
 ched du byas pa ma skyes rnams
 skyes spong ma skyes 'dod pa yis
 srin bu bal bzhin bcings par zad

ji snyed tha dad chos rnams kun
 gnyis med blang dor med pa yis
 lhag pa ma skyes¹⁴³³ don mchog ni
 skyes [279b] pa nyid na skye ba med
 dbyings phyogs ma [303] skyes de bzhin nyid

rig pa nyid dang¹⁴³⁴ ye shes 'dod
 blang dor med pa'i de bzhin nyid
 gnyis med ma byas ma bcos pa
 smra bsams¹⁴³⁵ 'das pa'i gtso mchog go¹⁴³⁶

[Great Emptiness]

de bzhin stong nyid zhen pa'ang¹⁴³⁷

1429 D: rig

1430 DP: bzhan

1431 K: gyi

1432 K: gsal

1433 D: go

1434 DP: dang yod

1435 D: bsam

1436 D: gtso mtsho skyes

1437 K: zhen pa yang

phyogs stong gsal stong la sogs las
 rnam pa'i¹⁴³⁸ mchog ldan stong chen po
 yod pa nyid ni¹⁴³⁹ stong pa nyid

yod dang med dbus¹⁴⁴⁰ smra bsams¹⁴⁴¹ 'das
 ngo bo rang bzhin mtshan nyid dang
 byin brlabs la sogs khyad par 'phags

[Nonappearance]

snang ba med ces brjod pa yang
 ma rtogs pa dang log par rtog¹⁴⁴²
 snang la med pa¹⁴⁴³ lta bus med
 phyogs gcig¹⁴⁴⁴ snang med phyogs ris¹⁴⁴⁵ med

brdzun pa [755] gsal ba snang med dang
 snang ba dri ma med pa dang
 mtshan snang med pa la sogs pa
 ched¹⁴⁴⁶ byas snang rtags¹⁴⁴⁷ kun par zad

sna¹⁴⁴⁸ tshogs snang ba dang bcas pa'i
 snang ba med pa'i mchog 'di ni
 snang ba yod¹⁴⁴⁹ med dbyer med pas
 'di ltar snang zhes bsam du med

[Nonduality]

gnyis su med par [304] bstan pa yang
 phyogs stong gnyis med yul sems med
 phyogs gcig¹⁴⁵⁰ bral pa'i gnyis med pa
 de kun gnyis pa'i gtso mchog go

1438 K: pa

1439 K: na

1440 K: pas

1441 D: bsam

1442 DP: rtogs

1443 DP: snang la med lta bus pa med

1444 P: cig

1445 KP: rig

1446 K: ches

1447 K: brtags

1448 P: snang

1449 D: yang

1450 P: cig

don dam¹⁴⁵¹ 'dod pa yod phyir ro

rgyu 'bras gnyis su med pa yang
bya ba rnal 'byor don dam par
gnyis med dang du len pa'ang¹⁴⁵²
res 'jog ltos pa'i phyogs gcig pa'o

gnyis par grags pa'i chos so cog
ldan bzhin gnyis su med pa yis
lhun grub¹⁴⁵³ blang dor med pa dang
gzugs brnyan nor bus mtshon pa'o

[Sameness]

tshe phyir mnyam nyid gsungs pa dang
'dra ba'i mnyam pa mi mnyam chos
mi mnyam bral ba'i phyogs mnyam ni
mnyam pa'i mtha' la gnas pas log

gsang chen mnyam pa chen po ni
mi mnyam chos kun bdag nyid la
mnyam dang mi mnyam cha shes¹⁴⁵⁴ med
mnyam pa kun gyi yang rtse yin
gzhan sel don du gnyer ba'i phyir

[Nothingness]

ci'ang¹⁴⁵⁵ min par [280a] bka' stsal pa'ang
rigs¹⁴⁵⁶ pas [305] ma yin shes pa la
yin par snang la skyon lta bar
mtha' sel phyogs gcig¹⁴⁵⁷ ma yin dang
dmigs pa ma yin kun kyang mtha'

blang dor med sogs ming¹⁴⁵⁸ gsum ldan

1451 KP: dang

1452 K: len pa yang

1453 K: 'grub

1454 K: shas

1455 K: ci yang

1456 DK: rig

1457 DP: cig

1458 DP: mi

ci'ang¹⁴⁵⁹ min zhes¹⁴⁶⁰ brjod pa'ang¹⁴⁶¹
 ci'ang yin¹⁴⁶² pa'i dngos gzhi can

yin min dbyer med cha shes bral
 phyogs su thug¹⁴⁶³ pa 'di la med
 rma¹⁴⁶⁴ bya'i mdongs rtse kha dog 'dra
 dgos ched sngon bzhin smra bsam 'das

bden pa phyogs gcig¹⁴⁶⁵ de bzhin pa
 khung bar¹⁴⁶⁶ chu blugs bzhin 'dod pa
 phyogs chas¹⁴⁶⁷ smra bsam yul las 'das
 rtog ge'i yul du da smra'o

ming¹⁴⁶⁸ gsum ldan pa'i don mchog ni
 smra bsam kun dngos smra bsam dka'
 [756] blo ngan yul du ma gyur pas¹⁴⁶⁹
 namkha'¹⁴⁷⁰ 'di zhes dka' dang 'dra

log rtog phyogs ris¹⁴⁷¹ rnal 'byor dang
 phyogs gsal mi gnas rten pa can
 phyi pa'ang¹⁴⁷² 'dzin pa'i gzhi can¹⁴⁷³
 gnas pa'i gtso bor bdag gis¹⁴⁷⁴ brjod

[Nonabiding]

[306] blang med dor med mi gnas pa
 bsgom bya sems phyir brtan¹⁴⁷⁵ bral ba

1459 K: ci yang

1460 P: zhen

1461 K: brjod pa yang

1462 K: ci yang min

1463 KP: thugs

1464 K: rmya

1465 P: cig

1466 D: mkhur; K: 'khu bar

1467 D: chos

1468 DP: mi

1469 D: las

1470 K: nam mkha'

1471 DP: rigs

1472 K: sa'ang

1473 K: can te

1474 P: gi

1475 D: rtan

gnas dang mi gnas spong len med

ci la'ang yid rten mi 'cha' bas
 mi gnas nyid la gnas mi byed
 rten dang rten¹⁴⁷⁶ can med pa¹⁴⁷⁷ ni
 mi gnas chen po mchog yin te
 namkha'¹⁴⁷⁸ lta bu rten dang bral

[No Observation]

gang gi¹⁴⁷⁹ mi dmigs shes brjod pa'ang
 log dang 'jig rten ting 'dzin dang
 'gog gnyis phyogs gcig¹⁴⁸⁰ la gnas dang
 dbu ma pa dag¹⁴⁸¹ mi dmigs gsum
 'dod las gsel¹⁴⁸² ba'i dmigs ba can
 phyogs gcig¹⁴⁸³ rten med dmigs pa'o¹⁴⁸⁴

dmigs pa kun bdag mi dmigs la¹⁴⁸⁵
 mtshon chen can du de brjod kyang
 mi dmigs 'dod pa'i chags ma med
 dmigs spo zhe sdang phrag¹⁴⁸⁶ dog med

gnyis su med par mi dmigs la
 mkha' la 'di zhes dmigs bral 'dra'o

[Nonconceptuality]

rnam par mi rtog brjod pa'ang¹⁴⁸⁷
 [280b] 'jig rten zhen pa'i rnam mi rtog
 log par sgom¹⁴⁸⁸ pa mi rtog dang
 byis pa dgag sgrub mi rtog [307] gnyis

1476 K: brten

1477 K: pas

1478 K: nam mkha'

1479 K: gis

1480 P: cig

1481 P: ma dag; D: ma ba dag

1482 K: sel

1483 P: cig

1484 D: pa can

1485 K: pa

1486 D: phrang; P: brag

1487 K: brjod pa yang

1488 K: bsgom

phyogs 'dzin gsal ba mi rtog pa
 rnam dag gsal ba mi rtog¹⁴⁸⁹ rnams
 bzhi la rtog pa med smra zhing
 mi rtog mi mthun bgegs lta bas
 dgag sgrub blang dor byed pa de
 nges mchog bzhi yi rtog pa can

thabs chen rnam par mi rtog pa
 rtogs tshogs ming tsam ye shes phyir
 rtog pa nyid nas ma skyes pas
 skyes brda'i 'du shes dbye ba med

dgag dang sgrub med mi rtog pa
 mi rtog nyid du'ang rtog med pas
 me long nag¹⁴⁹⁰ la rtog med bzhin
 grol rtogs bya phyir mtha' bral ba

[Overcoming the Extremes]

mtha' zhes thub¹⁴⁹¹ par grags pa rnams
 log pa'i mtha' gnyis bral gzugs med
 skye 'gag cha shes bral ba dang
 rang rig mtha' brgyad bzhi gnyis bral
 [757] mtha' la skyon du rtog byed cing
 mtha' bral yon tan len¹⁴⁹² byed pa
 ltos pas thub¹⁴⁹³ pa yod pa'i phyir
 mtha' bral nyid kyang mtha'i¹⁴⁹⁴ gtso
 kun rdzob shes yul byed pas 'khrul

yang dag mtha' bral shes bya ba'ang¹⁴⁹⁵
 [308] mtha' brgyad la sogs grags pa rnams
 rang rig ye shes snang pa'i phyir
 spros pa thugs rje'i dus nyid na
 ming tsam der red¹⁴⁹⁶ med pa'i phyir

mtha' dang bral ba gnyis su med

1489 K: rten

1490 D: nang

1491 K: thugs

1492 K: lan

1493 K: thugs

1494 DK: mtha' yi

1495 D: shes ba'ang

1496 K: re

sman zhes bya ba'i ga bur¹⁴⁹⁷ dus
 grang ba'i dug dang gnyis med ltar
 bral rjes brjod pa de kho na

thug ba'i¹⁴⁹⁸ mtha' dang dbyer med la
 gang du'ang thug¹⁴⁹⁹ pa med pa'i phyir
 mtha' bral bla mar bshad pa yin

