

**The Life of dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566) with a Focus on His  
Contribution to the Tibetan Scholastic Tradition**

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A thesis submitted to fulfil  
the requirements of the degree of  
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## **Statement of Originality**

This is to certify that the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or purpose.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, and that all assistance received in preparing this thesis and all sources have been acknowledged.

No content produced by generative AI tools has been used in the preparation of this thesis.

Dorjee Wangdi

**To His Holiness Fourth Penor Rinpoche (2011- )**

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## Thesis Abstract

**Thesis Title:** The Life of dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566) with a Focus on his Contribution to the Tibetan Scholastic Tradition

dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba is a well-known 16th-century scholar and historian who lived during the heyday of Tibetan scholasticism, and a figure of particular importance to the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Although his overall impact was remarkable, and his Tibetan religious history *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is widely accepted as a significant, unique, and reliable source by Tibetan scholars and academics alike, his life and writings are little studied. His scholarly contributions to the study of Tibetan Buddhism are virtually unrecognised. Therefore, this project seeks to address this lacuna.

Using mainly philological and historical analysis, this research looks at his life and work with a contextual study of his time. With the study of his life, this project is expected to contribute to the historical understanding of 16th-century Tibet in general and the history of the Karma bKa' brgyud school in particular. This will also elucidate the general trends of religious thought, practices, and ideas of the time in which he lived. Study of his various texts sheds light on his scholarly contribution to Tibetan Buddhist studies. Treatment of the doctrinal stances he held also contributes to the discourse and intellectual history of the Tibetan scholastic tradition, especially of the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

The first chapter lays a foundation for this research by identifying its aims and objectives and outcomes. Research methodologies are also delineated in the first chapter. The second chapter mainly studies his life including his early life and education, recognition as a reincarnated master, and his deeds as a scholar. The third chapter surveys his scholarly writings and provides an overview of his work. The fourth chapter discusses his main commentaries and their significance. Some of his philosophical stances are also explored. The fifth chapter summarises the findings of this research.

## **Conventions Used**

### **Transliteration and Italicisation**

Tibetan technical terms, proper names, place names, and titles of Tibetan texts follow Wylie transliteration. Some popular names such as Lhasa and Marpa are not transliterated. Sanskrit words in Tibetan script are transliterated with diacritics following the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration system. For example, ལཱཿ་ཐཤཾ་ is transliterated as lañca rather than lany+tsha. Sanskrit transliteration follows the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST).

Sanskrit and Tibetan technical terms are italicised. However, words in the Oxford Dictionary of English, such as lama and karma, are not italicised.

### **Capitalisation**

Rather than the first letter, the root letters of Tibetan proper names and titles of the texts are capitalised. The first letter of Sanskrit proper names is capitalised. Significant terms such as Triple Jewel and the *Single Intention* are also capitalised.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba is a well-known 16th-century scholar and historian who lived during the heyday of Tibetan scholasticism. He is a yogi-scholar of particular importance to the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He went on to become a 'moon-like' student of the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>1</sup> Although his overall impact was remarkable, and although his Tibetan religious history, *The Feast of the Wise that Illuminates the History of Turning the Wheels of Dharma* (*Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, henceforth *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*), is widely accepted as a significant, unique, and reliable source by Tibetan scholars and academics alike, his life and his writings are little studied.

Besides establishing himself as a renowned historian, gTsong lag phreng ba composed many texts and treatises on various fields of study, including Tibetan grammar, poetry, philosophy, Sanskrit, astrology, history, and medicine. This corpus of Tibetan textual sources in fourteen volumes was only recently made available in 2019. However, many of his texts are yet to be uncovered. Apart from his scholarly output, gTsong lag phreng ba conceptualised himself as a Yogi (*rnal 'byor pa*) in his spiritual songs (*mgur ma*). In this way, he was identifying himself as a role model who was both learned and spiritually accomplished. On account of his spiritual attainments and written output, this seminal figure deserves more academic attention than he has hitherto received.

gTsong lag phreng ba lived in 16th-century Tibet when school formation had begun to solidify (sometimes leading to outright religious sectarianism) and the philosophical systematisation of religious schools was at its highest point.<sup>2</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba studied under Karma phrin las pa for nineteen years.<sup>3</sup> His root guru, the Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554), gave him the name gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>4</sup> As a student of both Karma phrin las pa (1456–1539) and the Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje, gTsong lag phreng ba arguably studied with the most important figures of the Karma bKa' brgyud school of his time. He studied *Pramāṇa*, *Madhyamaka*, *Abhisamaya*, *Vinaya* under the Eighth Karmapa and the *dohā* commentaries and other tantric treatises with Karma phrin las pa.<sup>5</sup> On account of this, he promoted and perpetuated bKa' brgyud pa practices and philosophical positions.

Following the customary Tibetan expression of humility, gTsong lag phreng ba confessed that understanding of the treatises of the four philosophical systems of Indian Buddhism arose in him through mere reading (*bklags pa tsam gyis*). He maintains that he did not seek the status of a scholar through engaging in an academic tour (*grwa skor*), understanding that to be a matter of the eight worldly dharmas (*jig rten chos brgyad*).<sup>6</sup> In a similar fashion, gTsong lag phreng ba suggests that he was a scholar despite not actively

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<sup>1</sup> Wangchuk Dorje; Dewar, Tyler, trans. (2008: 12).

<sup>2</sup> Caumanns and Sernesi (2017: xiii).

<sup>3</sup> Rheingans (2021: 94).

<sup>4</sup> Rheingans (2021: 95).

<sup>5</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 57: *bka' bcu rab 'byams mkhas pa'i ming / /sgrub 'dod kyi grwa skor byed pa yang / /grags dang rnyed bkur 'dod pa yi / /chos brgyad kyi nang shas yin go bas / /mkhas pa'i ming gral ma bsnaygs so.*

seeking the acclaim associated with scholarship. Later scholars attest to his erudition.<sup>7</sup> The sheer extent, quality and variety of his literary compositions also substantiate his scholarly achievements.

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

This study aims to shed light on the life of the historian-scholar gTsong lag phreng ba, by offering a historical analysis of Tibetan sources. Despite being known as the author of the famous religious history *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, information on his life is scarce, and his scholarly contributions to the study of Tibetan Buddhism are virtually unknown. While he is celebrated as a historian and his contributions are appreciated by researchers of Tibetan history, dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba has not been given due recognition as a scholar. This project seeks to address this lacuna.

This project aims to explore his scholarly contribution to Tibetan Buddhism. This research will investigate his scholarly accomplishments, which include the composition of major commentaries and presentations of philosophical views. The study of his various texts and his treatment of significant doctrinal topics will shed light on his activities and achievements.

Additionally, research on gTsong lag phreng ba's life will help illuminate the historical epoch of 16th-century Tibet and will provide further details on the history of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. This will elucidate the general trend of religious thought, practices, and ideas of his time, throwing light on their historical development.<sup>8</sup> Since present ideas and practices are impacted by past ideas and practices, this study will also contribute an understanding to the present intellectual configuration of the Karma bKa' brgyud school.<sup>9</sup>

This study further seeks to show how gTsong lag phreng ba understood and promoted various Buddhist religious practices and philosophical positions of the bKa' brgyud tradition. For instance, his commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* clarifies bKa' brgyud pa perspectives on many philosophical topics, including emptiness. In this way, this research aims to evaluate gTsong lag phreng ba's contribution to the bKa' brgyud school in particular and his contribution to Tibetan Buddhism more generally.

### 1.2 Expected Outcomes

This research will explore the life of gTsong lag phreng ba with a focus on his contributions to the Tibetan scholastic tradition. The study of his hagiographies, auto-hagiographies and other related sources is also expected to shed some light on the history of his time. This will add to our historical knowledge of prominent Tibetan scholars and will enhance our understanding of Tibetan religious history more generally.

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<sup>7</sup> Byams pa 'phrin las (1928– ). *Bod kyi sman pa rim byon gyi rnam thar*. p. 207: *rig gnas kun la mkhyen pa rab tu rgyas pas bod gangs can ljongs su snyan grags shin tu che*. He maintains that gTsong lag phreng ba was well known in Tibet as being learned in all fields of knowledge.

<sup>8</sup> Conermann and Rheingans (2014: 8) assert that hagiographies can be a source for understanding the mental disposition of a particular society. Ehrhard (2017) delves into the life of Chos dpal bzang po (1371-1439) and sheds light on the 15th-century history of Mang yul Gung thang.

<sup>9</sup> Barzun and Graff (1992: 294). Marwick (2001: 22) also asserts the importance of understanding past events and their impact on the present which in turn will impact future events.

This project will also provide information on the texts gTsong lag phreng ba wrote through their descriptive catalogue and provide an overview of his intellectual and literary achievements. This will lay a foundation for further research on gTsong lag phreng ba's life and works.

This study demonstrates that bKa' brgyud masters were not only inclined to meditative practices as adherents of contemplative traditions (*sgrub rgyud*) but were also engaged in exposition, disputation, and composition of philosophical topics that began in the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Closely examining selected passages from his texts, this research will reveal some of gTsong lag phreng ba's significant doctrinal stances and thus also help illuminate the intellectual history of the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

gTsong lag phreng ba lived in the era of religious systematisation and political struggle, and this study will also uncover significant historical events that have a bearing on Tibetan religious and political history in general and on the history of the bKa' brgyud tradition in particular. As the study of the biography of lCang skyas Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786) illustrates, when employed carefully and critically, hagiographies can be a good source of information on many historical events and topics.<sup>10</sup> The biography of lCang skyas Rol pa'i rdo rje is considered a good source for the historical study of Tibetan Buddhism in the Qing court.<sup>11</sup>

The study of gTsong lag phreng ba's work reveals some bKa' brgyud pa positions through the lens of a famed historian-scholar. gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, for instance, challenges the philosophical stances of other schools, especially the Sa skyas pa, and promotes the bKa' brgyud scholastic perspective. This study will reveal gTsong lag phreng ba as one of the significant scholars in the bKa' brgyud tradition, along with the Eighth Karmapa.

