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rgyas’s *Three Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs*”

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1. PREFACE

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to all the wonderful people that have supported me in this difficult but rewarding endeavor. Without you, I could not have possibly found all the necessary information to complete this thesis and unraveled many of the secrets that still linger around the individual of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas.

My heartfelt thanks go to my supervisor Professor Klaus Dieter Mathes, who was right from the beginning inspired by the topic and extremely supportive in further pursuing it. Likewise, I want to thank all the teachers and guest professors at Vienna University who helped me throughout the jungle that any master student must go through. Seiji Kumagai for his support in making the first steps towards a successful master thesis, such as tracing out sources, individuals, texts, and mapping an overall structure. Peter Szanto and Kurtis Schaeffer for their help in making sense of difficult passages and accessing research tools. I am also grateful to Tina Draczcyk for her constant availability and support.

Many thanks to the scholars that have already gained familiarity with Pha dam pa and were of great help in tracing out materials and removing all kinds of confusions: Sarah Harding, Kurtis Schaeffer, David Molk and Dan Martin. A special thank goes to Dan Martin, without whose online Tibetan Vocabulary and the many blog entries related to Pha dam pa the outcome would not have been the same. I am deeply grateful to you for all the years of hard work that you have put into collecting, researching and translating these very particular terms.

I hope that this thesis will be a meaningful contribution to the scholarly world and a source of inspiration for practitioners of the Gcod and Zhi byed traditions.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. General Remarks

Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas (death ca. 1117, Dam pa or Pha dam pa in the following) is a very well-known figure in the contemporary world of Tibetan Buddhism, yet he remains relatively unstudied. He is frequently outshone by the glory of one of his main female disciples Ma cig lab sgron (1055-1149), the founder of the esoteric ritual practice of Gcod¹ “cutting,” attracting interest with regard to his relationship as guru to her. ’Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha yas (1813-1899, henceforth Kong sprul), in his attempt to collect and thereby safeguard the teachings that were at the risk of becoming forgotten in Tibet in the 19th century, spoke about a system of eight lineages of practice transmissions present in Tibet at the time. This included all the various streams of lineages which made their way into the country from India at some point in history and could somehow be categorized. In one of Kong sprul’s seminal works entitled *Sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad kyi smin grol snyingpo phyogs gcig bsdus pa gdams ngag rin po che’i mdzod kyi dkar chag bkra shis grags pa’i rgya mtsho* (henceforth *Gdams ngag mdzod*), after having pointed out the sources of the Dharma in India, he continues to trace back the origins to the principal agents who were involved in the transmission of those teachings to Tibet.² He talks about the “ten great pillars that upheld the lineage of explanation”³ – ten translators who contributed to the diffusion of Dharma in Tibet through their translations and revisions of important Indian and Chinese texts – and the “eight lineage holders of the chariots of the great practice lineages.”⁴ The main concern of the latter eight was not translation, revision

¹ According to Kollmar-Paulenz most Tibetan sources agree about Pha dam pa being the founder of the Gcod school. He is said to have transmitted it through his disciples Skyo ston Bsod nams Bla ma (b. 11th century) and Sma ra Ser po (also called Rmang ra Ser po or Yar klung pa Sma ra ser po) in a male lineage (Pho gcod) and through Ma gcig lab sgron (1055-1149) in a female lineage (Mo gcod). However, at the same time, for instance in Padma dkar po: *Chos ’byung*, Skyo ston Bla ma is depicted as the one who passed onto Ma cig the Gcod teachings he received from Pha dam pa. In any case, because of having brought forth the elaborate Gcod ritual that caught the attention of so many practitioners, Ma cig lab sgron was generally considered the main founder of Gcod and was seen as an emanation of Prajñāpāramitā. Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, preface, 11. In the *Blue Annals* it is stated that Ma cig met Pha dam pa at Yar klungs rog pa where he bestowed on her the precepts of Gcod. The foundations of Gcod seem to have ancient Indian origins as one can see from the *Blue Annals*, “Lord Maitrīpāda (Maitrīpa 986-1063) had said that even in the *Prajñāpāramitā* mention was made of practices which imitated those of the tantras. Because of this, the system was (originally) called Spyod yul. How can it be similar to the tantra? Because it agrees with the standpoint of the *Hevajratāntra*.” Roerich 1979, pdf page 58. For more on the topic see Harding, “Did Machik Really Teach Chod?”

² Harding 2007, 26.

³ *Bshad brgyud ’degs pa’i ka chen bcu*. Thon mi sambhoṭa (7th century), Vairocana (8-9th century), Ka ba dpal brtsegs (8th century), Cog ro Klu’i rgyal mtshan, Zhang Ye shes sde (8th century), Rin chen bzang po (958-1055), ’Brom ston Rgyal ba ’byung gnas (1004-1064), Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109), Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182-1251) and ’Gos Khug pa lhas btsas (11th century).

⁴ *Sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*. 1) Rnying ma. 2) Bka gdams 3) Sa skya 4) Mar pa Bka’ bgyud 5) Shang pa Bka’ bgyud 6) Zhi byed and Gcod 7) Sbyor drug 8) Rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub. In the 16th century the Rnying ma master Shes rab ’od zer (1517-1584) had already spoken about eight individuals that he considered to

and introduction of more textual resources in Tibet, but the path of practice itself. By ensuring that the previously established transmissions remained intact and alive, they also ensured the doctrine of the Buddha would continue in both its aspects of textual transmission and of practice and realization. As we know, in the course of Tibet's history, a number of major and minor traditions formed, so by the 19th century this had made it rather difficult to sketch an overview and find the connections and common roots among them. We can therefore appreciate the significance of Kong sprul's accomplishment of systematically categorizing all of these extant lineages into a certain number of practice lineages, connecting them to the old traditions and hence assuring their survival.

Among these Eight Great Chariots, there is the *Sdug bsngal zhi byed* "pacification of suffering" lineage that was spread forth by none other than Pha dam pa. Although much research is still necessary concerning the particulars of this lineage, the relevance of the Zhi byed doctrine is obvious. To various degrees it was integrated into all lineages of Tibetan Buddhism and lies at the basis of the very vibrant Gcod philosophy and practice.

In the introduction to the translation of 'Jig bral chos kyi seng ge's (19th century) *Grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po rje btsun dam pa sangs rgyas kyi rnam par thar pa dngos grub 'od stong 'bar ba'i nyi ma*, the living master Tshe ring dbang 'du Rin po che (*1935), who is seen as a reincarnation of Pha dam pa, mentions how the Zhi byed doctrine was mainly integrated into the Dge lugs pa lineage, which began with Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), by Pan chen Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1567/8-1662, the Fourth Panchen Lama) who felt it would be a source of great blessings for the lineage.⁵ According to Tshe ring dbang 'dus Rin po che, the practices of *tshe sgrub*, prolonging of life, and *bcud len*, the extraction of nourishment from the elements, practiced in the Dge lugs pa school even today have their origins in a text⁶ attributed to Pha dam pa. Moreover, the refuge and *bodhicitta* prayer of their Gnyung gnas practice are attributed

be the "legacy of former adepts" to whom he gave the name of "eight great pillars of practice lineages." This was the earliest source for Kong sprul's later categorization, which differs from his because it places the focus on the individuals involved in the transmission rather than the lineages they transmitted. Harding 2007, 26-27.

⁵ Molk 2008, 2.

⁶ What Molk calls the *Ali Kali Scripture Initiation of the Five Paths*. Unfortunately, the Tibetan title remains obscure for now but a short part of it is included in Molk 2008, Appendix 5. Regarding the initiation Molk says, "It is an extraordinary initiation and practice of highest Yogatantra, which Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas received directly from the goddess Nairātmyā at the time of his enlightenment. It has many unusual features, such as being conferred on the basis of a volume of scripture rather than a painted *maṇḍala*. When Nairātmyā conferred the initiation upon Pha dam pa, she did so on the basis of a *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture that she drew in space." Molk 2008, 18.

to him,⁷ as is the practice of the main protectress of the Dalai Lamas' Śrīdevi,⁸ which he says was brought to Tibet from India by Pha dam pa.⁹ Moreover, one of the greatest Tibetan scholars of the 20th century Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (1927-1997) claims in *Grub mtha'i skor gyi rnam bshad* (henceforth *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*) that the famous custom of sky burial goes back to Pha dam pa; before this was introduced to Tibet, people used to either burn or bury corpses.¹⁰ The essence of Zhi byed also entered the Kam tshang Bka' brgyud order. I assume that this started with the famous meeting between Pha dam pa and the great *yogin* of the 11th century Mi la ras pa (1040-1123) in the area that is now known as Snying rje mgon khang.¹¹ On this occasion Pha dam pa shared the essence of his doctrine with Mi la ras pa in the song called *Grub chen dam pa sangs rgyas kyis rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la ras pa la gdams pa'i dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed kyi snying por dril ba'i rdo rje'i mgur*¹² included in *Mi la ras pa'i mgur 'bum*. Reading through Mi la ras pa's songs, the influence of Pha dam pa does shine through from time to time, although of course insufficient research has been undertaken to assert whether their encounter was the only input for these Zhi byed-like utterances by Mi la ras pa, or if there was another source. For instance, the usage of the syllable *phaṭ* to dispel the obstacles of torpor and agitation and to settle in the nature of the mind – also used in the practice of Gcod – are tools that Mi la ras pa taught to his students and which Pha dam pa taught to him on that day at their meeting on the mountain pass at Snying rje mgon khang. Pha dam pa told Mi la ras pa:

“It is to refresh with *phaṭ* when sinking. It is to cut the roots when projecting. It is to settle in basic space when agitated. It is to regard their very nature when consciousness pursues outer objects.”¹³

According to Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las, there is no doubt they really met.¹⁴ Investigating their connection further, I came across a *mgur* to Mi la ras pa's female student Dpal dar 'bum,

⁷ For the exact lines in English see Molk 2008, 2.

⁸ Dpal lhan lha mo.

⁹ Molk 2008, 2-3.

¹⁰ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 495.

¹¹ Dilgo Khyentse 204, x.

¹² Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol.13, 366-38. Tsadra foundation lists by La stod mi bskyod rdo rje (Rgyal ba Te ne 1127–1217) as the author.

http://dnz.tsadra.org/index.php/Gdams_ngag_mdzod_Shechen_Printing/Volume_13. Accessed March 3, 2020.

¹³ Translation by Harding 2019, 73. The original passage states: *byings na phaṭ kyis gseng ba yin / 'phro na rtsa ba gcod pa yin / rgod na dbyings su jog pa yin / shes pa yul phyir 'brang tsa na / de nyid don la blta ba yin*. Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 13, 371.

¹⁴ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 495.

where he is asked by her about the practice of *phaṭ* for a *yogin* who practices Gcod¹⁵ when negative circumstances arise. Mi la ras pa sings:

“Recollecting the scattering of discursive thoughts is the outer *phaṭ*. Waking up sinking awareness is the inner *phaṭ*. Settling in the state of the true nature is the ultimate *phaṭ*.”¹⁶

It is certainly worth considering whether this instruction, along with the explanation on Gcod in the previous part of that *mgur* to Dpal dar ’bum, is drawn from the teachings he received by Dam pa that day at Snying rje mgron khang.

In her introduction to the *Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum gyi skor, the Tradition of Pha dam-pa sangs-rgyas: A Treasured Collection of his Teachings Transmitted*¹⁷ (hence *Zhi byed Collection* in the running text and ZC in the footnotes), Nimri Aziz mentions how, although the tradition of Pha dam pa as a distinct doctrinal scheme has become very obscure, there are still various branches of practice methods, and there are instructions in all of the main schools of Buddhism in Tibet that have their roots in these branches.¹⁸ There are some 50 mentions of the doctrine of Zhi byed in ’Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal’s (1392-1481) *Deb ther sngon po*¹⁹ (henceforth *Blue Annals*). It is mostly mentioned in the passages where the transmissions which important Tibetan masters²⁰ from all traditions received in the course of their training are listed. Therefore, his doctrine must certainly have had a great influence on the philosophical and soteriological development in Tibet in the centuries during and after Pha dam pa’s life. In Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba’s (1504-1566) *Dam pa’i chos kyi ’khor los bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston* (henceforth *Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*) he writes:

¹⁵ The song is located in the chapter called *Dpal dar ’bum dang mjal ba’i skor*. Gtsang smyon her ru ka 1990, 302-314. It is very interesting that there is the mention of Gcod. It would be worthwhile to investigate deeper, since from the content of the song it seems that Gcod as a practice of offering one’s body already existed and had spread to some extent. Does this therefore mean that this practice was already a part of the teachings on Gcod which Pha dam pa transmitted, or was it initiated by Ma cig and already that well-known at such an early stage of development?

¹⁶ Gtsang smyon Her ru ka 1990, 308: *rnam rtog ’thor ba sdud pa nang gi phaṭ / rig pa bying ba bseng ba phyi’i phaṭ / gnas lugs ngang la ’jog pad on gyi phaṭ /*

¹⁷ ZC 1979.

¹⁸ ZC vol. ka, 5.

¹⁹ ’Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po*. Roerich 1979.

²⁰ Such as ’Khrul zhig seng ge rgyal pa (13th century) from the Rnying ma school, the 3. Karma pa Rang ’byung rdo rje (1284-1339) from the Karma Bka’ brgyud order and Yang dgon pa Rgyal mtshan dpal (1213-1258) from the ’Brug pa Bka’ brgyud. See Roerich 1979.

“Coming [to Tibet], the one with the name Indian Noble Man spread widely the noble Dharma called Zhi byed, out of which innumerable practice lineages arose.”²¹

’Jig bral chos kyi seng ge mentions in his accounts that Dam pa’s heart disciple Kun dga’²² (11th century) asked him directly whether or not his lineage had been taught in Tibet previously. Dam pa then answered, that there are four lineages which he introduced to Tibet:

“The supreme lineage of the instructions of the *yi dam* deities, [...] the common lineage of the 55 female and male *yogins* and *yoginīs*, [...] the miraculous lineage of the instructions of the 36 Great Ones, [...] and the special lineage of the open heart and blood of the *dākinīs* [...]”²³

This clearly reveals the importance of the Zhi byed tradition and yet there are almost no studies that look into the philosophical nature of it.

Pha dam pa has been mainly studied by Dan Martin²⁴ and Sarah Harding.²⁵ But also Kurtis Schaeffer in the paper *Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dam pa Sangye*²⁶ (henceforth *Crystal Orbs*) has looked at a number of anthologies that are related to Pha dam pa. Kollmar-Paulenz²⁷ in her PhD dissertation has looked at and listed Tibetan texts that deal with the history of the Zhi byed and Gcod traditions.

There have been several translations of texts ascribed to Pha dam pa, such as the most well-known *Pha dam pa sangs rgyas kyis ’da’ ka zhal chems ding ri brgya rtsa ma*²⁸ (henceforth *Ding ri brgya tsa ma*), and *Grub pa’i dbang phyug chen po rje btsun dam pa sangs rgyas kyi rnam par thar pa dngos grub ’od stong ’bar ba’i nyi ma*²⁹ – the only biography translated so far – the 13th volume of the *Gdams ngag mdzod* by Kong sprul³⁰ on the topic of Zhi byed and text passages in blog entries and articles by Dan Martin.³¹

²¹ Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba 1980, vol. *ba*, 12: *dam pa rgya gar mtshan gyis byon pa yis /sdug bsngal zhi byed ces bya dam pa’i chos / rgyas par mdzad ste sgrub rgyud dpag med byung /*

²² Also known as Thugs sras Kun dga’, Byang chub sems pa Kun dga’ and Bla ma Kun dga’.

²³ ’Jig bral chos kyi seng ge 1992, 88-89: *mchog gi brygud pa yi dam lha’i gdams pa / [...] thun mong gi brygud pa rnal ’byor pho mo lnga bcu rtsa lnga’i gdams pa / [...] ngo mtshar gyi brygud pa dag nyid chen po sum cu tsa drug gi gdams pa / [...] khyad par gyi brygud pa mkha ’gro ma’i snying grag thang la ’phos pa [...]*

²⁴ Various blog entries on <https://tibeto-logic.blogspot.com>.

²⁵ Harding 2003, 2007 and 2019.

²⁶ Schaeffer, “Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dampa Sangye.”

²⁷ Kollmar-Paulenz 1993.

²⁸ DV vol. *kha*, 561-571. I didn’t find it in the *Zhi byed Collection*.

²⁹ ’Jig ’bral chos kyi seng ge 1992. Molk 2008.

³⁰ Harding 2019.

³¹ <https://tibeto-logic.blogspot.com>.

Dam pa's teachings can truly be described as vibrant today. They have been integrated in numerous lineages of Tibetan Buddhism that are still practiced and their transmission up to the present day by teachers of Buddhist practices appears to be intact. This is true even though there is, broadly speaking, little knowledge regarding the question of which elements specifically can be traced back to Pha dam pa. The late Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rin po che (1910-1991) is one example of those teachers during the last century who was well aware of the value of Pha dam pa's legacy and gave teachings on his texts.³²

2.2. Pha dam pa's life³³

It has proven to be very difficult to gain clarity on the life of this great Indian *yogin* from an objective historical perspective. The accounts available are mainly based on the Tibetan historiographic tradition, making it extremely hard to filter fiction from factual events. This genre of *rnam thar* is typically characterized by numerous topoi and elaborate stories of miraculous acts by the saint in question and are simply hagiographies. According to Kollmar-Paulenz, the earliest biography of Pha dam pa seems to have been the *Dam pa sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar*³⁴ by Bon dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1375-1451). It is a very concise account with a mere twenty folios focusing mainly on recounting the six previous incarnations of the *yogin* rather than historical events of his incarnation as the Black *Ācārya*.³⁵ Dung dkar mentions that the great *Gling ge sar* epos also writes about Pha dam pa, in particular about his extremely long life span. However, he says, although it indisputably is a great piece of art, it has been copied and edited many times over the centuries. In the course of that process, portions were often added by the editors and scribes – who most times were not very learned in the fields of history and other common fields of knowledge. For this reason there are many contradictions in these kinds of sources and they cannot be completely reliable.³⁶ We shall have a brief look at the life of Pha dam pa as it is recounted in 'Gos Lo tsā ba's *Blue Annals*,³⁷ a well-acknowledged chronicle on Buddhism in Tibet, since they offer an early linear and concise account.

³² Dilgo Khyentse 2005.

³³ This paragraph is mainly based on the *Blue Annals*. Whenever this is not the case it will be indicated in a footnote.

³⁴ Bo dong: *Encyclopedia Tibetica*, vol. 125.

³⁵ Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, 20.

³⁶ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 495.

³⁷ Roerich 1979, xxx.

He was born to an Indian brahman family as the middle son in a district known as Kūpadvīpa in southern India, probably in a coastal city in Andra Pradesh at an indeterminable date.³⁸ According to Martin his origins were without doubt Dravidian.³⁹ As a child he studied all various fields of knowledge excelling at all of them. Later he received ordination from the preceptor Kṣemadeva at Vikramaśīla monastery. He then started to study the Vinaya and dedicated himself to the practice of the *pratimokṣa* vows. He obtained instructions and initiations from a great number of teachers, usually known as the 54 female and male *siddhas*.⁴⁰ Among them, eleven taught him the Sūtra Vehicle of Dialectics and Grammar, eleven gave him teachings on the so-called father tantras and the moving of *prāṇa*,⁴¹ twelve granted him teachings on the so-called mother tantras and the experience of bliss,⁴² eleven taught him the symbols of *mahāmudrā*⁴³ and ten introduced him to the nature of mind.⁴⁴ There are some among these teachers that carry the names of some highly renowned masters of widely different dates, such as Āryadeva (3rd century), Nāgārjuna (2nd-3rd century), Lūyipāda, Śāntideva (7th-8th century), Tilopa (988-1069), Nāropa (1016-1100), Virūpa, Śāvaripa, and Saraha (8th century). Probably some of them were later individuals named after the earlier more famous ones. Another possibility from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective would be that he encountered the earlier famous ones in the expanse of his realization. In any case, he received all the instructions of the outer Sūtra path of dialectics⁴⁵ as well as the inner tantric path of fruition.⁴⁶ He then devoted himself to practice in various places throughout India and Nepal during which many meditation deities directly appeared to him. He obtained innumerable accomplishments, the path of seeing, and realized *mahāmudrā*. In the traditional accounts, he is said to have visited Tibet five times – not all agree on the number of visits⁴⁷ – and to have spent twelve years in

³⁸ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 25.

³⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁰ Although not all texts agree on the number, those in the *Zhi byed Collection* unanimously do. These 54 teachers are probably historically prior to the texts that speak of 84 *mahāsiddhas* because of the dating of the available *Bstan 'gyur* texts that list the 84 *mahāsiddhas*. According to Martin most or all of these texts must stem from a date later than Pha dam pa's death in 1117 CE. Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 35.

⁴¹ *G.yo ba rlung*. 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po*, vol. na, 771₆.

⁴² *Bde ba'i nyams*. Ibid., vol. na, 771₆.

⁴³ *Phyag chen brda*. Ibid., vol. na, 771₇.

⁴⁴ For the complete list of names see Roerich 1979, 868-869.

⁴⁵ *Phyi mtshan nyid theg pa*.

⁴⁶ *Nang 'bras bu'i theg pa*. These teachings are summarized by Dharmaśrī (1654 -1717/1718) in his *Zhi byed snga phyi bar gsum gyi khrid yig rnam phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa'i bdud rtsi'i snying khu*. Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod* vol. 13, 311-408.

⁴⁷ Martin writes about three visits. Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 33 and Martin, “New Padampa Manuscripts.”

China during which he is said to have spread the Dharma as Bodhidharma (5th/6th century), the founder of Chan Buddhism.⁴⁸

On a more personal and intimate level, Martin's article *Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet* reveals informations about his dress code and general postural manners, of which glimpses can also be gained in the texts of the translation in this thesis.⁴⁹ Dam pa most likely wore but a piece of woolen cloth that he would loosely tie around his lower body and no jewelry and additional clothing. He preferred to be and teach naked. Normally he would abide in the squatting posture – in the manner still widely practiced in India – which represents the way he is generally depicted in various iconographies. His eyes often stared right ahead into space, at times slightly upwards. A reason for this might be drawn from the *Blue Annals* in which he tells Kun dga' that this type of gaze is an auspicious posture peculiar to the Prajñāpāramitā.⁵⁰ Concerning his hands, the most common way of depicting them is an unusual one where both hands, mirroring each other, perform the teaching *mudrā* in which the thumbs and index fingers touch at the tips. This is a very interesting and unique iconography.⁵¹ Martin interprets it as referring to the double teaching style of Pha dam pa and says that his every physical or verbal action being was imbued with deep symbolic meaning. In the Gcod tradition there is a shift in the manner of his depiction, with him having a hair-knot on top of his head and holding the ritual objects peculiar to the *gcod* ritual: a *damaru* and a bone trumpet or a bell.

2.3. Pha dam pa's disciples

Once Pha dam pa was asked by Kun dga' how many people had heard his teachings in Tibet. He replied, "Can you count the stars in the sky over Dingri?"⁵² In short, the number of followers must have been large. His main or heart disciples were certainly the various lineage holders at the top of their respective transmission lineages. In particular, in the context of the later transmission, one finds certain groups of students mentioned in the *Deb ther sngon po*, the *Gdams ngag mdzod* and Kong sprul's encyclopedia *Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa gsung rab*

⁴⁸ See Molk 2008, 19 Edou 1996, 32, Hopkins 1996, 537 and Martin, "Padampa Site Sighted in Yunnan."

⁴⁹ The present paragraph draws from Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 30-32. For a probably less accurate physical description of Pha dam pa see Das 1992, 225.

⁵⁰ Roerich 1979, xxx (pdf 551)

⁵¹ For a substantial iconographic study of Pha dam pa, see Lokesh 1996, 97-98 and Lokesh 2003 vol. 9, 2619-2620. Thanks to Martin "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 24, for the hint.

⁵² Roerich 1979, pdf 520 and Molk 2008, 90.

rim po che'i mdzod bslab pa gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos shes bya kun khyab, (henceforth *Shes bya mdzod*):⁵³ the 108 great sons,⁵⁴ the 24 great ladies,⁵⁵ the 26 destroyers of illusion,⁵⁶ the 12 disciples pressing down the cushion⁵⁷ and the four *yogin* gatekeepers⁵⁸ Dam pa Phyar chen, Dam pa Phyar chung, Vajrakrodha and Kun dga'. Martin mentions another group called 21 female and male *siddhas*, which I could not find in these sources.⁵⁹ The number and capacity of his female disciples were remarkable for that era: they include the aforementioned 24 great ladies, one of whom was Ma cig slab sgron. Most of these gained great accomplishments. However, although Pha dam pa was widely reknown as being an extraordinary master and consulted by many for various reasons, there were probably still relatively few who were sincerely eager about traversing the path of emancipation based on his guidance and ready to leave behind all worldly purposes – about one or two hundred, according to Martin's estimate.⁶⁰

2.4. Pha dam pa's works

There is a large variety of names that Pha dam pa was known by, which all have to be considered if we want to cover all works attributed to him as author, contributing author, translator or scribe – as in the case for some texts in the *Bstan 'gyur*, the *Dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed rtsa ba'i chos sde dang / yan lag bdun kyi gcod yul* (henceforth *Dingri Volumes* in the running text and DV in the footnotes)⁶¹ and the *Zhi byed Collection*⁶². These are Kamalaśrī, Kamalaśīla,⁶³ Ācārya Nag po “Black Preceptor”, Dam pa Nag chung “Little Black Noble Man”, Rgya gar Dam pa or Dam pa Rgya gar “Indian Noble Man”, Rgya gar Na(g) gu “Indian Black One”, Na gu “Black One” and, rather seldom, Karuṇasiddhi “Compassion Attainment” and Mi pham mgon po⁶⁴ “Undefeatable Protector.”⁶⁵ In the various search tools and catalogues he is mainly listed as Kamalaśrī, Kamalaśīla and Pha dam pa.