[Purity]

rnal 'byor¹⁵⁰⁰ dag pa sbyang bya dag
 mthong sgom lam gyi¹⁵⁰¹ spong bya zhing
 sngags dang phyag rgya spyod rim dag
 dag 'dod dri med chags pas bcings

thug pa'i mam dag zhen pa can
 rang rang kun tu brtags¹⁵⁰² pas non
 'og mas smad pa'i dri ma rnams
 dri ma nyid na mam dag cing

[281a] blang dor gnyis su med pa la
 dag dang ma dag ris med pas
 theg¹⁵⁰³ pa kun gyi yang rtse¹⁵⁰⁴ ste
 'dam skyes padma ji bzhin no

[Signlessness]

mtshan ma med pa'i rim pa yang
 grags pa'i mtshan med 'dod pa yis
 spang¹⁵⁰⁵ dang spel bas phyogs gcig¹⁵⁰⁶ pa
 'du shes [309] yul la skyon lta zhing
 de med pa la mchog gzhol byed

1497 K: pur

1498 K: thugs pa'i

1499 K: thugs

1500 K: mam par

1501 K: gyis

1502 D: btags

1503 K: thegs

1504 D: kyi

1505 KP: stong

1506 P: cig

'dod dang zhen pa'i gzung¹⁵⁰⁷ 'dzin can
 phyi yi bya ba mal 'byor kyang
 de phyogs mthun mtshan phyir na rdzun¹⁵⁰⁸

mchog gi mtshan ma med ces pa
 'du shes kun bdag rang rig phyir
 yul med de la 'dzin pa med
 de nas phyogs kyi mtshan 'dzin bral

[Aspirationlessness]

de bzhin smon pa med pa yang
 blo chung ltos pa'i smon byed dang
 bsal dang len dang¹⁵⁰⁹ smon med gsum
 'dod pas zhen pa smon pa yin

smon pa kun rdzogs rang rig nyid
 lam dang [758] 'bras bu dngos gzhi'i¹⁵¹⁰ phyir
 'phrul dga'i longs spyod tshul bzhin du
 gzhan du re smon skye ba med

[The Expanse of Reality]

chos nyid dbyings zhes brjod¹⁵¹¹ pa'ang¹⁵¹²
 spyod yul 'di dag med stong zhing
 gsal bral stong pa'i chos dbyings dang
 rang rig dag pa'i chos nyid dang
 mtshan nyid med pa'i dbyings sogs pas
 zhen yul chos can mtha' las ril

stong nyid mu mtha' med sogs [310] smra
 rang rig rtags mthong dbyings shes¹⁵¹³ bya
 gsang sngags chen po'i chos nyid dbyings

chos can ma gol dmigs pa'ang med
 byed med byas med bslad pa'ang med
 'di dang 'di zhes ris med pa

1507 P: bzung

1508 DP: brdzung

1509 K: pa

1510 DP: bzhi'i

1511 P: shes rjod

1512 K: pa yang

1513 K: zhes

chos nyid dam pa de kho na'o

kun 'byung mu med brdal¹⁵¹⁴ khyab med
gang yang ma spangs bkol ba med
phyogs chad¹⁵¹⁵ med de blos reg¹⁵¹⁶ med
de phyr gsang ba'i dbyings zhes bya

[Nonelaboration]

rnam grangs¹⁵¹⁷ chos de namkha'¹⁵¹⁸ dang
mthu yod¹⁵¹⁹ phyr na nyer sbyar¹⁵²⁰ ba'o
spros bral shes par bya ba'ang
log rtog zhen la¹⁵²¹ spros pa rnam

skyon shes¹⁵²² [281b] sel ba'i phyogs gcig¹⁵²³ pa
phyogs gcig¹⁵²⁴ spros pa'i mtha' thug¹⁵²⁵ bcings¹⁵²⁶
rang rig ye shes spros pa'ang¹⁵²⁷
spong len byed na spros pa'i mtha'

thig le kun nas zlum¹⁵²⁸ pa ltar
spros pa lhun grub¹⁵²⁹ spros bral ni
ji snyed spros pa sems nyid phyr
rgyud¹⁵³⁰ 'dzin med pa'i byang chub sems

ming lnga ldan pa'i ye shes ni
de nyid chos dbyings rang byung ste

1514 DP: brda'

1515 DP: tshad

1516 DP: rig

1517 D: mrangs

1518 K: nam mkha'

1519 D: yong

1520 DP: spyar

1521 K: pa'i

1522 P: shes rab

1523 P: cig

1524 P: cig

1525 D: thub

1526 K: cing

1527 K: spros pa yang

1528 DP: bzlum

1529 DP: 'grub

1530 K: rgyu

[311] mi gnas shes pa lhun grub¹⁵³¹ pa
 de kho de bzhin nyid dam pa'o
 yul dang ngo bos spros med phyir
 spros bral kun gyi blar¹⁵³² 'gyur yin

[No Coming and Going]

'gro dang 'ong ba med ba yang¹⁵³³
 zhen log 'gro 'ong dam par med
 thun mong phyogs gcig¹⁵³⁴ 'gro 'ong med
 dag dang 'od gsal 'gro 'ong med

'gro 'ong phyogs la smod byed cing
 'gro 'ong med phyogs rjes 'brangs pa¹⁵³⁵

shes bya shes byed ya cha ba
 dam pa'i lam du gang¹⁵³⁶ la 'gyur
 'gro 'ong [759] kun dang gnyis med pa'i
 'gro 'ong med pa chen po'o¹⁵³⁷

'gro 'ong nyid na med pa'i phyir
 'ong dang mi 'ong yod med med
 rgya mtshor 'brel ba'i 'bab chu bzhin
 yod med mtha' yi med¹⁵³⁸ pa med

rtag¹⁵³⁹ pa 'khrul snang log snang dang
 phra rab stong 'khrul rnam snang dang
 sgyu¹⁵⁴⁰ snang ltar¹⁵⁴¹ snang rim pa dag
 yod snang la sogs 'dus snang dang
 bdag rig rang bzhin rkyan¹⁵⁴² bslangs pas¹⁵⁴³

1531 DP: 'grub

1532 D: blor

1533 DP: 'di

1534 P: cig

1535 K: rjes 'brang ba

1536 K: ga

1537 PK: la

1538 DP: omit med

1539 K: brtags

1540 K: sgyur

1541 P: lhar

1542 D: rkyen; K: skyen

1543 K: bas

lhar¹⁵⁴⁴ snang 'dod pas¹⁵⁴⁵ 'khrul mthong yin

[312] snang med snang ba kun bdag nyid
rang rig ye shes cho 'phrul ni
rgya mtsho chu dang brlabs bzhin du
byang chub sems nyid kun tu shar

[Nonhindrance]

'gag pa med pa'i bye brag ni
med na¹⁵⁴⁶ mi 'byung¹⁵⁴⁷ 'gag med dang¹⁵⁴⁸
glo¹⁵⁴⁹ bur tsam snang mi 'gog dang
'bras bu rdo rje'i 'gag med gnyis

'gag spong de dang 'bral 'dod na
'gag med mtha' la zhen par zad
gnyis med 'gag pa med pa ni
rang byung ye shes rang snang phyir

'gag pa nyid na¹⁵⁵⁰ 'gag med bas¹⁵⁵¹
namkha¹⁵⁵² lta bur skye 'jig med

[Nonattainment]

'dod ba¹⁵⁵³ zhen pa [282a] thob pa dang
sang¹⁵⁵⁴ thob sbyang¹⁵⁵⁵ thob 'grod¹⁵⁵⁶ pa dang
bdag yin las rung thob pa dag
'dod pas spang¹⁵⁵⁷ thob phyir na rdzun

thob pa med pa'i thob pa ni

1544 D: lhag

1545 K: pa

1546 K: nag

1547 D: 'gyur

1548 D: dag

1549 DP: blo

1550 K: ni

1551 K: pas

1552 K: nam mkha'

1553 K: pa; D: omits ba

1554 K: spong

1555 K: sbyang

1556 K: bgrod

1557 K: spang

mtshan ldan long pa mig phyed¹⁵⁵⁸ bzhin
 thabs la rten pa'i shes rab nyid
 'bras bu rang las¹⁵⁵⁹ shar bar zad

gzhi tsam nyid la spang thob med
 ched du byed¹⁵⁶⁰ pa'i thob med gnyis
 len¹⁵⁶¹ cing chags pa yod pa'i phyir
 thog med [313] zhen pa lcags sgrog can

bdag nyid chen po thob med ni
 'bras bu kun bdag rang rig la
 gnyis phyir thob bya'i chos med te¹⁵⁶²
 dbul mo gter¹⁵⁶³ dang phrad¹⁵⁶⁴ nor bzhin

byed pos dgrol¹⁵⁶⁵ dang bkag¹⁵⁶⁶ grol dang
 sbyangs pa¹⁵⁶⁷ grol ba phyogs gcig¹⁵⁶⁸ pa
 thun mong min pa'i ltas grol ba
 'ching grol gnyis su ltas pas bcings

bdag [760] nyid chen por dbyer med pa
 sus kyang ma bcings bcings¹⁵⁶⁹ med de¹⁵⁷⁰
 bcings¹⁵⁷¹ par bya ba med gnyis grol
 mkha' la mdud¹⁵⁷² med ji lta bu'o

ma rig nyon mongs las sdug bsngal
 chu bo bzhi las thar pa'ang¹⁵⁷³

1558 K: phyi

1559 D inserts +; P: 'bras bus

1560 D: phyed; K: byas

1561 K: lan

1562 DK: de

1563 K: dbul mo'i gtor

1564 KP: gyad

1565 DP: bgrol

1566 DP: skag

1567 K: pas

1568 P: cig

1569 K: bcing

1570 P: te

1571 K: bcing

1572 DP: 'dud

1573 K: pa'am

shin tu ring dang rgyud¹⁵⁷⁴ pa dang
 'gag¹⁵⁷⁵ spangs bsal bas¹⁵⁷⁶ thar pa dang
 zil gnon sbyor bas thar 'dod pa
 'dod pa'i rgya mtshor chud pa'i phyir
 rtsol ba'i chu rgyun phyogs cha¹⁵⁷⁷ khyer

mchog dang ring ba'i log lta can
 chu bo bzhi nyid lam 'bras phyir
 thabs dang shes rab las nyid kyi
 chu bo nyid la rol spyod pas
 brgal ba med par [314] rnam par thar
 chu la nya chen 'phyo ba'am
 sman sngags ldan pa'i dug nad 'dra'o¹⁵⁷⁸

log pa'i kun rdzob rnam gnyis dang
 'khrul pa gzhan dbang kun rdzob rnam
 rigs¹⁵⁷⁹ pa bzhis¹⁵⁸⁰ bcus bden lta ba'ang
 yon tan brlabs¹⁵⁸¹ 'byung lha¹⁵⁸² yi 'khor