### 1.3 Literature Review

The study of the life and works of gTsong lag phreng ba remains limited. Nevertheless, he is featured in some academic studies. For instance, the ninth chapter of gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* has been translated into English by Brunnhölzl (2004) in his *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*. He also presents gTsong lag phreng ba's views on the Madhyamaka in the text. Furthermore, Rheingans' (2017) *The Eighth Karmapa's Life and his Interpretation of The Great Seal* also features gTsong lag phreng ba as a principal student of the Eighth Karmapa. Rheingans (2021) briefly discusses gTsong lag phreng ba's life and relationship with his guru Karma 'phrin las pa in his monograph *The Life and Works of Karma 'phrin las pa (1456-1539)*. Apart from that, we only find some scattered references to gTsong lag phreng ba as a historian. Two papers by Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell deal in a more detailed manner with his life and his important historical work, the *mKhas pa'i dga'*

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<sup>10</sup> Rheingans (2014:16). Roesler (2014: 118) also concludes that a biography can be a source of information regarding politics, culture, religion and so on. gTsong lag phreng ba's auto-hagiography also reflects the religious climate of his time where religious practitioners failed to live up to the spiritual principles. This is discussed below in the religious and political context section.

<sup>11</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 282).

ston. On the whole, gTsong lag phreng ba is underrepresented in the academic studies of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>12</sup>

**Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell and (2022): The Second Pawo Rinpoché, Tsuklak Trengwa (1504–1566): Visions in Meditation and Dream**

This paper by Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell deals mainly with the secret aspects of gTsong lag phreng ba's life events relating to his realisations and their indicative omen of visions. Mainly based on gTsong lag phreng ba's auto-hagiography, the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, the paper discusses dreams and other experiential signs that indicated his attainment of spiritual realisation. The authors also interpret and analyse those dreams and experiences. The paper is useful in understanding the higher spiritual dimension of gTsong lag phreng ba's life as seen by the tradition.

**Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell (2022b): “The Second dPa' bo, gTsong lag phreng ba (1504–1566): Life and Work of the Great Sixteenth-Century Historian”**

This article by Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell presents an outline of the life of gTsong lag phreng ba and surveys some of his prominent works. The article also provides a summary of various sources on his life and discusses his life with a focus on his title 'dPa' bo', his place of birth and lineage, educational training, and passing. It contains textual and historical information, mainly derived from the respective colophons of the four prominent treatises. Therefore, this article provides a sound foundation and direction for academic research on his life and works.

**Dominik Dell (2021): “‘Feast of the Wise’: Author, Structure and Textual Witnesses of the 16th Century Religio-Historical Work *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* by the Second dPa bo, gTsong lag phreng ba (1504–1566)”**

In this paper, Dell deals with gTsong lag phreng ba's famous work, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. It also includes a brief hagiography of gTsong lag phreng ba with a focus on the principal episodes of his life. The paper also provides an overall content-wise arrangement of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* with the English translation of important parts of the text, such as colophons. The paper analyses the title of the text, discusses the length of the treatment on the various topics, and provides an overview of the contents. Furthermore, with the identification and analysis of various prints and manuscripts of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the article comprehensively studies this text and affords its valuable information for future research. This article is a welcome contribution to the subject as it investigates one of the most important works and provides some context. It is important for the present research.

**Karl Brunnhölzl (2004): *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition***

Brunnhölzl translates the ninth chapter of gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* into English. One can find descriptions of the qualities of gTsong lag

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<sup>12</sup> This underrepresentation is probably also due to the unavailability of his works prior to 2019 since his *Collected Works* only became available then.

phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary, such as its extensiveness and generous quotation of sūtras.<sup>13</sup> Since this is a translation of the ninth chapter, which deals primarily with the theory of emptiness, is useful material for this research while exploring the philosophical stance of gTsug lag phreng ba on emptiness.

Brunnhölzl, in the first part of the monograph 'The General Presentation of Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition,' presents gTsug lag phreng ba's standpoints along with those of the Eighth Karmapa to present the philosophical system of Madhyamaka in the bKa' brgyud pa school.

### **Miscellaneous References to gTsug lag phreng ba in Academic Writings**

gTsug lag phreng ba's life and work remain understudied and, to date, his presentation in academic studies comes mostly because of his remarkable work on Tibetan history, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. He is mentioned in the academic literature mainly for this work. For instance, van der Kuijp (1996b) and R. Jackson (1996) mention him only in connection with *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. DiValerio (2015) mentions gTsug lag phreng ba a few times in relation to the Rin spungs pa General Don yod rdo rje.

### **1.4 Textual Sources for the Study of gTsug lag phreng ba's Life**

Even though the genre has to be handled with care, this research will mainly use the following auto-hagiographical sources, since their content offers the most detailed and earliest accounts. Other materials of gTsug lag phreng ba, such as the *Kam tshang Biographies*, will be consulted where appropriate. Various materials of an author, such as spiritual songs and letters, do contain information relevant to a biographical and historical study. In the case of the available sources, however, they are of limited use, since colophons are missing. Furthermore, the spiritual songs and letters primarily consist of spiritual advice, which lacks any biographical information.

*dGe slong gtsug lag phreng ba rang nyid kyi rtogs pa brjod pa 'khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long* – (*The Monk gTsug lag phreng ba's Own Narration of Realisation, The Mirror that Reflects the Illusory Countenance, henceforth 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*)

This auto-hagiography constitutes 43 pages in the modern edition, which can be considered an extensive biography for the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> Written in verse, the auto-hagiography contains important information regarding gTsug lag phreng ba's life, such as his birthplace and familial lineage.<sup>15</sup> It also briefly mentions his previous reincarnation, the First dPa' bo Chos dbang lhun grub. In this text, gTsug lag phreng ba also recounts the events relating to his recognition as a reincarnation of the First dPa' bo. Furthermore, this auto-hagiography

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<sup>13</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 614).

<sup>14</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 263) is of the view that the length of the Tibetan biography ranges from ten pages in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to thousands of pages in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There was criticism over biographies being too lengthy in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Tibet (ibid. p. 287).

<sup>15</sup> While it is hard to determine what made the author compose in verse rather than prose, one can assume that it is done to express matters succinctly. Schaeffer (2010: 285) mentions that the Sa skya pa scholar Tshar chen (1502–1566) expresses the need of writing biography in a poetic form using ornate language to describe the protagonist of higher religious status, doubting the ability of plain language in narrating their qualities.

describes the events of his life in chronological order, including his studies, meetings with masters, and yogic experiences. gTsong lag phreng ba also discusses his own extraordinary qualities while only admitting to hearing about them from others. In this way, he maintains an air of humility.

In the colophon, gTsong lag phreng ba remarks regarding the composition of this auto-hagiography:

This [auto-hagiography] called *One's Own Narration of Realization, The Mirror that Reflects the Illusory Countenance* is written from the [result of] the co-emergence of the cause (*rgyu*) of insistence at first by the sister of Bying pa Chos kyi rje kun spangs pa, who possess the great knowledge of two traditions (religious and political), and the circumstance (*rkyen*) of the sudden insistence by the words of Vajradhāra Kun dga' rnam rgyal, [who was] the crown jewel of Lho gnas mchog dpal gyi tsā ri ta at the residence of Rong chung bSam gtan in the middle of a dense forest at the palace of Goddess Rematri, the lower area of the part of the palace of Dakinis, and in the great heaven of illusory emanation of all appearances, the palace of concentrated great bliss in Lho gnas mchog dpal gyi tsā ri tra, in the third month of female iron ox year at the age of 39 by me, the mendicant who holds Bhagavān Mi bskyod [rdo rje] at the centre of the heart.<sup>16</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba remarks that the main force behind the composition of this auto-hagiography has been the sister of Bying pa Chos kyi rje kun spangs pa and Kun dga' rnam rgyal, who insisted that he write it.

Since the auto-hagiography is composed in verse, which requires conforming to the metrical feature of equal syllables, information is not always as straightforward as in the case of prose and remains cryptic on many occasions. Nevertheless, this auto-hagiography is probably the most reliable and extensive source on the major episodes of gTsong lag phreng ba's life narrated in a progressive order till the age of 39, the age at which he composed it. As a result, one must rely on other sources for biographical detail from the age of 40.

***dPal gTsong lag phreng ba'i rang tshul mdor bsdus pa don tshan dgu pa'o (The Nine Points: A Short Description of One's Own Nature of the Glorious gTsong lag phreng ba, henceforth Don tshan dgu pa)***

This auto-hagiography consists of 17 pages in a modern edition. This source deals with his own biography in nine points: 1) obtaining human life, 2) study, 3) travel, 4) receiving empowerment and instruction, 5) practices, 6) conduct, 7) the vision of the tutelary deity

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<sup>16</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 43: rang gis rtogs pa brjod pa 'khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long zhes bya ba 'di ni lugs gnyis kyi yon tan rgya chen po mnga' ba bying pa chos kyi rje kun spangs pa lcam sring gis thog mar nan tan ches chen pos bskul ba'i mdzad pa'i rgyu dang / lho gnas mchog dpal gyi tsā ri tra'i gtsug gi nor bu rdo rje 'dzin pa kun dga' rnam par rgyal ba'i gsung gis 'phral du bskul ba'i rkyen lhan cig pa las bcom ldan ldan 'das mi bskyod zhabs snying gi dbus su 'dzin pa bsod snyoms pa gtsug lag phreng ba rang nyid kyi rang lo so dgu pa lcags mo glang gi lo nag pa'i zla ba la lho gnas mchog dpal gyi tsā ri tra/ bde chen rigs 'dus kyi pho brang / kun snang sgyu 'phrul chen po'i cha/ yul smad mkha' 'gro'i pho brang gi bye brag dpal ldan lha mo re ma ti'i phro brang / nags tshal stug po'i dbus/ rong chung bsam gtan gi khang bur sbyar ba'o.