⁵³ 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po*, vol. 12, 1022. Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod* and *Shes bya mdzod*.

⁵⁴ *Bu chen brgya rtsa brgyad*.

⁵⁵ *Jo mo nyi shu rtsa bzhi*. For all names and short descriptions see Roerich 1979, xxx

⁵⁶ *'Khrul zhig nyi shu rtsa drug*.

⁵⁷ *Gdan non bcu gnyis*.

⁵⁸ *Sgo pa'i rnal 'byor pa bzhi*.

⁵⁹ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶¹ DV 2012-2013.

⁶² ZC 1979.

⁶³ This must be the reason why he is usually seen as the same Kamalaśīla (8th century) who visited Tibet during king Khri srong lde bstan's reign and who is reported to have defeated the Chinese opponent Heshang Mohyen. However, in *Lion of Siddhas*, Chos kyi seng ge says that there is no reference in Dam pa's own speech but that in old texts of the tradition one finds the mention that his names in India were Kamalaśīla and Kamalaśrī.

⁶⁴ Skt. Ajitanātha.

⁶⁵ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 35 and “New Padampa Manuscripts.”

There exist several collections of Zhi byed texts in which texts on Gcod are also collected. The most well-known ones are the *Zhi byed Collection* edited with an English introduction by Barbara Nimri Aziz and the *Dingri Volumes* – which is newer, far more extensive and in computerized script, unlike the handwritten copy of the former collection. Another one is Bo dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal's *Gsung 'bum / de nyid 'dus rgyas 'bring bsdus kyi skor* (henceforth *Encyclopedia Tibetica*)⁶⁶ which contains various texts on Zhi byed; unfortunately I was unable to access this. Beyond these, no separate canon with texts attributed solely to Pha dam pa exists. It is by no means tenable to assume, as some do, that the texts to be found in any of these collections are authored uniquely by Pha dam pa and might therefore be called his *Gsung 'bum*. In fact, these textual corpora consist of texts by various authors which often are not indicated, and one would have to look at each of the manifold colophons – assuming there is one – to find out with which author one is dealing with. The *Zhi byed Collection* as the oldest is less extensive – since textual proliferation on the topic of Zhi byed developed over the centuries – and has four main authors: Pha dam pa, Kun dga', his student Pa tshab Tshul khrims 'bar (1077-1158) and Rgyal ba Te ne (1127–1217).⁶⁷ The other collections contain various root texts and commentaries that have come into existence over the centuries thanks to various masters such as 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse' dbang po (1820-1892).⁶⁸

The best known literary piece authored by Pha dam pa is the *Ding ri brgya rtsa ma*.⁶⁹ This is said to be a spiritual testament made by Pha dam pa not too long before he left his body, offering these verses of advice as an answer to a student asking what would become of his disciples after he left this world.⁷⁰ A variety of recensions of this work exist. It consists of about a hundred couplets in verse form, although a shorter version also exists called *Rgya gar gyi grub thob chen po dam pa rgya gar ram dam pa sangs rgyas zhes pa 'i gsung mgur zhal gdams ding ri brgyad cu pa* (henceforth *Ding ri brgyad bcu ba*).⁷¹

⁶⁶ It was published as *Encyclopedia Tibetica: The Collected Works of Bo-don Paṇ-chen Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal*. Bo dong: *Encyclopedia Tibetica*. Thanks to Sarah Harding for providing me with that information. Sarah Harding, private communication via email, April 4, 2019.

⁶⁷ For more information see this thesis: paragraph 3.1. The Canon *The Zhi Byed Collection*. For a catalogue of texts that deal with the topic of Gcod and Zhi byed, see Kollmar-Paulenz 1993.

⁶⁸ For instance a commentary to the *Āli Kāli Tantra* called *Dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed kyi gzhung gsang ba bsam gyi mi khyab pa'i rgyud sde'i dum bu rin po che'i snying po* which is also included in Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. *pa*, 2-16 and in DV vol. *ca*, 261-282. Molk has translated it into English. Molk, unpublished translation. David Molk, private communication via email, March 3, 2019.

⁶⁹ *The Ding ri Hundred*. For a translation see Dilgo Khyentse 2005.

⁷⁰ Dilgo Khyentse 2004, xvi.

⁷¹ Kong sprul: *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 13, 31-36. See Martin, "The Tingri Hundred."

An important set of texts attributed to him are the *Bodhicaryapradīpa*,⁷² *Yogapathapradīpa*⁷³ and *Cittaguhyapradīpa*⁷⁴ which are compiled in the *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum*.⁷⁵ According to Kong sprul they were the “first of all the spoken mysteries”⁷⁶ uttered by Pha dam pa. The *Shes bya mdzod* states that based on various sūtras, dhāraṇīs and tantras, Pha dam pa composed the *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum* as a summary of the Vinaya Piṭaka, Sūtra Piṭaka and Abhidharma Piṭaka.⁷⁷ According to the colophons of the *Bodhicaryapradīpa* and the *Cittaguhyapradīpa*, the Indian adept from Kashmir Jñānaguhya (ca. 11th century) and the Tibetan *lo tsā bas* ’Ong po and Lo Btsun chung (ca. 11th century) respectively translated them from the Sanskrit. The second text only mentions the author’s name in the colophon. Although most scholars mention only the *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum*, in the *Sde dge Bstan ’gyur* they are part of a set of nine Indic treatises called *Zhi byed sgron ma skor dgu*.⁷⁸ According to Martin they surprisingly survived in the *Bstan ’gyur* and form the foundation for the middling *Zhi byed* transmissions.⁷⁹

Kong sprul explains concisely the content of these three in the *Shes bya mdzod*.⁸⁰ The *Bodhicaryapradīpa* is a summary on the topic of superior discipline, hence has the purpose of pointing out the right conduct to adopt based on the body. It also carries instructions related to the practice of the thirty-four *kāli* “consonants” of the Sanskrit alphabet by explaining their semantic meaning related to the training in superior discipline. The *Yogapathapradīpa* encloses the teachings of the third basket on Buddhist metaphysics – that support the development of superior knowledge – instructions related to speech as well as the semantic meaning of the sixteen *āli* “vowels” of the Sanskrit alphabet. The *Cittaguhyapradīpa* is a summary of the words of the Buddha that were collected in the second basket. It teaches on superior meditative concentration, objects for focusing the mind and their relation to the semantic meaning of the fifty-five sounds⁸¹ of the Sanskrit alphabet along with the inherent *a* sound.⁸² According to several colophons of a number of texts included in the *Bstan ’gyur*, Pha dam pa was also a

⁷² *Byang chub spyod pa’i sgron ma. Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zhi, 263v7-264v2.

⁷³ *Rnal ’byor lam gyi sgron ma. Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zhi, 264v3-265r4.

⁷⁴ *Gsang ba thugs kyi sgron ma. Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zhi, 265r4-265v6.

⁷⁵ Harding 2007, 429 (FN 6). I could not find the Sanskrit for name of the compilation. There is an unpublished translation of these three texts by Molk. David Molk, private communication via email, March 3, 2019.

⁷⁶ Harding 2007, 261. It is important to remember, that probably Jñānaguhya was the scribe, as it was the case for other texts attributed to Pha dam pa.

⁷⁷ Harding 2007, 261.

⁷⁸ *The Nine Lamps of Pacification. Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zhi, 260v5-265v6.

⁷⁹ Dan Martin, paper presented at a conference. Thanks to Prof. Mathes for the material. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication.

⁸⁰ Harding 2007, 261.

⁸¹ Fifty consonants and vowels, and four neutral letters. Harding 2007, 261.

⁸² Harding 2007, 261.

translator, either alone or with the support of a Tibetan *lo tsā ba*,⁸³ as the word *rang 'gyur* “self-translated” indicates.

2.5. The Zhi byed doctrine

2.5.1. Textual Authority

For all streams of Tibetan Buddhism it is important to demonstrate authority and to prove their genuineness of not being contrived by self-made spirituality, their textual authority and an uninterrupted line of transmission to some spiritual authority of the past – in the best case that of Buddha Śākyamuni himself. Are there such instances in the case of Zhi byed? And if yes, what are they?

Generally, it is accepted by all the various authors involved in commenting on the topic, that Zhi byed goes back to the *prajñāpāramitā* teachings, hence implying that Buddha Śākyamuni himself stands at the top of the lineage of transmission. Another textual authoritative source, yet not mentioned by all authors and not attested in any traditional Tibetan canon, is said to be the *Āli kāli gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud* (henceforth *Āli kāli tantra*).⁸⁴ This is directly asserted by Kong sprul and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po.⁸⁵ Although the *Blue Annals* do not explicitly mention this as a source text for the doctrine, they mention it in the context of the later transmission as being a special tantra⁸⁶ called *Rgyud chu klung chen po* without elucidating further.⁸⁷ This assumption is backed up by the fact that both Zhi byed canons, the *Dingri Volumes* and the *Zhi byed Collection*, start with the well known

⁸³ Tibskrit Philology lists *Peking Bstan 'gyur* no. 2439 through 2453 as texts “belonging to a Pha dam pa collection, although mostly translated by him and his associates.” Tibsrikt Philology, entry “Kamalaśīla (d. 1117).” Accessed March 22, 2020.

⁸⁴ A tantra not attested in any *Bka' gyur*, *Bstan 'gyur* nor the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*. The Tibetan text in the *Zhi byed Collection* gives the following Sanskrit name: *Ali kali guhya chintapani bhayu maha tantra nama*. ZC vol. ka, 3v1. The *Dingri Volumes* version the following: *Āli kāli guhya acintya guhya mahānādī tantra nāma*. DV vol. ka, 101. Also see for an unattested version of the title Molk 2008, 332 (FN 34) and Molk, *The Tantra of the Great River of Inconceivable Secret Ali Kali*, unpublished translation. David Molk, private communication via email, Feb. 26, 2019. (The Sanskrit name according to Molk is *Saddharma duḥkha śamati grantha guhya chinta tantra barga ratnagarbha viharatisma ali kali guhya ah chintapani maha ratna kanda nama* or *Saddharma dukha shamati grantha guhya chinta tantra barga ratnagarbha viharatisma*. The short title *Ali kali guhya chintapani maha ratna kanda nama*.)

⁸⁵ Harding 2007, 255 and 'Jam dbyang mkhyen brtse dbang po: *Dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed kyi gzhung gsang ba bsam gyi mi khyab pa'i rgyud sde'i dum bu rin po che'i snying po*, 2801-3. I don't know about Bo dong pan chen phyogs las rnam rgyal. However, vol. 288 of his *Gsung 'bum* commences with it. Bo dong: *Encyclopedia Tibetica*, vol. 288: 9-118.

⁸⁶ *Sgos rgyud*. Roerich 1979, pdf 585.

⁸⁷ Roerich 1979, pdf 585 FN ?

*Bhagavatīprajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*⁸⁸ and the *Āli kāli tantra*.⁸⁹ 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po in the colophon to his commentary to the *Āli kāli tantra*⁹⁰ states that the essence of all lineages and teachings of Pacification that were proclaimed go back to that very tantra and that its tenth chapter *Lam lnga* “the five paths” is the one that portrays unmistakably the complete paths to be traversed by individuals of all capacities.⁹¹ According to Kong sprul, there exists another tantra that constitutes a source text for the system, the *Mkha' 'gro ma thams cad kyi thugs kyi gsang ba phyag chen brda'i rgyud* (henceforth *Phyag chen brda'i rgyud*).⁹² It is only contained in *Encyclopedia Tibetica*⁹³ – which I was not able to access – and in no other canon, not even in the *Zhi byed Collection* or the *Dingri Volumes*.

Based on my research, Pha dam pa's Pacification is primarily related to Prajñāpāramitā, especially in the earlier phases of his transmission. The *Āli kāli tantra* and eventually also the *Phyag chen brda'i rgyud* are secondary and therefore not equally fundamental because they probably became relevant only in the phase of his later transmission and they still belong to the doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā, expressing it in a tantric format.⁹⁴ Thus, Prajñāpāramitā remains the foundation of Zhi byed.

2.5.2. The Etymology of Zhi byed

The name Zhi byed is said to stem from the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, in particular the sentence “the mantra that pacifies all suffering,”⁹⁵ which sounds reasonable when one classifies the doctrine as a practice of *Prajñāpāramitā*. Kong sprul clarifies that the instructions found in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature were “taught in order to immediately pacify suffering.”⁹⁶ Of course all Dharma taught by the Buddha has that purpose. However, according to Kong sprul Pacification methods have the power to instantly remove the first of the three kinds of suffering,

⁸⁸ *Bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po. Sde dge Bka' 'gyur* vol. ka, 144b4-146a3. DV vol. ka, 1-8. ZC vol. ka, 1r-3r.

⁸⁹ DV vol. ka, 9-124. ZC vol. ka, 3v-58v. In English commonly referred to as *Unfathomable Secret Āli kāli Great River Tantra* (in short *Āli Kāli Great River Tantra*).

⁹⁰ The short name is *Āli Kāli'i rgyud kyi dum bu*.

⁹¹ DV vol. ca, 280₁₋₃.

⁹² In English called *Mahāmudrā Symbol Tantra*. Harding 2007, 255. Not attested by that name in any *Bka' 'gyur*, *Bstan 'gyur* or the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*. In *Encyclopedia Tibetica* vol. 288 it is the second text. Bo dong: *Encyclopedia Tibetica*, vol. 288: 119-168.

⁹³ Bo dong: *Encyclopedia Tibetica*, vol. 288: 119-168. Sarah Harding, private communication via email, April 6, 2019.

⁹⁴ See Roerich 1979, pdf 584.

⁹⁵ *Sdug sngal thams cad rab tu zhi bar byed pa'i sngags*. Roerich 1979, p.867? See also Thu'u bkwan 1984, Molk 2008 and Harding 2007.

⁹⁶ Harding 2007, 262.

the suffering of suffering, which is the reason why they were named after that particular passage in the *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁹⁷ This particular set of practices and instructions was also called “The Perfection Vehicle that is consistent with the Mantra Vehicle,” and is unique because of combining “all the sūtras and tantras into a single vital point.”⁹⁸ Contrary to contemporary scholars who have stated that the name Zhi byed was given posthumously to Pha dam pa’s doctrine, Kong sprul is of the opinion that it came to be known by that name after the composition of the first treatises *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum*.⁹⁹

Without referring to a source, Molk gives another story for how that doctrine came to its name – which probably stems from oral accounts possibly by Tshe ring dbang ’dus Rin po che.¹⁰⁰ Molk recounts that Pha dam pa was attending a gathering of *mahāsiddhas* – probably in India – when an exchange took place about the accomplishments each one had achieved. At some point, Pha dam pa was directly addressed by the gathering because they noticed he was not uttering a word. He then answered that the only accomplishment of interest to him was the one that pacifies the suffering of sentient beings most quickly. Hence the name “Pacification.”

2.5.2. The Philosophical and Practical Perspectives of Zhi byed

At the beginning of this study it was mentioned that gaining clarity on the life story of the protagonist is a very difficult task. However, it proves to be even more challenging to create an outline of the philosophical nature of the doctrine Pacification of Suffering. As Nimri says: “Zhi byed traditions have become extremely obscure. It is difficult to account for the decline of Zhi byed practices as discrete systems [...]”¹⁰¹ Kollmar-Paulenz has noted that whilst the doctrine of Gcod has gained much notoriety and attention in the world of western academics, the doctrinal content of Zhi byed has remained rather unnoticed. In most Tibetan historical accounts, these two are often described merely on a few folios, with the only exception of the *Blue Annals*.¹⁰² One of the reasons for this topic still being left out of relevant accounts might be that Pha dam pa had many faces and could manifest in whatever way a certain disciple needed him to be according to his personal karmic imprints and disposition. Because of being so well-versed in a variety of skillful means that the Buddha and his successors had taught, and

⁹⁷ Harding 2007, 262.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Harding 2007, 261.

¹⁰⁰ Molk 2008, 17.

¹⁰¹ ZC vol. ka, 5.

¹⁰² Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, xi. Roerich 1979.

because of being filled to the brim with insight and knowledge, he was “a fertile teacher and creator of parable,”¹⁰³ as Aziz characterizes him, and thus probably never easy to label. This might have been the reason for his success and at the same time the reason why the various Zhi byed traditions could not easily be preserved in an organized way.¹⁰⁴ That poses the greatest difficulty to the identification of certain clear doctrinal features.

Zhi byed was always characterized by multiple layers of instruction. Whatever Dam pa did, every action, movement and utterance was itself a teaching permeated with symbolic messages. Martin clarifies: “His disciples were constantly straining their faculties to the utmost to divine his intentions, since the symbolic actions themselves were his main way of transmitting the teachings.”¹⁰⁵ Of course, this is not unique solely to Pha dam pa. This is a characteristic inherent to all *siddha* like *yogins* that have occurred over the centuries, whether in the Indian subcontinent with the great *mahāsiddhas* Tilopa, Nāropa, Saraha, Kukuripa etc. or in Tibet with figures such as Mar pa (1000-1081) and Mi la ras pa. Nevertheless, according to Martin, he deserves to be placed at the top of the hierarchy of “the most kabbalistic of Buddhist teachers.”¹⁰⁶ Pha dam pa loved metaphors and symbolism so much: even his tiny residence was called interdependence house and the tiny bag – one of the few possessions he owned along with his woolen cloth – interdependence bag.¹⁰⁷

Although there probably was a system behind many of these instructions – as it is clear from ’Jig bral chos kyi seng ge’s list of teachings that were transmitted in the three Zhi byed lineages¹⁰⁸ – it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to ascribe a systematic tradition to all the techniques applied and the typology of instructions bestowed by him. In the *Blue Annals* it is recounted that Dam pa taught the so-called path of blessing focused on prayers to some, mind training¹⁰⁹ and ascetic practices to those fit for the gradual path¹¹⁰ like Kun dga’, and to individuals fit for instantaneous awakening¹¹¹ he granted the single empowerment¹¹² of

¹⁰³ ZC vol. ka, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 30.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ These are lists with the names of the various categories of teachings that were transmitted in the three Zhi byed lineages. For further research this could reveal as an invaluable source because it might be the only clear summary of that kind. ’Jig bral chos kyi seng ge 1992. In translation Molk 2008, 86-87.

¹⁰⁹ *Blo sbyong*.

¹¹⁰ *Rim gyis pa*.

¹¹¹ *Cig car ba*.

¹¹² *Dbang gcig mo*.

mahāmudrā. Some would be introduced to the nature of primordial awareness¹¹³ by means of instructions and some would receive the four initiations through symbols.¹¹⁴ Fortunately, certain traits of character can be identified thanks to their reoccurrence and have found consensus among various Tibetan scholars over the centuries.

Concerning the doctrine that lays at the foundations of Zhi byed, the most widely shared perspective is that it corresponds to the doctrine contained in the whole *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, as already mentioned earlier. Although the *Blue Annals* at first merely relate the name Zhi byed to *Prajñāpāramitā*, at a later point they clearly connect the teachings of the second turning of the wheel with Dam pa's doctrine, at least what concerns the later Zhi byed transmission. 'Gos Lo tsā ba says that the precepts which Dam pa taught in the context of the later transmission called *Phyag rgya chen po dri me thigs pa phyag bzhes kyi skor* "cycle on the method of the drop of stainless *mahāmudrā*" belong to the Mahāmudrā system of Maitrīpa (986-1063), who was one of Pha dam pa's direct teachers. These precepts belong to *Prajñāpāramitā* although they follow the tantric system regarding the conduct, in the manner mentioned in the *Hevajratantra*.¹¹⁵

Very helpful works in the attempt to classify and organize the Zhi byed doctrine are the Tibetan doxographies on *grub mtha'* and encyclopedias. An all-time treasure for contemporary Tibetologists is Kong sprul's encyclopedia *Shes bya mdzod*. It speaks about the three main methods applied by Pha dam pa on the basis of the well-known systematization of ground, path and fruition¹¹⁶ which the *Blue Annals* call the three stages he used to guide his disciples.¹¹⁷ These three correspond to the ground of the three vows,¹¹⁸ the path of austerities¹¹⁹ and the result of exerting the benefit of others.

Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma's (1737-1802) survey of philosophical tenets from India, China and Tibet *Grub mtha' thams cad kyi khungs dang 'dod tshul ston pa legs bshad*

¹¹³ *Rig pa ngos 'dzin*.

¹¹⁴ Roerich 1979, pdf 546.

¹¹⁵ Roerich 1979, pdf 584 and Mathes, "A Summary and Topical Outline of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* by 'Bum la 'bar," 372. In *Meditation on Emptiness* Jeffrey Hopkins quotes the Rnying ma Bla ma Mkhas btsun bzang po (1920-2009) according to whom Zhi byed is based on the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, and can be divided into sūtra, tantra, and a union of sūtra and tantra, coming close to "a doctrine much like that of sudden enlightenment." Hopkins 1996, 537.

¹¹⁶ Harding 2007, 256.

¹¹⁷ Roerich 1979, p. 520?

¹¹⁸ The *pratimokṣa*, *bodhisattva* and *vajrayāna* vows.

¹¹⁹ *Rtul bzhugs*.

*shel gyi me long*¹²⁰ (henceforth *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'*) explain that Pha dam pa was a holder of six various streams of *Prajñāpāramitā* transmissions: 1. from Tuṣita the land of gods, 2. from the land of *nāgas*, 3. via Oḍḍiyāna, 4. from Bengal in eastern India, 5. from Bethala, south India and 6. from the southern island, Bhiṣokotacandana.¹²¹ All of these six were passed down from Buddha Dīpaṃkara to Śākyamuni, all the way to Dam pa's uncle Āryadeva¹²² who transferred them onto him.¹²³ They thus also declare the essence of Zhi byed to be *Prajñāpāramitā*:

“The essence of the Zhi byed Dharma are the instructions on the stages of the path of practice, not known by all, of the meaning of *Prajñāpāramitā* according to the long, middling and short version of these sūtras.”¹²⁴

As noted by Harding in her introduction to the section on Zhi byed in the *Shes bya mdzod*,¹²⁵ the most particular aspect of the doctrine of Pha dam pa is the fact that in the first stage of the path of practice most teachings are aiming at removing suffering by eliminating the causes, hence the afflictions such as the root of the three poisons, as well as all branches that unfold on that basis. Since this system focuses right from the beginning on turning suffering into the primary tool for the path rather than removing its causes, it offers a unique approach.¹²⁶ This is the reason why this method is considered extremely profound and very special. This is also how the contemporary master Tshe ring dbang 'dus Rin po che refers to the importance of Pacification practices in the very time that we live in:

“My teachers told me that because this was a time of the five degenerations, it was vital for the teachings of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas to be preserved, because they could pacify immense suffering such as that created by wars waged out of jealousy and greed. Wherever these teachings spread and are practiced, suffering is automatically pacified.”¹²⁷

The scholar Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las explained the meaning of Zhi byed from a practical perspective in accord with modern practitioners in his *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*:

¹²⁰ For the English translation see Lhundup 2009.

¹²¹ Thu'u bkwan 1984, 169-170. Thanks to Lhundup 2009, 164 for a better spelling of these places.

¹²² His maternal uncle Āryadeva the Brāhmin and not Āryadeva the disciple of Nāgārjuna. Michelle Sorensen, “Machik Labdron.”

¹²³ Thu'u bkwan 1984, 169.

¹²⁴ Ibid.: *zhi byed kyi chos kyi snying por gyur pa ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa g.yum rgyas 'bring 'dus gsum gyi don ma lus pa nyams su len pa'i man ngag kun la ma grags pa'i khya chos shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam gyi rim pa bya ba ni yin la /*

¹²⁵ Harding 2007, 256.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Molk 2008, 5.

“Concerning the meaning of the so-called Pacification: The fact that we have to experience a lot of suffering in this life is the result of karma of previous lives. Practicing the Dharma in order to pacify the suffering that is the result of the karma of previous lives by taking all harmful conditions that we encounter in this life onto the path – such as being struck by sickness or becoming poor – is the meaning of Pacifying the Result of Suffering from Actions of Previous Lives.”¹²⁸

According to him, although the view at the basis of the doctrine is Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka,¹²⁹ Pha dam pa taught based on the various dispositions of the disciples. This means that he could as well teach Svātantrika-Mādhyamaka, Cittamātra or any other philosophical view – whatever was beneficial for his particular disciples.¹³⁰

Furthermore, it seems that Pha dam pa also taught yogic practices of some kind. The *Blue Annals* mention that Zhi byed “Brings a speedy alleviation of suffering [...] and enables them (the disciples) to practice yoga.”¹³¹ These yogic practices were often carried out in connection with so called yogic gazes.¹³² They frequently had animal names – typical even for *haṭhayoga* postures today – and were almost as important as “[...] letter visualizations¹³³ for Pha dam pa’s meditation practices. Gazes were believed to focus awareness, to counter specific emotional states, to reroute the internal energy system, to freeze thought processes, and the like.”¹³⁴

With regards to the present, the most well-known method of Zhi byed that has survived is without doubt Gcod, originally called Spyod yul.¹³⁵ Pha dam pa transmitted the Gcod teachings in two streams: the “male lineage”¹³⁶ through his disciples Sma ra Ser po and Skyo ston Bsod

¹²⁸ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha’ rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 495-496: *zhi byed zer ba’i go don ni / tshe ’di la sdug bsngal mang po myong dgos pa de skye ba sngon ma’i las kyi ’bras bu yin pas skye ba sngon ma’i las kyi ’bras bus dug sngal de zhi ba’i ched du tshe ’di la nad kyis mnar ba dang sprang po chags pa sogs kyi gnod pa byung ba tshang ma dang du blangs nas chos byas te / skye ba sngon ma’i las kyi ’bras bu sdug bsngal de zhi bar byed pa’i don yin /*

¹²⁹ That is contradictory to Kamalaśīla of the *Bhāvanakrāmas* because he followed a Yogācāra-Svatantrika-Mādhyamaka approach.