[The Indivisibility of the Two Truths]

tshul mthun rigs¹⁵⁸³ pas 'bras bur lta¹⁵⁸⁴
 lhag pa kun rdzob don dam gnyis
 bshad pa bzhin du shes par bya
 thun mong¹⁵⁸⁵ don dam bye brag kyang
 bshad pa cha yis shes par bya

rgya mtsho dang bar¹⁵⁸⁶ gza' skar bzhin
 bden gnyis snang stong [282b] dbyer med pa
 phyogs blta'i mthar thug med pa ni

1574 K: brgyud

1575 K: bkag

1576 DP: gsal pas

1577 K: chas

1578 K: 'dra

1579 K: rig

1580 K: bzhi

1581 K: rlabs

1582 D: lnga

1583 D: rig

1584 K: blta

1585 K: mongs

1586 D: dangs bar; K: drangs par

de kar¹⁵⁸⁷ rang bzhin rgyud nyid do

[Nonattachment]

zhen pa'i yul la ma chags pa'ang
 tshim dang snying po bar chad sogs
 chags med 'khrul dang log pa dang
 bkag spangs phyogs gcig¹⁵⁸⁸ chags pa dang
 bzlog dang btang¹⁵⁸⁹ snyoms chags med dang
 bzhi po chags med chags pas bcings

chags med blang dor med pa ni
 chags pa nyid na chags med pas
 thabs dang [315] shes rab gdengs¹⁵⁹⁰ ldan pas
 padma la ni 'dam¹⁵⁹¹ bzhin no

[Intrinsic Nature]

kun rtags¹⁵⁹² rang bzhin chos mams ni
 rgyud spangs phyogs gcig¹⁵⁹³ rang bzhin med
 phyogs gcig¹⁵⁹⁴ mtha' yi rang bzhin dang
 chos [761] nyid mtshan nyid la sogs pa
 rang bzhin yod 'dor med bsgrub phyir
 spong len mthar gyur rang bzhin can

namkha¹⁵⁹⁵ dangs¹⁵⁹⁶ ba'i dus nyid dang
 'ja' sprin tshogs¹⁵⁹⁷ kyi rang bzhin lta
 brtags¹⁵⁹⁸ pa'i rang bzhin thams cad pa¹⁵⁹⁹
 de nyid snang phyir gnyis med pa'o

de bzhin dngos po med pa dang

1587 DK: ka

1588 P: cig

1589 DK: gtang; P: btar

1590 DP: gdeng

1591 DP: omit 'dam

1592 K: brtag

1593 P: cig

1594 DP: cig

1595 K: nam mkha'

1596 P: dar

1597 P: chogs

1598 K: btags

1599 K: ya

zhen pa med cing grags pa rnams
 ye med snga la gcig med gcig la gcig
 med dang zhig med 'dod lta ba

bzhi la gnyis pa med 'dod pa
 mi srid bzhi¹⁶⁰⁰ yi dpes mtshon par
 'dod pa snang ris mi mthun par
 lta ba sngon bzhin rgyu rim bzhin

de nyid 'bras lta'i rim pa gnyis
 drug po 'das pa'i¹⁶⁰¹ mthar zhen cing
 phyogs gcig¹⁶⁰² gzhi la gang lta ba
 sna tshogs snang ba'i gzhi¹⁶⁰³ mi rung

[316] de bas¹⁶⁰⁴ mar me gsal dus na
 mun pa ma song¹⁶⁰⁵ sgras¹⁶⁰⁶ med de
 gsal nyid gnyis su med par lta
 dngos zhen ma rig ye shes pa

spangs dang mi gnas 'gal ba med
 yid bzhin nor bu'i yon tan ltar
 dngos gnyis lhun grub cir¹⁶⁰⁷ yang snang
 chos kun gzhi¹⁶⁰⁸ zhes de phyr bya'o

rdzun la sogs pa'i rig pa ni
 rgyu yi gzhi 'dod bden lta ba
 phyogs gcig¹⁶⁰⁹ yin gyi nges 'jog pa¹⁶¹⁰
 'byung ba'i gzhi rtsar the tshom med

thams cad ye [283a] nas dbyer med la
 rigs dang ma rigs blang dor med
 gnyis med ston pa'i lung man ngag

1600 D: gzhi

1601 P: sa'i

1602 P: cig

1603 P: bzhi; K: gzhir

1604 D: des

1605 D: sang

1606 DP: sgral

1607 DP: cing

1608 DP: bzhi

1609 P: cig

1610 DP: omit pa

rig¹⁶¹¹ pas 'tsham¹⁶¹² pa go 'byed pa

dpa' po'i lag cha ji bzhin du
 rnam grangs kun kyang rtogs pa'i thabs
 rig pa med kyang thabs kyis mchog
 yin min chos la rtsod mi byed

[No Self]

chos dang gang zag bdag med pa
 dngos lta'i bdag med nyan thos pas
 phyogs tsam stong pa'i chos bdag med
 rgyun snang don 'gog bdag med dang
 gsal ba [317] phyogs gcig¹⁶¹³ bdag med dang
 rigs¹⁶¹⁴ snang bdag med ye shes snang
 gsum gnyis spong len byed pa'i phyir
 bdag tu 'dzin pa'i gtso bo yin

phyogs bcu rang [762] byung ye shes la
 rang byung 'di 'dra'i dngos med pas
 chos dang gang zag yod ma yin
 la lar nyi ma'ang mun rkyen ltar

bdag med ye shes bdag kun ldan
 gnyis med bdag med bdag nyid che
 med mthar thug pa 'di la med

[No Other]

gzhan med spyod yul med pa yang
 phra bas gzhan pa'i yor po med
 zab pas rtags¹⁶¹⁵ pa'i dpyod byed med
 gzhan pa¹⁶¹⁶ stong pas med pa dang
 'khrul pas med dang¹⁶¹⁷ rdzun pas med
 rig phyir med¹⁶¹⁸ dang ye shes phyir

1611 P: rigs

1612 K: 'tshoms

1613 P: cig

1614 D: rig

1615 K: brtags

1616 K: yang

1617 D: pa'i

1618 K: me

gzhan med pa'ang¹⁶¹⁹ de bzhin no

de bral 'dod phyir lcags kyi¹⁶²⁰ dkris
sngon bzhin thams cad ye shes la
ngo bo gcig¹⁶²¹ phyir cha shes med
gcig mtha' med pas kun tu shar

gnyis su med pas phung gsum med
de la smra¹⁶²² bsam med pa'i [318] phyir
gzung¹⁶²³ 'dzin lcags kyis sdoms¹⁶²⁴ pa med
lha rig gnyis kyi sngon brjod pa
'dod pa tha dad yul mthong ba'o

shes rab spyen gyi ngo bo ste
khyad par bshad pa nyid du zad

mthong pa'i lam du gcig¹⁶²⁵ smra ba'ang
bshes gnyen rkyen¹⁶²⁶ phrad sngags mthong gi
de med rang gi mngon shes kyis
mthong na bcu pa'ang thob par rigs

lta ba'i sgrib pas phye ba'i phyir
[283b] las dang 'bras bu'i khyad par che'o¹⁶²⁷

[Primordial Wisdom]

sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i ye shes la
bcu drug gnyis su 'dod pa dang
bzhi dang gnyis su gnas 'gyur 'dod
rig¹⁶²⁸ pa bzhi dang lngar 'dod pa
rang rang rtags¹⁶²⁹ pa'i don mthong phyir
mun pa'i rab mchog yin zhes brjod

1619 K: med pa yang

1620 K: kyis

1621 P: cig

1622 D: smras

1623 K: gzugs; P: bzung

1624 K: sdom

1625 P: cig

1626 K: skyen

1627 K: che

1628 K: rigs

1629 D: rtogs

[Enumerations]

ngo bo gcig pa'i de kho na
de ni gcig¹⁶⁴⁵ gi [284a] mthar¹⁶⁴⁶ thug 'gyur

cir yang snang ba'i ye shes nyid
bcos med nges pa'i de kho na
lhag pa'i ye shes sgyu ma de
byas 'gro med par ci¹⁶⁴⁷ yang 'khrul