(*vidam*), 8) recollection of former lives, and 9) activities for the sake of others. gTsong lag phreng ba states the basis and reasons for the composition of this auto-hagiography:

sTon sgom Kirtī śva ra, the [monastic] seat holder of 'Brug phu gser khang of Nyang stod, presented to me a self-composed auto-hagiography condensed in nine points of a great cotton-clad yogi [Mi la ras pa] of Shar kha, the great Siddha blessed by Marpa: the manner of obtaining [human life with] freedom and possession, engaging in hearing and contemplation, travelling places with the endurance of hardships, receiving instructions on ripening and liberation, engaging in meditation, engaging in tantric conduct, having the vision of a tutelary deity, remembering of [past] lives, and engaging in the activities for the sake of others. Then [he] asked me to [compose] a manner of [my] life condensed, similar to this [hagiography of Mi la ras pa] as support for devotion. Therefore, to make his request meaningful, [I] Mendicant Glorious gTsong lag phreng ba alias Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don yongs su grub pa wrote this in two meditation sessions in the dGyes pa rdo rje's (Mi la ras pa) inconceivable mansion of the aptly emanated great palace of Sras mkhar based on the nine points since I do not bear embarrassment having freely relinquished this life for some time even though it would be shameful like a black metal before gold since I do not possess such qualities of the sublime yogi (Mi la ras pa).<sup>17</sup>

Evidently, this auto-hagiography is fashioned after the auto-hagiography of Mi la ras pa in nine points at the request of sTon sgom Kirtī śva ra.<sup>18</sup> This auto-hagiography was also completed in the Sras mkhar, a nine-storey tower believed to have been built single-handedly by Mi la ras pa and renovated by gTsong lag phreng ba. These circumstances indicate that some disciples, including sTon sgom Kirtī śva ra, held him in high regard as a yogi comparable to Mi la ras pa. However, this auto-hagiography present in his *Collected Works* does not, as translated above, provide the year when it was composed, while one published in France by gNas nang bSam gtan chos gling mentions the year of composition as the male iron dog year, which corresponds to 1550.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 71: *bsod snyoms pa dpal gtsug lag phreng ba can ming gzhan ma pham chos kyi rgyal po don yongs su grub pas nyang stod 'brug phu gser khang gi gdan sa pa ston sgom kirtī shwa ras rje btsun mar pas byin gyis brlabs pa'i grub thob chen po dpal shar kha ras chen gyi rnam thar nyid kyis mdzad pa/ dal 'byor thob tshul/ thos bsam mdzad tshul/ dka' ba spyad de gnas skor tshul/ smin grol gyi gdams pa zhus tshul/ sgom sgrub mdzad tshul/ sngags spyod mdzad tshul/ lhag pa'i lha gzigz tshul/ skye ba dran tshul/ gzhan don mdzad tshul te don dgur bsodus pa cig bstan nas khyod nyid kyi tshu 'di'i tshul 'di lta bur bsodus pa zhig dad pa'i rten du dgos zhes bskul ba don dang ldan par bya phyir/ don tshan dgu po de nyid gzhir byas te rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dam pa de lta bu'i yon tan bdag la mi ldan par pas gser gyi mdun du lcags nag po bzhin du ngo tsha bar zad mod kyang / tshu 'di ci dgar biang nas cung zad lon pas ngo tsha ba med pa'i phyir/ ji lta bar sprul ba'i pho brang chen po sras mkhar dgyes pa rdo rje'i gzhag med khang du thun mtshams gnyis su bkod pa'o.*

<sup>18</sup> Quintman (2014: 34) notes that “As with the figure of the Buddha himself, every word ascribed to Mila has been mediated through one or more generations of disciples, authors, and scribes; there is little, if anything, we can claim to know about him directly.” Therefore, this auto-hagiography of Mi la ras pa is likely to have involved the mediation of later authors.

<sup>19</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i rang tshul mdor bsodus pa don tshan dgu pa'o*, fol. 24a: *lcags pho khyi lo sku mkhar gser thog gi dus thun mtshams gnyis su bkod pa'o*. By this reckoning, dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba was forty-six years old while composing this spiritual autobiography.

Although his auto-hagiography is written following the nine points or activities of Mi la ras pa's hagiography, one cannot see the full correspondence of episodes between the two protagonists (Mi la ras pa and gTsug lag phreng ba).<sup>20</sup> For instance, in the third section about travel, gTsug lag phreng ba only expresses his desire to visit places, unlike Mi la ras pa, who is believed to have travelled from one place to another, including Nepal.<sup>21</sup>

In the section on obtaining his human life, gTsug lag phreng ba identifies the place where he was born and how he was known as the reincarnation of the previous dPa' bo. The second section regarding his study is also brief and largely a digest of what has been included in the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*. In the third section about travels, he describes his wishes to visit places such as India. The fourth section on the reception of empowerments and instructions contains merely names of masters and empowerments and instructions, but excludes details. The fifth section recounts his spiritual experiences resulting from his practices, while the sixth section on conduct addresses his tantric practices. The next section on visions of a tutelary deity contains his tantric experiences of pure perception while denying to have a vision of the tutelary deity. The section on the recollection of former lives denies recollecting previous lives.<sup>22</sup> He presents his viewpoints through instruction or advice about engaging in activities to help others in the final section, 'activities for the sake of others.'

While this material is a good source of information about gTsug lag phreng ba's life, it is not as elaborate as *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*. As the author admits, this particular auto-hagiography can be taken as spiritual advice and inspiration for the disciples.

***Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa zab gsal gi gter mdzod rab tu sbas pa'i gtam mo (A Fully Secret Account of One's Own Expression of Realisation, The Treasury of Profundity and Clarity)***  
The *Collected Works* of gTsug lag phreng ba does not contain this spiritual auto-hagiography. The copy of this work preserved by the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP) contains 21 folios. The project mentions this material as damaged. However, apart from some damage on the corners of the folios, a large part of the text is legible.

Dell provides the following translation of the colophon that demonstrates the nature of this auto-hagiography:

In this way, I have clarified some of my experiences. I have not expounded common talk here, such as travels to many regions, wealth and non-wealth, fame and non-fame [and] experiences of joy [or] suffering. Compared to that, this talk is more profound and vast [...]. Furthermore, except for those with the eye of experience, there is no need to

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<sup>20</sup> This auto-hagiography is an example of what Roesler (2014: 119) calls 'Individual life stories with an internal numerical micro-structure.' There is also a hagiography of Mi la ras pa written following the pattern of the twelve activities of Buddha (*mdzad pa bcu gnyis*). See Sernesi (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Quintman (2014: 5).

<sup>22</sup> However, insiders to the tradition, especially his followers, would take it as a sign of humility. His students such as Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag (1525–1583) laud his qualities such as possessing the ability to remember countless previous lives where he says in his *dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i bstod pa* folio 1a–1b: *skye ba'i phreng ba bgrang yas rjes su dran* ([he] remembers a countless chain of [previous] lives). One can also assume that such remarks denying his capability of remembering previous lives can enhance his credibility as an auto-hagiographer.

tell this to others, [i.e.,] to those without the eye of experience, in order for them to abandon fear and dread. This is profound and very profound so keep it hidden! [I] hand over [and] entrust [these teachings] to the retinue of protecting māras such as bKa' drung gNod sbyin bzhi po and dPal ldan Dud pa'i sol ba ma. Protect [it]! Hide [it]! Defeat the obstacles and fulfil the wishes of those who take hold of these teachings. May supreme pure goodness pervade this world. [I], the vajra yogi, dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba have clarified a few of my experiences [in this text] and it is very secret.<sup>23</sup>

It is also interesting to note that gTsug lag phreng ba does not include this auto-hagiography in his own catalogue of his *Collected Works*.<sup>24</sup> lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med's includes this work in the catalogue of gTsug lag phreng ba's works of which he received the transmission. lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med lists it as *gSang ba'i rnam thar (The Secret Biography)*.<sup>25</sup>

Since it is a hidden or secret biography, it does not provide information such as dates of life events other than his spiritual realisation, which gTsug lag phreng ba urges to be left secret, as evident from the abovementioned Dell's translation of the colophon of this auto-hagiography. In this auto-hagiography written in verse, gTsug lag phreng ba provides accounts of dreams and visions he had experienced. For instance, he relates that one morning he saw, at a tender age, Guru Padmasambhava in the sky. He felt elated, according to him, and showed Guru Padmasambhava to others.<sup>26</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba divided this secret biography into three chapters: 1) a chapter composed from the mode of past lives (*sngon gyi tshul las brtsams pa'i rnam par rtog pa*) where he recounts his past incarnations prior to the First dPa' bo, 2) a chapter composed concerning the mode of the present life (*da ltar gyi tshul las brtsams pa'i skabs*) 3) a chapter composed concerning the mode of future lives (*ma 'ongs pa'i tshul las brtsams pa'i skabs*) where he makes aspirations for future rebirths to benefit beings.

gTsug lag phreng ba portrays and admits himself as a Yogi in this auto-hagiography. Therefore, this secret auto-hagiography is also a self-representation of a yogi. Since accounts of his spiritual experiences remain beyond the scope of historical inquiry, this material is not used extensively in the present study.

### ***bDag gi tshul yang dag pa'i yi ge mchis (A True Account of My Nature)***

Included in the *Collected Works* of the dPal brtsegs edition, the four pages of this auto-hagiography written in verse describe his nature (*rang tshul*) by way of expressing his qualities. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba declares that he has no desire for wealth and fame while generating no envy for those who possess them.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 137–138).

<sup>24</sup> Or gTsug lag phreng ba could have written this biography only after the self-written catalogue.

<sup>25</sup> The whole catalogue is provided in the appendix.

<sup>26</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa zab gsal gi gter mdzod rab tu sbas pa'i gtam mo*, fol. 6a: *tshe 'dir bus pa shin tu chung ngu'i dus/ tshes bcu'i nang gcig bdag nyid chen po ni/ padma 'byung gnas mkha' la gsal bar mthong / dga' zhing mgu bas gzhan la bstan par byas*.