¹³⁰ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha’ rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 496.

¹³¹ Roerich 1979, xxx..

¹³² Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 32.

¹³³ Pha dam pa often worked with the Sanskrit vowels and consonants. See *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum* or his *Ali Kali initiation* (the Tibetan title remains unidentified, but I have found a text in ZC vol. ka, 59r-89v called *A li ka li rin po che dbang gi ’khor lo* and a passage in the *Deb ther sngon po* that mentions a certain initiation called *dbang gi chu bo*. ’Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po* 1984, 414.

¹³⁴ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 32.

¹³⁵ See Roerich 1979, pdf 586 and this thesis: 5 (FN 1).

¹³⁶ *Pho gcod*.

nams Bla ma, and the “female lineage”¹³⁷ through Ma cig slab sgron.¹³⁸ Although Pha dam pa was fundamental in laying the foundations for Gcod, Ma cig slab sgron was instrumental in formalizing and spreading it. Martin states: “She may, with arguable justice, be called the founder of Cutting. In effect, Cutting was more successful than Zhi byed over the centuries, since it preserved its distinct identity within institutions of other schools.”¹³⁹ As per today, it is very difficult, probably impossible, to differentiate which elements in Gcod can be traced back to which of these two individuals. Dung dkar explains the essence of Gcod in the following way:

“Gcod is eliminating the **egotistic** mindset that places oneself first, or conducting [oneself by the way of] eliminating the innate ego-clinging, called I.”¹⁴⁰

It is also a practice of compassion and loving kindness. One trains the mind in taking onto oneself all kinds of suffering, hindrances and diseases that sentient beings experience. One imagines that by experiencing the disease that stands for the root of all other sicknesses, that of ego-clinging oneself, all diseases that pursue living beings that stem from the same cause, along with that very cause, are absorbed into one’s own ego-clinging and thereby eliminated. Based on that practice the egotistic mindset along with the cause of ego-clinging is eliminated and it is said that one becomes truly able to take the suffering from others onto oneself and thereby free them from it.¹⁴¹ When one has reached that point, three stages of progress are traversed. That of *tshar tshad*¹⁴² the “Final Level,” where the practitioner encounters a lot of fear, suffering and diseases; that of *lhong tshad*¹⁴³ “Level of Obstacles,” where afflictions that were mild become utterly strong and sometimes manifest outwardly as illusory appearances of demons – as we all know from the story of the Buddha – and that of *chos tshad* the “Level of Dharma.”¹⁴⁴

Pha dam pa was thus a very versatile and skilled teacher who inspired many and the core of his instructions was *mahāmudrā*. As Martin has stated: “As far as he knew, his main teaching was

¹³⁷ *Mo gcod*.

¹³⁸ Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, xi.

¹³⁹ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 33.

¹⁴⁰ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha’ rnam bshad*, vol. *ga*, 496. „rang gtso bor byed pa’i sger sems de med pa bzo ba’i gcod dam yang na nga zer ba’i ngar ’dzin lhan skyes de med pa bzo ba’i spyod pa [...]”

¹⁴¹ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha’ rnam bshad*, vol. *ga*, 497.

¹⁴² Also see Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*tshar tshad*.”

¹⁴³ Ibid., entry for “*lhong tshad*.”

¹⁴⁴ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha’ rnam bshad*, vol. *ga*, 497-498. Somehow the last level is not described. Probably because it is the final stage of accomplishment.

the Great Sealing, which promises relatively fast, not therefore necessarily easy, achievement of Buddhist enlightenment.”¹⁴⁵ Dam pa maintained that everybody – no matter their gender, age, impairments and ailments – can achieve the understanding of the true nature of phenomena if they encounter the skillful means of a spiritual teacher. Thanks to the pith instructions of the guru, any state whatsoever will turn into the path.¹⁴⁶ This is also perfectly in harmony with the claim that the essence of the Zhi byed system is Prajñāpāramitā. In fact, the Indian buddhist master Jñānakīrti (10th/11th century) used the term *mahāmudrā* as a synonym for *prajñāpāramitā*:

“Another name for the very great mother Prajñāpāramitā is Mahāmudrā, for [*mahāmudrā*] has the nature of nondual wisdom.”¹⁴⁷

It is highly unlikely that Dam pa’s aim was to teach a complex ideology of an elaborate system based on three different transmission that would later be known as early, middling and later Zhi byed traditions. Nor did he have the ambition to establish a school or sect in its own right. It is nonetheless to be expected that the manifold predispositions of his students, their various karmic connections with him and their respective disciples would lead to numerous lineages and sets of teachings arising, which might then appear as distinct from one another.

2.4.3. Transmission Lineages

It is said that Pha dam pa’s disciples in Tibet gave rise to three different lineages of transmission,¹⁴⁸ with some sub-streams within them. In the tables of the transmission lineages drawn by Kollmar-Paulenz based on the Tibetan accounts she identified as sources dealing with the history of Zhi byed and Gcod, it can be seen that different works depict different principal agents of transmission as well as lineage holders.¹⁴⁹ While all accounts overlap at some point

¹⁴⁵ Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 25. The iconographies which depict Pha dam pa face-to-face with the translator Vairocana vajra (12th century, from nowadays Orissa, India, also known as Vairocanarakṣita) back up the importance they both had for the *mahāmudrā* teachings in Tibet. Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 33-34. For more information on Vairocana vajra see Schaeffer 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Mathes 2008, 36.

¹⁴⁷ *Tattvāvatāra* (Tibetan translation), *Peking Bstan ’gyur*, no. 4532, 46a2-3. Translation from Mathes 2008, 36.

¹⁴⁸ For a list of teachings that these lineages transmitted see ’Jig ’bral chos kyi seng ge 1992, in translation Molk 2008, 86-87.

¹⁴⁹ For a clear map of the transmission lineages with all lineage holders according to these sources see Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, 223-251. Whenever I compare sources in the following paragraphs, the comparison is based on her work. Therefore, in most cases, a reference of the exact page number of the Tibetan sources can not be given as it is missing there and for most cases no searchable texts are available.

or another, Dung dkar is the only one to present the three transmissions in a unique and distinctive manner, unfortunately omitting the indication of a source and explanations for his presentation. He merely states that the three lineages arose over a time span of 13 centuries: the earlier one goes back to Nāgārjuna, whom he places in the first century saying that Pha dam pa already lived at the time; the middling goes directly to Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas who gave it to Rma Chos kyi shes rab (b.1054), So chung Dge 'dun 'bar (1062–1128) and Skam Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1062-1128); and the later transmission is the one that arose during the time of Mi la ras pa.¹⁵⁰ Generally, apart from Dung dkar, the three lineages are presented more or less in accord with their founders.

According to the *Blue Annals*, the first lineage, also called early lineage, was characterized by the *sādhana* of Yamāntaka and the precepts taught in the *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum*, which Pha dam pa proclaimed to Jñānaguhya – his Kashmiri disciple and translator. They were then taught by him and Jñānaguhya to 'Ong po Lo tsā ba. Jñānaguhya and 'Ong po Lo tsā ba respectively passed the teachings onto their disciples – the latter leaving out the practice of *sādhana*s.¹⁵¹ The early transmission is said to have occurred in India.¹⁵²

The intermediate lineage¹⁵³ mainly consists of three streams that originated with three disciples of Pha dam pa: Rma sgom Chos kyi shes rab, So chung Dge 'dun 'bar and Skam Ye shes rgyal mtshan. All accounts but the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*¹⁵⁴ and Stag lung Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal's (1571 – 1626) *Stag lung chos 'byung ngo tshar rgya mtsho*¹⁵⁵ agree on the main agents of the middle transmission being the aforementioned trio, simply referred to as Rma, So and Skam. The *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* and the *Stag lung chos 'byung ngo tshar rgya mtsho* do not mention Skam but instead a certain Kam Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan.¹⁵⁶

Rma founded the Rma lineage of the intermediate Zhi byed transmission. In Pha dam pa's and Rma's first encounter, Dam pa bestowed on him instructions on the *mahāmudrā* of meaning.

¹⁵⁰ Dung dkar: *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, vol. ga, 496.

¹⁵¹ Roerich 1979, pdf 520-521.

¹⁵² Martin, “New Padampa Manuscripts.”

¹⁵³ For a concise study about this lineage see Martin, “New Padampa Manuscripts.”

¹⁵⁴ Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba 1980.

¹⁵⁵ Stag lung Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal 1992, 714.

¹⁵⁶ Not identified. Probably it is merely another name for Skam ye shes rgyal mtshan.

His five main disciples were Gang bar gshen,¹⁵⁷ Shud bu Lo tsā ba (11th/12th century), Bla ma She'u,¹⁵⁸ Sog po Mdo sde,¹⁵⁹ and Zhang Dga' ldan pa.¹⁶⁰

So chung Dge 'dun 'bar,¹⁶¹ the second principal figure in the intermediate transmission, at first became a disciple of Rma and only later followed Pha dam pa, who recognized in him a disciple of the past three lives. He bestowed on him the precepts of the lineage of meaning,¹⁶² the 51 precepts that remove extremes¹⁶³ and the hidden precepts of the 54 male and female *siddhas*.

Skam Ye shes rgyal mtshan was the third agent for the intermediate transmission. He met Pha dam pa at his own house after Dam pa accepted his invitation.¹⁶⁴ Pha dam pa stayed there for only 14 days, which seems to have been the sole time where Skam directly learned from him. On the first day, he was introduced to the nature of his mind by being introduced to meditation and to the nature of illness¹⁶⁵ – at that time Skam suffered from nine tumours in the stomach. On the next day, he taught him among others the four noble truths and on refuge. After 14 days Dam pa left him with the advice that in times of uncertainty he should rely first of all on the best of all virtuous friends, one's own mind, secondly on the Dharma – in particular the short, middling and extensive *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* – and lastly on the physical teacher. As prophesied by Pha dam pa, in the eight following years which he spent practicing meditation, omniscience arose in him. Skam's main transmissions seem to have been the exposition of the eight principal subjects of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*. His disciples gave rise to two streams: the upper lineage, initiated by 'Khun 'dzi yang dben pa Dbang phyug

¹⁵⁷ Also spelled Gang par gshen. Roerich 1979, pdf 522. Molk calls him Gangpa Rashan (no Wylie available). Molk 2008, 139.

¹⁵⁸ Martin assumes that he is the same person as She'u Lo tsā ba (11th century). Tibskrit Philology, entry "She'u lo tsā ba." Accessed March 15, 2020.

¹⁵⁹ A mongolian tax collector who knew both dharma and medicine. Molk 2006, 139. For a short paragraph on him see Roerich 1979, pdf 523.

¹⁶⁰ Roerich 1979, pdf 522 and Dung dkar 2002, 1636-1637. For a short paragraph on Zhang Dga' ldan pa see Roerich 1979, pdf 523.

¹⁶¹ Source for this paragraph is Roerich 1979, pdf 523-524.

¹⁶² *Don brgyud*. Roerich 1979, pdf 524.

¹⁶³ *Mtha' sel lnga bcu rtas gcig*. Roerich 1979, pdf 525. I came across two texts which seem to be strongly related to these instructions, the *Mtha' sel lnga bcu rtas bzhi pa* (ZC vol. *kha*, 177v-179r) and its commentary *Mtha' sel lnga bcu rtas bzhi'i bshad pa* (ZC vol. *kha*). The first one pertains to the cycle of teachings called *Pha rol tu phyin pa'i don brgyud skor gsum* written down by Kun dga'.

¹⁶⁴ Roerich 1979, pdf 536.

¹⁶⁵ In *Mtha' sel lnga bcu rtas bzhi pa'i bshad pa* (ZC and DV) it says: *lus la na tsha byung na rig pa rten dang phrol* / "When the body is struck by sickness, separate primordial awareness from its support."

rdo rje and Rgyams Shes rab Bla ma,¹⁶⁶ and the lower lineage handed down by Sgro Chos brtson (11th century).¹⁶⁷

A few works, such as the *Blue Annals* and the *Shes bya mdzod* make mention of another two lineages, which belong to the middling transmission: *brgyud pa phran* the “minor lineage” and *brgyud pa thor bu pa* the “miscellaneous lineage.”¹⁶⁸

The later Zhi byed transmission is represented with some points of divergence concerning the main agents involved. The version most agree upon is that it was propagated by the disciples Dam pa Phyar chen, Dam pa Phyar chung, Vajrakrodha and Kun dga’, also known as the four *yogin* gatekeepers.¹⁶⁹ However, there were a large number of practitioners who sprang forth of the later transmission, which might be the reason why there is a variety of different presentations in the accounts identified by Kollmar-Paulenz.¹⁷⁰ For more on the philosophical and doctrinal components of these lineages see *Shes bya mdzod*.¹⁷¹

2.4.4. Pha dam pa’s Mahāmudrā Doctrine

No research has so far been undertaken in order to precisely describe the Mahāmudrā tradition of Pha dam pa. In “*A Summary and Topical Outline of the Sekanirdeśapañjikā by ’Bum la ’bar*” to *The Sekanirdeśa of Maitreyañātha (Advayavajra) with the Sekanirdeśapañjikā of Rāmapāla*,”¹⁷² Mathes points out that the *Blue Annals* give valuable information concerning the subject in relation to the later Zhi byed transmission. ’Gos Lo tsā ba claims that the teachings of the later Zhi byed transmission named “cycle on the method of the drop of stainless *mahāmudrā*” are in accord with the system of Maitrīpa, whose system “should be known to be Pāramitā in essence and in accordance with the secret mantra.”¹⁷³ To my knowledge, this passage in the *Blue Annals* is the only source that ascribes a definite character to Pha dam pa’s

¹⁶⁶ The only information about them is that they were sick and therefore were introduced to the nature of the mind through illness. Roerich 1979, pdf 537.

¹⁶⁷ Sgro ston Cho brtson. He was the teacher of ’Chus pa Dar ma brtson ’grus (1117-1192). Roerich 1979, pdf 538.

¹⁶⁸ Roerich 1979, pdf 541-547 and Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, 226. I tried to find the original passage in Kong sprul: *Shes bya mdzod* and Harding 2007 without success.

¹⁶⁹ *Sgo pa ’i rnal ’byor pa bzhi*. Roerich 1979, pdf 546.

¹⁷⁰ Kollmar-Paulenz 1993, 223-288. For more on the philosophical and doctrinal components of these lineages see Harding 2007, 263-275.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 263-275.

¹⁷² Mathes, “A Summary and Topical Outline of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* by ’Bum la ’bar,” 372.

¹⁷³ ’Gos Lo tsā ba 1984, vol. 2, 1133: [...] *ngo bo pha rol tu phyin pa gsang sngags dang rjes su mthun pa la zhes bya ste* /

Mahāmudrā tradition¹⁷⁴ although one has to bear in mind that it is only referring to a particular teaching cycle of the later transmission. Therefore, it might not be enough to make an assertion about Dam pa's Mahāmudrā approach as a whole. In any case, that passage, although limited, shows that it corresponds to the very system of Maitrīpa. It is authentic, the practices that are to be applied differ slightly from other teachings, and it is classified as having the essence of the Sūtra path in accord with the Vajrayāna. Furthermore:

“[...] in the commentary on Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka*,¹⁷⁵ that tradition is Pāramitā and the conduct that should be adopted, which is in accord with the secret mantra, is similar to how it is explained in the *Hevajra*[*tantra*]. Since it is not based on deity yoga and does not follow the four seals, it is not the secret mantra. It appears that [Pha dam's tradition] is in accord with that [which] is said there.”¹⁷⁶

However, the *Blue Annals* subsequently state that it was also said that Pha dam pa granted the empowerment of Kālacakra to some disciples and to some the practice of *karmamudrā*, which means that probably he preached all the four *mudrās*.¹⁷⁷ This would entail that his doctrine did indeed contain special tantric precepts, although that might not have been the case for those teachings of the later Zhi byed transmission called “cycle on the method of the drop of stainless *mahāmudrā*.”

In sum, it is very probable that Dam pa's Mahāmudrā system in general was in agreement with the one of Maitrīpa. There is another point of convergence in regard to the latter's *amanasikāra* doctrine of “not becoming mentally engaged,”¹⁷⁸ which backs up that theory. Maitrīpa equated the meaning of Madhyamaka as it was taught by Saraha the elder, Saraha the younger (Śavaripa), Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti (7th century) with *mahāmudrā* and *amanasikāra*.¹⁷⁹ In

¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, the scope of this thesis did not allow me to have a look at all primary sources on Zhi byed in order to find other sources with the same assertion.

¹⁷⁵ *Tattvadaśaka* (Tibetan translation), *Peking Bstan 'gyur*, no. 2236.

¹⁷⁶ 'Gos Lo tsā ba, 1984, vol. 2, 1133: *mai tri pa'i de kho na nyid bcu pa'i 'grel par yang lugs de pra rol tu phyin pa yin pa la / gsang sngags dang rjes su mthun pa'i spyod pa bya tshul kye'i rdo rje las bshad pa dang 'dra ba zhig byung / lha'i rnal 'byor la brten pa ma yin zhing phyag rgya bzhi'i rjes su 'gro ba med pas gsang sngags ni ma yin no zhes gsung pa de dang mthun par snang /*

¹⁷⁷ Roerich 1979, pdf 585. *Mahāmudrā, dharmamudrā, samayamudrā and karmamudrā*. See Mathes, “The ‘Succession of the Four Seals’ (*Caturmudrānvaya*) Together with Selected Passages from Karopa's Commentary.”

¹⁷⁸ For more on the topic see Mathes 2015 and Mathes, “Maitrīpa's *Amanasikāradhāra* (‘A Justification of Becoming Mentally Disengaged’).”

¹⁷⁹ Mathes 2008, 35-36. See Mathes 2015.

Thugs kyi me long rnam par gsal ba zhyes bya ba bzhugs so, Dam pa likewise equates *mahāmudrā* to *amanasikāra*. Herein, someone – maybe Kun dga’¹⁸⁰ – asked him:

“Dam pa, what is the so called *mahāmudrā*?” He replied, “It is being free from mental engagement.”¹⁸¹

Furthermore, in *Gsung gi me long rnam par gsal ba* he is asked:

“Dam pa, what is the path of *mahāmudrā*?” Swaying the arm in space he answered, “It is the trace of that!”¹⁸²

In the course of analyzing the debates about the authenticity of the Sūtra-Mahāmudrā system¹⁸³ propagated by Sgam po pa (1079-1153) – also widely known as Dwags po Mahāmudrā – Martina Drasczyk in her article “*Some Dwags po Mahāmudrā Responses to Sa skya Paṇḍita’s Critique at “Present-Day Mahāmudrā,”*” mentions that the Eighth Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-1554) clearly saw Pha dam pa as a teacher of *mahāmudrā* linked with sūtric sources – that means also with the system of Maitrīpa.¹⁸⁴ He like other Indian *mahāsiddhas* and *paṇḍitas* who spread the Dharma in Tibet, such as Mitrāyogin (12th century), Śākya śrī (12th century) and Vanaratna (1384–1468), taught that system which was actually quite common in Tibet. In that manner, it became “the practice in various Bka’ brgyud lineages as well as other esoteric traditions with an Indian pedigree, such as the Gcod system.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ I assume that it’s Kun dga’ speaking because in this texts Pha dam pa directly addresses him several times and the style of composition is in form of notes just as in the *Three Cycles*.

¹⁸¹ DV vol. *kha: dam pa / phyag rgya chen po bya ba ci la zer ba yin zhus pas / yid la byed pa dang bral ba la zer ba yin gsungs /*

¹⁸² DV vol. *kha: dam pa / phyag rgya chen po’i lam gang lags zhus pas / nam mkha’ la phyag yug mdzad nas de’i rjes yin gsungs /*

¹⁸³ Sūtra-Mahāmudrā does not rely solely on the Pāramitāyāna and is in accordance with tantra, however, without the specific tools of the Vajrayāna (empowerment and practice of the four *mudrās*). Its essence is to abide in a state of nonconceptual wisdom. Mathes 2008, 44. Also see Mathes, 2006.

¹⁸⁴ Drasczyk 2016, 377 and n. 11 (In JABS 39). Mathes 2008, 35.

¹⁸⁵ Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje 1974, 151–162, as translated by Drasczyk: “This [Mahāmudrā] doctrinal system had a great and vast dissemination in this Snowy Plateau [Tibet], not only in this precious [Bka’ brgyud] lineage. It also appeared as the three so-called ‘early, later and middling’ [transmissions] known as ‘the noble doctrine of Pacification (zhi byed) of Suffering’ which was transmitted through the master Dam pa from India.” Draczyk, “Some Dwags po Mahāmudrā Responses to Sa skya paṇḍita’s Critique at “Present-Day Mahāmudrā,” 377 (FN 11).

3. *The Three Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs*

3.1. The Canon *The Zhi Byed Collection*

The earliest western involvement in the preservation of the tradition of Pha dam pa seems to have been by Barbara Nimri Aziz, the editor and writer of the English introduction to the publication of the *Zhi byed Collection*. The *Zhi byed Collection* was reproduced from a unique collection of manuscripts preserved by 'Khrul zhig Rin po che of Rong phu monastery at Ding ri glang 'khor¹⁸⁶ in 1979.¹⁸⁷ Escaping into exile, 'Khrul zhig Rin po che brought this manuscript with him to Nepal where he served as the abbot of Thub bstan chos gling in Solu.¹⁸⁸ Martin analyzed the microfilm of the manuscript used for this edition, which he received from the National Archives in Kathmandu. He dated it within a decade of the year 1250 and identified it as a handwritten copy of a manuscript written between 1207 and 1210 CE, no longer extant at present. That original was written in golden ink with probably nearly the same title content and compiled by a certain Zhig po (b.1159).¹⁸⁹ It stretched over four volumes, instead of the present five in the *Zhi byed Collection*, and it was arranged differently. The copy that has survived, which Martin has dated to about 1250, is incredibly valuable since the literary monuments from that period are few. Moreover, as Martin states, this set of texts made up of various layers that were compiled throughout the first 100 years of the early Zhi byed tradition is a unique early source for the iconography and the life of the saint. The core layer consists of the *Bhagavatīprajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, the *Āli kāli tantra* and anthologies of songs by Pha dam pa's fifty-four Indian teachers.¹⁹⁰ Among these various strata also the three texts of the present translation are located: personal notes of Kun dga' about the deeds and words of his guru Pha dam pa. They are part of the *Bka' Cho-lu'i Skor* "Cycle of Scattered Pronouncements" as it is known to the tradition – a collection of three notebooks full of Kun dga's memoirs of his days with Dam pa. According to Martin, these were later ordered, rearranged and labelled by Kun dga's student Pa tshab into the form we now have in the *Zhi byed Collection*.¹⁹¹ Martin reconstructed the title on the microfilm catalogue card as *Dam chos snying po zhi byed las rgyud pa phyi ma'i snyan rgyud zab kyad ma* "Among the Peacemaking Teachings That Lay at the Heart of the Holy Dharma, This is the Text of the Later Oral Transmission Known as the

¹⁸⁶ In La stod in the province of Gtsang.

¹⁸⁷ ZC vol. *ka*, introduction.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Martin, "Padampas Animal Kingdom Part One."

¹⁹⁰ Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 28.

¹⁹¹ Martin, unpublished paper from a conference. Accessed June 21, 2019. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication. See BA1979, 926 for how Pa tshab discovered Kun dga's heritage.

Exceptionally Profound.”¹⁹² Thus, it differs from the title of the work in the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (henceforth BDRC) database: “*Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum gyi skor, The Tradition of Pha Dam pa Sangs rgyas: A Treasured Collection of His Teachings Transmitted by Thugs sras Kun dga’*,” which refers to all three transmission lineages as the Tibetan clearly states, instead of merely the later oral transmission mentioned in Martin’s title. Another divergence in the later version of the title is the statement that the whole *Zhi byed Collection* was transmitted by his heart disciple Kun dga’. As Martin has pointed out, the core here is formed by the Indic texts of the tradition and more layers kept on accumulating, up to 100 years later. This makes it impossible for Kun dga’ to have been the only person involved. However, it is probably accurate to say that today the only lineage that exists is Kun dga’s. Although other lineages did surely exist, no early texts associated with them have survived – apart from the *Sgron ma skor dgu*¹⁹³ and the literature on Gcod of course.¹⁹⁴

There exists another printed version that is in computerized Tibetan script and much more recent, from the year 2012-2013: the aforementioned *Dingri Volumes*. According to my research¹⁹⁵ it seems to have been compiled based on two sources:

1. A handwritten edition in the possession of Mnga’ dbang sangs rgyas the compiler and editor of the collection – which I unfortunately could not access
2. A handwritten edition borrowed from the library of ’Khrul zhig Rin po che Mnga’ dbang chos kyi blo gros (1923-2011) – probably the same manuscript that was used for the *Zhi byed Collection*.¹⁹⁶

The three translated texts presented here are contained in both the *Zhi byed Collection* and the *Dingri Volumes*. As explained above, the *Zhi byed Collection* is the earliest of our sources and the only extant one from those times,¹⁹⁷ so it will be the main source for my translation. However, there are some parts containing odd or mistaken spellings, and pages are mixed up in the second text. Only in these cases did I consult the *Dingri Volumes* for clarification, with annotations in the footnotes.