[Oneness]

namkha'i¹⁶⁴⁸ cho 'phrul mtsho rlabs bzhin
snang ba'i dus na snang med de
dbyer med pa la rim mi phyed¹⁶⁴⁹
de phyir gcig¹⁶⁵⁰ ces mtshon thabs brjod
de kho 'dra ba'i mchog yin no

tha dad spong ba'i gcig¹⁶⁵¹ 'dod pa
gcig gi mtha' la zhen pas nor
dag pa'i 'og tu gcig pa las
ma dag blo¹⁶⁵² bur snang 'dod pa
sa bon med pa'i 'bras 'dod pa
sab rta mtho¹⁶⁵³ mi [321] thag sprul ltar¹⁶⁵⁴

smig rgyu chu zla¹⁶⁵⁵ ltar med pas
snang zhes rig¹⁶⁵⁶ pas bsgrub¹⁶⁵⁷ pa [764] yang¹⁶⁵⁸
'khrul te de na ri bong rwa'ang¹⁶⁵⁹
'byung ba nyid du the tshom med

gzhi la 'dra 'khrul chos yod phyir

1645 P: cig

1646 K: thar

1647 K: cir

1648 K: nam mkha'i

1649 K: byed

1650 P: cig

1651 P: cig

1652 DK: glo

1653 KP: tho

1654 K: dang

1655 K: rgyu chur snang

1656 P: rigs

1657 K: sgrub

1658 D: bsgrub pa pa yang

1659 K: rwa

'di 'dra 'khrul pa'i chos med ltar
lhun grub¹⁶⁶⁰ dbyer med ngang las¹⁶⁶¹ snang
'khor 'das snang yang grub pa med

[The Mistake of Refutation]

yod pa sun 'byin chos 'di la
med par smra ba byis pa'i blo
med par sun 'byin chos dag la
yod lta yin¹⁶⁶² zhes smra ba'ang log
dbus 'dzin sun 'byin chos dag la
gcig¹⁶⁶³ tu lta dgur¹⁶⁶⁴ byed pa'ang 'khrul

mtha' bral 'dzin pa sun 'byin pa
dri mas bgos 'dra nor pa'i mig
kun gyi 'byung gnas byed pa'o
de yis ma byas gang yang med

kha dog dbyibs rigs kun dngos dang
kha dog dbyibs rigs gang yang min
shin tu brtag¹⁶⁶⁵ dka' sus mi rig¹⁶⁶⁶
rig med ngang¹⁶⁶⁷ las¹⁶⁶⁸ thams cad snang

[The Mind of Awakening]

byang chub sems zhes brjod pa ni
skad cig kun dngos rgyud med phyir
gang nas [322] ma 'ongs gar mi 'gro
rtog med rang rig kho na'o

shes byar gyur pa'i chos so cog
rig pa ye nas rang gsal phyir
rang rig shes bya dmigs skye med¹⁶⁶⁹
dngos yul tsam yang 'dod ma yin

1660 DP: 'grub

1661 D: la

1662 K: min

1663 P: cig

1664 D: bur

1665 P: rtag

1666 K: rigs

1667 D: dang

1668 K: la

1669 K: skyed dam

byang chub sems kyi thig le ni
 [284b] kun la khyab cing mi gnas pa
 kha dog gnas dbyibs¹⁶⁷⁰ ris yod min
 yon tan mchog gi snying po ni
 rtog ge'i spyod yul de ma yin

[The Dynamic of Sameness]

mnyam¹⁶⁷¹ pa'i don nyid ji lta bu
 mnyam nyid rang bzhin gang yang min
 gnyis phyir min zhes brjod pa las
 phyogs gcig¹⁶⁷² min pa smra brjod 'das

zhen pa bzlog phyir rkyen bshad¹⁶⁷³ ma rtogs pa
 chos kyi ngang la tshig med brjod med pa'ang
 spangs bsal¹⁶⁷⁴ med phyogs log gsum blta ba ste
 rang bzhin ngo bo mtshan nyid mchog las gol ba ni¹⁶⁷⁵
 'og mas spangs pa'i log rtog¹⁶⁷⁶ grangs

mtha' yas mi spong rang rig phyir
 len pa'i chos rnams blang du med
 blang dor med pa'i [765] don mchog ni
 zhen bral mtha' 'das 'ching grol¹⁶⁷⁷ sogs
 blang bya kun gyi mchog yin te
 de nyid bdag yin bla med pa
 nyams su blang ba'i¹⁶⁷⁸ thabs mchog yin

[323] sus kyang ma bcings bcings¹⁶⁷⁹ med de
 bcings par¹⁶⁸⁰ bya ba yod ma yin
 bcings¹⁶⁸¹ med nam par grol med pa'i
 ye nas lhun rdzogs sangs rgyas chos

¹⁶⁷⁰ K: nas rim

¹⁶⁷¹ P: mnyams

¹⁶⁷² P: cig

¹⁶⁷³ DP: gshas

¹⁶⁷⁴ P: gsal

¹⁶⁷⁵ D joins the preceding two lines.

¹⁶⁷⁶ P: ltog

¹⁶⁷⁷ P: khrol

¹⁶⁷⁸ K: blangs pa'i

¹⁶⁷⁹ K: bcing

¹⁶⁸⁰ K: bcing bar

¹⁶⁸¹ K: bcing

yid bzhin nor bu'i yon tan ltar
 bden gsum don kyang de ltar snang
 don du bden dang mi bden zhes
 gnyis pa'i rtog pa ngang gis med

[The Eye of Highest Insight]

de mthong shes rab mchog gi spyan
 dmigs pa'i yul gyis lta¹⁶⁸² 'dod pa
 bzung 'dzin lam du zhugs pa'i phyir
 nam yang lhag pa'i don mi mthong

rtog pa'i yid dang rdo rje'i yid¹⁶⁸³
 snga¹⁶⁸⁴ ma mi spong mi len te
 de sogs brgyad po'i rigs med phyir
 brgyad bzhi'i tshogs mams gcig¹⁶⁸⁵ yin te

rang rig tshogs gcig¹⁶⁸⁶ dbang drug mchog
 so so'i rgyud du dbyer med de¹⁶⁸⁷
 brtags¹⁶⁸⁸ pas tha¹⁶⁸⁹ snyad snang dus¹⁶⁹⁰ na
 ngo bo¹⁶⁹¹ gcig¹⁶⁹² pa rdo rje yin

yul med rang gsal she rab spyan
 shes pa spyod yul gnyis su¹⁶⁹³ med
 shes dang shes par bya med pa'i
 ye shes [285a] sgron me sbreng¹⁶⁹⁴ bar ni
 rgyu¹⁶⁹⁵ med rgyun tu¹⁶⁹⁶ rang shar bas
 phyogs bcu'i zhing khams [324] thams cad mthong

1682 D: blta; K: gyi blta

1683 K: mig

1684 D: sba

1685 P: cig

1686 P: cig

1687 P: te

1688 P: rtags

1689 P: mtha'

1690 P: du

1691 KP: bos

1692 P: cig

1693 D: sa

1694 D: sbar

1695 K: rgyud

1696 K: du

thams cad mkhyen pa'i shes rab can¹⁶⁹⁷
 go tshim myong reg¹⁶⁹⁸ rig sogs chos
 ming¹⁶⁹⁹ grangs drug bzhi gnyis su grangs
 de ltar nges pa'i lta ba la
 zhen¹⁷⁰⁰ pa'i lam du 'gro sa med

'jug pa'i dus na gcig po nyid
 nges par rang gsal mi g.yo la
 rtog ge pa dag de lta na
 bogs dang yon tan 'gag¹⁷⁰¹ 'gyur zhes
 som nyis¹⁷⁰² za zhing¹⁷⁰³ yul min pas
 gnyis su bsalabs¹⁷⁰⁴ pa gcas bya¹⁷⁰⁵

de bzhin gshegs pa'i spyod yul te
 blo rtsal¹⁷⁰⁶ rab kyis rtogs 'gyur cing¹⁷⁰⁷
 brjod bzhin shes pa nges¹⁷⁰⁸ skye phyir
 zab brjod zab mor nges par skye

[766] zab mo'i tshe na **blo can gyis**
 rang gi mtshan nyid mngon rtogs phyir
 'dod pa med par zhor bogs¹⁷⁰⁹ sogs
 'byung ba nyid na g.yos pa med

rnal¹⁷¹⁰ 'byor thabs dang shes rab lam
 rim par mngon byas stobs 'gyur na
 dpag bsam shing dang rin chen ltar
 ngo mtshar rmad byung¹⁷¹¹ 'bras bu lnga

1697 K: spyan

1698 D: rag; P: rig

1699 K: mi

1700 DP: zhes

1701 D: dgag

1702 KP: gnyis

1703 D: gzhi'i

1704 K: bsalab

1705 D: gcas par bya; K: zhes bya ba

1706 D: rtsol

1707 K: zhing

1708 D: des

1709 K: sogs

1710 K: ma

1711 DP: 'byung

gzhan nas yod 'ong ma yin te
 thabs la brten pa'i¹⁷¹² shes rab nyid
 de lta bu yi [325] ngang du 'byung¹⁷¹³
 yang dag rdzogs sangs rgyas shes bya

rigs 'dzin gsum pa'i gang de nyid
 srid pa tha ma mdzad¹⁷¹⁴ rdzogs pas
 de la¹⁷¹⁵ dbang bskur mngon sangs rgyas
 rdo rje 'dzin par the tshom med

skal ba snod shes dad brtson¹⁷¹⁶ shes
 mchog rnams kun gyis rtog¹⁷¹⁷ bya bgyis
 de bzlog¹⁷¹⁸ yul min sgro skur¹⁷¹⁹ la
 ming tsam don phyir bstan ma¹⁷²⁰ bya

bskal¹⁷²¹ mun nang gi rin chen nor
 sgron mes brnyed 'gyur¹⁷²² dbul sel ltar
 skal pa thugs kyi rin chen nor
 ston¹⁷²³ tshig sgron ma 'dis brnyed¹⁷²⁴ shog

thugs kyi sgron ma gnyan¹⁷²⁵ dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad pa rdzogs so

1712 P: rten D: brten na

1713 D: lta bu yi ngang du 'byung; K: lta bu yi ngang du byung; P: lta bu'i ngang du
 'byung

1714 K: mrdzod

1715 D: de yi

1716 P: rtson

1717 K: kun gyi brtag; P: rtag

1718 K: ldog

1719 P: sgro ba kun

1720 K: mi

1721 P: skal

1722 K: rnyed gyur

1723 K: stor

1724 D: ma 'di rnyed; K: ma 'dis rnyed; P: ma 'di brnyed

1725 DP: omit gnyan

THE LAMP OF THE CORRECT VIEW • TRANSLATION

The glorious *maṇḍala* of Mind¹⁷²⁶ brilliantly blazes forth
 Like a thousand rays of the sun, and awareness of self grows dim.
 Transcending melody and lyric, transcending the very characteristics of space,
 A mere portion of the meaning of the spontaneous Mind, unoriginated and profound,
 appears.