<sup>27</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *bDag gi tshul yang dag pa'i yi ge mchis*, p. 46: *de las rnyed bkur ngan ngon phra mo thob/ las kyi dbang gis spong bar ma nus kyang / chags zhen re dogs 'ching ba gang yang med/ 'di tsam dam*

While this material does not contain information regarding his life, such as dates of his biographical events, it provides contextual information about his time. One can discern something of the religious and historical context of the period in which gTsong lag phreng ba lived. His expression of dissatisfaction with and repugnance for religious practitioners who falsely claimed to be the reincarnations of past masters is made explicit in this writing.

gTsong lag phreng ba remarks in the colophon of this auto-hagiography that he wrote it, at Yar 'brog, to fulfil the wishes of his patron bSod nams rgyal po, who devoutly requested that he compose it.<sup>28</sup> Apart from this information, the colophon does not indicate the dates of the composition.

***Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston (The Feast of the Wise that Illuminates the History of Turning the Wheels of Dharma)***

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* was composed by gTsong lag phreng ba himself. It contains some information on gTsong lag phreng ba's life and his masters. In the biographies of some of his masters, he narrates his relationship and connection with them, such as his studies with them. Since this material can be considered a first-hand source, similar to his auto-hagiographies, it provides a reliable and useful source for studying his life. Completed at the age of sixty-one, this work is a history of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, with a focus on the Karma bKa' brgyud school.<sup>29</sup> The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* comprises four volumes of his *Collected Works* in the dPal brtsegs edition.

In this historical work, gTsong lag phreng ba presents biographies of some of his teachers, including sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa (1458–1515) and Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa (1449– 1524).

**1.4.1 Secondary and Later Sources**

***sGrub brgyud karma kaṃ tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu sel gyi phreng ba (Spiritual Biographies of the Precious Meditative Lineage of the Karma Kaṃ tshang, the Garland of the Boundless Crystal Gems)***

This ten-page-long spiritual hagiography of gTsong lag phreng ba by Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774) and 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab *sGrub brgyud karma kaṃ tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu sel gyi phreng ba* (henceforth *Kaṃ tshang Biographies*) covers his important life events in brief. Since this hagiography is written in prose (in contrast to the versified auto-hagiographies written by gTsong lag phreng ba himself), it contains some additional and clearer information regarding the biographical events that were left terse and cryptic in the auto-hagiographies. It also provides the full names of his masters, left abbreviated in the auto-hagiographies of gTsong lag phreng ba. Therefore, this source serves as a valuable supplement to understanding the

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*pa'i chos su gtogs par go /rnyed bkur grags pa thob pa gzhan thos na/ /so so'i dge ba'i 'bras bu yin go bas/ /phra dog mi ldang rjes su yi rang 'phel.*

<sup>28</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *bDag gi tshul yang dag pa'i yi ge mchis*, p. 48: *zhes sbyin bdag chen po bsod nams rgyal pos dad pa'i lhag bsam gyis bskul ba'i bzhed pa bkang ba'i slad du/ dpal gtsug lag phreng bas ya 'brog sa'i thig le dpal sde'i skyed tshal du sbyar ba'o.*

<sup>29</sup> This is discussed in the fourth chapter.

auto-hagiographies of gTsong lag phreng ba, and to some extent, it also functions as a commentary on them.

The *Kam tshang Biographies* was written by Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774) and 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab. Published in two volumes by D. Gyaltsan and Kesang Legshay in 1972, it consists of biographies of the Karma bKa' brgyud masters, starting with the First Karmapa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), up to the Tenth Zhwa dmar Chos grub rgya mtsho (1742–1792).

#### 1.4.2 Other Sources

There are also other sources, such as *Bod gyi sman pa rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* (*A Compilation of the Spiritual Biographies of Successive Tibetan Physicians*) by mKhas dbang Byams pa 'phrin las (b. 1928). In this material, the author presents a brief hagiography of gTsong lag phreng ba and praises his good qualities as a physician.

Another source worth mentioning is Thub bstan 'od zer's (20<sup>th</sup> century) *dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba'i mdzad rnam mdor bsdu* (*A Brief Spiritual Biography of dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba*). It is included in the *dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba'i gsung 'bum* published by Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying khang in 2019.

Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell also identify some 20th-century sources on the life of gTsong lag phreng ba and discuss their relevance.<sup>30</sup> They rightly observe that these biographies are digests of *Kam tshang Biographies*.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, these sources cannot provide additional and new biographical information on gTsong lag phreng ba.

While some of these sources can be used as supplementary sources to the auto-hagiographies of gTsong lag phreng ba, they have limited historical value since they were written later at a time distant from the events.

#### 1.4.3 Employment of Sources on the Life of gTsong lag phreng ba

This study will employ and mainly rely on the two auto-hagiographies, the *Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long* and *Don tshan dgu pa*, since they are more detailed and reliable than other auto-hagiographies and biographies in terms of gTsong lag phreng ba's life events, details, and chronological order.

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* will also be used wherever information on his life is found, since it is reliable, similar to his two auto-hagiographies. Composed by gTsong lag phreng ba himself, this historical writing contains information on his teachers. This allows us to understand his appreciation for his teachers.

Other later sources on gTsong lag phreng ba, such as the *Kam tshang Biographies*, will also be used as supplementary materials. This historical text, authored by two Karma bKa' brgyud masters, contains the biographies of the prominent figures in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, including gTsong lag phreng ba. The *Kam tshang Biographies* contain information about gTsong lag phreng ba found in the biographies of his students, contemporaries and later dPa' bo incarnations. For instance, in the biography of the Third rGyal tshab Go shri Grags pa dpal 'byor (1516–1546), one can find information about the teachings gTsong lag phreng ba

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<sup>30</sup> See Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 138–140).

<sup>31</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 139).

conferred on him.<sup>32</sup> This information is not found in gTsug lag phreng ba's auto-hagiographies.

20th-century sources on the life of gTsug lag phreng ba are not used extensively since they are simply a summary of his auto-hagiographies and the *Kam tshang Biographies*.

### 1.5 Textual Sources for his Scholarly Contribution and Philosophical Stances

gTsug lag phreng ba has enunciated many doctrinal positions, such as on emptiness, tathāgatagarbha, and tantric views. The main texts where gTsug lag phreng ba makes doctrinal contributions are as follows:

***Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po (A Commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatāra, The Essence of the Boundlessly Profound and Vast Ocean of Mahāyāna Teachings)***

In two volumes, the commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is one of the most extensive among Tibetan commentaries. The commentary elaborates gTsug lag phreng ba's sūtric philosophical stances in relation to Indian schools such as Madhyamaka and Cittamātra. Additionally, the treatment of the bodhisattva vow is extensive and includes refutations of the views of other religious masters such as Sa skya paṇḍita. Therefore, this material is a good source for the study of gTsug lag phreng ba's scholarly writing, his philosophical contributions, and the expression of bKa' brgyud pa philosophical views. gTsug lag phreng ba's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is considered the authoritative work on views on emptiness in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition alongside the Eighth Karmapa's commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.<sup>33</sup>

***dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba (The Notes on the Single Intention that Emerged from the Instructions of the Victorious One)***

*The Notes on the Single Intention that Emerged from the Instruction of the Victorious One*<sup>34</sup> by gTsug lag phreng ba contains his philosophical positions, such as the difference between the Buddhahood attained through the path of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. The notes are allegedly on teachings by the Eighth Karmapa (as discussed in the fourth chapter) on the *Single Intention*, propounded by 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143–1217). Therefore, this source, among others, is useful for understanding gTsug lag phreng ba's bKa' brgyud pa perspective on the Mantrayāna, which is arguably based on the Eighth Karmapa's teachings.

### Textual Materials of *Dris lan*

gTsug lag phreng ba's *dris lan* materials are also useful sources in understanding his doctrinal stances and their contribution to scholarly debates on them. For instance, *Dris lan zab mo snang byed* contains his discussion on tathāgatagarbha. Although Draszczyk and Higgins (2019) discuss the tathāgatagarbha from the standpoint of the Eighth Karmapa and other bKa'

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<sup>32</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, Vol. II, p. 64: *rje dpa' bo'i drung nas snga phyir 'dul ba/ phar phyin/ tshad ma rnams kyi bshad pa dang*.

<sup>33</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 613).

<sup>34</sup> This commentary is discussed in the fourth chapter.

brgyud scholars, such as Karma 'phrin las pa, gTsong lag phreng ba's interpretive perspectives are missing. This *Dris lan* material contains some presentations on other philosophical points, including emptiness, in response to questions from his followers. In this respect, it is a good source from which to gain some understanding of gTsong lag phreng ba's views on doctrinal topics.

### Textual Materials on the Scholarly Contribution

Further sources that illustrate gTsong lag phreng ba's scholarly breadth are his works on astrology and the major guide to the practice of Vajrayoginī, which became a standard in his school. Other texts, such as his Tibetan grammar, also contributed to the scholarly writings of Tibet. These are discussed in some detail in the fourth chapter. In general, his *Collected Works*, published in 2019 in fourteen volumes, will be used as textual materials for this research. His *Collected Works* is discussed in some detail in the fourth chapter.

### 1.6 Research Methodologies

This research presents a historical study by delving into the life of gTsong lag phreng ba and the historical contexts within which he lived. Historical studies can be understood as creating knowledge about the past based on textual and other sources.<sup>35</sup> The study of gTsong lag phreng ba's life as a form of historical research will be based on sources, including hagiographies<sup>36</sup> or spiritual biographies and auto-hagiographies, utilising careful analysis that aims to head off uncritical assumptions.<sup>37</sup>

Since Tibetan hagiographies or *rnam mthar*,<sup>38</sup> depicting the lives of religious figures, are composed with many purposes, and sometimes reflect sectarian interests that aim to edify the protagonist and their school over rivals, their biographical information and its presentational approach must be approached with caution.<sup>39</sup> One also needs to be cautious of the biographical information of a particular spiritual master, which may be overblown and exaggerated to fulfil objectives such as generating devotion and enthusiasm to follow the spiritual path. gTsong lag phreng ba asserts that he wrote his auto-hagiography *Don tshan dgu pa* after his students requested him to compose his spiritual biography as an object for their devotion (*dad pa'i rten*).<sup>40</sup> Moreover, gTsong lag phreng ba urges his students to emulate his hagiography rather than simply take it as a narrative (*lo rgyus*).<sup>41</sup> This kind of advice

<sup>35</sup> Marwick (2001: 28).