¹⁹² Martin, “New Padampa Manuscripts.”

¹⁹³ Martin claims they belong to the middle transmission. Martin, unpublished paper from a conference. Accessed Jan. 21, 2020. However, in the *Blue Annals* the *Sgron ma skor gsum* are part of the early transmission and since they belong to the *Sgron ma skor dgu*, I wonder if not all nine lamps stem from the early transmission. Roerich 1979, xxx

¹⁹⁴ Martin, unpublished paper from a conference. Accessed June 21, 2019. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication.

¹⁹⁵ Sean Price, private communication via email, May 10, 2019.

¹⁹⁶ Sean Price, private communication via email, May 10, 2019.

¹⁹⁷ Martin, unpublished paper from a conference. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication.

3.2. The Three Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs

The *Phyag chen brda'i skor gsum* “The Three Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs” (henceforth *Three Cycles*) are three texts¹⁹⁸ located in the last section¹⁹⁹ in vol. *kha* of the *Zhi byed Collection*, entitled *Pha dam pa sangs rgyas kyis gsungs pa zhu lan gyi skor* “The Teachings by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, the Cycle of Dialogues.” In contrast to the first two sections which contain texts composed by Bla ma Spa tshab and an unknown author, the third section comprises six collections of texts attributed to Pha dam pa.²⁰⁰ Without having analyzed and looked at each and every single text of these collections, I assume that the writings contained herein were written down by Kun dga'. For instance: The texts in the second subsection *A tsa ra nag po'i don gyi zhu lan drug* “The Black Ācārya's Six Dialogues of the Meaning” are very similar in style to the *Three Cycles*, consisting merely of questions and answers to Pha dam pa. They are therefore very similar in terms of structure and imagery.

The *Three Cycles* were written in the form of personal notes by Kun dga' Dam pa's heart disciple. Probably he did this in order to remember the precious symbolic instructions he was a witness to, day by day. They are contained in the first group of the last section in vol. *kha*, called *A tsa ra nag po'i brda'i zhu lan rnam gsum* “The Black Ācārya's Three Dialogues of Signs.” The three are *Sku'i rnam dag brdar bstan pa*,²⁰¹ *Gsung gi brjod bya brdar bstan pa*²⁰² and *Thugs kyi dgongs nyams brdar bstan pa*.²⁰³ They are a collection of short sentences usually consisting of two parts. In the first Kun dga' explains briefly the meaning that Pha dam pa wanted to convey with a certain sign, and in the second he recounts what Pha dam pa did or said in order to express the intended meaning (the sign). In a few cases, certain signs are related to the previous one, being hence a continuation of it or the situation or dialogue that was formerly opened.

What is the meaning of *brda*? In English this can be rendered as “metaphor, sign, parable” or “symbol.” I decided to render the term with “sign” because it made the phrasing in English

¹⁹⁸ It is puzzling that Tshe ring dbang 'dus Rin po che says that they consist of four texts. Molk 2008, 4. Unfortunately there is no way to clarify this. In the *Zhi byed Collection* and the *Dingri Volumes* there are only three, as the overall title already clearly mentions.

¹⁹⁹ The other two are *Dri med shel sgong gi bshad 'bum* and *Dri med bdud rtsi'i thigs pa bshad pa*. ZC vol. *kha*, 1v-66r.

²⁰⁰ 1. *A tsa ra nag po'i brda'i zhu lan rnam gsum*, 2. *A tsa ra nag po'i don gyi zhu lan drug*, 3. *'Khrid lam sdong po'i chos sde bzhi*, 4. *Brul tsho'i skor*, 5. *Nyams cho lu lnga*, 6. *Mtshon dpe chen mo*. ZC vol. *kha*, 66v-238v.

²⁰¹ ZC vol. *kha*, 66v-73v. DV vol. *kha*, 1-17.

²⁰² ZC vol. *kha*, 74r-79v. DV vol. *kha*, 19-33.

²⁰³ ZC vol. *kha*, 80r-86v. DV vol. *kha*, 35-49.

easier and also because in *Thugs kyi brda'* the term *rtags* “sign, symbol” is used as a synonym. Furthermore, the Sanskrit equivalent *saṅketa* carries the meaning of “sign.” Schaeffer interprets *brda'* as symbols which “express interior experiences through everyday external imagery,” as well as riddles pointing to spiritual experiences without directly naming them.²⁰⁴ Concerning signs/symbols as they are being used in these texts, Tshe ring dbang 'dus Rin po che says:

“When Buddha Vajradhara Samantabhadra first taught, the teachings were given without words, through direct mind-to-mind transmission. Teachings such as those translated in these texts were later given through the language of symbols.”²⁰⁵

Hence, one can relate the Tibetan term *brda'* in “Pha-dam-pian” usage to an ancient tool for teaching: an alternative to the mind-to-mind transmission.

In the *Three Cycles*, the sign toolkit itself consists of body, speech and mind signs. *Sku yi brda'* contains physical gestures and actions as the title suggests, but also a great number of verbal signs. *Gsung gi brda'* comprises mainly utterances and statements. These were either spoken at the request to teach, as responses to questions posed by various individuals, as a reaction to some kind of happening or as simple exclamations without a particular precondition. *Thugs kyi brda'* conveys mainly through speech a lot of instructions pointing out the true nature of the mind as well as content on a miscellanea of topics. Although each text offers an overall label for the signs in the title, the content does not strictly conform with it. All three contain examples of all three sign categories: physical actions, utterances of speech and gestures. However, the majority of signs are expressed orally.

Upon consultation and comparison with other texts in the *Zhi byed Collection* attributed to Pha dam pa, one will often encounter passages and imagery that occur in the *Three Cycles*. For instance, in *Pha dam pa sangs rgyas kyi gsung sgros kyi gdams pa mtshon dpe chen mo zhe bya ba bzhuks so*²⁰⁶ – a list of examples Pha dam pa gave as teachings on profound principles – as well as in various other texts in the *Zhu lan* “dialogue” sections. One might also notice the similarity concerning the style in terms of structure and content in the present three texts with

²⁰⁴ Schaeffer, “Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dam pa Sangye,” 18, 11.

²⁰⁵ Molk 2008, 4.

²⁰⁶ ZC vol. *kha*, 231v-238v.

the anthologies studied by Schaeffer.²⁰⁷ These anthologies remind strongly of the way Pha dam pa communicates his signs in the *Three Cycles*: how he makes use of metaphors, symbols, gestures and parables in order to convey more and less hidden messages. Schaeffer mentions that there are seventeen anthologies in total said to have been brought from India to Tibet by Dam pa Sangs rgyas.²⁰⁸ They supposedly were entrusted to him by various beings, mainly *ḍākinīs* and devotional deities. Among these texts, there are seven which carry the word *brda*’ in the title. For instance, *Phyag rgya chen po rin po che brda’i man ngag*,²⁰⁹ *Phyag rgya chen po brda’i brgyud pa*²¹⁰ and *Rdo rje mkha’ ’gro ma’i brda’i mgur*.²¹¹ But there are more parallels to the *Three Cycles*, for instance in imagery and wording. For example, in order to express that all phenomena are of one taste, in *Phyag rgya chen po rin po che brda’ man ngag* it is stated:

“The head and the limbs are part of the same body [...] The mirror and the reflection have no difference.”²¹²

In a similar manner in *Sku’i brda*’ Dam pa says the following:

“The shadow of all trees is of one essence. Ground sugarcane does not have sides.”²¹³

The imagery that constitutes the verbal signs differs slightly but the meaning which they convey remains the same.

3.3. Notes on the translation

There are no precedent published translations of these three texts as a whole, in spite of their apparent importance. Along with multiple handwritten volumes of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* of various lengths and other scriptures, they were enshrined in the walls of Ding ri glang ’khor

²⁰⁷ Schaeffer, “Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dam pa Sangye.”

²⁰⁸ Schaeffer, “Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dam pa Sangye,” 8. It is more likely that these anthologies were created in Tibet by Pha dam pa and Zha ma lo tsā ba, playing the roles of scribe, translator, author, recipient and speaker accordingly. To give them more authority they would personify the speaker as a *ḍākinī*, *mahāsiddha* or deity. Kurtis Schaeffer, private communication.

²⁰⁹ *Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zi, 74a7-79a3. ZC vol. ka, 134r-141v.

²¹⁰ *Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zi, 50a1-55b7. ZC vol. ka, 213-234.

²¹¹ *Sde dge Bstan ’gyur*, vol. zi, 64v-67r. ZC vol. ka, 156r-159v.

²¹² Schaeffer, “Crystal Orbs and Arcane Treasures: Anthologies of Buddhist Tantric Songs from the Tradition of Dampa Sangye,” 10.

²¹³ This thesis: 43.

monastery.²¹⁴ Molk offers partial translations in the appendix to *Lion of Siddhas*,²¹⁵ although the structure and interpretation differ greatly from the present manuscript. These lead me to assume that he must have had a third manuscript at hand but unfortunately, if indeed that was the case, I was not able to retrieve this.²¹⁶ An unpublished translation exists by Martin.²¹⁷ Several signs from this are published in his 2006 article²¹⁸ and short extracts can also be found online as part of the entries for old and odd Tibetan terms in Martin's *Tibetan Vocabulary*.²¹⁹

At times, this text is very hard to understand because of the archaic language. Moreover, the grammar in the manuscript is either archaic or so local that it is hard to understand, while other times it is simply not well constructed. Sometimes the metaphors do not follow consistently through the whole passage and the imagery in the sign and the intended message do not always seem to match. Sometimes the *Dingri Volumes* edition offers a more modern and correct spelling for archaic and misspelled words, which was very helpful and for which I would like to express my gratitude to the editors and publisher. I did not find out whether the spelling differences between the *Zhi byed Collection* and the *Dingri Volumes* are an adaptation of the scribes who transposed the manuscript into computer input letters or if this was indeed the spelling in the handwritten edition in the possession of Mnga' dbang sangs rgyas.

With regard to the contents, the *Dingri Volumes* present the same signs as the *Zhi byed Collection*. In *Sku'i brda'* in the *Zhi byed Collection*, page [68v] is left blank, probably a simple mistake while scanning, and in *Gsung gi brda'* the pages are totally mixed up and parts of some sentences are missing. Luckily the *Dingri Volumes* offer a more readable version, in which not only the pages follow the proper order, but also the parts missing in the *Zhi byed Collection* are complete. This clearly shows that one of the two manuscripts used by the editors of the *Dingri Volumes* – probably that of Mnga' dbang sangs rgyas – must have differed greatly from the manuscript of the *Zhi byed Collection*. In order to restore the right order of pages and to fill in the blanks, I consulted the *Dingri Volumes*.

²¹⁴ Molk 2008, 18.

²¹⁵ Molk 2008.

²¹⁶ Molk informed me that his personal copy got destroyed and other copies for what formed the basis of his translation, as far as he knows, were made solely for the Tibetan Library in Dharamsala and the King of Bhutan. David Molk, private communication via email, May 27, 2019. I tried to get in contact with Dharamsala and the National Library of Bhutan without success.

²¹⁷ Dan Martin, private communication via email, May 10, 2019.

²¹⁸ Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet."

²¹⁹ Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary." <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>.

Another reason for why the Tibetan might feel unusual to a reader of standard Tibetan texts might be that Kun dga' tried to note down situations that he experienced during the day which often were very lively and took place in a normal “day with the guru” setting, rather than formal situations where literary grammatical structures would be expected. It is important to keep in mind that these texts came into being as personal notes of Kun dga'. This becomes especially relevant when dialogues take place, since in general the speaker is not explicitly mentioned and the reader has to infer who it was. Most of the time it was certainly just Kun dga' addressing his teacher, thinking or uttering out loud reflections on particular subject matter. As this was his personal memory aid, it was probably not necessary for him to put his name explicitly in the document. Therefore, whenever the translation reads: “Saying [...]” or “Asking [...]” without a clear subject, one should keep this in mind and remember that the subject is probably Kun dga'. Furthermore, there are many colloquial expressions in these notes that even today are not formalized in writing. For instance, there are several passages which end with a statement made by Dam pa ending with the continuative particle *ste*, or *de*, *te* such as in “*gdams ngag mar me de la gda' ste*”²²⁰ or as in “*ha ha da khyod la yi ge 'bri pa'i thabs yod te*.”²²¹ I have interpreted the particle as a colloquial way of expressing a fact which someone might have previously objected to or been unaware of. Another example of a colloquial usage is the following phrase, “[...] *yang ngo bo stong par mi 'dug ge?*”²²² *Mi 'dug ge* is serving as a question particle in accord with colloquial Tibetan, which in classical would be *med dam*. One can notice a regular usage of *'dug*, which is mostly, although not uniquely, colloquial, as well as words such as *ga na* “where” instead of *gang na* or *ga par*. Moreover, the phrasing “*gdams ngag cig zhu dang*” comes up quite often when asking Pha dam pa for teachings. This still feels puzzling to me, since in contemporary Tibetan the verb *zhu ba* is a humble way of addressing an individual of higher rank and not the other way around as it is the case here. These are just a few of the particularities. If the reader wishes to dive deeper here, I suggest taking a direct look at the Tibetan text.

A few technical terms presented translation difficulties. These included *rig pa* and *shes pa*, which at times seem to be synonyms and at times not. I have consistently used the term “primordial awareness” for *rig pa*. *Shes pa* has been rendered according to the context as either “awareness,” “conceptual knowledge” or “consciousness.” Another related term is *dran pa* which I have rendered according to the context either as “mindfulness” or “awareness.” In cases

²²⁰ ZC vol. *kha*, 71r4.

²²¹ ZC vol. *kha*, 70r2.

²²² ZC vol. *kha*, 70r5.

of uncertainty regarding the translation, footnotes have been added stating that it is tentative and providing the Tibetan. Where the translation seems to make no sense but is grammatically correct, the Tibetan passage has not been cited. I have tried to be as literal as possible and to stay close to the original in terms of both the overall structure and the internal order of the signs. In the Tibetan text, almost all signs start with Kun dga's interpretation of the verbal act, gesture or action of Pha dam pa and are then followed by him recounting the events and forms in which that sign was expressed. In the same way, I have divided each sign into two parts:

1. The first contains Kun dga's reoccurrent formula of interpretation: "As a sign that/of/for [...]," either directly at the beginning or after an introductory description of the scene in which the sign was conveyed.

2. The second expresses Dam pa's sign.

In order to make a clear distinction between these two parts, I have separated them by a semicolon and a new line.

The reader should not be unduly concerned if immediate understanding does not follow a reading of the *Three Cycles*. At the very beginning of *Skū yi brda'* it is directly stated that Pha dam pa would teach in signs understandable only to the fortunate ones – those with enough good karmic fortune. Of course, a lack of comprehension could also be due to an unsuccessful translation on my part, as well as this cryptic nature of Pha dam pa's instructions, which were not actually intended to be understood immediately and by everyone. So these signs resemble Zen Koans to which one comes back again and again in contemplation practices. As I worked my way through translating these texts, I had to do exactly that, returning to them again and again and contemplating. As time passed, I noticed how elements of the signs previously puzzling me would start to unravel. Also Martin noted that the utterances and actions of Pha dam pa often seem cryptic at first, lacking a good reason or riddles impossible to solve.²²³ But this process was purposefully intended. As a teacher of Prajñāpāramitā and Mahāmudrā, there was indeed a good reason behind this strategy: to induce the realization of absolute primordial wisdom in the mind of the disciples. Anything that would serve this purpose could be applied as a skillful means and be worthy of the label "sign." That could be a mind-to-mind transmission, one or a few cryptic words, a riddle, a non-verbal action or even a simple gesture. In the first meeting between Dam pa and his disciple Skam ye shes rgyal mtshan, it is recounted that as soon as Dam pa arrived at Skam's home, he started preaching to the whole family in

²²³ Martin, "Padampas Animal Kingdom Part One."

symbolic language. Skam, understanding the meaning, was irritated when he saw how easily Dam pa had given such teachings. Reading his mind, Dam pa said:

“Symbols can be seen by those who have eyes, but not by those who have no eyes.”

In that moment Skam understood that the others had not grasped the meaning.²²⁴

3.4. Translation

3.4.1. [*Pointing Out the Purity of the Body as Signs*]²²⁵

[66v] I bow to the genuine gurus.

Concerning Dam pa sangs rgyas, the protector of beings, the glory of the six classes of beings, the one who comprehends the variegated greatness of interdependence:²²⁶

As a sign that he is exalted compared to other beings, he was blessed by the Great Compassionate One when he was in his mother’s womb.

As a sign that he is free from the stains of the womb he has all forty teeth. Having the characteristics of being learned in all arts,²²⁷ a *brahmin* made eight kinds of prophecies. Being endowed with innate knowledge²²⁸ he perfected the three precious trainings.

[His] qualities of physical greatness [are]: he knows how to send forth 42 emanations.

[His] qualities of the greatness of speech [are]: he is not ignorant concerning the meaning and the sound of the Sanskrit consonants and vowels.²²⁹

[His] qualities of the greatness of mind [are]: he is endowed with the five kinds of supernatural knowledge. Through the greatness of his insight into interdependence,²³⁰ he forcefully²³¹ manifests non-conceptuality and is naturally able to transform appearances. Through the

²²⁴ Roerich 1979, pdf 537.

²²⁵ All titles are taken from the colophon because absent at the beginning.

²²⁶ *Rten ’brel gyi che ba*.

²²⁷ Reading *rgyu rtsol* as *sgyu rtsal*. DV vol. *kha*, 24.

²²⁸ *Skyes thob kyi shes rab*.

²²⁹ *Ā li kā li*.

²³⁰ Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*rten ’brel gyi che ba*.” Also see Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 25, for his translation of this passage.

²³¹ *Btsan thabs*.

fortune to approach and accomplish²³² the four empowerments²³³ in the Lion Fort,²³⁴ [67r] he met face to face with Mañjuśrīvādisiṃha.

Through a twelve-year-long practice on Tāra Mountain he perfected the ascetic practices²³⁵ of the first period.²³⁶

In the east at Lang tang peak he practiced extracting nutrients out of poison and thereby brought the 10 winds under his control, thus defeating the four enemies, the elements.²³⁷

By training in the Nāgārjuna Cave in powerful skills²³⁸ he obtained the accomplishment of quick feet.²³⁹ He had names given by each of the eight classes of male and female deities, spirits, and demons and became known as glorious Mi pham mgon po.

²³² *Bsnyen sgrub*. Is usually referring to the two primary aspects of a deity practice: 1. The creation phase, in which the deity is approached through mantra and visualization, 2. The stage in which it is accomplished by becoming inseparable with it. It is also often divided into four aspects which can apply to any level of tantric practices. See Dowman 1996, 199 (FN 57), and Kunsang 1990, 167.

In 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po et al. *Bla ma'i thugs sgrub rdo rje rdag rtsal las / zhal gdams lam rim ye shes snying po bzhugs so*, 31: *de ltar rgyd smin par byed pa dbang bzhi dang / smin nas grol bar byed pa bsnyen sgrub yan lag bzhi'i lam mchog la zhugs pa* [...]. "In that manner, having entered the supreme path of the four empowerments that cause the ripening of the mindstream and having ripened, [the path of] the four branches of approach and accomplishment that causes liberation [...]" <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W3JT13384>. Accessed Jan. 26, 2020.

²³³ It is very unlikely that here the four empowerments that one receives in the Vajrayāna context from a guru are meant since this passage is referring to the part of his life where he practiced probably alone in seclusion, probably in a cave, it must be one of another set of four empowerments. Maybe *phyi nang gsang yongs rdzogs* "outer, inner, secret and completion" or the four as subdivisions of the fourth empowerment in the Rnying ma school (Dalai Lama 1995, 106) *spros bcas*, *spros med*, *shin tu spros med*, *rab tu spros med* "with elaboration, without elaboration, greatly free of elaboration and utterly free of elaboration." Bdud 'jom gling pa (Wallace 2015, 224) speaks about four types of realization which make a practitioner perfect the four empowerments without ever needing to receive initiation.

The *Ali Kali Great River Tantra*, which we know that was extremely important to Pha dam pa, mentions four exceptional empowerments: "[...] The meaning of absolute unelaborated coemergence is in the complete four empowerments, the vital point of Ali Kali [...]" translation Harding 2007, 269-270. But these might not be the ones referred to here.

²³⁴ *Seng ge'i rdzong*. I assume that this might be the name of a mountain hermitage, probably a cave as was the case in Milarepa's life story, where these so called "forts" had the special connotation of being an isolated place of practice, mainly caves, not at all connected to a fortress in its literal sense.

²³⁵ *Dka' thub*.

²³⁶ *Dus dang po*. In *Lion of Siddhas* the author mentions that there are three periods that refer to the stages of training: 1. Relying on the guru for study and contemplation performing the practice of a *śrāvaka*, 2. Not being able yet to benefit beings one trains in the practice of a *pratyeka*, retreating in solitude and so forth; 3. To perform the great deeds of a *bodhisattva*. This might explain the meaning of "first period." Molk 2008, 55.

²³⁷ Reading 'byung pa as 'byung ba. DV vol. *kha*, 34.

²³⁸ *Nus pa'i rtsal*.

²³⁹ A power to move at a supernatural pace from one place to another, or through the sky etc. What in Sanskrit is called *pādukāsiddhi*. Mallison 2007, 212 (FN 270). The BA explain it as a power to travel the distance of 100 *yojanas* in one day. Roerich 1979, xxx

This *yogin* free from the stains of the eight worldly *dharma*s came to Tibet in order to purify *samsāra*, the power of karma.²⁴⁰ He said that he had many words of advice to give to those fortunate people with pure aspirations down there²⁴¹ in central Tibet.

When he stayed in Ding ri in Nyi ma la stod²⁴² many appearances transformed through [his] blessing. Little was the bestowal of words of advice through speech. A special technique was to teach through symbols, which people without fortune, because of having no residual [good] karma, would not understand. He scolded some individuals and at some he smiled.

As a sign that consciousness²⁴³ is not to be labeled²⁴⁴ as apprehended and apprehender,²⁴⁵ He transforms primordial awareness²⁴⁶ into space.

As a sign that *mahāmudrā* arises out of freshness,
He destroys sequences of consciousness²⁴⁷ through wrathful gazes.²⁴⁸

As a sign that the result depends on practice, [67v]
He stays alone.

As a sign that when one practices the Dharma, one has to abandon clinging to true existence,²⁴⁹ He regards²⁵⁰ gold and dirt as equal.

As a sign that non-conceptual wisdom arises out of pure primordial awareness,
He abandons ordinary consciousness through the elixir of mindfulness.²⁵¹

²⁴⁰ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 67r4: 'khor ba las stobs sbyong ba /

Stobs sbyong ba is an attested term. The grammar of this phrase is not clear. The ablative is obscure because this expression is not attested anywhere else as per my findings and neither is the option to change *las* into *la*. I suggest this translation instead of the other possibility, "This *yogin* free from the stains of the eight worldly *dharma*s came to Tibet in order to train in the power from *samsāra*." Because it is certain that he went to Tibet to turn the people away from non-virtue and teach them the tools to purify their afflictions rather than for his own sake.

²⁴¹ Reading *ma gir* for *ma gim*.

²⁴² In the Everest region. Lhundup 2009, 630.

²⁴³ *Shes pa*. Skt. *jñāna*. When translated into Tibetan it is sometimes rendered as *shes pa* "knowledge" and sometimes as *ye shes* "non-conceptual wisdom."

²⁴⁴ 'Dog pa.

²⁴⁵ *Gzung 'dzin*.

²⁴⁶ *Rig pa*. In *Mtha' sel lnga bcu rtsa bzhi pa'i bshad pa* (ZC and DV): *rten med kyi rig pa nam mkha' la bsgyur nas* /

²⁴⁷ *Shes pa snga phyi*.

²⁴⁸ In the *Vimalaprabhā*, *krodhadṛṣṭi* is described as looking upwards without blinking. *Vimalaprabhā* (Tibetan translation), *Peking Bstan 'gyur*, no. 1347. Peter Szanto, private communication.

²⁴⁹ *Dngos 'dzin*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 680.

²⁵⁰ Reading *ngo snyom* as a misspelling for *ngo mnyam*.

²⁵¹ *Dran pa'i rtsi*. The term is attested in the Zhi byed literature as well as other texts. For instance in *Lam dri ma med pa dngul sgong dag pa'i skor* (ZC and DV vol. *kha*): *dran pa'i rtsi dang ma bral ba 'di ni* / Tsi nto ma 'i

As a sign that the nose ropes that lead one into *samsāra* are habitual tendencies²⁵² hence, the eight worldly *dharma*s have to be abandoned,
He adopts the behavior of a little child.