Because most learned people have come to their realization independently, their oral
 teachings
 Inappropriately take up such subjects as ‘logic’ and ‘self’.
 However, these mere verbal expressions of knowledge should be analyzed and deeply
 considered with an awareness pursuing the meaning of Dharma
 By those with faith in the definitive meaning.

For many kalpa, the Conquerors
 Generated the roots of virtue and purified their own minds.
 Therefore, the great definitive scriptures of highest yoga
 Are clarified in the mind aspiring to know supreme wisdom.

With regard to mental observation employing the great method of awareness
 Of nonconceptual, ultimate, intrinsic nature,
 Ascertaining by means of scripture, oral instruction, and awareness,
 Have genuine confidence in the intrinsic nature of phenomena.¹⁷²⁷

What is space? Although on a conventional level,
 Space might be described with names and terms,
 It is without distinguishing characteristics and is without elaboration.
 It naturally transcends the realm of mind.

What are the appearances of the illusory aggregates?
 In those very appearances, they are like the intrinsic nature of space.
 Although they appear in such a way as the variety of phenomena,
 In their very appearance, they have the characteristic of space.

¹⁷²⁶ This term (*thugs kyi dkyil 'khor*) appears throughout the *Guhyagarbha tantra*.

¹⁷²⁷ The last two lines of this stanza are quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* and in the fifth chapter of the *Ka tang de nga*. The passage in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* (49.5) is nearly identical to the Peking version. The *Ka tang de nga* version omits the term *man ngag*: *lung dang rig pas thag bcad de | sems kyi rang bzhin yang dag yid ces bya. bKa' thang sde lnga* (1997): 466.11

With awareness of its dynamic, listen
 To the [teachings of the] vast, profound, supreme vehicle, the broad path,
 The ultimate, the unobjectifiable, which transcends all discursiveness,
 Identical to the expanse of self and phenomena, the Middle Way.

Once one has instantaneously understood ultimate reality,
 One transcends the realm of consciousness of existence and nonexistence, and
 Thoroughly abandons the extremes of hope and fear.
 One then should act with effortless perseverance.

All phenomena always have been of one flavor.
 Thus, neither meditation nor anything upon which one should meditate can be observed.
 If one knows that mind itself always has been the *dharmata*,
 There will be no need for meditating on anything other than the expanse of dharma itself.

Just as the blisses and sufferings of one's dreams
 Are equal in their intrinsic nature once one has awoken,
 So both conceptual and nonconceptual consciousnesses
 Are completely equal once one has insightful awareness.

Similarly, once one knows that the utterly pure throughout the three times
 Does not transcend one's own intrinsic nature,
 And once one no longer pursues the elimination of reification,
 The natural sphere emerges, and thus, there will be no need of fabrication.

There is no meditating on space
 Because space is without defining characteristics.
 Just so, how can there be meditation on the nonorigination of
 Mind, which is unoriginated by means of its very essence?

When you know the dynamic by which the obstructions are indistinguishable from their
 antidotes,
 You will abandon all diligence.
 When you settle into the continuum with great equanimity and without fabrication,
 Although it is merely a nominal convention, practice "meditation" on this.

Because neither defects nor good qualities are produced,
 No matter what characteristics arise in conceptual thought,
 They are unimpeded, self-arisen, unpursued, and in spontaneous quiescence.
 Thus, unfabricated and uncreated, they are spontaneously and naturally illuminated.

Thus ends *The Lamp of the Correct View*, by Ācārya Pelyang.

THE LAMP OF THE CORRECT VIEW • CRITICAL EDITION

P: Peking 5919, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos, mo* 285a8-286a6 (vol.150, p.234)

D: sDe dge 4447, *sna tshogs, no* 383b4-384a7 (766.4-767.7)

K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, 327-329

dpal ldan thugs kyi dkyil 'khor nyi ma'i 'od stong gis
shin tu 'bar ba'i zer tsam bdag blo mun par byung
dbyangs dang tshig 'das nam mkha'i¹⁷²⁸ mtshan nyid las 'das pa'i
rang sems skye med zab mo'i don gyi phyogs tsam snang

rang gis rtogs pas¹⁷²⁹ mkhas pas gsungs pa'i rnam mang ba
rtog ge¹⁷³⁰ bdag 'dra'i spyod yul rtsom¹⁷³¹ par mi 'os kyang
rig pa'i brjod¹⁷³² dbyangs¹⁷³³ tsam 'di nges don mos rnam kyis¹⁷³⁴
chos phyir 'brang ba'i blo yis dpyad cing goms par bya

bskal¹⁷³⁵ pa mang por rgyal ba rnam la ni
dge rtsa bskyed cing rang sems sbyangs pa yis
rnal 'byor dam pa nges pa'i lung chen la¹⁷³⁶
shes rab mchog ldan rig pa'i mos blo gsal

rnam par mi rtog don dam rang bzhin gyi
rig pa'i tshul chen sems kyis dmigs pa ni
lung dang man ngag rig¹⁷³⁷ pas thag gcad de
chos kyi rang bzhin yang dag yid ches bya

ji ltar namkha' la ni tha snyad du
ming dang tshig gis brjod¹⁷³⁸ par byed mod kyi
mtshan ma med cing spros dang bral ba ste

1728 P: namkha'i

1729 K: pa

1730 P: gi

1731 K: brtsom

1732 D: brjed

1733 DK: byang

1734 K: kyi

1735 P: skal

1736 K: ma

1737 DK: rigs

1738 D: rjod

ngo bo nyid kyis sems kyis yul las¹⁷³⁹ ‘das

ji ltar smig rgyu’i phung po snang ba dag
snang ba nyid na nam mkha’i¹⁷⁴⁰ rang bzhin ltar
de bzhin chos rnams sna tshogs ltar snang yang¹⁷⁴¹
snyang ba nyid na mtshan ma¹⁷⁴² nam mkha’¹⁷⁴³ bzhin

rgya cher ba zab theg mchog yangs pa’i lam
don dam dmigs med spros pa kun las ‘das
bdag dang chos kyis dbyings su mnyam pa yi
dbu ma’i don can blo yis¹⁷⁴⁴ go bar byos

yang dag don dam cig¹⁷⁴⁵ car go nas ni
yod med la sogs sems kyis yul ‘das shing
re dang dogs pa’i mtha’ ni rab spangs nas
rtsol¹⁷⁴⁶ ba med pa’i brtson ‘grus brtsam par bya

chos rnams thams cad ye nas ro gcig¹⁷⁴⁷ phyir
bsgom¹⁷⁴⁸ pa dang ni bsgom bya’ang dmigs su med
sems nyid ye nas chos nyid [286a.1] yin shes na
chos kyis dbyings nyid gzhan du bsgoms mi dgos

rmi lam dag gi bde dang sdug bsngal dag
sad par gyur na rang bzhin mnyam pa ltar
rnam par rtog dang mi rtog gnyis ka yang
shes pas rig na rang bzhin yongs kyis mnyam

de ltar dus gsum rnam par dag pa dag¹⁷⁴⁹
rang bzhin nyid las ma ‘das shes na ni
sgro ‘dogs bus¹⁷⁵⁰ pa’i rjes su ma ‘brangs nas¹⁷⁵¹

1739 K: la

1740 P: namkha’i

1741 K: tshogs snang yang; P: tshogs snyang ltar snang ba yang

1742 K: med

1743 P: namkha’

1744 DP: blo yi rting du

1745 KP: gcig

1746 DP: brtsol

1747 P: cig

1748 K: sgom

1749 K: dang

1750 D: gus

1751 DP: na

rang bzhin ngang¹⁷⁵² du yong gis bcos mi dgos

ji ltar nam mkha'¹⁷⁵³ mtshan ma med pa'i phyir
 nam mkha'¹⁷⁵⁴ de nyid bsgom par mi 'gyur bzhin
 ngo bo nyid kyis ma skyes sems kyis ni
 ma skyes de nyid bsgoms par ga la 'gyur

mi mthun pa dang gnyen¹⁷⁵⁵ po dbyer med don
 rang gis¹⁷⁵⁶ shes na rtsol ba kun spangs te
 btang snyoms chen por ma bcos ngang bzhag na
 tha snyad tsam du'ang bsgom zhes di¹⁷⁵⁷ la bya

skyon dang yon tan gnyis po ma skyes phyir
 rnam par rtog pa'i mtshan ma ci byung yang
 ma bkag rang byung ma 'brangs rang zhi ste¹⁷⁵⁸
 ma bcos ma byas rang gi ngang gis gsal¹⁷⁵⁹

lta ba yang dag sgron ma rdzogs s.ho¹⁷⁶⁰

gnyan A tsarya¹⁷⁶¹ dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad pa'o

1752 K: nyid; P: omits ngang

1753 P: namkha'

1754 P: namkha'

1755 D: gnyan

1756 P: gi

1757 K: de

1758 P: te

1759 K: rgyal

1760 DK: so

1761 DP: A tsarya; K: gnyan A tsa

THE LAMP ILLUMINATING THE EXTREMES • TRANSLATION

Phenomena are the mistakes of the mind, and as such,
 Apart from mind, there are no phenomena.
 That which appears as phenomena is merely the mistaken mind.
 Interdependence and illusion are without origination.

Though it is taught that they are without origination,
 Such is merely to overcome one's conceiving of things as real.
 Though illusion primordially is without origination,
 Not even the sound imputing "without origination" is to be designated.