<sup>36</sup> Conermann and Rheingans (2014:7) maintain that the term 'hagiography' is generally thought of as a text that recounts the life of a saint and is informed by research on the hagiographies of medieval Christian saints. Here, it should refer to Buddhist saints as pointed out by Rheingans (2014: 69).

<sup>37</sup> Marwick (2001:3).

<sup>38</sup> Rheingans (2017: 59) rightly analyses the term as "Tibetans mechanically rendered the prefix *vi* with the prefix *rnam pa* and *mokṣa* with *thar p/ba*, hence: *rnam par thar ba*, transformed into *rnam par thar pa* and then abbreviated to *rnam thar*." This is translated as a 'liberation story' or 'spiritual biography' (ibid). Therefore, the etymology of *rnam thar* also shows that it must contain some characteristics to arouse faith in disciples so that they can emulate the protagonist on the path towards liberation.

<sup>39</sup> Rheingans (2021: 22). Heimbrel (2017:250) presents religious sectarianism in the Tibetan biographical writings through the discussion of the biographies of mKhas grub rje and Ngor chen.

<sup>40</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p.71: *khyod nyid kyi tshhe 'di'i tshul 'di lta bur bsdu pa zhig dad pa'i rten du dgos zhes bskul ba don ldan du bya phyir*

<sup>41</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 70–71: *'dis bdag gi ngang tshul brjod mod kyang //chos rnam thar tshul du bstan pa ste/ /tshig lo rgyus tsam du ma bzhag par/ /don gdams ngag du yod kyis nyams su longs.*

indicates that biographies are also composed to instruct students.<sup>42</sup> Schaeffer reports that biographies have purposes such as generating devotion and inspiration in students.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it is vital to understand the purposes behind the composition of spiritual biographies with critical attention to inflated material. Regarding the functions of hagiographies, Conermann and Rheingans observe:

The functions of hagiographies reached from propaganda (relevant to a certain religious denomination) to legitimize (religious as well as secular) authority and the transmission of that authority; the making and transmitting of group identity; and the provision of spiritual guidance for a certain group of adherents.<sup>44</sup>

In the case of Tibetan studies, hagiographies of teachers composed by their students contain overstatements of the qualities and activities of the protagonists in question, while auto-hagiographies sometimes take a humbler tone.<sup>45</sup> However, reading spiritual biographies also requires an emic understanding of religious beliefs and practices, balanced with critical analysis so as to adequately appreciate their historical and religious connotations. For instance, historical narratives seemingly unacceptable to the audience of later generations could have been necessary and rational in their historical contexts. Therefore, I will take a critical stance while reading hagiographies with an emic knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism as an insider to the tradition.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the fact that religious biographies and spiritual autobiographies were composed for the spiritual advancement of students, a critical approach to them has been reported to have been discussed in Tibet as early as the 17th century. For instance, the Fifth Dalai Lama argued that presenting both good and bad episodes of one's life would make an autobiography satisfactory.<sup>47</sup> He even kept a record of his activities and had a group of intellectuals verify his sources while composing his auto-hagiographical work.<sup>48</sup> Methodological considerations, such as the style of writing biography, are also reported to have surfaced in 18th-century Tibet.<sup>49</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama was mindful of making his writing straightforward while writing his spiritual autobiography so that audiences of diverse intellectual capacities could understand it.<sup>50</sup> This indicates that there had been some awareness of the critical dimension while writing and reading historiography in Tibet.

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<sup>42</sup> Smith (2001: 14) rightly points out that 'The *rnam thar* is ultimately a practical instruction, a guide to the experience, insights, and vision of one developed being.'

<sup>43</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 277).

<sup>44</sup> Conermann and Rheingans (2014: 306).

<sup>45</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 265) points out divergent viewpoints about biographies among Tibetan scholars where some think autobiographies need to reflect both the positive and negative aspects of a protagonist while some argue that biographies should solely eulogise a protagonist. Ibid. p. 275 reports, for instance, that the Fifth Dalai Lama was censorious of himself about some of his visionary events.

<sup>46</sup> Ruegg (1995: 175) argues that an insider's perspective is significant to 'think along' traditions for a better understanding of cultural terms. Knott (2005) discusses the insider/outsider perspective in religious studies. Neither approach appears perfect yet each has its own merits. Therefore, both are serviceable in the study of religion.

<sup>47</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 265).

<sup>48</sup> Roesler (2014: 134).

<sup>49</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 273).

<sup>50</sup> Schaeffer (2010: 275).

Although it is not feasible to reach full objectivity concerning the past, this study will strive to attain some historical understanding through a critical study of the sources and textual evidence.

Philological methods are also indispensable in the study of Tibetan texts. Reading texts will take both denotations and connotations of terms into account to arrive at a more accurate textual meaning.<sup>51</sup> Translations will attempt to be faithful to the original, capturing the sense, while each word of the source texts will be approached following a literal translation method.<sup>52</sup> Evaluating textual sources requires a comparison of different available editions and source criticism.

Since research exploring the life of a figure such as gTsong lag phreng ba's involves a historical reading of texts, the historicist reading or the Plane 1 reading of Pollock will be employed to understand historical events in their context.<sup>53</sup> This research will explore the life and contributions of gTsong lag phreng ba from every available source. It also takes account of the religious context in Tibet at gTsong lag phreng ba's time to throw light on his life and works.

In surveying the protagonist's scholarly contributions, the study of his philosophical viewpoints and interpretations is central. This includes examination of the rationality of the protagonist's arguments and analysis of possible invalid reasoning. It is suggested that such analysis can eliminate false positions held by the given text or author.<sup>54</sup> The arguments proposed by gTsong lag phreng ba will be analysed in terms of their efficacy in proving the points they attempt to establish.<sup>55</sup>

As Siderits observes, philosophy is concerned more "with how to answer questions than with the answers themselves."<sup>56</sup> Therefore, philosophical positions held by scholars will be presented, taking into account the assumptions and methods employed to arrive at them. Therefore, at times, the philosophical positions of different scholars will be presented without making a judgment of them.<sup>57</sup> Philosophical study also demands precise definitions of terminology along with an assessment of reasoning, and so on.<sup>58</sup>

The standpoints of past scholars must be studied in their historical and cultural context to determine the true intention (*dgongs pa*) of texts or authors.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the philosophical standpoints of a particular scholar would need to be studied in the religio-political context of his time.

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<sup>51</sup> Tillemans (1995: 269) states 'The important feature of most working philologists' approach is the conviction that by understanding in real depth the Buddhist languages, and the history, institutions, context, and preoccupations of an author and his milieu, progress can be made towards understanding that author's thought and better grasping his world.'

<sup>52</sup> Ruegg (2016: 198) suggests using both methods while translating scholarly texts.

<sup>53</sup> Pollock (2014: 411).

<sup>54</sup> Tillemans (1995: 272).

<sup>55</sup> Hungtington (1995: 292) argues that philosophy has to do with reasoning rather than the creative usage of language.

<sup>56</sup> Siderits (2007: 1).

<sup>57</sup> Siderits (2007: 2) notes that "So perhaps philosophy has established something after all—that under the surface of seemingly simple matters lurks surprising complexity." Therefore, it is not straightforward to assign values to the philosophical positions held by individuals.

<sup>58</sup> Siderits (2007: 2).

<sup>59</sup> Ruegg (1995: 161) is optimistic about knowing how the past authors understood the meaning of texts while admitting the associated challenges.

As Ruegg notes, philological considerations are also important in doing philosophy.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, this study will strive to translate terms with awareness of historical-philological factors.

With these methodologies, this study will strive to arrive at objectivity while accepting the fact that it is almost impossible to achieve it.<sup>61</sup> Obviously, one cannot entirely eliminate the subjective dimension, given the nature of the field of study.

### 1.7 Plan of this Research

The first chapter lays a foundation for this research by identifying its aims and objectives, and expected outcomes. It outlines and discusses the research methodologies employed.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses previous research on gTsong lag phreng ba and explores textual materials on his life and the doctrinal positions he held.

The second chapter will mainly study gTsong lag phreng ba's life, including his early life and education. It examines and discusses his deeds as a scholar and his other significant activities. It will also explore the religious and political context of gTsong lag phreng ba's life. In addition, the second chapter will survey some significant areas of gTsong lag phreng ba's activities including the geopolitical networks and non-sectarian outlook he nurtured.

The third chapter will survey gTsong lag phreng ba's scholarly writing and provide an overview of his compositions. It will also provide information on the origin and reception of the *Collected Works*. In addition, this chapter will look at the various available editions of his *Collected Works* and the genres of his writings. It will also identify the missing and extant writings of gTsong lag phreng ba by comparing different catalogues.

The fourth chapter will discuss gTsong lag phreng ba's main works and their significance. His principal treatises, along with their characteristics and scholarly contributions, will be discussed. The principal commentaries will be selected based on their extensiveness, impact, and significance in the Karma bKa' brgyud school. Some of gTsong lag phreng ba's philosophical stances will also be discussed in this chapter. This will include an analysis of his views on emptiness, tathāgatagarbha and the distinction between the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra traditions.

In the fifth chapter, some conclusions will be advanced. The chapter will also lay out the contribution of the present research and give direction for future research on the life and works of gTsong lag phreng ba.

The appendix section will provide a descriptive catalogue of his writings based on the dPal brtsegs edition of gTsong lag phreng ba's *Collected Works*. It will also contain a catalogue written by gTsong lag phreng ba on his own work. This will list the texts that are missing and those that are extant. It will also provide a title list of the *gSan yig* of the *Collected Works* of gTsong lag phreng ba by lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650).

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<sup>60</sup> Ruegg (1995: 145-147) discusses the necessity of the philological dimension in philosophy and issues related to the translation of terms. Ibid. On p. 168 he also appears to suggest that political influence can have a negative bearing on philosophical concepts. Cabezon (1995: 267) maintains that even political and economic contexts have to be considered while engaging in academic investigation.

<sup>61</sup> Marwick (2001: 45).