As a symbol that roaming around constitutes causes²⁵³ and conditions for the emergence of the Dharma,
He holds the interdependence bag²⁵⁴ in his hand.

As a symbol that accomplishments are not obtained when one conforms with worldly people,²⁵⁵
He remains without answering questions.

As a symbol that there is no progress other than obtaining the wisdom of knowledge,²⁵⁶
He said, “There is no need to hit the husk with a stick when the barley has already been extracted” and as Rgya sgom ma²⁵⁷ supplicated him, he threw earth at her.

As a sign that the true nature of phenomena is free from referent and signifier,
He stole the Dharma bag of Bla ma Phyar²⁵⁸ and burned it.

As a sign that the first accomplishment²⁵⁹ has to be brought about on the cushion,
He said to Lcug ston,²⁶⁰ “I have a method to obtain accomplishments!” and then tied [his] legs.

gdams pa yin / Since it clearly is a noun here, I opt for this translation. Khenpo Blo sang also suggested it be taken as the meaning of the second syllable in *bdud rtsi*. Khenpo Blo bsang, private communication, Jan. 2, 2020. For a possible verbal rendering see Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry “*gtsi ba*.”

²⁵² *Bag chags*.

²⁵³ Reading *rgyur* as *rgyu*. DV vol. *kha*, 31.

²⁵⁴ *Rten ' brel gyi gal te*. This is one of Pha dam pa's unique features, one of the few possessions he owned. For some notes on this and the terminology see Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 29-30. Also see Martin Dan, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019.

²⁵⁵ *Myi chos pa*. Later on, it is also used as *myi chos* where I read it as “worldliness” or “worldly activities.” In stands in opposition to *lha chos*.

²⁵⁶ Am. *Mkhyend + pa'i*.

²⁵⁷ His main female disciple who received objects at the moment of his death as a sign of lineage holder. Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 30. Also see Molk 2008, 152.

²⁵⁸ This is probably the disciple Phyar chen, one of the four *yogin* gatekeepers, because in the *Blue Annals* he gets the epithet Bla ma which the disciple Phyar chung does not receive. Roerich 1979, xxx

²⁵⁹ Am. *bsgrub + pa*.

²⁶⁰ The *Blue Annals* speak about a certain Bla ma Cug who received by Dam pa the precepts of the Path of the Four Initiations. Roerich 1979, pdf 547. Also mentioned in Molk 2008, 132.

As a sign that the mindstream²⁶¹ won't ripen through studies without having received the blessing of the guru,

He said, "I shall bless Bla ma Bka' gdams pa"²⁶² and plugged his ears with mud.

[68r] As a sign that just one word based on the guru's experience is better²⁶³ than knowing a hundred commentaries to the tantras containing manifold scripts,

He said to 'Gar sgom,²⁶⁴ "Weigh whatever your texts say! To ascertain all phenomena of *samsāra* and *nirvana* as unreal will be weightier."

As a sign that in cities and villages realization decreases,²⁶⁵

He said, "People close to dogs are not happy."

As a sign that one has not given up²⁶⁶ grasping if one suffers because of fearing the toils [one will encounter] during old age,

He snatched Bla ma Rong pa's²⁶⁷ rosary of *gzi* [pearls] and threw it in the river.

As a sign that [this] is because of not being able to cope with the hindrances²⁶⁸ of discursive thinking,²⁶⁹

He said to 'Dre sgom ma,²⁷⁰ "Sleep with your brother or I will hit you on the head!" Naked he stood up and raised a stone. And again [he said], "Prostrate naked or I will send wolves after you!" She asked, "Where do you have wolves?" He replied, "They are in [my] interdependence house," and came back with two wolves. Frightened she prostrated naked and in that moment the blessing entered her. He said, "From now on you will be free from the suffering of freezing."

²⁶¹ Misspelling of *rgyad* for *rgyud*.

²⁶² Not identified.

²⁶³ *Dga' ba*.

²⁶⁴ The only individual I could find with that name is a certain 'Gar sgom dkar po (alt. Mgar sgom, alias 'Gag bsgom zhig po) who was a close disciple of Sgam po pa Bsod nams rin chen (1079-1153). I can not say if this is the same individual. Roerich 1979, pdf260.

²⁶⁵ Am. + *rtogs*. Am. 'gro for 'gre.

²⁶⁶ Reading *thengs* as *thongs*. DV vol. *kha*, 56. Although normally *thongs* is the imperative of the verb *gtong*, in the *Three Cycles* it is also used as a past tense.

²⁶⁷ Not identified. He seems not to be Rong zom chos kyi bzang po (11th century) because in his biography in the *Blue Annals* there is no mention of Pha dam pa. Roerich 1979, xxx

²⁶⁸ Reading *gags* as *gegs*. DV vol. *kha*, 61.

²⁶⁹ Martin translates, "As a symbol touching on our inability to block troubling thoughts." Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 30.

²⁷⁰ She appears a few more times in the *Zhi byed Collection*, sometimes as 'Bro gom ma. Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 30 (FN14). In Molk 2008, 293 she is called 'Bre sgom Ma mo.

As a sign that the finale of innermost desires is suffering,
He said, “It is the fault²⁷¹ of having found a companion that the yoke is put on the back of the ox’s neck. People who are not able to stay alone are not happy.”

As sign that cherishing *saṃsāra* [means] to perceive suffering as an ornament,²⁷²

[68v blank page. Continued on DV64]

He said, “This bird continues to dote the fledgling. That is the fault of not knowing that it is unnecessary.”

As a sign that to have contentment towards objects [of] deluded conception²⁷³ is noble,
He said, “It is good if one removes the heart of the dog.”

As a sign that it is easy to get used to the latencies of deluded conceptions,
He said, “Since the mirror is not clear if you don’t clean it, don’t let it rust!”

As a sign that in the mountain solitude *dākas* and *dākinīs* gather,
He said, “Make foxes and wolves your neighbours.”

[DV7] As a sign that if one does not free oneself from *saṃsāra* now, a time for liberation won’t come,

He said, “There will not always be a bridge over the river Ganges, therefore take care²⁷⁴ and go now!”

As a sign that all manifold phenomena are of one taste,
He said, “The essence of the shadow of all trees is one [and the same]. Ground sugarcane does not have sides.”

As a sign that blessing enters [those with] devotion and respect,
He said, “If the clay pot burns, varnish does not stick.”

²⁷¹ *Lan*. Synonym for *nyes pa*, also spelled *lan pa*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 2760.

²⁷² *Brgyan du mthong*. It comes up in several passages in the *Zhi byed Collection*. Khenpo Tamphel explained the meaning to me in this manner and that suits to other passages in these texts as well as, for instance on folio [73v4]. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

²⁷³ *'Khrul rtog dngos po*.

²⁷⁴ *Gzobs*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 2510.

As a sign that if the guru does not have the experience of realization,²⁷⁵ it is not possible to work with the mind of a student,

He said, “If there is no image in the mold,²⁷⁶ it won’t turn into an image²⁷⁷ or a clay sealing.”²⁷⁸

As a sign that if one avoids the five poisons, they won’t arise as non-conceptual wisdom.²⁷⁹

He said, “A lotus doesn’t grow out of a clean place. Monkeys don’t settle²⁸⁰ in mountains without forests.”

As a sign that if the boundaries of the commitment are [too], loose they will turn into a cause for impediments,

He said, “[Carrying] a load²⁸¹ that one can not bear will result in sickness. Don’t make the string long at the beginning. It should [start] short [and then] be lengthened.”²⁸² **[end DV74: chung ngu nas srings]**

[69r] As a sign for the inexpressible essence between distraction and stillness,

He turns the *mudrā* towards the sky.

As a sign to recognize momentary consciousness²⁸³ between the past and the future,

Occasionally he would not look anywhere with the eyes.

As a sign that there is no need to get carried away by the objects of the six collections,²⁸⁴

He wrapped his head with a woolen garment.²⁸⁵

As a sign that one has to discard sequences of consciousness in order to train in the power of primordial awareness,²⁸⁶

²⁷⁵ *Drod tshad*. Lit. “Temperature, extent of realization.”

²⁷⁶ *Skos phor*. Misspelling for *rkos phor* “carved.”

²⁷⁷ *’Bi ’bi* for the skt. *bimba*.

²⁷⁸ *Tsha tsha*.

²⁷⁹ *Ye shes*.

²⁸⁰ Reading *’chags* as *chags*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 780: [...] 2) *gnas pa’am ’jag pa*.

²⁸¹ *Khur tsha*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*khur tsha*.”

²⁸² This could refer to nomads when they tie a load onto the animal. Peter Szanto, private communication.

²⁸³ *Shes pa*.

²⁸⁴ *Tshogs drug* “the six consciousnesses.”

²⁸⁵ *Bal thul*. The only clothing Phadampa used to wear. See Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 31.

²⁸⁶ *Rig pa’i rtsal*.

He gets angry²⁸⁷ when walking and sitting without purpose.²⁸⁸

As a sign that reverence and respect of others are detriments when one [practices] austerities,
Paring down to the bare necessities²⁸⁹ he did not make specific arrangements.

As a sign for consciousness not running after objects,
He does not cling onto anything.

As a sign that if one does not block the doorways of the senses, awareness becomes alert,²⁹⁰
His eyes glanced many times towards the interdependence house.

As a sign that the nature of phenomena is free from expression,
Being asked to say something about the ultimate, he tied Nam mkha' gsal's²⁹¹ mouth with a
slingshot.

As a sign that if one speaks about²⁹² the experience of the extent of realization²⁹³ it vanishes,
He does not open the interdependence bag in the presence²⁹⁴ of people.

As a sign that if one controls the wind that stirs the mind²⁹⁵ subtle and coarse concepts stop,
He looked at one place without moving the eyeballs.

As a sign that the great *māra* of virtuous practice²⁹⁶ is to try saving one's face,
He does not act with partiality towards his retinue.

²⁸⁷ *'Tshom*. There is no entry in the dictionaries but the term is attested in many texts. One finds the verb in the honorific expression *dgongs pa 'tshom pa* "to get angry." *Dgongs pa 'tshoms pa* is attested in *Tshig mdzod chen mo*, 1985: 460.

²⁸⁸ From the Tibetan it is unclear who is the one walking and sitting, whether it is Kun dga' or Pha dam pa himself.

²⁸⁹ Reading *gyong bkur as gyong bskur*.

²⁹⁰ Reading *drungs as grung*. DV vol. *kha*, 82.

²⁹¹ One of the 24 *'jo mos*, Dam pa's main female disciples. She was from 'Ol kha in Dbus, spent six years learning and practicing with him and obtained realization. Roerich 1979, xx

²⁹² *Mu cor smras*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 2101.

²⁹³ *Rtogs tshad*.

²⁹⁴ *Gam du*.

²⁹⁵ *'Gyu byed kyi rlung*. Not attested term. The kind of wind that causes "afflicted mind," the seventh consciousness according to the Yogācāra tradition, to arise and differentiate into self and other. Rang 'byung rdo rje, 2006: [...] *yid 'gyu byed kyi rlung gis bskyod pa las bdun yid langs nas bdag gzhan du rtogs pa na* [...]

²⁹⁶ *Dge' sbyor*.

[69v] As a sign that if one sustains instantaneous consciousness,²⁹⁷ duality does not arise,
[His] gaze moves gradually.

As a sign that if one does not train the mind in loving kindness and compassion, one is not
training emptiness,
He does not wear shoes²⁹⁸ on the feet.

As a sign that if one does not separate from craving immediately, the hindrances of subject and
object won't subside,
He discards food alms of excellent taste on the spot.

As a sign that common and supreme accomplishments originate from realizing ones' own mind
[nature],
When he has time to rest,²⁹⁹ he holds the interdependence wheel at his heart.

As a sign that if one trains in the potential of primordial awareness, the limitations of
consciousness disintegrate,
He does not sleep, neither during the day nor the night.

As a sign that nothing exists on its own terms,³⁰⁰
He does not give each thing a name.

As a sign that holding onto existence on its own terms is delusion,
[His] behavior is without certainty.

As a sign that if one destroys the experience of meditative absorption, post-meditation³⁰¹ will
be good,
He performs the conduct of a madman.

²⁹⁷ *Skad cig ma'i shes pa.*

²⁹⁸ Misspelling *chags* for *phyags*. DV vol. *kha*, 85. *Phyags* is an honorific term for shoes. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1737.

²⁹⁹ Reading *mdo long* as *sdod long*. This term appears in various parts of the collection with the spellings *mdo' / mdo /* and *'do'*. It seems an adverb, but no translation could be found with either spellings. However, the term *sdod long* for “*dug pa'i khom pa*” exists. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1479.

³⁰⁰ Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*rang rgyud*.”

³⁰¹ Reading *rjes* as *rjes thob*.

As a sign that if certainty is not generated, profound instructions are of no benefit,
He said, “Contemplate without scriptures!” and threw Lcug ston’s Dharma bag into the river.

As a sign that all phenomena are exhausted at the face of the truth of instantaneousness,³⁰²
He said to Sged po,³⁰³ “What is the name of this?” “It surely is Sged po,” he replied.
[Dam pa] said, “In reality,³⁰⁴ this name is empty of previous and subsequent [moments],” and
laughed for a long time.

[70r] As a sign that one does not get free from suffering until a needless mind has arisen,
After saying, “Please take a pen from there³⁰⁵ in order to write the 20.000³⁰⁶ as an object to
worship,”³⁰⁷ he uttered, “Ha ha, now you have a way to write!” [I] replied, “There is no pen,
therefore if have no way to write.” [Dam pa] said, “All phenomena in *samsāra* and *nirvana* are
like that. This 20.000 has put you at a loss.³⁰⁸ Allying with the very enemy, you seek an escort
elsewhere,” and laughed for a very long time.

As a sign that if one leaves consciousness³⁰⁹ as it is, the appearances [of ordinary] experience³¹⁰
don’t dawn in the mind,³¹¹
From time to time he looks at the palm of his hands.

As a sign that there is no cause for delusion when one understands the truth as being empty,
He said, “If one destroys the head, the support, then where do the supported mouth and eyes
linger?” And then grated a turnip. He said, “If cut into pieces, is not also the turnip by essence
empty?”

³⁰² *Skad cig ma*.

³⁰³ Probably a weird spelling for *rgad po* “old man,” the name of one of Dam pa’s students. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*sged po*.”

³⁰⁴ *Don la gtugs na*.

³⁰⁵ Reading ‘*der as der*’.

³⁰⁶ The *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*.

³⁰⁷ Tentative translation. ZC vol *kha*, 70r1: *mchod gnas cig nyi khri ’bri ba la smyug gu ’der blang dang*. My assumption here is, that Kun dga’ after this command left and only once he returned, Dam pa addressed to him the following words.

³⁰⁸ *Gyod la gtugs*. *Gyod* “fight, dispute, contention, loss.” *Gtugs* “contend, reach, meet.”

³⁰⁹ *Shes pa*.

³¹⁰ *myong snang*.

³¹¹ *Yid*.

As a sign that until one does not give up worldly activities, one does not turn away from karmic actioning,

When 'Gar sgom's sister offered him a rosary of *gzi* pearls he said, "The *ācarya* does not need³¹² *gzi* pearls" and refused it. Saying, "But even if Dam pa himself does not need it, he could give it to someone else." He replied, "Hands which do not accumulate merit and wisdom are no [proper] recipients." Saying, "Still, there are many gurus that accumulate wealth." He replied, "If I put that³¹³ and a dog skull³¹⁴ for three days under the armpit, I will possess the jewels of the world. [70v] Therefore, I don't need it."

As a sign that experience has to happen³¹⁵ on the basis of [certain] conditions,

He said, "If there is no target, there is nowhere for the arrow to strike." I haven't seen people in Ding ri who know how to moisten the ground necessary for experience [to arise]. Merit necessary for the divine Dharma will emerge next month.³¹⁶ "It is better to discard ordinary consciousness,"³¹⁷ he said.

After the son of the patroness En tsha lcam³¹⁸ died she asked Dam pa for advice. As a sign that by merely seeing circumstances of suffering one has to directly cut off attachment,

He said, "Hold this thin rope!" and cut it into four pieces. [And then said,] "Now, En tsha lcam, where is it?³¹⁹ It is a bad omen to only partially³²⁰ apprehend the character of compounded phenomena as impermanent. There is no time to grieve over the waning of the moon in water. Make your mind pursue the Rtsibs ri [mountain]!"

As a sign that when discursive thoughts cease on the inside, [this] can't be expressed on the outside,

³¹² Am. *dgos* for *dges*.

³¹³ Probably the *gzi* rosary.

³¹⁴ Am. *thod* for *thong*.

³¹⁵ I read 'gel "load, impose, put on" as 'khal "achieve, happen, hit." The verbs 'khal, 'khel, 'gel seem to be part of one semantic group.

³¹⁶ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 70₁₋₂: *nyams myong dgos pa'i sar brlon shes pa'i myi ding ri na 'dug pa ma mthong / bsod de lha chos kyi dgos pa de zla ba phyi ma la 'ong bar gda' /* Khenpo Tamphel suggests that this is referring to wetting the ground in order to make it fertile for spiritual growth. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication. While the individual lines are coherent, the overall structure and the speaker of these two sentences are not clear.

³¹⁷ *Tha mal gyi shes pa*. In the Bka' brgyud *mahāmudrā* instructions this term refers to the natural uncontrived mind and is to be cultivated. The Third Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje has equated it with *dharmadhātu* and buddha nature (Mathes 2008, 44, 414). However, here it definitely has a negative connotation and is seen as something that should be discarded.

³¹⁸ Not identified.

³¹⁹ *Ci'i sa na gda' ye*.

³²⁰ *Cha yod bzhin du*.

Having covered his face with the left hand, he bent the right hand sign out.

As a sign that one has to sustain instantaneousness without distraction,
Whenever [I] come, he does not ask whether [I am] well.

As a sign that all phenomena dissolve [back] to where they arose,
Asking him, “Dam pa, what is the cause of the arising of mindful awareness³²¹ in a variety of ways?” He answered, “I have no idea about this. You should ask this bell. This bell is an expert in that subject.”

[71r] As a sign that the guide on the path towards joy is suffering,
He said, “People who don’t work, don’t obtain wages.³²² Tibetans have no perseverance. If they were able go naked, how bundles of silk brocade, heaps of wool, and roasted barley flour would fall down like rain!”

As a sign that one does not get free from attachment and aversion if non-conceptuality is not generated in the mindstream,
When Ston pa Rtsegs chung bsgom³²³ said, “Please give me an instruction,” he said, “All instructions asked by people who have not turned the mind away from *saṃsāra*, are a waste of time.”³²⁴ [He] asked, “Why are they a waste of time? The [people] come from far away.” [Dam pa] said, “I haven’t seen an instruction greater than that butter lamp over there. You should ask the butter lamp for instructions. If you practice the so-called Dharma,³²⁵ the butter lamp has got instructions!”

As a sign that the support for obtaining the higher realms and liberation is discipline,

³²¹ *Dran rig*.

³²² Reading *brla’ sngan* as *gla rngan*.

³²³ Not identified.

³²⁴ *Rang thang*. Syn. for *rang ga* “ordinary” what in colloquial usage is *ta ka se* (Tulku Sangnak Tenzin, private communication) and *ma bcos pa* “unaltered.” I read it as “useless, waste of time” because from the context I assume that it is an ancient way of saying exactly that. Although in Tibetan the “people” are the subject, I made the “instructions” the subject because otherwise it doesn’t make sense.

³²⁵ ZC vol. *kha* 71r4: *chos sam de byed na* / This way of phrasing is very obscure. According to Khenpo Tamphel it is a local dialect that might intend what is translated here. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication. This expression comes up more later on, the structure of it is always the Tibetan construction for “or” in conjunction with a demonstrative pronoun. I have rendered it in the same way throughout. Molk translated it as, “what you call.” Molk 2006, 188.

He said, “There is no fortunate man in central Tibet like Rtag sgom, who has generated certainty about the vows. On his³²⁶ waist there is one eye. He treasures it dearly. People who don’t look after³²⁷ their eyes are not happy.”

As a sign that if one does not separate from [ones’] innermost desires the view won’t manifest, He said, “People without gold don’t suffer the fear of³²⁸ loss. Rtse lde³²⁹ adores merit. He has not understood that merit is Rtse lde’s loss.”³³⁰

As a sign that until one won’t give up the activities of a householder, meditation won’t manifest, He said, “This donkey likes to have wounds on his back,³³¹ therefore he comes.”

[71v] As a sign that if one does not turn the mind away from *saṃsāra*, the conduct³³² doesn’t manifest,

He said, “There is no sentient being [more] deluded than a honeybee, which, obsessed with honey, does not implement the conduct of the vows.”

As a sign that without training the potential of primordial awareness³³³ the result won’t manifest,

He said, “Without training, great strength does not come even to a hero.”³³⁴

As a sign that, if one understands phenomena to have no inherent nature, thoughts of rejection and appropriation do not arise,

He said, “People who direct their intention and cultivation towards *saṃsāric* affairs³³⁵ will not reach a virtuous practice.” He said, “There is no liking or disliking of illusory horses and bulls.”

As a sign that the time to separate from the placenta of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is now,

³²⁶ Am. *kho’i* for *khe’i*. DV vol. *kha*, 122.

³²⁷ *Nya ra. Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 930.

³²⁸ Reading *gyis* as *gyi*.

³²⁹ A local ruler from Mnga’ ris whom he set onto the path. Heller, “Indian Style, Kashmiri Style: Aesthetics of Choice in Eleventh-Century Tibet.” Molk 2008, 57. Dung dkar 2002, 759.

³³⁰ *Gyod*.

³³¹ *Sgal pa. Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 82.

³³² This is the third element in the triad of view, meditation and conduct which Kun dga’ explained in the two previous signs.

³³³ *Rig pa’i rtsal*.

³³⁴ Am. *gyad* for *gyang*. DV vol. *kha*, 126.

³³⁵ *Mdun ma*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*mdun ma*.”

He said, “When you find a victorious Myrobalan³³⁶ fruit, you should apply it to the disease.³³⁷ You will not encounter a victorious [fruit] later. Now that you have obtained a wage, there are many people [ready] to snatch it from you.”

As a sign that to an individual endowed with certainty there is nothing that does not turn into an instruction,

He said, “The appearances of the objects of the six collections have turned into a little volume³³⁸ of instructions and [people] don’t know how to practice [them]!” Asking, “Whose fault is that?” “It’s the fault of standing in front of the little volume of instructions without knowing how to look at it.”

As a sign that if there is a preceding undefiled cause, later on the result will be unfailing,
He took a turnip in his hand and [said], “It is like this [turnip], since it is merely born from a seed.³³⁹ [72r] Therefore, Kun dga’, would you set aside your great inner furthering power and sit around just like that?”

As a sign that if one takes deluded perceptions as something meaningful, one won’t get free³⁴⁰ from the cocoon of *samsāra*,

He said, “It is nice to be in a place where one can stay. The sky provides the provisions.³⁴¹ People who are unable to stay are not happy.”

As a sign that one does not achieve supreme accomplishments if one does not separate from a worldly mindset,

He said, “A *zo*³⁴² that is not free from [its] nose-ring³⁴³ does not taste salt. People who have lost their nose-rope to other people are not happy.”

³³⁶ *A ru ra*.

³³⁷ Reading *nad* for *nang*. DV vol. *kha*, 132.

³³⁸ Reading *be phum* as *be bum*.

³³⁹ *Nyungs kar*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 958 says, “A kind of seed that produces oil.” It seems to be the seed of the turnip here.

³⁴⁰ *Hrol ba*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*hrol ba*.”

³⁴¹ *So nam byed*. This usage appears again in folio 73v₁. It seems that it refers to the provisions necessary for a *yogin* in retreat, although its basic meaning is “farming.”

³⁴² *Mdzo*’. A cross-breed of yak and cow.

³⁴³ Reading *rnal cu* as *sna gcu*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1582.

Lce bsgom bsod de said, “Although I have been meditating for a long time, not even a little realization has developed. Please give me just one oral instruction to keep to heart.”³⁴⁴ As a sign that the path of bliss does not arise in the mindstream without removing the leader,³⁴⁵ suffering,

He replied, “Reduce to ashes what follows thoughts.”³⁴⁶ Without having removed the arrowhead, there is no need for new flesh to grow under the healing wound.³⁴⁷ What kind of doctor is the one who does not know the characteristics of illnesses?”

As a sign that if one travels on the path to liberation, one has to let go of clinging and attachment,³⁴⁸

He said, “If I’d say let’s go as sky-goers, who in Ding ri is able to go? Clinging and attached ones look at your own mindstream! Without turning the mind away from *samsāra*, hoping for the result of enlightenment is too high of a view.”³⁴⁹

As a sign that when primordial awareness is free of a support taking in [outer objects] is destroyed,

He looked at the center of the sky. Saying, “Please bless a sick person!” [72v] He answered, “Make circumambulations around the star up there and pray to it! That star up there is endowed with blessing.”

As a sign that one subdues the malice of the ghosts by clearing away discursiveness of conceptual knowledge,³⁵⁰

He said, “Individuals with determination don’t become dependent.”³⁵¹ Asking, “What helps when afflicted by harmful spirits?” He replied, “Concerning that, it helps if you eat the eyes of a crazy elephant.”