If one says, "This sky is non-existent,"
 A fool will suppose it is so.
 A wise person will not conceive of it as having been long existent,
 Will not conceive of it as nonexistent, and will not utter such words.

Because there are no phenomena apart from the mind,
 There are not anywhere any phenomena to be meditated upon.
 If even the mind is primordially without origination,
 Where is there any meditator?

If the mind, which is the root of verbal expressions,
 Is without origination and fundamentally nonexistent,
 What verbal conventions of 'meditation' and 'non-meditation'
 Can be applied and with regard to what?

The mental continuum of beings is not held to be dual.
 It is without origination and does not observe itself.
 Because there is no alternative mind to that,
 How can there be any contrivance of it or abiding within it?

If the mind appears like a mirage¹⁷⁶²
 While possessing the conditions of mistaken conceptions,
 Then those who know its intrinsic nature are without contrivance.
 Not knowing is like contriving a mirage.

Nonconceptual minds without characteristics
 Do not abide even in the absence of characteristics.

¹⁷⁶² Taking *smig* for *dmigs*, as does Karmay. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 82.

Mind does not abide in the absence of characteristics.
Needless to say, neither does it abide in characteristics.¹⁷⁶³

It does not accomplish, nor does it abide.
In its lack of compositional factors, it is like space, and thus
Any meditation arising from such compositional factors is faulty.
It is unsullied by anything at all.

How does a profound nonconceptuality
Appear as the object of awareness?
Because the experience of profound nonconceptuality
Is experience, it is not that actual (nonconceptuality).¹⁷⁶⁴

The Little Grain¹⁷⁶⁵ of the View: The lamp that clears away the darkness of the extremes,
composed by the Tibetan pandita, Ācārya Nyan Pelyang.

¹⁷⁶³ These two lines are quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* as being from the “man ngag” as follows: mtshan ma med pa la yang mi gnas na/ mtshan mar mi gnas smos ci dgos/ *STMG*: 318.2.

¹⁷⁶⁴ This stanza appears to be taken from lines 1-4 of the second section of the *Small Hidden Grain* by Buddhagupta, a manuscript copy of which was found at Dunhuang, ITJ 594. “ji tsam rtog myed zab mo zhig/ blo’i yul du snang zhe na/ myi rtog zab mo nyams myong ba/ myong ba yin phyir de nyid myin” Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 60-61.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Taking *rgum* for *dgum*, as does Karmay. *Ibid.*, 83.

THE LAMP ILLUMINATING THE EXTREMES • CRITICAL EDITION

P: Peking 5920, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos*, mo 286a6-286b6 (vol.150, p.234)
 D: sDe dge, *sna tshogs*, no 384a7-384b6 (767.7-768.6), Toh. 4448
 K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, 329-331

chos rnams sems kyi 'khrul pa ste
 sems las ma gtogs¹⁷⁶⁶ chos rnams¹⁷⁶⁷ med
 chos su snang ba 'khrul ba'i sems
 rten 'brel sgyu ma skye ba med

skye ba med ces bstan pa'ang¹⁷⁶⁸
 dngos por 'dzin pa bzlog phyir te
 sgyu ma ye nas skye med la
 skye med snyad¹⁷⁶⁹ kyi sgra mi gdags

nam mkha'¹⁷⁷⁰ 'di ni med do zhes
 blun po gang zhig rtog par byed
 mkhas pa sngon nas yod mi 'dzin
 med par mi rtog tshig mi brjod

sems las ma gtogs¹⁷⁷¹ chos med phyir
 bsgom bya'i chos nyid gud¹⁷⁷² na med
 sems kyang ye nas ma skyes na¹⁷⁷³
 sgom¹⁷⁷⁴ pa po'ang¹⁷⁷⁵ gang la yod

brjod pa'i rtsa ba sems nyid ni
 ma skyes dngos gzhi yod min na
 sgom¹⁷⁷⁶ dang bsgom du med pa yi
 tha snyad gang zhig gang la 'jug

-
- 1766 P: rtogs
 1767 K: gzhan
 1768 K: pa yang
 1769 K: gnas
 1770 P: namkha'
 1771 P: rtogs
 1772 P: gung
 1773 K: nas
 1774 DP: bsgom
 1775 K: po yang
 1776 DP: bsgom

‘gro la sems rgyud gnyis mi ‘chang
de ni ma skyes rang mi dmigs
de las gzhan pa’i sems med phyir
bcos shing gnas pa gang zhig yod

‘khrul rtog rkyen dang ldan gyi bar
dmigs rgyu bzhin du sems snang na
rang bzhin shes pas bcos su med
mi shes smig¹⁷⁷⁷ rgyu bcos pa bzhin

mi rtog mtshan med sems mams kyis¹⁷⁷⁸
mtshan¹⁷⁷⁹ ma med la’ang gnas mi byed¹⁷⁸⁰
mtshan ma med la mi gnas na
mtshan mar gnas pa smos ci dgos

bsgrub pa med cing gnas pa med
’du byed med pa mkha’ ’dra bas
’du byed las byung bsam gtan skyon¹⁷⁸¹
ma lus kun gyis gos¹⁷⁸² pa med

ji ltar rtog med zab mo zhig
blo yi yul du snang zhe na
mi rtog zab mo’i nyams myong ba
myong ba yin phyir de nyid min

lta ba dgum¹⁷⁸³ chung
mtha yi mun sel sgron ma¹⁷⁸⁴ bod kyis pandita A tsa rya gnyan¹⁷⁸⁵ dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad
pa’o/

1777 KP: dmigs

1778 K: kyis

1779 DP: ma rtogs mtshan

1780 D: ma byed

1781 K: skyen

1782 K: kun gyi dgos

1783 K: sgom

1784 K: me

1785 P: bsNyan

THE LAMP OF METHOD AND WISDOM • TRANSLATION

Yogins who know the intrinsic nature of phenomena
 In the same way the Conquerors of the three times fully understand it
 Also attain without attainment. Therefore, though one does not strive,
 The particulars of compassion—the activity of skillful means—are also taught.

Although there may be a great diversity of rainbows in the sky,
 In the sphere of space, they are of one flavor without distinction.
 Just so, though there is a great diversity of physical forms of Conquerors,
 In the expanse of primordial wisdom, they are of one flavor without distinction.

Buddhanature is the intrinsic nature of Mind.
 However, since long ago, [Conquerors] have appeared as distinct beings
 To deluded sentient beings with mental continuums that cling to a self.
 Their very intrinsic nature is one with the Dharmakāya of the Conqueror.

Despite the inconceivable differences between primordial wisdom and wrong
 understanding,
 Both Buddhas appearing as illusory manifestations of primordial wisdom and
 Sentient beings appearing as illusory manifestations of wrong understanding
 Are [mere] illusions, and thus, they are entirely equal.

If one knows the single authentic method by which sentient beings are awakened, and that
 One's own mind itself is [already] awakened,
 Then there is nothing else to achieve.
 Therefore, neither is there anything to abandon.

When one is aware of such a method of Dharma,
 Universal compassion toward all those who are unaware is generated.
 Having generated such compassion, one practices meditative stabilization on the illusory
 nature [of appearances].
 Thereby, all manner of skillful practices to benefit [others] are taught.

What is the intention of the buddhas?
 It is to meditate in accordance with the nonabiding intrinsic nature of mind.
 What is [their] boundless compassionate endeavor?
 It is to emanate in accordance with the meditative stabilization of yogic skillful means.

Because they perceive neither self nor anything that is one's own,
 Without perceiving the Six Perfections, they are fully endowed with them.
 All those that are to be trained are trained by means of the activity of skillful means, but

There is neither illusory sagacity nor boasting pride.

THE LAMP OF METHOD AND WISDOM • CRITICAL EDITION

Peking 5921, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos, mo* 286b6 -287a8 (vol.150, p.234-235)
 sDe dge, *sna tshogs, no* 384b6-385a6 (768.6-769.6), Toh. 4449
 K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, 331-333

dus gsum rgyal bas ji ltar thugs chud pa'i
 chos kyi rang bzhin rig pa'i rnal 'byor pas
 ma thob thob phyir brtson par mi byed kyang
 snying rje'i bye brag thabs kyi spyod pa'ang ston

ji ltar mkha' la 'ja' tshon rnam mang yang
 nam mkha'i¹⁷⁸⁶ ngang du ro gcig¹⁷⁸⁷ bye brag med
 de bzhin rgyal ba'i gzugs sku rnam mang yang
 ye shes dbyings [385a] su ro gcig¹⁷⁸⁸ bye brag med

bde gshegs snying po sems kyi rang bzhin la
 yun ring dus nas rmongs pa'i sems can mams
 bdag tu 'dzin pa'i sems rgyud so sor snang
 rang bzhin nyid ni rgyal ba'i chos skur gcig¹⁷⁸⁹

ye shes sgyu mar snang ba'i sangs rgyas dang
 log rtog sgyu mar snang pa'i sems can gnyis
 ye shes log rtog khyad par bsam yas kyang
 sgyu ma yin phyir rang bzhin yongs kyis mnyam

sams can sang rgyas bden par tshul gcig¹⁷⁹⁰ cing
 rang gi sems nyid sangs rgyas yin shes na
 gzhan nas bsgrub par bya ba ci yang med
 de lta bas na spang bar bya ba'ang med

'di lta bu yi chos kyi tshul rig na
 ma rig mams la snying rje yongs kyis skye
 snying rje skyes nas sgyu ma'i ting 'dzin gyis
 phan 'dogs thabs kyi¹⁷⁹¹ spyod pa cir yang ston