## Chapter II The Life of gTsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566)

This chapter will explore the life of gTsug lag phreng ba from his birth and early life to his education and activities until his passing. This chapter will also study the contextual circumstances of gTsug lag phreng ba's life. Then it will discuss his recognition as a *sprul sku* of the First dPa' bo, his early life, education, and ordination. His non-sectarian outlook towards different religious traditions in Tibet and political involvement will also be examined.

### 2.1 The Historical Context of gTsug lag phreng ba's Life

While the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in Tibet can be acclaimed as a golden era for the Buddhist philosophical systems in Tibet, they were not without their darker side. gTsug lag phreng ba paints a dismal picture of Tibet, openly expressing his disillusionment. He brands Tibet on many occasions as the land of darkness. He writes:

Now [I am] disillusioned with the dark land of Tibet,  
And [I] intend to move to the Land of Āryas (India).<sup>62</sup>

Disillusioned with the conduct of the Tibetan people, gTsug lag phreng ba even thought of moving permanently to India and immersing himself in meditation at Jālandhara,<sup>63</sup> Vajrāsana (*rdo rje'i gdan*), and on the bank of the river Nairāñjanā.<sup>64</sup> Alternatively, he thought of remaining at Mount Wutaishan<sup>65</sup> and Glang chen 'gying ri located in the present-day Sichuan province.<sup>66</sup> The *Kam tshang Biographies* also mentions that, before he met the Eighth Karmapa, he had decided to leave for India after handing over the Gro bo lung monastery<sup>67</sup> to a lama.<sup>68</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba's disenchantment with Tibet appears to have been caused mainly by political and religious turmoil. Therefore, this section will explore the political and religious environment of Tibet at the time of gTsug lag phreng ba and will give consideration to power struggles among different political factions. It will include an investigation of the

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<sup>62</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Rin chen gling gi rtse mor smras pa*, p. 123: *da ni bod khams mun pa'i gling la skyo// rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul du 'gro bo snyam*. However, there is no indication of him visiting India.

<sup>63</sup> It is one of the twenty-four sacred places associated with Cakrasaṃvara Tantra. See Buswell, Robert E., and Donald S. Lopez (eds.) 2013, under s.v. pīṭha.

<sup>64</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 58: *bdag bod yul skye bo'i spyod pas skyo// gnas rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul du 'gro/ dpal dzā lan dha ra rdo rje'i gdan// chu bo nai rañ dza ra'i 'gram sogs su// rtse gcig tu sgrub pa lhur byas te// bod yul du ldog par mi bya snyam*. Buswell, Robert E., and Donald S. Lopez (eds.) 2013, under s.v. Nairāñjanā explains that it is a river located in Bihar, India, and believed to be a river on whose banks Buddha practised austere meditation for six years. It is also believed that on the bank of this river Brahmā requested Buddha to turn the wheel of dharma.

<sup>65</sup> Mount Wutai Shan known as Ri bo rtse lnga in Tibetan is considered the mountain associated with Mañjuśrī and believed to be a place where he ceaselessly gives teachings (Buswell, Robert E., and Donald S. Lopez (eds.) 2013, under s.v. Wutaishan).

<sup>66</sup> Zhang Yisun describes Glang chen 'gying ri as *si khron zhing chen o me rdzong gi lho nub na yod cing/ rgya mtsho'i ngos las mtho tshad smi 3099 yod pa dang/ krung go'i nang pa'i chos lugs kyi gnas mchog cig*.

<sup>67</sup> Rheingans (2021: 152, footnote 671) describes and locates Gro bo lung: "Lho brag Gro bo lung was the main monastery of Marpa. It is located in the southern part of Tibet in the vicinity of the border with Bhutan. Marpa translated various works and instructed his illustrious disciples Milarepa, rNgog Chos sku rdo rje, and others. Behind the monastery, there is a retreat place (*sgrub khang*). Later, it was also a seat of the dPa' bo sprul skus."

<sup>68</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, Vol. II, p. 58: *de nas dgon du bla ma zhig zhu nas dgon sde rnams de la gtad de rgya gar du phebs thugs thag bcad*.

religio-political climate in which the systematisation of religious traditions occurred. In this way, this chapter aims to cast some light on this insufficiently studied period.<sup>69</sup>

### 2.1.1 Political Context

gTsug lag phreng ba was born and lived in a period of political struggle that occurred along with the systematisation of religious traditions. His entire life was marked by frequent fighting between the provinces of bBus and gTsang. This political period, although not generally explored in depth, has been studied by Sorensen and Hazod (2007), Olaf Czaja (2013), and Caumanns and Sernesi (2017), as pointed out by Rheingans.<sup>70</sup> Rheingans (2021) and Jackson (1989) are also valuable sources for studying this period.

From 1354 to 1642, the dBus and gTsang region of Tibet was ruled by three successive ruling families: the Phag mo gru pas (1354–c.1478), the Rin spungs pas (1478–1565), and the gTsang pas (1565–1642).<sup>71</sup> In 1478, Phag mo gru rule was superseded by the Rin spungs pas, led by mTsho skyes rdo rje (1462–1510) and General Don yod rdo rje (1463–1512) of the Rin spungs pa, who assisted gTsug lag phreng ba and his family financially from his early age.<sup>72</sup> During the Rin spungs pa rule, the Phag mo gru pas were only nominal figures under the Rin spungs pa rulers.<sup>73</sup> For instance, Rin spung pa rulers had been a force behind the appointment of Ngag dbang bkra shis grags pa as sDe srid in 1499.<sup>74</sup>

By the time of the birth of gTsug lag phreng ba in 1504, the Karma bKa' brgyud sect was enjoying the political support of the Rin spungs pa under the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524), and the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1507).<sup>75</sup> Between 1498 and 1517/1518, the Rin spungs pa had political control over dBus and gTsang.<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa also had a relation with the Phag mo gru pa, which enabled him to become sPyan snga (abbot)<sup>77</sup> of gDan sa thil monastery.<sup>78</sup>

Efforts to keep the Phag mo gru under the power of the Rin spungs pas were at play, indicating the power struggle between the two parties. There had been marriages between the two parties in attempts by one party to gain a political advantage over the other. For instance, Don yod rdo rje gave his own daughter to the Phag mo gru pa ruler sDe srid Ngag dbang bkra shis grags pa in 1504 in what has been suggested as a political strategy.<sup>79</sup> Phag mo gru pa sde

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<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, Olaf Czaja's *Medieval Rule in Tibet* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2013) and the proceedings of the conference 'Towards a History of 15th Century Tibet: Cultural Blossoming, Religious Fervour, and Political Unrest' held in 2015 at the Lumbini International Research Institute are good sources to understand this period.

<sup>70</sup> Rheingans (2021: 34).

<sup>71</sup> Rheingans (2017: 36).

<sup>72</sup> Rheingans (2017: 38). DiValerio (2015: 272, footnote 39) enumerates the various designations of Don yod rdo rje: 'These include *nang so*, *drung*, *sgar pa*, *sde pa*, *sde pa sgar pa*, *sde srid*, *sa skyong*, *chos rgyal*, *chos skyong ba'i rgyal po*, *sa skyong chos kyi rgyal po*, *stobs kyi rgyal po*, *mi'i dbang po*, *sa skyong mi'i dbang po*, and others.' (Heimbel 2017: 261) also notes that Don yod rdo rje was also known as sDe pa sGar pa.

<sup>73</sup> Rheingans (2017: 40).

<sup>74</sup> Tucci (1971: 228).

<sup>75</sup> Rheingans (2010: 244). Rheingans (2017: 38) also mentions that the Rin spungs pa ruling family had a connection, as patron, with the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524), and the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho. Sernesi (2021: 8) Zhwa dmar ascended to this position in 1493.

<sup>76</sup> Rheingans (2010: 248).

<sup>77</sup> *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* defines *spyan snga* as *phag mo gru pa'i mkhan po'i tha snyad* (a term for the abbot of the Phag mo gru pa).

<sup>78</sup> Rheingans (2017: 38).

<sup>79</sup> Czaja (2013: 2015). See also Sernesi (2021:8)

srid Kun dga' legs pa (1433–1482/83) also married Chos spal bzang mo from the Rin spungs pa party.<sup>80</sup>

Sorensen and Hazod illustrate marriage as a political ploy in early 16th-century Tibet (the time when gTsug lag phreng ba was young):

Not uncharacteristically, the early 16th century is denoted a period fraught with internal conflicts between maternal relatives (*zhang tshan 'khrugs pa*) as the sources depict disloyalty between rival relatives. It refers not least to the sheer endless conflicts and rivalries in which many governors were locked, headed by families often affiliated with one another by blood. Blood in fact here meant little, since arranged intermarriage indeed was regarded as nothing more than a strategic means of forging indispensable if only temporary alliances.<sup>81</sup>

However, the fortune of the Rin spungs pa rule changed after the death of their rulers mTsho skyes rdo rje and Don yod rde rje. The death of Don yod rdo rje is believed to have consolidated the ruling status of Sne'u gdong rtse.<sup>82</sup>

Not long after, the Phag mo gru pas started to challenge the Rin spungs pa rule. For instance, in 1509, the sDe srid confronted the Rin spungs pa rule when Rin spungs pa rulers intervened in the dispute between the sDe srid and officials of bSam sde.<sup>83</sup> In the same year, sDe srid Ngag dbang bkra shis grags pa also started an altercation with one of the Don yod rdo rje's fathers-in-law.<sup>84</sup>

In 1510, during the funeral of mTsho skyes rdo rje, his son Ngag dbang nam rgyal (b.1470/1482/1494?) attacked Bla 'bring g.ye. It has been reported that the Phag mo gru pa's intervention in this dispute was disregarded by Don yod rdo rje, leading to an augmentation of hostility between the Phag mo gru pa and Rin spungs pa.<sup>85</sup>

Reforms were expected in dBus and gTsang after the passing of both mTsho skyes rdo rje and Don yod rdo rje.<sup>86</sup> As expected, in 1526, fighting between the Phag mo dru and Rin spungs pa in dBus and gTsang occurred during gTsug lag phreng ba's youth (although he does not mention them in his auto-hagiographies).<sup>87</sup> As a result, the Phag mo gru pa sDe srid Ngag dbang bkra shis proved victorious, leading to the loss of lHun po rtse of Chu shul for the Rin spungs pas.<sup>88</sup> He also lent his support to the dGe lugs pas in a bid to consolidate his control.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, the Rin spungs pa controlled a substantial area of dBus and gTsang until 1517.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> DiValerio (2015: 129).