³⁴⁴ *Thugs la gdags pa*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1169. Lit. “to tie to the mind.” Based on other passages in the *Zhi byed Collection* it seems that the mind here could indeed be that of the master, which by “tying onto the mind” is accepting the disciple and promises to look after him. A literal rendering of the Tibetan does not really work in English. Also see Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*thugs la btags*.”

³⁴⁵ *Sna*. I think it is a short form of *lam sna* because of the similar imagery in previous signs.

³⁴⁶ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 72r4: *dogs pe’i phyi na pyi na phar thal ba gtor*.

³⁴⁷ Reading *sha’ur* as *sha’u*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 2836.

³⁴⁸ *Dzin chags*.

³⁴⁹ *Mthos pa*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 195, 1224.

³⁵⁰ *Shes pa’i khu’ phrig*. See *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 230 for *khu’ phrig*. *Shes pa* is not only “consciousness” but can stand for the Sanskrit word *jñāna*, which can stand for both “conceptual knowledge” and “non-conceptual wisdom,” in which case the Tibetan differentiates terms by translating the latter with *ye shes*.

³⁵¹ *Gzhan dbang*.

As a sign that if doubts are not removed, one does not achieve accomplishments,
A teacher asked, “What is the reason for not accomplishing [the result of mantra] recitation?”³⁵²
He replied, “It is your hostile intentions.”³⁵³

As a sign that no afflictions arise when one lets go of clinging,
A teacher asked, “Please give an instruction on meditation!” He replied, “If you are not able to meditate, wouldn’t you better give up craving³⁵⁴ for things? It is the third lunar day of the month, don’t³⁵⁵ rush³⁵⁶ with your meditation!”

A woman asked, “Why³⁵⁷ don’t you abide in places of good areas, and instead dwell in [a place] such as this one?”

As a sign that well-acquainted places are where desire and aversion emerge from,
He said, “Although there is nowhere better than the place³⁵⁸ and India, since an invincible enemy rose I fled.”

[She further] said, “Still, you don’t abide in a place with an easy livelihood.” As a sign that veneration and respect of others interrupts the increase of virtuous practice, [73r]
He answered, “By consuming lots of meat and alcohol of impure livelihood, gold decreased. Submitting to hardship³⁵⁹ here from now on,³⁶⁰ I hope that gold will increase.”

As a sign that one has to cut the fetters of the world,
His behavior would turn into whatsoever.

As a sign that if chatter is abandoned on the inside, one becomes free from faults on the outside,
At times he does not say anything at all.

³⁵² *Bzlas brjod*.

³⁵³ Reading *mdang sems pa* as *sdang sems pa*.

³⁵⁴ *Zhen pa*.

³⁵⁵ Reading *de men* as *de min*. DV vol. *kha*, 153.

³⁵⁶ *Rings pa*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 2695.

³⁵⁷ *Tsug lags*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*de tsug lags*.”

³⁵⁸ It is unclear which place he is referring to as the Tibetan just reads *yul*.

³⁵⁹ Reading *sdug msgur* as *sdug sgur*.

³⁶⁰ *Da ’og*. In this and other passages in the *Zhi byed Collection* it means “from now on” often supported by verbs in imperative but in another context, it also means “up until now” as Martin translated it. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*da ’og*.”

As a sign that if one first completes the benefit for oneself, benefit for others arises on the side,
He endeavors in practice by engaging mainly in ascetic practices.

As a sign that one can not find the authentic meaning through letters,
After going to 'Bro sgom skyo sangs,³⁶¹ he washed his little volume of pith instructions with water.

As a sign that the unobstructed energy [of] this appearance emerges as anything,
Casting a mantra onto the horn of an antelope,³⁶² he transformed it into gold.

As a sign that that very [horn] is empty of a true existence,
He took it into his hand and it transformed into ashes.

As a sign that the variety of the greatness of interdependence emerges out of non-existence,³⁶³
He placed [his] woolen garment into [empty] space.

As a sign that one can not scrutinize all phenomena in *samsāra*,
He said, "Like clouds nothing has a true existence."

Bla ma Phyar asked, "What kind of behavior should one adopt in order to carry out a genuine³⁶⁴
practice?" As a sign that one has to extinguish [the notions of] like and dislike,
He said, "That human corpse over there is teaching an exalted instruction."

Bla ma Sgom bsod asked, "Don't you allow to take care of food and clothing in order to practice
the Dharma?" [73v] [He said,] "The provisions of the *yogin* will be provided by the guru's
blessing."

As a sign that if at present one encounters suffering, later happiness will follow,

³⁶¹ A male disciple. According to the *Blue Annals* he was a lineage holder of the secondary lineage called *brgyud pa thor bu ba* of the intermediate transmission. Roerich 1979, xxx. Molk 2008, 62.

³⁶² Reading *rtso ru* as *gtsod ru*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary":
<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for "*rtso ru*."

³⁶³ *Sna tshogs myed pa*. For an alternative translation see Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 31. In *Thugs ki brda'* there is also the mention of variety appearing out of non-existence. ZC vol. *kha*, 81r3: *myed pa'i ngang las sna tshogs shar ba de [...]*

³⁶⁴ Reading *gsha ma* as *gsha' ma*.

He said, “If one endures to stay three years in the hamlet³⁶⁵ of foxes and wolves, in the front a spring of molasses will emerge. In the back rain of wool will fall. At that time a great gathering will take place in the wilderness. Knowing how to attract³⁶⁶ gain, people will come.”

Asking, “What was the cause for Dam pa to cry yesterday?”³⁶⁷ He replied, “I cried for the child of the elephant.” Asking, “Why so?”³⁶⁸ As a sign that if an individual lives a family life, he separates from the noble path,

He said, “Not enjoying the great food³⁶⁹ that exists in the jungle,³⁷⁰ he prefers to get bound onto shackles in villages.”

As a sign that people who perceive suffering as an ornament don’t know how to abandon the enemy,

He said, “To him hostile bees are not harmful.³⁷¹ He does not enjoy if there is no bee.”

As a sign that it is certain that hindrances [caused] by *māra* will come,

He said, “Having annihilated them, the one who honors the winds is the one who controls,³⁷² consider him again to be the one who learns to control.”

As a sign of not being apprehensive of the causes for suffering [and] *samsāra*,

He said, “The *nāgas* have put him at a loss³⁷³ and still he values them.”

From the *Three Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs*, [this is] *Pointing Out*³⁷⁴ the Purity of the Body as Signs. It is complete. *Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*.

³⁶⁵ Am. *grong* for *greng*.

³⁶⁶ Reading *sgugs* as *’gug*. DV vol. *kha*, 166.

³⁶⁷ *Mdang* could either be “yesterday evening” or “yesterday.”

³⁶⁸ *De tsug lags*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*de tsug lags*.”

³⁶⁹ Reading *bza’ ched po* as *bza’ chen po*. DV vol. *kha*, 171.

³⁷⁰ Reading *nags bseb* as *nags gseb*. DV vol. *kha*, 171.

³⁷¹ Although the *Dingri Volumes* spell *gnod* whenever the *Zhi byed Collection* spells *gnad*, it is an attested term with the same meaning and not a misspelling. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed March 15, 2020. Entry “*gnad pa*.”

³⁷² The one who controls the afflictions, horses etc. Dan Martin “Tibetan Vocabulary”:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry “*’dul sbyong*”

³⁷³ *Gyod la btugs*. Martin translated it as “to grief” in Dan Martin, “Tibetan Dictionary”:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry “*gyod la gtug*.”

³⁷⁴ Reading *brian pa* as *bstan pa*. DV vol. *kha*, 174.

3.4.2. [Pointing Out Enlightened Verbal Expressions as Signs]

[74r] I prostrate to the noble gurus. To ascertain all phenomena is the view. Concerning that, the inner and outer view have been mistaken³⁷⁵ by mediocre and inferior pundits. Hence, the son of the victors, the lion among men, the black *ācārya*, the one who sees the truth of *dharmatā*, Dam pa sangs rgyas followed³⁷⁶ the protector of beings Nāgārjuna. He took onto the path the instructions on the explanations about the path by Nāgārjuna, compassion [and] the enlightened mind, and became exalted to the inferior path. [76r] Empowered by prophecy at the 'Gron bu zad pa³⁷⁷ temple in the east, his mindstream ripened. Completing³⁷⁸ the practice of approach and accomplishment of the four empowerments, absolute coemergent wisdom³⁷⁹ dawned in his mindstream and he attained stability in the two stages³⁸⁰ of the path. Knowing 54 different scripts and grammar sciences he cut through knots of doubts. He became known for directly perceiving *sugatas* about [the number of] the stars in the sky. Regarding that guru endowed with manifold supreme qualities, [he bestowed] the astounding instructions through symbols:³⁸¹ the key instructions of completing the secret mantra practice of approach and accomplishment without the repetition of mantras, the key instructions of obtaining stability in generation and completion stages without meditating on the body of the deity, [77v] the key instructions of making the channels and winds workable without relying on the upper³⁸² and lower doors, the key instructions on generating extraordinary realization in the mindstream by [letting] body, speech and mind abide naturally, the key instructions on the arising of power of speech by speaking worldly nonsense, the key instructions on the appearing of coemergent wisdom in the mindstream without practicing, the key instructions of mastering the power of meditative concentration³⁸³ within the afflicted mind, the key instructions on the arising of clairvoyance by taking the five poisons onto the path – raising the wisdom of primordial awareness³⁸⁴ in the midst of discursive thoughts³⁸⁵ – the instructions on *prajñāpāramitā* in

³⁷⁵ *Ma phyed pa*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*ma phyed pa*.”

³⁷⁶ Reading 'brengs as 'brangs.

³⁷⁷ Unidentified. The only reference I found is a mere transcript of a text passage where the temple is mentioned but it does not give any information about this temple. Martin, “Medicine in Life of Atisha.”

³⁷⁸ *'Thems pa*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1230. Could also mean “to make an effort.” For that see Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry “*'thems pa*”

³⁷⁹ *Don dam lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes*.

³⁸⁰ Either the two stages of *bskyed rim* and *rdzogs rims* on the Vajrayāna path or the two stages of *thabs lam* and *grol lam* according to the *mahāyoga*.

³⁸¹ Curiously here the author uses the term *rtags* as a synonym for *brda*.

³⁸² Reading *stang* as *steng*.

³⁸³ *Ting nge 'dzin*.

³⁸⁴ *Rig pa'i ye shes*.

³⁸⁵ *Rnam rtog*.

accordance with the secret mantra – elevated by the weight³⁸⁶ of ascetic practice [and] adorned with the greatness of [pure] interdependence³⁸⁷ – are called “the transmission of *mahāmudrā* signs.”

As a sign that awareness³⁸⁸ is empty of the three times, creation and destruction,
He said, “How funny that the water wheel of Snga ris³⁸⁹ ascertains [the nature of] all phenomena of *saṃsāra*!”

As a sign that one does not reverse delusion if one does not separate from clinging to the true existence of this appearance,³⁹⁰

He said, “Poor *kṛṣṇasāra* antelope, which does not understand that the mirage does not behold water! The camel has been put at a loss by honey.”

As a sign that if attachment exhausts, meditation is not necessary,

When Ston pa zhig sgom³⁹¹ asked for instructions he said, “Venerable, if you are not able to meditate, give up safeguarding³⁹² the ego clinging. If one is not able to remove the eyes, meditation does not help.”

As a sign that if the [75r] power of the two accumulations is not completed, the mind can not awaken,

He said, “If charcoal is not ignited, the ore can not [be reduced] to iron.”

As a sign that the mind has no established basis,

He said, “There is no place to abide that does not depend on space.”

³⁸⁶ *Srang*. It is the name of a measure in Tibet that is without exact correspondence in western units. Therefore the best would be to leave it untranslated. However, “weight” seems to be a good compromise to keep the meaning and have a readable sentence.

³⁸⁷ It probably refers to interdependence which is not separate from emptiness. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication.

³⁸⁸ *Dran pa*. Although I previously translated it as “mindfulness” it does not seem to be what is meant here. Rather it seems to refer to the inherent quality of the mind of being conscious and aware.

³⁸⁹ Seems to be a place called Snga ris probably different from Mnga’ ris. It might be in La stod but there is no certainty about it. See Stearns 2007, 525 (FN 566).

³⁹⁰ *Dngos ’dzin*.

³⁹¹ Not identified.

³⁹² *Kha ’dzin*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 208. This term appears several times in the Zhi byed literature. “To safeguard” seems to work well as a translation for most passages.

Asking, “Why is there no way to illuminate space?” As a sign that if attachment is not reversed, hope in the Dharma is lost,

He replied, “When the mother sees a beehive,³⁹³ she does not hesitate to go near [her] child. An impatient child³⁹⁴ won’t help.”

As a sign that if certainty towards the guru is not generated, the instructions do not benefit, While teaching the Dharma to the daughter of ’Dro bsgom he said, “Dry glue is not adhesive. People who don’t understand that are incompetent.”³⁹⁵

As a sign that primordial awareness is not substantially existent,³⁹⁶ He said, “Space has neither inside nor outside.”

[I] asked, “What were you entertained by when you laughed this morning?” As a sign that attachment is the demon that does not allow you to attain the result, He replied, “There is a prisoner in Kashmir that got attached to the daughter of the head of the prison³⁹⁷ and therefore was not released. How amusing³⁹⁸ recollecting that!”

As a sign that after desire afflictions follow, He said, “After the king has gone also the ministers leave.”

As a sign that all phenomena come forth from emptiness, which is without any basis, He took the horn of an antelope into his hands and said, “Isn’t³⁹⁹ the essence of form emptiness?”

[76v] Asking, “Please grant me an instruction on the true nature!” As a sign that the wisdom of the mind is free from expression,

He replied, “I am not familiar with this. Ask the head of the frog.”

³⁹³ *Sbrang ma’i thum po*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*thum po*.”

³⁹⁴ Reading *dang thung* as *ngang thung*.

³⁹⁵ *’Ja tri*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*’ja tri*.”

³⁹⁶ *Rdzas su ma ’grub pa*.

³⁹⁷ Reading *brtson bu* as *btson bu*, and *brtson bdag* as *btson bdag*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*btson bu*.”

³⁹⁸ Although *rgod bro* sounds more as a verb here, I haven’t found any passage in other texts where it could be read as a verb.

³⁹⁹ *Myi gda’ ye*. I read this *ye* as the interrogative colloquial particle *gas*. In this and other passages (f.i. 70v₂) it works well with that reading.

As a sign that craving is the cause for suffering,
He said, “If craving for honey is not stopped, the camel won’t be happy.”

As a sign that if the fetters of ego clinging are not severed, one won’t get liberated from *saṃsāra*
He said, “A fish on the hook did not swim⁴⁰⁰ away in the ocean.”

As a sign that until one does not separate from desire, it is suffering [one experiences],
Asking, “Which enemies harm the Dharma practice?” He replied, “Performing golden deeds harms [the Dharma practice].”

As a sign that if one gives up the doing, meditation is not necessary,
When Ston pa Cig bsgom said, “I need an instruction to keep to heart,”⁴⁰¹ he replied, “People who have been separated from their limbs and their mother are not happy. This Tibetan man is not able to separate from desire and considers meditation.”

One teacher said, “Dam pa, please grant an instruction to awaken of [just] one word to keep to heart!” As a sign that if one understands all phenomena as being in essence non-existent,⁴⁰² there is no need to accumulate karma,
He replied, “Ask people who have seen the lion costume! It knows about accumulating and not accumulating karma.”

As a sign that when there is no mental engagement with the three times, habitual tendencies purify naturally, therefore habitual tendencies don’t accumulate,
[76r] He said, “I don’t either have a copper scale⁴⁰³ nor weights, nor a blacksmith to beat them. There is no one at all who guards the outer ocean.”

The pure realm of the three *kāyas* is not on the outside. As a sign that at the time when the power of primordial awareness is trained on the outside, pure perception arises on the inside,
He said, “The moment the crystal egg got free from rust, light radiates from within. [This light] is inherently present.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ Strangely the past tense *phyin* is used.

⁴⁰¹ *Thugs la gdags pa*.

⁴⁰² *Dngos po myed pa*.

⁴⁰³ Reading *brgya ma* as *rgya ma*. DV vol. *kha*, 251.

⁴⁰⁴ *Rang chas*.

If craving towards objects is not severed, the mind does not turn away from worldliness, thus, even if experience is smeared, it does not arise,

He said, “’Bro sgom’s younger brother is not able to let go the rope of worldliness. Even if one painted it now, [the color] wouldn’t stick.”⁴⁰⁵ Asking, “Whose fault is that?” He replied, “It is indeed the inability to separate from clinging onto appearances as truly existent.”

As a sign that if you take unlimited consciousness for the limits of the intellect, [this notion] turns into a delusion,

He said, “[The fact] that we don’t look directly at the clear sky and have [instead] been looking at the color of the clouds is the fault of Lcug ston’s meditation demons, which brought the [clouds] along.”

As a sign that the cause for enlightenment is the power of the two accumulations,

He said, “All metals that have been anointed with the substance that transforms things into gold, turn into gold. Poor [are] all the metals that have not been anointed with that substance! The metals that come in contact with the substance that transforms things into gold are few.”

As a sign that if suffering is experienced, Dharma arises,

He said, “I am glad⁴⁰⁶ that ’Bro chung pa⁴⁰⁷ lost the turquoise. Now he encountered a big turquoise.”⁴⁰⁸

[78v] As a sign that people who have not cut off worldly fetters don’t remember the Dharma,

He said, “Poor [is] the bear which sees a heap⁴⁰⁹ of honey! It is the fault of seeing the honey that [he] does not arrive⁴¹⁰ home. Without resolving [to retrieve] honey, the bear is not happy.”

As a sign that if the present human body does not liberate [itself] from *samsāra*, a time for liberation won’t come,

⁴⁰⁵ Reading ’chags as chags. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 780.

⁴⁰⁶ ’Tshengs. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “’tshengs.”

⁴⁰⁷ He is mentioned quite often in Molk 2008 and the *Zhi byed Collection* where he also receives the title of *bla ma* and one time the epithet *smyon pa*.

⁴⁰⁸ Reading *g.yu* instead of *g.yul*. DV vol. *kha*, 261.

⁴⁰⁹ *Thum po*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “*thum po*.”

⁴¹⁰ *Rtol*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “’rtol ba.”

He said, “If the disease is not cured at the time when a victorious Myrobalan fruit is found, [another fruit] won’t be obtained later on. The disease will persist for a long time.”

Knowing that [I was] pondering about whether a remote place is necessary in order to practice, as a sign that when one gives up physical actions that [itself] is a remote place,
He said, “If you give up the conduct of ants⁴¹¹ and hold the lineage of vows, you are a man.”

Knowing that [I was] pondering that virtuous activity grew quickly, as a sign that if one does not concord with worldly people, a huge boundary has been removed,
He said, “Away with the balance weight! Throw the scale at the dog!”⁴¹²

Abiding for some days reciting mantras ’Bro sgom addressed him saying, “Having already obtained accomplishments of virtuous practice of body and speech, are you looking for anything else?”⁴¹³ As a sign that the meaning of emptiness is not realized if the roots of virtue are not completed and the accumulation of merit has to be gathered because the path of the noble ones [consists] in the power of the two accumulations,
He said, “Since this bird soaring through the heights needs both wings, right now, I am taking care of [my] wings. If the wings are not expanded, [77r] it can not fly.”

Ston pa Cig bsgom⁴¹⁴ said, “I need an instruction to keep to heart!” As a sign that meditation is not necessary if subsequent moments of thought are removed,
He replied, “Recognize the present awareness!”

As a sign that if pride⁴¹⁵ of the intellect is not cut off, realization will be a [mere] reflection,⁴¹⁶
He said, “If the musk deer cuts off [his] attachment to the rock, the dog won’t catch him.”

As a sign that if one does not let go⁴¹⁷ of clinging onto appearances as having a real existence, meditation will be a [mere] reflection,

⁴¹¹ Reading *grog mo* as *grog ma*. DV vol. *kha*, 264.

⁴¹² Tentative Translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 78v5: *srang gi nya ga phyi la srang shing khyi la rgyob gsung /*

⁴¹³ *Cang ’tshal*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed May 15, 2019. Entry for “’tshal ba.”

⁴¹⁴ Not identified.

⁴¹⁵ *Snyems*.

⁴¹⁶ Am. + ’gro ba’i. DV vol *kha*, 272.

⁴¹⁷ Reading *thengs* as *thongs*. DV vol *kha*, 273.

He said, “If the antelope does not cut off the desire towards the water in the mirage, it won’t reach the destination it is wishing for.”⁴¹⁸

As a sign that if the taste of joy and suffering is not equalized,⁴¹⁹ conduct will be a [mere] reflection,

He said, “There is no need to apply a medicine to a [certain] disease which does not help.”

As a sign that if spiritual activity is not applied to benefit beings, the fruition will be a [mere] reflection,

He said, “The *ācārya*, having given up *samsāra*, does not accomplish⁴²⁰ *nirvāṇa*.”

As a sign that if experience does not become a remedy for afflictions, it serves no purpose,

He said, “Mold⁴²¹ in a well,⁴²² food that does not satiate, serves no purpose.”

As a sign that there is no need for remedies if they are unable to reverse the deluded mind,

He said, “If one is ineffective in the moment when acting like a champion, the reward⁴²³ for the hero will be a dog.”

As a sign that if one does not rely on the main part [of the practice] afterwards, the armor of practice becomes useless,

He said, “There is no reason to associate with a captain that does not retrieve jewels.”

As a sign that if the mind does not turn away from *samsāra*, there is no reason to stay in mountain solitude,

[75v] He said, “If the monkey mind does not slow down, the limbs don’t have the power to stay still.”

⁴¹⁸ The second part of the sentence is missing in the *Zhi byed Collection* and was probably added by hand in the unreadable scrabbles above. Am. + ‘*dod pa’i gnas su mi brtol* / DV vol. *kha*, 27₃.

⁴¹⁹ The first part of the sentence is missing in the *Zhi byed Collection*, although it might have been added in unreadable note in the manuscript. Am + *bde sdug gi ro ma bnyoms na*. DV vol. *kha*, 27₄.

⁴²⁰ *Sgrub*.

⁴²¹ *Sha bal*. Dbyangs can dga’ ba’i blo gros 2011, 535: *dbyar dus sa’i steng du sngon po bal ta bur chags pa de’o* / “That which is blue and forms like wool on the ground in the summer.” This translation was confirmed by Khenpo Lobsang, an expert in Vinaya. Khenpo Lobsang, private communication.

⁴²² Reading *kō mo* as *kwo mo*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for “*ko mog*.”

⁴²³ *Zho sha*.

As a sign that if one does not give up longing, there is no reason to practice,

He said, “What is the benefit of the turtle associating with moisture? It does not recognize salty turbulent water.⁴²⁴ There is no enemy that does greater harm.”

As a sign that if the guru does not give explanations, the meaning [behind] the words won’t be understood,

He said, “Bla ma Phyar composed a few lines, on the basis of [which] the captain sailing towards the golden island won’t [be able to] identify the wished-for path. The pathway through the ocean has to be traversed by [means of] the experience of a great captain.”

As a sign that if on the inside the limits of discursiveness⁴²⁵ are dissolved, on the outside frightening abysses will disappear and hence one will be free from doubts,

Asking, “What is a mind that has realized the view like?” He replied, “I don’t know about that. You should ask people that have seen the lion costume. It is one who has eradicated misconceptions concerning the view.”

As a sign that although the outer objects not possessing a ground for conceptualization are not established, the hell realms are a distorted perception,

He said, “I don’t either have a copper scale⁴²⁶ nor weights, nor a blacksmith to beat them. There is no one at all who guards the outer ocean.”

Asking, “Is there a falling back to *samsāra* even after having obtained accomplishments?” As a sign that in order not to fall back to *samsāra*, one has to obtain Buddhahood and that ordinary accomplishments, since they arise out of interdependency, will perish,

He replied, “A Garuḍa that does not return to the place where birds are summoned, will fall on the ground. [78r] The power of the wings will wear out.”

Knowing that I was reflecting about how difficult it is to obtain the *bodhisattva* levels,⁴²⁷ he said, “It is not difficult as it is not necessary to train gradually.” As a sign that with a single [moment] of greatness of interdependence all paths are perfected,

He said, “If one puts the king to serve, one does not have to entrust a master to the common people.”

⁴²⁴ In *Skū'i brda* it becomes clear that this is the image for desire.

⁴²⁵ *Khu phrig*.

⁴²⁶ Reading *brgya ma* as *rgya ma*. DV vol. *kha*, 286.

⁴²⁷ Skt. *Bhūmi*.

As a sign that although one has the mindset of practicing the Dharma, it won't be accomplished because until one becomes able to set aside this servant⁴²⁸ of food and clothing, [ones' experiences] are the nature of suffering,

He said, "Until the food⁴²⁹ in the heron's⁴³⁰ crop is not set aside, nobody is able to [practice] Dharma. People who don't understand that a naked person does not have enemies are not happy."

As a sign that if fetters of discursiveness⁴³¹ are severed, thoughts get freed in their own ground,⁴³²

Asking, "What was the issue⁴³³ that no magical display⁴³⁴ whatsoever appeared when Mgar sgom slept at the house of a housewife who was a murderer?" He replied, "He first saw the lion costume and then ascertained all phenomena in those regards."