1786 P: namkha'i

1787 P: cig

1788 P: cig

1789 P: cig

1790 P: cig

1791 K: kyis

sangs rgyas rnam kyī¹⁷⁹² dgongs pa ji lta ba
 sems kyī rang bzhin gnas¹⁷⁹³ med de ltar bsgom
 thugs rje'i 'bad pa rab 'byams ji lta ba
 rnal 'byor thabs kyī¹⁷⁹⁴ ting 'dzin de ltar sprul¹⁷⁹⁵

bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa med pa'i phyir
 pha rol phyin drug dmigs med rdzogs par ldan
 thabs kyī spyod pas gdul bya kun 'dul yang
 sgyu ma'i blo ldan rlom sems ci yang med

ma skyes sems la sems can med pa'i phyir
 ngo bo nyid kyī chos sku'i nga rgyal 'chang
 chos kun sgyu mar mngon sum gsal ba'i phyir
 ting 'dzin sgyu mas ci 'dus¹⁷⁹⁶ de ltar ston

chos sku mnyam nyid rtogs nas 'gro don du
 bde gshegs byin¹⁷⁹⁷ brlabs cir yang ston pa ltar
 bdag nyid chos sku rig pa'i rnal 'byor pas
 thabs kyī bye brag de¹⁷⁹⁸ nas de¹⁷⁹⁹ ltar brjod¹⁸⁰⁰

thabs dang shes rab ldan pa'i sgron ma rdzogs sho¹⁸⁰¹

slob dpon dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad pa'o¹⁸⁰²

1792 DP: omit rnam kyī

1793 D: rnam

1794 K: kyis

1795 D: spral

1796 K: 'dul

1797 P: phyin

1798 DK: da

1799 P: di

1800 K: mdzod

1801 DK: so

1802 K: adds mangga lam

THE LAMP OF THE METHOD OF MEDITATION • TRANSLATION

As for the phenomena of Suchness,
Phenomena do not engage forcefully with phenomena.
No matter how profound the words one uses,
They will not accord with reality.¹⁸⁰³

Know that the mind does not abide in anything and
Does not observe anything.
Clarify the faulty notion that the mind abides or observes.
Such a notion grasps subtly at mind.

If, like a mirage, mind does not exist,
Then what is there which does not abide or observe?
To know the sky does not abide even within itself
Is a meaningless meditation.¹⁸⁰⁴

Thus, sitting cross-legged and straight,
All the contrivances regarding the body
Arise from direct attachment to conceptions of a body.
In the unembodied sky there is no contrivance.¹⁸⁰⁵

If one knows the body is like an illusion,
There is no attachment to the seated position with legs crossed.
For anyone abiding via the normal course of life
There is no training to be undertaken, nor anything at all to be done.¹⁸⁰⁶

¹⁸⁰³ This stanza appears to be taken from lines 5-8 of the second section of the *Small Hidden Grain* by Buddhagupta, a manuscript copy of which was found at Dunhuang, ITJ 594. “*ji bzhin ba’i chos brtsad de/ chos la chos ni myi ‘jug pas/ ji tsam zab mo’i tshig brjod kyang/ don dang ‘tsham bar ga la ‘gyur’*” Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 60-61. It is also quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. STMG: 382.2.

¹⁸⁰⁴ This line is quoted in the *Theg pa chen po’i tshul la ‘jug pa* by Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po. As per Ibid., 85, fn. 3. Also quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. STMG: 440.5

¹⁸⁰⁵ This stanza appears to be taken from lines 13-16 of the second section of the *Small Hidden Grain* by Buddhagupta, a manuscript copy of which was found at Dunhuang, ITJ 594. “*dkyil dkrung drang ‘dug bcas pa dang/ lus kyi bcos pa thams chad kyang/ lus rtoḡ mngon bar zhen las byung/ lus myed mkha’ la bcos su myed’*” Ibid., 60-61.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Also quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. STMG: 404.1-2.

The body and mind are unoriginated and without foundation.
 They are without the fault of contrivance, like the sky.¹⁸⁰⁷
 For those who would construct a body and mind logically,
 The stake is just that [unorigination].¹⁸⁰⁸

Just as the sky is without characteristics,
 Free of striving to observe or not observe,
 So is the sky of mind.
 See it just naturally.

The body and so forth are like that, too.
 Because they are without striving, however they are seen,
 If there is no abiding in that nonabiding,
 There will be simply no contradiction.

The Method of Meditation on the Definitive Dynamic belonging to the System of Those Engaging in Yogic Activity: The Little Grain of Oral Instructions, by Nyan Pelyang.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Also quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. STMG: 404.6.

¹⁸⁰⁸ This line appears to be taken from the second section of the *Small Hidden Grain* by Buddhagupta, a manuscript copy of which was found at Dunhuang, ITJ 594. “’dzin pa ’i phur pa de na yod” Karmay, *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 60-61. It is also quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation*. STMG: 404.1.

THE LAMP OF THE METHOD OF MEDITATION • CRITICAL EDITION

P: Peking 5922, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos, mo* 287a8-287b7 (vol.150, p.235)

D: sDe dge, *sna tshogs, no* 385a6-385b4 (769.6-770.4), Toh. 4450

K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, 339-340

ji bzhin pa yi chos brtsan par
chos la chos ni mi 'jug ste
ji tsam zab pa'i tshig brjod kyang
don dang mthun par ma¹⁸⁰⁹ 'gyur ro

sems ni ci la'ang mi gnas dang
ci la'ang mi dmigs shes bya ba
sems la gnas dmigs skyon sel ba'i
sems 'dzin phra mo de la yod

smig¹⁸¹⁰ rgyu bzhin du sems med na
mi gnas mi dmigs byed pa gang
nam mkha'¹⁸¹¹ rang la'ang mi gnas shes
bsgom pa don dang ldan ma yin

de bzhin skyil krung drang 'dug¹⁸¹² dang
lus kyi bcos pa thams cad kyang
lus rtog mngon par zhen las byung
lus med mkha' la bcos su med

sgyu ma bzhin du lus shes na
drang 'dug skyil krung 'cha' ba med
spyod lam gsum gyis¹⁸¹³ gnas pa gang
ched du bya med byed pa'ang med

lus sems ma skye gzhi med pa
mkha' ltar bcos ba'i kha na med
tshad mar lus sems 'chos byed pa
'dzin pa'i phur pa de la yod

1809 DK: mi

1810 P: dmigs

1811 P: namkha'

1812 K: 'dug pa

1813 K: gyi

ji ltar mtshan med nam mkha'¹⁸¹⁴ ni
 dmigs dang dmigs med rtsol dang bral
 de bzhin sems nyid nam mkha'¹⁸¹⁵ yang
 rang bzhin nyid kyis de lta'o

lus la sogs kyang de bzhin te
 rtsol¹⁸¹⁶ ba med phyir gang ltar yang
 gnas pa med de mi gnas na
 mi 'gal tsam¹⁸¹⁷ du gyur pa yin

rnal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs nges pa'i don la ji bzhin bsgom¹⁸¹⁸ thabs rdzogs so
 man ngag dgum chung¹⁸¹⁹
 gnyan dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad pa'o¹⁸²⁰

1814 P: namkha'

1815 P: namkha'

1816 DP: brtsol

1817 K: tsal

1818 K: sgom

1819 K: omits rdzogs so man ngag dgum chung

1820 K: pa rdzogs so/_/dge'o

THE LAMP OF THE PRECIOUS VIEW • TRANSLATION

Primordially unoriginated, pure, awakened mind
Has always been identical with the Ocean Mind of the Conquerors.
Out of an illusory distinction between knowledge and ignorance,
Sam̐sāra and nirvana appear as cause and fruit.¹⁸²¹

There is no conceptualization of things because there are no ‘things’.
Subjects are not observable. Objects themselves are non-existent.
An explanation of the reasons is not included because desire has been overcome.
In the realm of dharma, there are no words or expressions.

As for the mirage of nonexistence within appearance itself,
There arises no awareness of nonexistence for those who know it [to be a mirage].
The wise who realize the unoriginated, intrinsic nature of phenomena,
Do not reify it as unoriginated emptiness.

If the intelligent who possess awareness of unoriginated, primordially pacified,
Nondual, unelaborated self-awareness
Do not abide even in the sphere of the ineffable,
How could they perceive [a dichotomy of] real and conventional?

The Conquerors have taught that there is neither seeking nor attainment nor anything other
than
The selfless, the Dharmakāya, the awakened mind, but that
Obscurations are abandoned and awakening is attained
In the same way that forms in a dream vanish when one awakens.¹⁸²²

Know the causes of worldly existence, the afflictive emotions and karma,
To be like people drinking poison in a dream.
In the dream, the suffering of the poisoning is unbearable;
Birth, aging, sickness, and death are the sufferings of cyclic existence.

One should know the many [means of] liberation on the Noble Path

¹⁸²¹ This passage is quoted in *The Lamp Eye of Contemplation* as being from the “Man ngag.” There, the passage is as follows: *rig dang gri mug rgyu yi ghyad par las/ /srid dang rnam grol rgyu dang ‘bras bur snang/ STMG: 195.3*

¹⁸²² These lines are quoted in the *STMG*, where they read as follows: *bdag nyid chos sku byang chub snying po las/ /gzhan nas brtsal zhing thob pa ma yin yang/ /rmi lam sad nas gzugs dang bral ba bzhin/ /sgyib spangs byang chub thob ces rgyal bas gsungs/ STMG: 275.1-2.*

To be like the medicine which cures illness in a dream.
 The moments of gradually purifying suffering
 Are methods of generating distinctive insight and meditative stabilization.

Attaining awakening to the intrinsic nature of mind
 Is like eradicating illness and gaining the bliss of healing in a dream.
 Just as one should not be deceived about cause and effect within a dream,
 So should one be certain about the sleep of ignorance.

Those with insight who have awakened from the sleep of delusion and
 [Those who] are empowered by [knowing] cyclic existence to be like a dream
 Strive for the meaning of the Noble Path [and attain] its resultant clear awareness
 Without arrogance at having attained unchanging, intrinsic nature.

If the dynamic of Sameness is not identical to one's awareness,
 One cannot reverse the current of conceptualization [merely] employing the term
 'sameness'.
 Although cyclic existences such as that in Hell and so forth do not waver from Sameness,
 Those beings appear to wander aimlessly from the terrifying suffering of one worldly
 existence [to another].