<sup>81</sup> Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 503–504).

<sup>82</sup> Czaja (2013: 252).

<sup>83</sup> Czaja (2013: 251).

<sup>84</sup> DiValerio (2015: 131).

<sup>85</sup> Tucci (1971: 229). Czaja (2013: 252).

<sup>86</sup> Czaja (2013: 253).

<sup>87</sup> Tucci (1971: 231). See also Czaja (2013: 254)

<sup>88</sup> Czaja (2013: 254).

<sup>89</sup> Czaja (2013: 21).

<sup>90</sup> Rheingans (2021: 36).

Since civil wars were reported to have occurred throughout his life, it is plausible that gTsong lag phreng ba witnessed this political chaos until he died in 1566. Even in the year he died, Karma tshe brtan annexed bSam grub rtse, once held by the Rin spungs pa.<sup>91</sup>

Against this backdrop of struggle and fighting between the Rin spungs pa and Phag mo gru pa for political power, gTsong lag phreng ba likely became disillusioned with Tibet's political climate.

### 2.1.2 Religious Context

The era when gTsong lag phreng ba lived was rife with religious and doctrinal differences that fuelled sectarian identity. It was also a period when political factions favoured some religious traditions over others. For instance, the Rin spungs pas did not favour the dGe lugs tradition and they attempted to restrain it.<sup>92</sup> It has even been suggested that the dispute between the Rin spungs pa and Phag mo dru pa was associated with the contest between the dGe lugs and bKa' brgyud traditions.<sup>93</sup> Rin spung pa, in alliance with the Karmapa, attempted to undermine the influence of the dGe lugs pas.<sup>94</sup> Towards this end, the Rin spungs pa sponsored building bKa' brgyud pa monasteries in and around Lhasa to counter dGe lugs influence. For instance, Yangs pa can monastery was built in 1503 with the support of Don yod rdo rje to counter the control of the dGe lugs pas and the Phag mo gru pas.<sup>95</sup>

Rin spungs pa lords also supported Sa skya pa during this time.<sup>96</sup> It has been suggested that the need to counter the growing dGe lugs pas led to the alliance of Sa skya pas and bKa' brgyud pas.<sup>97</sup> In what can be one form of alliance, around this time Sa skya pa and the bKa' brgyud pa also had religious connections, as evidenced by Karma 'phrin las pa's involvement with the Sa skya tradition.<sup>98</sup> The other religious traditions also likely felt the need to contain the rise of the dGe lugs pa.

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the dGe lugs pas established 36 institutional centres in the vicinity of Lhasa. The dGe lugs pa influence grew in other parts of Tibet as well. In the same period, more than a hundred dGe lugs pa monastic centres were reported in the span of a century after the founding of dGa' ldan monastery in 1409.<sup>99</sup>

Religious tensions are also explained by the fact that the dGe lugs pas converted monasteries of other traditions to dGe lugs. For instance, many 'Dri gung bKa' brgyud seats were converted to dGe lugs.<sup>100</sup> Sectarianism also appears to have taken its most severe form in this period. Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), the highly revered scholar of the Sa skya

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<sup>91</sup> Tucci (2013: 279).

<sup>92</sup> DiValerio (2015: 133).

<sup>93</sup> Schwieger (2015: 28).

<sup>94</sup> Schwieger (2015: 28).

<sup>95</sup> Czaja (2013:250). Sorensen and Hazod (2007:52). DiValerio (2015: 137) suggests that Yangs pa can was strategically important, especially in having authority over some routes between Lhasa and Gyantse. Wylie (2013: 271) also suggests that the monastery was built for geo-political advantage over the Lhasa area.

<sup>96</sup> Caumanns (2017: 177) reports that Rin spungs pa rulers served tea to the monks during the funeral rites of Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507). DiValerio (2015: 139) mentions that Don yod rdo rje's paternal ancestors supported the Sa skya pas through founding institutes.

<sup>97</sup> DiValerio (2015: 139).

<sup>98</sup> See Rheingans (2021).

<sup>99</sup> DiValerio (2015: 124).

<sup>100</sup> DiValerio (2015: 127).

tradition, is said to have been coerced by the Phag mo gru pa ruler to learn rJe Tsong kha pa's teachings.<sup>101</sup>

While many disputes are attributable to interest in gaining additional patrons for a religious tradition, philosophical and doctrinal differences appear to have played some part.<sup>102</sup> Heimbel reports public debates organised by rulers such as Don yod rdo rje between religious traditions concerning doctrinal differences.<sup>103</sup> All of these instances indicate the intense partisanship among religious schools during gTsug lag phreng ba's time. However, gTsug lag phreng ba himself may have exhibited a non-sectarian outlook from a young age on account of receiving teachings of different traditions that he professed to practice. This is discussed below in the section 'Non-sectarian Outlook.'

Despite 16th-century Tibet being in its heyday for advancement in philosophical studies and religious growth, gTsug lag phreng ba laments his birth in that country. He denounces Tibet as the land that the Buddha had not visited, as a place abandoned by paṇḍitas and translators, and as a region where one cannot find people who practise dharma properly.<sup>104</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba remarks:

[I, who am] called Chos rgyal don grub (his abbreviated name)  
Speak this, disillusioned with the  
Manner of frittering away my time in meaningless slothfulness  
In the land of the conduct of hypocrisy, deceit, and dishonesty  
In the central part of a snowy country  
Near the gently-flowing river Pakṣu.  
Like a being in the egg,  
I remain alone even in its midst.  
Having not conformed with others on aspirations and goals,  
[I] think I desired to remain alone.  
If eight [worldly] concerns and desire for fame are abandoned, [one would not] earn a  
livelihood,  
If [actions] are done according to dharma, all dharma practitioners revile [you].  
Such bad times have come to the land of Tibet.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> DiValerio (2015: 141).

<sup>102</sup> Sernesi (2021: 4) notes that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, "The confrontation on philosophical tenets took place in public debates, treatises, and polemical texts. At the same time, from the political and institutional perspective, the schools were competing for the support of powerful and wealthy noblemen, to establish the prestige of their monastic establishments, and to expand their territorial domains and revenues."

<sup>103</sup> Heimbel (2017: 261) states that Don yod rdo rje organised a debate between Sa skya and dGe lugs pa lamas over doctrinal positions.

<sup>104</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Legs par bshad pa'i grwar rang la skur 'debs su smras pa*, p. 85: *skyabs mchog thub pas zhabs kyis ma bcags shing // rgyal tshab lo paṇ rnam's kyis bor ba'i gnas // chos bzhin spyod pa'i skye bos dben pa'i sa // sdig spyod 'dun pa'i phyogs 'dir las kyis skyes*. gTsug lag phreng ba appears to refer to Indian paṇḍitas and translators but he does not specify them.

<sup>105</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Rin chen gling gi rtse mor smras pa*, p. 121: *chos rgyal don grub ces byar bod pa de // kha ba can gyi rgyal khams dbus kyi cha // chu klung pakṣu dal gyis 'bab pa'i 'gram // g.yo sgyu khram gsum spyod pa'i yul khams na // don med snyoms las kho nas dus 'da' ba'i // tshul la skyo ba'i sems kyi 'di skad lo // sgo'i nga'i nang gi sems can ji bzhin du // mang po'i dbus na'ang rang nyid gcig pur 'dug/ gzhan dang zhe 'dod bsgrub bya ma mthun pas // gcig por gnas pa zhib la dungs pa snyam // chos brgyad grags 'dod spang na zas mi myong // chos bzhin byas na chos pa kun gyis gshe/ bod yul 'di ru 'di 'dra'i dus ngan byung*.

gTsug lag phreng ba's words indicate some form of competition over material goals among religious practitioners.<sup>106</sup> He also maintains that he did not conform with other religious personalities regarding materialistic aspirations and that he was, unlike others, not after wealth and fame.

Religious tensions during the time and the period immediately preceding gTsug lag phreng ba became even more ugly, leading on occasion to physical confrontations between the adherents of different religious traditions. For instance, the Seventh Karmapa was assaulted by dGe lugs pa monks in Lhasa in 1497.<sup>107</sup> On another occasion, in 1489, Nāleन्द्रa, founded by Rong ston shes bya kun rig (1367–1449), was attacked by dGe lugs pas.<sup>108</sup>

The extreme animosity between religious traditions is also evident in the prohibition of the dGe lugs pas from taking part in the Great Prayer festival in Lhasa between 1498 and 1517, during the Rin spungs pa rule.<sup>109</sup> The dGe lugs pas were only permitted to participate in 1518 following the request of the Second Dalai Lama dGe 'dun rgya mtsho (1475–1542).<sup>110</sup>

The founding of the Yangs pa can monastery of the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa in 1503/1505 and Thub chen monastery in Lhasa also exacerbated disputes between the dGe lugs pa and Karma bKa' brgyud pa traditions.<sup>111</sup> The bKa' brgyud pa schools, principally the Karma bKa' brgyud and 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud, may have founded monasteries in the Lhasa area to counter the influence of the dGe lugs pa.<sup>112</sup>

In addition, gTsug lag phreng ba lamented that the era was filled with people who falsely claimed to have achieved supernatural power and with people who claimed to be reincarnations.<sup>113</sup> According to gTsug lag phreng ba, dharma practitioners were distracted by the desire to become leaders.<sup>114</sup> Schwieger asserts that in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, *sprul sku* or reincarnations had an appealing status associated with religious authority and ownership of material possessions.<sup>115</sup> This special status of *sprul sku* appears to have led to the introduction of this system in other religious traditions following its introduction in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>116</sup> By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the system of *sprul sku* had become firmly instituted in the dGe lugs pa tradition as well.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Religious traditions were in contention over winning patrons for material support since their survival depended on them. Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 527).