As a sign that the benefit of others is not accomplished if oneself has not [yet] ripened – knowing that 'Bro sgom thought that he should teach the Dharma, [Dam pa] said, "Without having accomplished the benefit for oneself, there is no need of a servant for others. The guide of gods and humans called Śākyamuni, had not the power to teach the Dharma until he underwent hardship."

Jo sras rtsang bzang⁴³⁵ said, "I have been pondering that I should do a practice of the noble Dharma but caring for food and clothing has bound me to service.⁴³⁶ I need an instruction to keep to heart where food and clothing are not necessary [74v]." As a sign of being unable to practice the Dharma, since, if one practiced accordingly, food and clothing would be provided by the blessing of the Three Jewels,

⁴²⁸ *Khol po*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for "*khol po*."

⁴²⁹ *So skos*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for "*sos kos*."

⁴³⁰ *Skya bkra*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for "*skya bkra*."

⁴³¹ *Snyems thag*.

⁴³² *Rang sar grol*.

⁴³³ Reading *nad ka* as *gnad ka*. DV vol. *kha*, 29s.

⁴³⁴ *Cho 'phrul*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for "*cho 'phrul*."

⁴³⁵ Not identified. In the *Dingri Volumes* he appears only in this text spelled as Jo sras gtsang bzang.

⁴³⁶ *Bkol*. This term is found various times throughout the collection, often in combination with *khol po* "slave, servant."

He said, “Although one wants gold, one is unable to dig. If one encounters a golden ore, one procrastinates the work. One does not have to look after food and clothing at a place where one can find lumps of gold.⁴³⁷ The one called Rgya sgom⁴³⁸ is someone whose effort in working for gold is excellent.”

And again he (Jo sras rtsang bzang) said, “Please grant an instruction about [accumulating] great merit for people like me, who, not having gathered the accumulations, [have] great qualities but little merit.” As a sign that merit occurs by gathering the accumulations, He said, “The virtuous man from Zhang zhung has gathered more accumulations [of merit and wisdom] [with] one plate of *rtsam pa*⁴³⁹ dough than Rtse lde through a hundred Dharma festivals.”

Saying, “Venerable Dam pa, are you happy⁴⁴⁰ with this yogic conduct in order to practice the Dharma?” As a sign that if one practices [the life of a] *yogin*, one has to give up the activities of a householder,

He said to a *na mo*⁴⁴¹ *khams pa*, “Are there vagrant yaks in your place?”

After that men from Khams offered a piece of brocade and prostrated, as a sign that appearances arise as whatsoever without certainty,

He said, “I heard that there are brocade images in Ding ri but in the village there are none to get.”

Saying,⁴⁴² “Please bestow an instruction that prevents body and mind from suffering,” as a sign that the cause for suffering is craving,

[Dam pa] said, “A camel [79r] that tastes honey is not happy. Look at the rock!”

As a sign that the causes for bondage are wealth and possessions,

He said, “You should know that it is the fault of gold that the son of Gnam the has been put at a loss.”

⁴³⁷ *Gser sbram. Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 3026.

⁴³⁸ One of Dam pa’s main male disciples also known as Bla ma Rgya gom pa. Damp pa imparted on him the precepts called *rig pa ngos ’dzin*. Roerich 1979, pdf 547.

⁴³⁹ Roasted barley flour.

⁴⁴⁰ Am. *bde’ ba* for *pde ba*.

⁴⁴¹ A place in Khams?

⁴⁴² Either Kun dga’ or the man from Khams.

Again, at a later point, the man from Khams offered a big piece of ancient satin. As a sign that the supreme possession is contentment,

He said, “It is enough for the *ācārya* to wrap up in the woolen garment, hence he doesn’t need it. Give it to someone who wants it!”

He (the man) said, “There are many who would want this. However, I gave it to you, guru, you who does not desire it.” As a sign that wealth arises for a *yogin* when he does not wish for it, Looking at Bla ma Phyar he said, “This water from Spu rangs springs forth at the time of drought.”

Remaining there, the *ācārya* placed the object⁴⁴³ into its case and said, “[?]” As a sign that when keeping something secret it gets loud,⁴⁴⁴

He said, “How funny the people who having gone far away glance at Bsam yas [and] having arrived nearby don’t look.”

Again, that man from Khams offered a big piece of brocade to Dam pa who said, “Pull out one of its warps! I shall watch the spectacle!” As a sign that in the knowledge of primordial wisdom all five types of primordial wisdom are complete,

He said, “Taking out one warp, five various colors displayed.”

As a sign that all manifold Dharmas of the precious baskets are of one taste,

[79v] He said, “One knows this by staying side by side to a weaver.⁴⁴⁵ It is impossible to understand by teaching it to Tibetan people.”

As a sign that a few words [coming from] the experience of the guru are better than knowing hundred reflection [like] qualities,

He said, “If one trains in this weave, the fishing net’s⁴⁴⁶ experience is more skilled.” Knowing that [I] thought, “Hence, the scriptures do not contain meaning,” he said, “All outer and inner phenomena are ascertained by brocade.”

⁴⁴³ Reading *g.yul* as *yul*.

⁴⁴⁴ The whole passage is unclear to me and also where the previous sign ends. Tentative Translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 79r4-6: *a tsar as 'di der bsdad nas g.yul shubs su bcug pas / sdog gsum pa'i myi dra ba 'dra bacig byung gsung / gsangs na sgra che ba'i brda' ru /*

⁴⁴⁵ The *Zhi byed Collection* reads *'thag pa* “to weave,” which could also be a misspelling for *thag pa* “string.” Either options convey the message.

⁴⁴⁶ *Rgya mo*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed July 15, 2019. Entry for “*rgya mo*.”

As a sign that the characteristics of material phenomena⁴⁴⁷ are undeluded since they are devoid of a true existence,

He said, “It is enough to see the lion costume once.”

As a sign that if one understands that the relative lacks an inherent existence,⁴⁴⁸ that very [fact] alone is the ultimate truth,

Asking, “Is *saṃsāra* without inherent existence?” He said, “It is so.” “But, the six classes of beings don’t cease [to be]!” He replied, “The relative is not understood as the ceasing of suffering.” Saying, “If one understands [the relative as such]?” “Then, one has seen the lion costume,” he replied.

From the *Cycles of Mahāmudrā Signs* [this is] *Pointing Out Enlightened Verbal Expressions as Signs*. It is complete. *Om maṇi padme huṃ*.

3.4.3. [Pointing Out the Realization of the Mind as Signs]

[80r] I prostrate to the precious guru.

Dam pa sangs rgyas, the one who, having mastered⁴⁴⁹ the four types of enlightened activity, has the power to entrust activities to the *dākinīs*,

The one who, blessed by beings that obtained realizations, has a pure mindstream,

The one who, blessed by *sugatas*, has the power to transform the appearances of others,

The one who, having equalized the doors of the eight worldly *dharma*s, has extinguished the flaws of *saṃsāra* and *nirvaṇa*,⁴⁵⁰

The one who, having eradicated the peg of apprehender and apprehended from within, is free from the causes that trigger rebirth in *saṃsāra*,

The one who, having trained the mind in emptiness, manifests the knowledge of primordial wisdom,⁴⁵¹

The one who, completing the stage of approach of the four empowerments, spreads non-contaminated joy,

⁴⁴⁷ *Dngos po'i chos*. Interestingly here the two terms that could very well stand alone are combined, probably to emphasize material phenomena.

⁴⁴⁸ *Rang bzhin*.

⁴⁴⁹ Am. *mnga' brnyes* for *mnga' mnyes*.

⁴⁵⁰ *Gnyis bsdu*s.

⁴⁵¹ *Mkhyen pa'i ye shes*.

The one who, having purified concepts that stir the mind,⁴⁵² truly manifests the eyes of primordial wisdom,

The one who, having obtained the power of non-forgetfulness, is unobscured concerning the Dharma of the three baskets,

The one who, possessing innate wisdom, knows the profound meaning,

Due to previous pure aspirations, he met with the sons of the noble ones,

The one who, applying himself to practice with exertion and effort, met face to face with the tutelary deity,

This fortunate lion amongst man is like the second Buddha.

As a sign that instantaneous consciousness is free from identification,

He snapped the fingers and [80v] asked, “Did you have the time to develop a dualistic mindset in relation to that?”

As a sign that suchness is the realization of the Buddha,

He said, “The so-called realization of the Buddha is between Ding ri and Rtsibs ri.”

As a sign that although instantaneousness at the time of [its] continuity has never been separated from the primordial, if the guru does not point it out, one doesn’t know,

He said, “Although this fish from the moment of his birth has never been separated from water, he does not recognize the fresh and old water.”

As a sign that the only practice is the absence of sequences of consciousness,⁴⁵³

He performed one kind of gaze and said, “Oh! The so-called Buddha is at an easy place.”

As a sign that in order to maintain the practice, one has to give up worldly actions,

He said, “To hope for the result of enlightenment without turning the mind away from *saṃsāra* is too high of a view.”

As a sign that the [true] nature is beyond extremes,

He said, “Ask the ship’s⁴⁵⁴ crew about the view!”

⁴⁵² *’Gyu byed kyi rtog pa*. This thesis: 45 (FN 295).

⁴⁵³ *Shes pa snga phyi*.

⁴⁵⁴ *Gzings*. See Molk for more information on the the ship’s crew. Molk 2008, 334 (FN 73).

As a sign that subtlety and coarseness cease when phenomena as they appear to others⁴⁵⁵ don't stir up the mind,

He said, "Ask the arrow maker⁴⁵⁶ about meditation!"

As a sign to not be extreme⁴⁵⁷ about what to adopt and what to discard,

He said, "Concerning the conduct, look at the infant!"

As a sign to not establish⁴⁵⁸ the view based on the basis,

He said, "Don't designate⁴⁵⁹ the body based on what the eyes of the crow are."

As a sign that unless the flow of the intellect stops,⁴⁶⁰ one does not come free from thought,

He said, "Don't assign⁴⁶¹ the awareness⁴⁶² of the archer to the limits⁴⁶³ of discursiveness!⁴⁶⁴"

As a sign that one should not mingle with ordinary practitioners,

He said, "Don't let the body of an infant get carried away⁴⁶⁵ by smelted ice!"

As a sign that *samsāra* has no inherent existence,

He laughed at the shadow of the interdependence bag.⁴⁶⁶

As a sign that *samsāra* is devoid of [being] full and empty, arising and decreasing,

He said, "Put the sky water with the skull in here!" and held out as a receptacle an angle of the lower lap of his robe.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁵⁵ *Gzhan snang*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed Sep. 4, 2019. Entry for "*gzhan snang*."

⁴⁵⁶ *Mda' mkhan*.

⁴⁵⁷ *Kha myi bzung*.

⁴⁵⁸ *Gzhag*. This term comes up very often in the following sings. It can have a number of meanings among which I have chosen based on what felt most accurate. Khenpo Tamphel explained that it has the sense of restricting, limiting or fixing. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁵⁹ *Bzhag*.

⁴⁶⁰ It could also mean, "Unless certainty regarding the mind is gained." Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁶¹ *Bzhag*.

⁴⁶² *Rig pa*.

⁴⁶³ *Mtshams*.

⁴⁶⁴ *Snyems byed*. Seems to be used here as a synonym for *rtog pa*.

I guess what is being said here is, "Don't limit the awareness of the arrow maker through discursiveness!"

⁴⁶⁵ *Bkur*.

⁴⁶⁶ *Rten 'brel gyi gal te*. This is one of Pha dam pa's unique features, one of the few possessions he owned. For some notes on this see Martin, "Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet," 29-30.

⁴⁶⁷ *Thu ba*. Dan Martin, "Tibetan Vocabulary": <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. Accessed Sep. 4, 2019. Entry for "*thu ba*."

As a sign that *saṃsāra* is primordially pure at the basis,⁴⁶⁸

He said, “Nobody put⁴⁶⁹ the sky [here],” and waved⁴⁷⁰ his hand above the head.

As a sign that the arising of variety out of the state of non-existence is opening up the space⁴⁷¹ of emptiness,

He said, “I haven’t seen any craftsman more skilled than this sky!”

As a sign that what appears⁴⁷² dissolves into the expanse of that⁴⁷³ essence,⁴⁷⁴

After the smoke of tinder disappeared in the sky he said, “All phenomena in *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are like this,” and laughed for a long a time.

“That understanding is a concept.” As a sign that there is no one that can make one understand⁴⁷⁵ the [ultimate] meaning,

He said, “[There’s] a *yogin* who teaches the Dharma to a man made of stone.”

As a sign that the very person giving instructions is like an echo and the ear of the listener, which produces hearing, is not existent,

He said, “The ear of the turtle heard that.”

As a sign that if [the understanding of] meanings like those are not born in the mindstream, whatever one does is a cause for *saṃsāra*,

He said, “The wife of the king practiced that.”

As a sign that if one does not generate the perception of *saṃsāra* as a prison, the mind won’t turn away from this world, [81v]

“I have seen accomplishments attained by a prisoner inside a ditch.”

⁴⁶⁸ *Dbyings su dag pa*.

⁴⁶⁹ *Bzhag*.

⁴⁷⁰ Reading *yug* as *g.yug*.

⁴⁷¹ Reading *go phye ba* as *go ’byed pa*. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁷² Reading *shar bde nyi* as *shar ba de nyi*. DV vol. *kha*, 394. Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 81r4: *shar ba de nyi ngo bo de’i dbyings su dag pa’i brda’ ru /*

⁴⁷³ Emptiness. This sign relates to the previous one. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁷⁴ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 81r4: *shar ba de nyi ngo bo de’i dbyings su dag pa’i brda’ ru /*

⁴⁷⁵ Am. *go rgyu* as *go sgyus*.

As a sign that if one does not remove apprehended and apprehender, the view remains ordinary,⁴⁷⁶

He said, “There is no need for a key that does not open the lock.”⁴⁷⁷

As a sign that if afflictions are not pacified, meditation remains ordinary,

He said, “There is no need for applying a medicine that does not cure the disease.”

As a sign that if one is not able to transform the perceptions of others, conduct remains unaltered,

He said, “There is no need for people without strength to slip into the clothes of a hero.”

As a sign that if desire does not come to an end, realization remains ordinary,

He said, “If one does not stop the craving for things, there is no need for practicing the Dharma.”

As a sign that if thoughts are autonomous,⁴⁷⁸ experience is ordinary,

He said, “There is no need to practice if suffering is not appeased.”

As a sign that when experience occurs one does not remain ordinary,

He said, “Having found a golden ground, one does not procrastinate the work.”

As a sign that one does not have even an instant for distraction,

He said, “Kun dga’ do you have time to look at the moon?”

As a sign that letting go is the unmistakable path of the noble ones,

He said, “Wipe the weighing pans of the scale!”⁴⁷⁹

As a sign that if one does not practice, qualities will be suppressed by pride,

He said, “Hit the dog with the beam of the scale!”⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ *Rang thang*. In the following signs this word keeps on repeating. As was already mentioned, I read it simply as “goes to waste,” but according to the context I also use the already attested translations “unaltered and ordinary.”

⁴⁷⁷ *Tha rams*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*tha rams*.”

⁴⁷⁸ *Rang rgyud*. Probably it means if your thoughts are out of control.

⁴⁷⁹ *Srang gi nya ga*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 928. It must be yet another part of the scale and not the balance beam as Martin has suggested, which is called *srang shing*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*nya ga*.”

⁴⁸⁰ *Srang shing*. See this thesis: 71 (FN 479).

As a sign that outer conformity⁴⁸¹ has to be given up in order to generate meditative stability,
He said, “If you want the inner butter lamp⁴⁸² [82r] to be efficient, smash the outer vase!”

Asking, “Is it like they are saying, that once you have realized the view there is no need to practice?” As a sign that it is necessary to practice as long as mental grasping has not been extinguished,

He said, “As for the boil, to touch it before it has turned into a black-head⁴⁸³ is unbearable. Up to then, this bandage is highly treasured.”

As a sign that appearance and emptiness are not separate,
He said, “There is no difference between the moon of the first day or the fifteenth.”⁴⁸⁴

As a sign that if one does not let go of grasping, one won’t get free from *samsāra*,
He said, “If you are a *yogin*, throw the hook into the water!”

As a sign that primordial awareness⁴⁸⁵ is free from the cover of obscurations,
He stays naked.

Saying, “How nice if you’d wear some clothes!” As a sign that the nature of the mind is not produced by causes, conditions and an agent,
He said, “Bring me a piece of clothes that has neither been formed in formation,⁴⁸⁶ nor woven in weaves!”

As a sign that the nature of mind is not established as form,
He said, “Kun dga’, the egg does not have a seam.⁴⁸⁷ Where did consciousness enter into it?”

⁴⁸¹ *Mthun ’jug*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*mthun ’jug*.”

⁴⁸² *Me mar*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*me mar*.”

⁴⁸³ *Rmen pa*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocabcontinued/home>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*rmen pa*.”

⁴⁸⁴ As to say, between the moon right after new moon, and the full moon.

⁴⁸⁵ *Rig pa*.

⁴⁸⁶ *Chags su ma bcags*. Martin translates it in the same way. Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 31.

⁴⁸⁷ I haven’t translated the focus particle *ni*, as it has a colloquial usage here unique to Tibetan. In English it would probably be rendered by the tone of the voice.

As a sign that the nature of mind is devoid of birth and death,
He said, “There is no tying and releasing to space.”

As a sign that this mind’s nature is primordially clear light,
He said, “The essence of the sun has never been since the very outset associated with darkness.”

As a sign that there is no first origin from where the nature of the mind sprang forth,
He said, “The lion should not be separated from the snow!”

[82v] As a sign that the conduct of a *yogin* is not in accord with worldly people,
He said, “The king should not adopt the behavior of common people!”

As a sign that without having ripened oneself, others won’t ripen,⁴⁸⁸
He said, “Hungry people don’t give loans.”⁴⁸⁹

As a sign to not let the instructions of the guru go to waste,⁴⁹⁰
He said, “After having eaten delicious food, don’t throw up!”

As a sign that body, speech and mind need to be transformed,
He said, “After having found a precious jewel, don’t sit around indolently! Having found it,
don’t throw it away!”

As a sign that it is useless to know a lot of discourses whose meaning has not been understood,
He said, “Don’t admire⁴⁹¹ a parrot!”

As a sign that habitual tendencies are what lead the mind into *samsāra*,
He said, “What puts the *zo* at a loss is the nose-ring. Therefore, unless it is broken, [the *zo*] is
not happy.”

As a sign that mind’s nature is the essence of primordial wisdom,

⁴⁸⁸ Thanks to Molk 2008, 190 for his rendering.

⁴⁸⁹ ‘*Bun. Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1970. ZC vol. *kha*, 82v₁: *myi ltogs ’bun myi gtang gsung* / DV vol. *kha*, 422: *mi ltogs kyis ’bun mi gtang gsungs* /

⁴⁹⁰ *Khar zags*. This not attested term comes up a few times throughout the collection always along with the verb *gzhus* in imperative and the negation particle *ma*. The rendering “let go to waste” fits to all of these passages.

⁴⁹¹ *Yid smon ’dings*. Lit. “don’t spread/lay out admiration.”

He said, “The essence of the sun does not have a dark basis.”

As a sign that mind’s nature is the essence of primordial awareness,

He said, “Matter does not get sick.”

As a sign that if one does not train in the potential of primordial awareness, one does not get liberated from *samsāra*,

He said, “In order to cross the Ganges, one has to learn how to swim.”

As a sign that the nature of the mind can not be seen,

He said, “The roots of the white dhatura plant⁴⁹² can’t be established in a single direction.”

[The text ends a section here with four *shads*]

The noble Dam pa spoke, “If one [wants] to be a *yogin*, one has to get free from demons first. People who don’t get free from demons [83r] aren’t able [to become] *yogis*. Asking, “What is a demon?” He replied, “Since if pretentious face-saving is not destroyed, one does not rise above worldliness, a so-called friend will show up.”⁴⁹³

As a sign that the rope of fervor for someone with whom one has a relationship of clinging has to be cut,

He said, “He who has a relationship with that demon has to burn the rope of fervor. Can you do that?”⁴⁹⁴

As a sign that the continuum of attachment and aversion is not severed if one does not distance oneself from one’s hometown,

He said, “Phyar chung⁴⁹⁵ don’t go to Spu rangs! That is the home of demons.”

As a sign that if faith the moment is arises does not turn towards the Dharma, one won’t get liberated from the fetters of attachment and aversion,

⁴⁹² *Sngo dgu’ gyur*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*dgu’ gyur*.”

⁴⁹³ Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁹⁴ The whole passage was translated thanks to the help of Khenpo Tamphel. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁹⁵ One of the four *yogin* gatekeepers. Roerich 1979, xxx

He said, “The elephant flees the moment he thinks of the forest.”

As a sign that if the entanglements of the world are not severed, the path to liberation won’t be found,

He said, “People hoping to accomplish virtuous practice while not giving up the activities of [their] household have no heart.”⁴⁹⁶

As a sign that if the mind does not turn away from *saṃsāra*, faith becomes ordinary,

He said, “There is no need for an escort that can’t face enemies.”

As a sign that if one does not comprehend the faults of *saṃsāra*, wisdom becomes ordinary,

He said, “Eyes that don’t see are unnecessary.”

As a sign that if there is no contentment to wealth, to know the Dharma becomes futile,

He said, “There is no reason to have many needles.”⁴⁹⁷

As a sign that if one does not put on⁴⁹⁸ the armor during post-meditation, commitments become unnecessary, [83v]

He said, “It is not necessary to promise not to practice.”

As a sign that if Dharma and mind don’t merge, practice becomes ordinary,

He said, “Glue that does not know how to stick is useless.”

As a sign that if one does not stop to relate to worldly people, yogic practice becomes ordinary,

He said, “[Because] it’s an axe of lead I didn’t give it to the younger brother of ’Bro sgom for sharpening”⁴⁹⁹

As a sign that nothing helps, [we’ll] have to die,

⁴⁹⁶ Martin has translated this with “don’t stand a chance.” Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Sep. 15, 2019. Entry for “*snying*.” However, since Pha dam pa is very poetic and speaks a lot through images, I prefer to keep the translation literal.

⁴⁹⁷ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 83r7: *khab ’di mang po la dgos pa myi gda’ gsung* / Khenpo Tamphel says that it is a colloquial figure of speech that is being used here, not conform to normal grammatical standards, as one would probably rather read, “This needle does not serve many [purposes].” Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁴⁹⁸ Reading *bskal* as *’khel*.

⁴⁹⁹ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 83v2: *’bro sgom gyi nu bo la zha nye’i sta ri yin brdar ba la bul med*.

He said, “The horns of the deer don’t own the liberty to stay on [his] head.”

After fetching water, the vase broke. As a sign that all compounded phenomena do disintegrate,
“Kun dga’, today you were not here. Rgya sgom ma, ascertained all phenomena of *saṃsāra*.”

As a sign that there is no joy in *saṃsāra* rather suffering arises quickly,
He said, “There won’t come an end to these ocean ripples.”⁵⁰⁰

As a sign that although one is acquainted with the skillful means, the suffering in *saṃsāra* does not allow you to abandon it,
He said, “For instance a deer has sharp horns. If it hits the dog [with them], it does not have to run away.”

As a sign that people who know the guru’s pith instructions without putting them into practice and instead apply themselves to the suffering of *saṃsāra* have no heart,
He said, “I have seen a prisoner holding a file in his hands without cutting the iron chains. Having discarded the use of the file, he sits there,” and then laughed.

[84r] As a sign that in the nature of knowables⁵⁰¹ no aspect of the intellect is established,
He said, “The essence of space does not have upper, under nor the aspect of directions.”

As a sign that the nature of knowables can’t either be harmed nor benefitted by *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*,
He said, “The power of fire and water can’t be given to space.”

As a sign that whatever joy and suffering of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* might appear, there is no change in the nature of knowables,
He said, “Through the destruction and becoming of an eon, space does not waver.”

As a sign that that nature is not the domain of the intellect,
He said, “Space is not in the middle of the six accumulations.”

⁵⁰⁰ Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁵⁰¹ *Shes bya*. A technical term which denotes phenomena.

As a sign that it is not possible to say, “The nature of things⁵⁰² is like this”

He said, “I wonder to what the name of this so-called space was given. Not even the protector of beings Nāgārjuna found a way to say, ‘Mind is like this.’”

As a sign that in the nature of things nothing called *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is established,

He said, “Since space is not established as form, it does not have a color.”

As a sign that when the nature of things is scrutinized,⁵⁰³ the basis disperses,

He said, “What was called ‘space’? Saying, ‘The mind is like that!’ wouldn’t be possible even for Śākyamuni⁵⁰⁴ himself.”

As a sign that upon examining⁵⁰⁵ the nature of things, all outer and inner phenomena get liberated, [84v]

He said, “All three realms appeared out of space.”

As a sign that there is no need to understand the nature of things, which is like that,

He said, “Knowing the word space does not enable benefit, harm, joy or suffering.”

When asking, “When is the moment that non-conceptual primordial wisdom arises?” As a sign that all phenomena have to be liberated upon one [thing],

He said, “It is as soon as the mind has been utterly scrutinized.⁵⁰⁶ The polishing and enhancing⁵⁰⁷ of it has to be done by the guru.”⁵⁰⁸ [And again] he said, “There is not more than a single word of instruction in order to awaken.” Answering, “I need to know it!”⁵⁰⁹ He replied, “Get rid of imprints, the phenomena of *saṃsāra*!”