Once one has gained understanding of primordially pure nonattainment, and
 Has fully endeavored in practicing the yoga of insight and method, and
 embodied all the supreme qualities of Body and Speech,
 How could such a one display the blemish of unique attributes?

Having purified the mind of misconceptions with supreme insight,
 [One attains] the great accumulation of primordial wisdom, the Dharmakāya of the
 Conqueror.
 Having mastered meditative stabilization of the minor and major marks,
 [One attains] the great accumulation of merit, the Rūpakāya of the Conqueror.¹⁸²³

Accomplishment is not viewed as [something] attained through ripening,
 Nor is primordial wisdom attained from elsewhere.¹⁸²⁴

¹⁸²³ This pair of accumulations—of primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) and of merit (*bsod rnam*)—is associated with the meditative generation of a divine buddha body and with formless meditations on emptiness, respectively. The first is commonly said to result in achievement of the Rūpakāya, and the second is said to result in accomplishing the Dharmakāya. These associations commonly appear throughout Mahāyoga and other tantric literature. Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs Chen)," 231.

¹⁸²⁴ These six lines appear in a slightly different order in the *STMG* as a citation from the Rin po che'i sgro ma. There, the lines are as follows: *dpe byad mtshan gyi ting bdzin dbang thob na/ bsod nams tshogs chen rgyal bas gzugs kyi sku/ shes rab mchog gi log*

Thus, in accordance with the way in which one joins with the Three Bodies, the supreme fruit

Is also the cause of the power of the achievements gained through effort.

The yoga of one's own mind¹⁸²⁵ is insight and meditative stabilization.

It is sentient beings that take up the goal of Sugata;

Such does not ripen in the Pure Lands.

The five impurities¹⁸²⁶ themselves are meditatively cultivated as the blissful heavenly abodes.¹⁸²⁷

Non-abiding insight is uncontaminated by the dust of attachment, and

Does not suffer in the pitiful realm of sentient beings.

Directly perceiving the unimpeded flow of illusory characteristics,

They are recognized as being of a single flavor in the signless, ultimate expanse.

Here ends *The Lamp of the Precious View*, by Master Pelyang.

rtog sems byang nas/ ye shes tshogs chen rgyal ba chos gyi sku/ rnam smin tshul gyis grub par mi lta zhing/ ye shes gzhan nas thob par mi byed do/ STMG: 269.3.

¹⁸²⁵ This term (*rang sems rnal 'byor*) also appears in the *Vajrasattva Questions and Answers* in the answer to Question 12.

¹⁸²⁶ The five impurities (*snyigs ma lnga*) are: the impurity of life span (*tshe'i snyigs ma*); the impurity of view (*lta ba'i snyigs ma*); the impurity of conflicting emotions (*nyon mongs pa'i snyigs ma*); the impurity of sentient beings (*sems can gyi snyigs ma*); and the impurity of our present age (*dus kyi snyigs ma*).

¹⁸²⁷ This is a reference to a line in the *Guhyagarbha tantra* that reads, "The five impurities themselves are the secret, blissful realms." (*snyings ma lnga nyid bde ldan gsang*). *Guhyagarbha tantra*, Chapter Two.

THE LAMP OF THE PRECIOUS VIEW • CRITICAL EDITION

P: Peking 5923, *ngo mtshar bstan bcos, mo* 287b7-288b5 (vol.150, p.235)

D: sDe dge, *sna tshogs, no* 385b4-386b7 (770.4-771.7), Toh. 4451

K: bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, lu, 333-337

gdod nas ma skyes rnam dag byang chub sems
rgyal ba rgya mtsho'i thugs dang ye nas mnyam
rig dang gti mug sgyu ma'i khyad par las
srid dang rnam grol rgyu dang 'bras bur snang

dngos po med phyir dngos por rtog pa'ang med
chos can mi dmigs chos nyid yod ma yin
zhen¹⁸²⁸ pa bzlog phyir rkyen¹⁸²⁹ bshad ma gtogs pa
chos kyi ngang la tshig med¹⁸³⁰ brjod du med

snang ba nyid na med pa'i smig¹⁸³¹ rgyu la
shes ldan rnams ni med pa'i blo mi 'byung
chos rnams rang bzhin ma skyes rtogs pa yi¹⁸³²
mkhas pas skye med stong par sgro mi 'dogs

ji bzhin ma skyes gdod nas zhi ba yi
gnyis med¹⁸³³ spros bral rang rig blo ldan pa
brjod med ngang tsam du yang mi gnas na
dngos dang tha snyad 'dzin par ga la 'gyur

bdag med chos sku byang chub snying po bas¹⁸³⁴
gzhan nas btsal zhing thob pa ma yin yang
rmi lam sad nas gzugs dang bral ba bzhin
sgrib spangs byang chub thob ces rgyal pas gsungs

rmi lam skyes bus¹⁸³⁵ dug¹⁸³⁶ 'thungs ji bzhin du

1828 K: zhes

1829 P: rgyen

1830 D: mod

1831 P: dmig

1832 K: yis

1833 P: 'di

1834 K: las

1835 P: bu

1836 P: drug

srid rgyu nyon mongs las mams de ltar shes
rmi lam dug nad sdug¹⁸³⁷ bsngal bzod dka' ba
skye rgas¹⁸³⁸ na 'chi 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal yin

rmi lam nad¹⁸³⁹ sel sman dang 'dra ba ni
'phags lam rnam thar mang por rig par bya
sdug bsngal khad kyis 'byang¹⁸⁴⁰ ba'i skad cig ma
shes rab ting 'dzin khyad par skye ba'i tshul

rmi lam nad bsal sos pa'i bde rnyed¹⁸⁴¹ pa
sems kyi rang bzhin byang chub thob pa'i dpe
rmi lam nyid na rgyu 'bras mi bslu bzhin
ma rig gnyid log mams la de ltar nges

rmongs pa'i¹⁸⁴² gnyid sad shes rab ldan pa dang
'khor ba rmi lam lta bu'i dbang tsam du
'phags¹⁸⁴³ lam don brtson 'bras bu rig par gsal
rang bzhin mi 'gyur thob pa'i rlom¹⁸⁴⁴ sems med

mnyam pa'i don nyid blo dang¹⁸⁴⁵ ma mnyam na
tshig gi mnyam pas rtog pa'i klung mi zlog¹⁸⁴⁶
dmyal sogs 'khor ba¹⁸⁴⁷ mnyam las ma g.yos kyang
sdug bsngal mi bzad¹⁸⁴⁸ srid las 'khyam¹⁸⁴⁹ par snang

ye nas mnam dag thob pa¹⁸⁵⁰ med rig nas
shes rab thabs kyi rnal 'byor rab brtson zhing
sku gsung che ba'i¹⁸⁵¹ yon tan kun bsdus pas
mtshan ma'i nyes dang ldan pa ga la yin

1837 K: sdul

1838 K: rga

1839 D: nang

1840 D: 'byor

1841 PK: snyed

1842 DK: omits pa'i

1843 K: 'phaggs

1844 P: brlom

1845 P: dar

1846 DP: bzlogs

1847 K: bas

1848 D: zad

1849 D: las 'khyam; K: las 'khyams par snang; P: las 'kham par snang

1850 D: la

1851 K: na'i

shes rab mchog gis log rtog sems sbyangs nas
 ye shes tshogs chen rgyal ba chos kyi sku
 dpe byad mtshan gyi¹⁸⁵² ting 'dzin dbang thob nas
 bsod nams tshogs chen rgyal ba gzugs kyi sku

rnam smin tshul gyis grub par mi lta¹⁸⁵³ zhing
 ye shes gzhan nas thob par mi byed de
 sku gsum ji bzhin sbyor bas 'bras bu'i mchog
 rtsol¹⁸⁵⁴ byas bsgrub pa'i dbang gi¹⁸⁵⁵ rgyu yang yin

rang sems mal 'byor shes rab ting 'dzin yin
 sems can nyid na bde gshegs yul la 'jug
 dag pa'i zhing du smin¹⁸⁵⁶ par mi byed de
 snyigs ma lnga nyid bde ldan gnas su bsgom

shes rab gnas med chags pa'i rdul bral yang
 snying rje sems can khams la skyo¹⁸⁵⁷ ba med
 sgyu ma'i mtshan nyid ma 'gags mngon sum ste¹⁸⁵⁸
 mtshan med ro gcig¹⁸⁵⁹ don dam dbyings su rtogs

slob dpon dpal dbyangs kyis mdzad pa'i¹⁸⁶⁰ lta ba rin po che¹⁸⁶¹ sgron ma¹⁸⁶² rdzogs s.ho¹⁸⁶³

1852 DP: gyis

1853 K: blta

1854 P: brtsol

1855 K: gis

1856 D: smon

1857 K: skye

1858 P: te

1859 P: cig

1860 PK: pa

1861 D: che'i

1862 K: ma zhes bya ba

1863 DK: so

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Abbreviations

ITJ: India Office Library Tibetan J. A classification for Tibetan-language manuscripts from the Stein Collection, now held at the British Library in London.

Margavyūha: Buddhaguhya. *Lam rim chen mo (Greater Stages of the Path)*. KMG, vol. 23, 5.1-133.3. (P4736).

MVT: *Bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen mo (Mahāvvyutpatti)*. P58322.

NGB: *Collected Tantras: rñiṅ ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated During the Period of First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet*. Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973.

NSTB: Bdud-'joms, Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje, and Gyurme Dorje. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism : Its Fundamentals and History*. Edited by Jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje Bdud-'joms. 1st ed, Wisdom Advanced Book. Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publications, 1991.

P: *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition, Kept in the Library of the Otani University, Kyoto*. Edited by Daisetz T. Suzuki. Tokyo, Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1957.

PT: Pelliot tibétain. A classification for Tibetan-language manuscripts from the Pelliot Collection, held at the Bibliothèque National de France.

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