⁵⁰² *Dngos po*. In the way how this term is recurrently occurring in this and a number of following signs, it feels to me that this is just another variant to the term *chos* “phenomena.”

⁵⁰³ Reading *brtag gzhi*’ *biang kyi* as *brtag gzhig gtong gin*. DV vol. *kha*, 45s.

⁵⁰⁴ Reading *shag thub* as *shāk thub*. DV vol. *kha*, 45s.

⁵⁰⁵ Reading *spyad ra byas kyi* as *dpyad pa byas kyin*. DV vol. *kha*, 45s.

⁵⁰⁶ *Zhu tig*. This term is not attested although often used in colophons referring to proof reading. However, in this case it seems to rather refer to some kind of thorough scrutiny of the mind and its nature. According to Khenpo Tamphel it refers to the complete absence of doubt and hence might be a synonym for certainty. Khenpo Tamphel, private communication.

⁵⁰⁷ Reading *bya i bsos* as *byi bsos*. DV vol. *kha*, 46s. Reading *byi* as a misspelling for *phyi*.

⁵⁰⁸ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha*, 84v2-3: *de’i bya i bsos bla mas byed dgos pa yin gsung* /

⁵⁰⁹ *Thugs la gdags*. This is not a literal translation.

Answering, “I don’t know [how to],” as a sign that when the mindset of grasping at particulars⁵¹⁰ is discarded, apprehender and apprehended naturally withdraw,

He said, “Leave the behavior of an ant behind and keep up the continuity of the vows!”

As a sign that if primordial awareness is brought out,⁵¹¹ vacillations⁵¹² of consciousness are overcome,

He fixes primordial awareness in wrathful gazes.⁵¹³

As a sign that if one fixes appearances in primordial awareness, the movement of discursive thoughts is cut off,

He raises [his] wrathful angry eyes toward the sky.

As a sign that if the variety of primordial awareness does not strike, doubts are removed,⁵¹⁴

He said, “Take whatever you encounter onto the path. The essential point⁵¹⁵ of a madman without a key wanting to open an iron [lock], is necessary for everybody.”

As a sign that if defilements of primordial awareness are removed, [insight into] interdependence arises,

He said, “Interdependence must be preceded by the owner of interdependence [85r],” and refrained from sleep.

Saying, “Please bestow an instruction that cuts off misconceptions,”⁵¹⁶ as a sign that all phenomena are like an echo,

He answered, “Blow this conch! It will give you an instruction that severs misconceptions.”

After blowing the conch [I] said, “I don’t understand it. Please give me an instruction!”

⁵¹⁰ *Ched du ’dzin pa’i blo*. In *’Brug pa bka’ brgyud gtsor bor gyur pa’i phyag chen chos skor* 2012, vol. 14: *mig gi yul du sna tshogs legs nyes ci ltar snang yang / de la ched du ’dzin pa’i blos legs nyes kyi brtag dpyad mi byed* [...] <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W3JT13326>. Accessed March 12, 2020.

⁵¹¹ *Phyir bton*. Martin says it’s a synonym for *dmyug pa* “bring out, pull out.” See Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 10, 2019. Entry for “*dmyugs pa*.”

⁵¹² *’Phrig. Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 1792.

⁵¹³ Martin translates a bit differently but with the same meaning. See Martin, “Padampa Sanggye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” 32.

⁵¹⁴ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha* 84v6: *rig pa’i sna ma ltebs pas the tshom sol ba’i brda’ ru /*

⁵¹⁵ Reading *nad ka* as *gnad ka*. DV vol. *kha*, 466.

⁵¹⁶ *Sgro ’dogs*.

He said, “That is the instruction! Not even the protector of beings Nāgārjuna could benefit individuals without certainty.” Uttering the *pāramitā phaḍ* he threw earth into [my] face [and] turned back three times with a hand gesture.⁵¹⁷ [I] asked, “Does that person lack fortune?” He replied, “Someone with bad omens does not have juices in the intestines. If he did, then there would be not more than three words of advice in order to awaken.” Saying, “Please let me take these to heart!”⁵¹⁸ He said, “Don’t hold onto existence on its own terms! Destroy reduction!⁵¹⁹ Discard the mindset of grasping at particulars!”

As a sign that in order to cut off the fetters of ego clinging, it is necessary to not think with sick eyes looking at the past,⁵²⁰

He said, “Throw the pebbles of Chinese divination⁵²¹ into water!”

As a sign that outer craving extinguishes, when primordial awareness is surveilled,

He said, “There has never been a man in a monolith.”⁵²²

As a sign that the essence of deluded perception is merely emptiness, clear light,

He said, “The apparition which appears in the mirror is empty of an essence of the apparition.”

In that way appearances arise out of a state of emptiness. The essence of appearances is empty.

[85v] As a sign that appearances and emptiness are not separate, hence not dual,

He said, “Having ascertained that ice is water, Rgya sgom ma doesn’t ask [questions] to anyone.”

⁵¹⁷ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha* 85r3: *phyag brda’ phyir lan gsum skyogs* /

⁵¹⁸ *Thugs la thogs dang*.

⁵¹⁹ *Kho na ba*. It is not attested in any texts or dictionaries outside of this canon. It is a nominalization of the adjective *kho na*. This term comes up several times in the teachings of Pha dam pa recorded in the Zhi byed collections, always in the context of being something to be abandoned. This something seems to be the concept of reducing the true nature to one thing, whatever that may be. The passages that I mostly relied on for rendering the term in this manner are DV vol. *kha*, 2653: *rang bzhin la ngo bo stong pa des kho na ba’i zhen pa spang ba’i lag len dang* / „[...] The practice of abandoning clinging onto reduction through the empty essence of the true nature [...]” and DV vol. *kha*, 4185-6: *rang bzhin la kho na ba med pa chu la mthong snang mi gcig pa lta bu* / “[...] The absence of reduction in the true nature, like different apparitions in water [...]”

⁵²⁰ Tentative translation. ZC vol. *kha* 85r4: [...] *phyis kyi nad myig mi sems pa cig dgos pa’i brda’ ru* /

⁵²¹ *Rgya rtsis*. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985, 535 and Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*rgya rtsis*.”

⁵²² *Mtho’ yor*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*tho yor*.”

He said, “There’s no reason for the inauspicious Tibetan people to achieve accomplishments.”
 Asking, “Why is that?”⁵²³ as a sign that because their body, speech and mind are put to serve the desire for food and clothing they have no time to practice,
 He answered, “Freedom⁵²⁴ doesn’t occur when the steersman⁵²⁵ gets into the frame of the wheels.”

As a sign that through reverence and respect [paid] by others, progress of ascetic practice gets interrupted,

He said, “Although one endeavored in farming, it’s gone with the harvest tax.”⁵²⁶

As a sign that if one goes about⁵²⁷ selling⁵²⁸ experience, afterwards it will be lost,

He said, “The so-called ‘eyes’ are necessary for looking. If they are pulled out, [that capacity] exhausts.”

As a sign that when ordinary accomplishments are enjoyed without giving supreme accomplishments the time to ripen, the ordinary ones obstruct the supreme ones,

He said, “Until craving for honey has not been abandoned, the bee is not free.”⁵²⁹

As a sign that if the eight worldly *dharma*s are not equalized on the outside, there’s no place in the mindstream for union⁵³⁰ to arise,

He said, “The chariot can’t pass on a road which surface is uneven.”

As a sign that if one cultivates the causes for *saṃsāra*, the life of a householder,⁵³¹ one separates from the path of the nobles,

⁵²³ Reading *nad ka* as *gnad ka*. DV vol. *kha*, 48₂.

⁵²⁴ *Dal ba’i dbang*. This seems to be the old form or local dialect for what is otherwise called *rang dbang*.

⁵²⁵ *Shing rta*. Could also be the chariot, but it feels more logical to think of the charioteer as being the one getting between the wheels.

⁵²⁶ *Thun shas*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*thun shas*.”

⁵²⁷ Reading *zos* as *bzos*. It could also be a misspelling for *zad*.

⁵²⁸ Reading *btsongs kyi* as *’tshong gin*. And *zos* as *bzos*. DV vol. *kha*, 48₃.

⁵²⁹ *Dal dbang*. This thesis: 80 (FN 524).

⁵³⁰ In DV vol. *kha*, *Gnad kyi me long rnam par gsal ba* Dam pa explains that in Vajrayāna union can have two meanings: 1. The union of learning where the state of meditative absorption and post-meditation have blended and one habituates oneself in that union through the surveillance of mindfulness, 2. the union of no more learning where that habituation has become the ultimate expanse and mindfulness has ceased. *Sngags kyi dbang du byas na* [...] *zung ’jug la ’gro sa gnyis yod pa las / mnyam rjes ’dres nas dran pai bya ra bas goms par byed pa ni slob pa’i zung ’jug / goms pa klong du gyur nas dran pa bya ra dang bral tsam na mi slob pa’i zung ’jug yin /*

⁵³¹ *Khyim thabs*.

He said, “A deer that is not free of the trap⁵³² is not happy. [86r] It is so, that a person which lives a family life is without virtuous practice. Rtse lde heard a teaching that was a misunderstanding.” [I] asked, “Which one was that?” He answered, “He distributes material things because he longs for possessions.”

As a sign that if the mind is not altered, it is clear,
He said, “If one does not move a crazy elephant, it is tame.”⁵³³

As a sign that if one does not engage with objects of desire, one is content,
He said, “If one does not drink salty turbulent water, one is satisfied.”

As a sign that it is good if [meditative] experience of the mind is destroyed,
He said, “The key point⁵³⁴ to [obtaining] excellent gem liquid is to beat [the gem].”⁵³⁵

As a sign that merit arises at the time of desirelessness,
He said, “This water from Spu rangs sprang forth of a drought.”

As a sign that the result is obtained when not aiming for it,
He said, “These turtle eyes don’t see when they are open. They see when they are closed.
Pondering again about it, that is truly amazing.”

From the *Cycle of Mahāmudrā Signs* [this is] *Pointing Out the Realization of the Mind as Signs*.
They are complete. *Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*.

These are the three dialogues on signs by the black *ācārya*.
Bless me, so that I may realize the meaning of what was perfectly said⁵³⁶ exactly as it was intended!

⁵³² *Gdos*. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Vocabulary”: <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home?authuser=0>. Accessed Oct. 15, 2019. Entry for “*gdos*.”

⁵³³ Reading *srun* as *bsrun*. DV vol. *kha* 492.

⁵³⁴ Misspelling *nad ka* for *gnad ka*.

⁵³⁵ Tentative transation. ZC vol. *kha*, 86r3: *rin po che zhun ma bzang pa'i gnad ka de gdabs pa la byung 'dug gsung* /

⁵³⁶ Misspelling of *gsrungs* for *gsungs*.

3.5. The Three Cycles of *Mahāmudrā* Signs in Context

At the end of a chapter, it is always nice to look back at how everything began. Let us return to the overall title with which we embarked on this journey of deep “Pha-dam-pian” symbolism. Having now seen a translation of the three texts, prior expectations might not have been met. We need to reconsider the initial promise of a deep dive into profound pith instructions on pointing out the ultimate nature of the mind and all phenomena, that is to say *mahāmudrā*. As mentioned above, the captivating term *phyag chen* and the well-known doctrinal form of *sku gsung thugs* were only applied to this literature at a later point, probably with the purpose of giving a structure and authority to the texts and imbuing it with the power to immediately capture the attention of anyone intrigued by the vast and profound extent of the Zhi byed literature. However appealing, the title only relates to the content in some parts, and it was probably also given for devotional purposes. Martin has stated that Kun dga’s disciple Pa tshab gave titles to his notes, which were originally divided into the categories of the different segments of a tree and not in three cycles associated with enlightened body, speech and mind.⁵³⁷ Actually, these texts do not particularly represent *mahāmudrā* instructions of any kind, whether in the context of what is known as Sūtra-Mahāmudrā, Essence-Mahāmudrā or Mantra-Mahāmudrā.⁵³⁸ They are rather a presentation of important points necessary to embark and progress on the path, as well as, from time to time, instructions that point out the nature of the mind. If one reads between the lines, one can find many basic guidelines that might have been uttered for the sake of bringing individuals onto the very beginning of the path. At some point for instance, Kun dga’ notes down Pha dam pa’s utterances to point out the triad of view, meditation and conduct essential to the Buddhist path. He explains that the view is born by abandoning clinging from the roots, giving up *tr̥ṣṇā* “thirst” that is often said to be the very cause for rebirth in cyclic existence. Meditation unfolds once all actions of a worldly life are abandoned, and conduct is generated once the mind turns away from *saṃsāra*, hence from all worldly pursuits. Dam pa further continues to talk about the result, about what exactly one should abandon or cultivate, and many other points that normally would never be labelled as *mahāmudrā*. If the word did not appear in the title it would never occur to us to relate such basic instructions to *mahāmudrā*. Indeed, Martin categorizes about ninety percent of the

⁵³⁷ Martin, paper presented at a conference. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, private communication. The original parts were called: *Thog mar zug pa’i rtsa ba’i chos sde zhus len dgu*, *’Gril ba sdong po’i chos don rgyud skor*, *Gyed pa yal ga’i chos*, *Lo ’dab kyi chos sde bcu drug*, *Mdzes pa me tog gi chos sde lnga*, *’Bras-bu’i chos sde āli kāli phyi nang gsang gsum*. Roerich 1979, 927?

⁵³⁸ See Mathes 2008, 144.

messages the signs convey to those disciples with karmic destiny as concerned with either teacher-student relationship, the importance of renunciation, meditative experiences, or ways of dealing with mental afflictions.⁵³⁹ However, this does leave some fifteen percent of the teachings that resemble *mahāmudrā* instructions. These include references to recognizing and abiding in primordial awareness at all times and to take everything onto the path.

Who exactly decides what can be labelled *mahāmudrā* instruction and what not? Perhaps to Pa tshab these instructions were worthy to be denominated in that manner, whereas in a present-day understanding, a simple instruction as,

“If one does not stop the craving for things, there is no need for practicing the Dharma,”

would simply not be labelled *mahāmudrā*. However, there is presumably no objection to naming the category of teachings that point out mind’s nature as such. For instance:

“As a sign that mind’s nature is the essence of primordial awareness,
He said, ‘Matter does not get sick.’⁵⁴⁰

As a sign that this mind’s nature is primordially clear light,
He said, ‘The essence of the sun has never been since the very outset, associated with darkness.’”⁵⁴¹

In the Tibetan environment it is not unusual to give titles or names that only partially portray the content matter, as we can easily see with the three individual titles themselves. For instance, *Skū’i brda*’ contains not only the physical signs from the title, but verbal and mental ones as well. On the other hand, perhaps Pa tshab considered these teachings as causal Mahāmudrā and entitled the texts according to the principle of naming the cause after the result.

What about the three categories of *sku gsung thugs*? Do they exhibit any common features that help us to make assumptions on why the signs herein contained were assigned to either the category of body, speech or mind signs? There are indeed shared aspects, yet there are also many overlaps and there is a lack of consistency. None of this is too surprising given that these

⁵³⁹ Martin, “Padampas Animal Kingdom Part One.”

⁵⁴⁰ This thesis: 74.

⁵⁴¹ This thesis: 73.

signs were random notes of colloquial statements, events and gestures performed on the unpredictable basis that is daily life. In *Skū'i brda'* Dam pa's physical actions are considered to be the body signs. However, not all signs are uniquely physical actions such as gestures and the like. We do also find many statements, which would be expected in the speech section. As the title *Gsung gi brda'* suggests, the second text does consist mainly of a series of utterances by Pha dam pa. Almost no gestures and actions are found in the second section, unlike in *Skū'i brda'*. In the introduction to the second text, we find a very interesting passage that outlines all various key points that constitute the transmission lineage of *mahāmudrā* signs, which is often mentioned in the course of transmission that Dam pa himself received, as well as what he passed onto his disciples. In *Thugs kyi brda'* there are a series of metaphors starting on folio [82r] pointing out the nature of the mind. This seems indeed to be the meaning that the title is alluding to and the reason why these instructions were included in the section on mind signs rather than in those of speech and body. Another meaning of *Thugs kyi brda'* could be found in the section starting on folio [84r], containing metaphors in order to convey insight into the true mode of abiding of all phenomena, entities and knowables. It seems that the title refers in general to signs that point out the true nature of all things, which is definitely a topic much more present in the last text rather than the two previous ones. However, there is no consistency to this categorization either. In fact, just as in *Skū'i brda'*, most signs here are verbal utterances and include many topics other than pointing out instructions. The instructions about other topics relate to the necessity to practice as long as mental grasping has not been extinguished or to the metaphorical absence of the heart in individuals that do not put into practice the advice of the spiritual guide.

“As a sign that people who know the guru's pith instructions without putting them into practice and instead apply themselves to the suffering of *samsāra* have no heart,

He said, ‘I have seen a prisoner holding a file in his hands without cutting the iron chains. Having discarded the use of the file, he sits there,’ and then laughed.”⁵⁴²

To summarize, I believe that what the *Three Cycles* point out and highlight does certainly represent an important part in the transmission of *mahāmudrā* and probably belongs to the cycle on the method of the drop of stainless *mahāmudrā*. Moreover, these signs grant a deep insight into how Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas handed down his transmission to Kun dga', the practical instructions he gave to his students, and how he guided them. These texts allow us to become

⁵⁴² This thesis: 76.

part of a very intimate setting, with the opportunity to be a direct witness of the guru in a day to day life situation some time in the 11th century. Although there are no signs that overtly transmit practices of, for example, how to make the channels and winds workable, it can nonetheless be assumed that much happened between the lines and in the sphere beyond words. Although the *Three Cycles* belong to the later transmission and therefore originated at a much later point in Dam pa's teaching career, I believe that they are just as important as the *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum* – considered to be the first scriptural monument of the Zhi byed tradition. They are thus a vital part of his heritage.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the present thesis was primarily to gather information on the person and doctrine of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas. Many scholars have studied him in particular contexts, without ever including an overall presentation on him and Zhi byed. The lack of such a summary and my wish to fill this gap led to my first impulse to choose Pha dam pa as the topic of my master thesis. As soon as I started, I realized the possible reason for this absence in the scholarly world: it was not easy to gain clarity even about the life story of Pha dam pa, let alone the universe of texts related to the tradition, with almost no extant catalogue. Although I initially felt lost, I eventually found my way through and around the jungle, with a path opening up that led me right to the *Three Cycles*, whose translation would then become the heart of this thesis.

The thesis started by answering my initial questions about Dam pa. Why is it important to look into him and the Zhi byed doctrine? What is the actual state of research? From this introduction, I then looked briefly at Pha dam pa's life, his upbringing, his teachers, his disciples and his works. The doctrine he initiated was the next subject for my investigations. What are its origins? Where does it belong in the vast world of Buddha words? How did his legacy continue? Answering these questions laid an introductory foundation offering a taste of the universe that had been entered. Subsequently the heart of my thesis could unfold: the translation of *Phyag chen brda'i skor gsum*. Obviously, the title of these texts then necessitated a look at Dam pa's Mahāmudrā doctrine. Only then was it time for the translation. Here I discovered that the selected texts were not concerned with *mahāmudrā* in the way I was expecting. Nevertheless, they made this research extremely enjoyable and exciting, with a frequent element of surprise during the process of reading and translation that kept my attention and focus in place.

One aim of this thesis was also to discover more about the actual doctrine of Pha dam pa. To summarise: It seems to have been Prajñāpāramitā – with all aspects of meaning expounded directly or indirectly in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* of various lengths – transmitted in any form necessary, in sūtric or tantric style, with or without empowerment. At the same time its core was *mahāmudrā*. These instructions were bestowed with the same flexibility and absence of limitations – whether it was in a direct way through the blessing of the guru as Essence-Mahāmudrā, via the Sūtra-Mahāmudrā path or via the classic tantric path involving initiation called Mantra-Mahāmudrā.

Thanks to the comparison with parallel texts, text passages in scanned texts from the BDRC database as well as the *Dingri Volumes*,⁵⁴³ and Tibetan dictionaries such as the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*⁵⁴⁴ and others, I have presented a more or less accurate translation of three extremely relevant and interesting texts that give insight into the person, character, way of teaching of Pha dam pa and into what he considered to be important points on the path. He often stressed the importance of leaving behind a worldly life, of not wasting time and traversing the ocean of *saṃsāra* now that all favorable conditions are gathered, and of interrupting the flow of discursiveness and thereby abiding in the natural state of clarity of the mind. I have identified misspellings as well as presented alternative ways of reading obscure and old terms. I have rearranged the order of the pages in *Gsung gi brda'* and included the missing page of *Skū yi brda'* thanks to the *Dingri Volumes* edition. Moreover, I have found ways to translate words for which no entries in bilingual dictionaries are attested yet, such as *sha bal* “mold” and *dran pa'i rtsi* “elixir of mindfulness.” I have interpreted a variety of colloquial renderings and terms which seem to have been the local dialect of Ding ri at the time.

Thanks to the introduction in *Gsung gi brda'*, it was possible to get a clear list of “the astounding instructions [bestowed] through symbols” that constitute the “lineage of *mahāmudrā* signs.” They are:

“The key points of completing the secret mantra practice of approach and accomplishment without the repetition of mantras, the key points of obtaining stability in generation and completion stages without meditating on the body of the deity, the key points of making the channels and winds workable without relying on the upper and lower doors, the key instructions on generating extraordinary realization in the mindstream by [letting] body, speech and mind abide naturally, the key instructions on the arising of power of speech by speaking worldly nonsense, the key instructions on the appearing of coemergent wisdom in the mindstream without practicing, the key points of mastering the power of meditative concentration within the afflicted mind, the key points on the arising of clairvoyance by taking the five poisons onto the path, raising the wisdom of primordial awareness in the midst of discursive thoughts, the instructions on *prajñāpāramitā*, in accordance with the secret mantra, elevated by the weight of ascetic practice, adorned with the greatness of [pure] interdependence.”⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Thanks to Kurtis Schaeffer for retrieving the searchable etext-file and forwarding it to me.

⁵⁴⁴ *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* 1985.

⁵⁴⁵ ZC vol. *kha*, 74r5-6, 77v1-4.

This opens up a whole world of possibilities for research, as in the *Three Cycles* many of these mentioned key instructions are missing but may well be found in other texts of the *Zhi byed Collection* and the *Dingri Volumes*.

In sum, this thesis is nothing but a new drop in the deep ocean of Buddhist studies and more than anything an incentive for anyone feeling the call to dig deeper. I have tried to mention all relevant sources and the actual state of research for anyone who wishes and dares to take that plunge. Since the questions are many and the extent of a master thesis does not allow the student to answer all questions in great detail, I am well aware that I have not managed to tend to all of them thoroughly. I still hope that a newcomer to the “Pha-dam-pian” universe, and maybe even someone at home in the scholarly world, will appreciate and find one or the other part interesting. I truly hope that my limited contribution may be meaningful and a source for inspiration to whomever finds the patience to read through.

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Abstract

The great Indian *yogin* Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas (11th-12th century) is a very well-known figure in the contemporary world of Tibetan Buddhism, yet relatively unstudied. He is known to have founded the *Sdug bsngal zhi byed* “pacification of suffering” lineage. Although much research is still necessary concerning the particulars of the *Zhi byed* tradition, its relevance is undisputed. To various degrees it was integrated into all lineages of Tibetan Buddhism and lies at the basis of the very vibrant *Gcod* philosophy and practice.

This thesis aims at bringing together the main aspects concerning Pha dam pa and the *Zhi byed* doctrine. Thereby a general understanding concerning the identity of this individual, his legacy and the importance he had for the development of Tibetan Buddhism in the 11th and 12th century is expressed.

The present thesis also offers a translation of three extremely relevant texts called *Phyag chen brda'i skor gsum* composed by Pha dam pa's heart disciple Kun dga'. They give direct insight into the character of Pha dam pa, his way of guiding disciples and what he considered to be important points on the Buddhist path.

Zusammenfassung

In der heutigen Welt des Tibetischen Buddhismus ist der große indische Meister Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas (11.-12. Jahrhundert) eine sehr bekannte Persönlichkeit. Er ist als Gründer der Linie Sdug bsgnal zhi byed “Befriedigung des Leidens” bekannt. Obwohl es bezüglich der Einzelheiten dieser Linie noch viel Forschung bedarf, ist ihre Wichtigkeit unumstritten. Sie wurde in verschiedenem Ausmaß in alle Linien des Tibetischen Buddhismus integriert und bildet die Grundlage für die weit verbreitete und lebendige Gcod Philosophie und Praxis.

Diese Arbeit beabsichtigt, die wichtigsten Eigenschaften zu Pha dam pa und der Zhi byed Tradition zusammenzuführen. Dadurch werden die Identität dieses Individuums, sein Erbe und die Wichtigkeit, die er für die Entwicklung des Tibetischen Buddhismus im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert darstellte, ersichtlich.

Außerdem präsentiert diese Arbeit eine Übersetzung von drei sehr wichtigen Texten namens *Phyag chen brda'i skor gsum*, verfasst von Pha dam pas Herzensschüler Kun dga'. Sie gewähren einen lebendigen Einblick in die Charakterzüge Pha dam pas, seine Art und Weise Schüler anzuleiten und zeigen die für ihn wichtigsten Punkte des Buddhistischen Weges auf.