<sup>107</sup> Rheingans (2017: 39).

<sup>108</sup> Rheingans (2021: 40). Regarding the Nāleन्द्रa monastery and its history, also see Jackson (2019).

<sup>109</sup> Rheingans (2017: 40). DiValerio (2015: 133) suggests that Don yod rdo rje could have also conducted military aggression towards dGe lugs pa monasteries such as dGa' ldan. Later, Don yod rdo rje took control of areas that served as sources of support for Se ra and 'Bras spungs (ibid).

<sup>110</sup> Rheingans (2017: 40).

<sup>111</sup> Rheingans (2017: 40).

<sup>112</sup> DiValerio (2015: 136).

<sup>113</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 1: *deng sang grub rtags mngon sum ston skad dang // sprul par grags pas sa steng gang ba'i dus*.

<sup>114</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long. Vol. XI. p. 2: *chos pa rnam ni sde dpon 'dod nas g.yengs*.

<sup>115</sup> Schwieger (2015: 23). The *sprul sku* system also gave monasteries an advantage in owning material possessions. It gave them the right to keep wealth, instead of inheriting based on the family lines (Rheingans 2010: 250).

<sup>116</sup> Schwieger (2015: 18).

<sup>117</sup> Schwieger (2015: 30). The status of *sprul sku* was also reported to have gained popularity in the rNying ma pa tradition in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (ibid. p. 23).

gTsong lag phreng ba recounts religious personalities who claimed to be the reincarnation of Buddhas, such as Samantabhadra.<sup>118</sup> Concerning the false claimants of reincarnations of his time, gTsong lag phreng ba laments:

[Some], when they hear of great beings of the past, say “This is me.”  
Others say “Vajradhāra’s reincarnation is Śākyamuni, then Avalokiteśvara;  
Then all the learned and accomplished masters of India and Tibet,  
[While] their present incarnation is me.”  
Others say: “I have experienced acting a Buddha [only]:  
The primordial Adibuddha Samantabhadra  
Incarnated as the five buddha families of *Sambhogakāya*,  
[While their] reincarnation is the Seven Successive Buddhas,  
[And], the present rebirth of those is me.”<sup>119</sup>

In conclusion, it is evident that the period of Tibet when gTsong lag phreng ba lived was an era of conflict and contest between religious traditions. According to gTsong lag phreng ba, religious figures claimed to be *sprul sku*, and some religious personalities engaged in the accumulation of material wealth. gTsong lag phreng ba appears to have found these events reprehensible, leading him to consider renouncing Tibet for good.

## 2.2 Birth and Education

This section will discuss gTsong lag phreng ba’s birthplace, parents, and the time up to his recognition as the reincarnation of the First dPa’ bo. It will also explore some important events in his life, including his ordination.

### 2.2.1 Birth and Early Life

gTsong lag phreng ba was born in sNye thang<sup>120</sup> located in the Chu shul<sup>121</sup> area, south of Lhasa on the thirteenth day of the fourth month in the male wood bird year corresponding to 1504.<sup>122</sup>

While gTsong lag phreng ba does not mention the names of his parents in his auto-hagiographies, as pointed out by Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b), the *Kam tsang Biographies*

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<sup>118</sup> However, it should be noted that such beliefs were not uncommon in the Tibetan tradition. For instance, Padma dkar po (1527–1592) is considered an emanation of Avalokiteśvara (Schwieger 2015: 51). Sa skya paṇḍita was portrayed as an emanation of Mañjuśrī (Samuel 1993: 488).

<sup>119</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *bDag gi tshul yang dag pa’i yi ge mchis*, p. 45: *sngon gyi skyes chen thos tshe nga yin zer// la las rdo rje ‘chang gi skye ba ni// śākya thub pa de nas spyan ras gzigs// de nas rgya bod mkhas grub thams cad kyi// skye ba da lta kho bo yin no skad// kha cig nga yis sangs rgyas byed pa myong // ye thog dang po’i sangs rgyas kun tu bzang // de ni longs sku rgyal ba rigs lngar skyes// de yi skye ba sangs rgyas rab bdun te// de yi skye ba da lta nga yin zer*. While it is hard to verify those claims in a literal sense, one can draw some conclusions that there were false claimants of the reincarnation of previous masters due to the status of reincarnation being associated with wealth and power.

<sup>120</sup> Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 167), footnote 419 states: “sNye-thang is an area with a millennium-long history; today a *xiang* in Chu-shur *rdzong* of sKyid-smad.”

<sup>121</sup> Chu shul is situated in the sKyid chu valley, 36 kilometres from Lhasa (Dorje 1999, p. 133, 152).

<sup>122</sup> *‘Khrul pa’i bzhin ras ‘char ba’i me long*, p. 2: *bdag yul dbu ru’i snye thang zhes bya ste*. See also Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 147).

identifies his father as Bla ma dar, the descendant of Nyak Jñānakumara, and his mother as Lam rnyed sgrol ma.<sup>123</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba himself asserts that his parents were destitute yet devout, while his paternal lineage can be traced back to gNyags,<sup>124</sup> one of the six royal lineages during the time of King gNya' khri btsan po, although later the lineage was debased to that of a petty ruler (*rje'u*)<sup>125, 126</sup>.

gTsong lag phreng ba reports that the people knew that he was born with his eyes wide open.<sup>127</sup> He states that the words he first uttered, after he started to talk, were 'To the various sentient beings, may the child be able to benefit beings.'<sup>128</sup> He spoke mainly these words until the age of about four or five.<sup>129</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba frames his auto-hagiography, especially when it comes to his good qualities exhibited since his childhood, in indirect speech rather than the writer (in this case himself) claiming them to be true. He says that other people had told him about extraordinary qualities, such as the clairvoyance (*mngon shes*) he showed as a child.<sup>130</sup> He states only facts that appear to be true to him. Otherwise, he maintains the style of narration in indirect speech throughout his auto-hagiography.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 55: *gnyags dza nyā na ku mā ra yi gdung rigs yab bla ma dar dang / yum lam rnyed sgrol ma sras su shing pho byi ba lo dpyid tha sa ga'i tshes bcu gsum gyi nyin yum la gnod pa med par spyan hrig gi gzigs bzhin par 'khrungs*. One has no alternative other than this source for the name of gTsong lag phreng ba's parents since gTsong lag phreng ba does not mention them in his auto-hagiographies. One can also assume that the authors of this religious history could have obtained information from reliable sources since the authors and gTsong lag phreng ba belong to the same religious tradition.

<sup>124</sup> Although the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long* spells it as *snyags*, it is likely that the correct spelling should be *gnyags* as in the *Kam tshang Biographies* (see previous footnote). As pointed out by Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 147), it could have been an archaic form of orthography or a wrongly spelt *gnyags*. Zhang Yisun defines *gnyags* as *bod kyi yab 'bangs rus drug gi ya gyal zhig* (one of the six paternal lineages of in Tibet). Zhang Yisun in turn explains *yab 'bangs rus drug* as *sngar bod rgyal gnya' khri btsan pos bod la dbang sgyur skabs rgyal rigs su gtogs pa'i rus te/ lho/ gnyags/ khyung/ snubs/ se/ spo bcas drug* (lineages that belong to the royal clan in the past when the Tibetan King gNya' khri btsan po ruled over Tibet: *lho, gnyags, khyung, snubs, se and spo*). Therefore, it is plausible that *gnyags* is one of the family lineages that has descended from the Tibetan King gNya' khri btsan po. Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 414) contend that in Tibet such clans were used as a means to legitimise political and religious power by tracing their origins back to royal ancestry.

<sup>125</sup> Zhang Yisun explains it as *dpon chung*. gTsong lag phreng ba appears to have extended *rje'u* (one syllable) to *rje'u* (two syllables) to fulfill the metrical requirement to make it even-syllabic with other lines since he writes it in verse. See footnote 9 for the verse.

<sup>126</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 2: *rus ni shar gyi snyags zhes bya ba yin/ rigs ni rgyal rigs rgyal srid nyams gyur nas/ rje'ur lhung ba zhig yin pha ma gnyis/ dbul po chos ldan dad can zhig yin no*.

<sup>127</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 3–4: *mig ni mi zum bye bar skyes zhes grags*.

<sup>128</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 4: *ring por ma lon ngag yang bye gyur te/ ngag tu sems can rnam pa sna tshogs la/ byis pas 'gro don nus par shog /di ni gtam gyi thog ma yin no skad*. *Byis pa* in Tibetan can be understood in three meanings: a child, the fool as a contrast to the wise, and an ordinary being (*so so skye bo*) as opposed to exalted beings on the path (*phags pa*) as defined in the Zhang Yisun. Here, it could mean child since he speaks these words as a child. However, one cannot rule out the other two possibilities since gTsong lag phreng ba could consider himself, as a show of humility, a fool and ordinary being as well.

<sup>129</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 4: *phyin chad lo grangs bzhi lnga lon gyi bar/ ngag tu phal cher 'di nyid zer bar grags*. Here, gTsong lag phreng ba simply reports what he heard from others rather than making those statements himself.

<sup>130</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 6: *de rnam kun tu'ang mngon shes phra mo dang // sngon gyi ngos 'dzin du ma byas so zhes// tshur mthong skye bo du ma mgu bar gyur*.

<sup>131</sup> One can also speculate whether this kind of narration is one of his strategies, as a historian, to convince readers whilst not claiming the truth of such a narrative which, to some extent, falls beyond the human dimension and beyond the scope of human verification.

gTsong lag phreng ba presents himself as a child inclined toward a contemplative life even from an early age. He declares that he desired to always remain in solitary places, relying on austerity by wearing only cotton clothes. However, he says, in the usual style of Tibetan practitioners, that he had been stuck in the swamp of distraction.<sup>132</sup>

He says that during his younger age (without specifying an age), he would retreat to solitary places and practice concentration (*bsam gtan*).<sup>133</sup> He beautifully depicts the qualities of his meditation caves surrounded by a chain of snowy mountains with meadows of flowers where wild animals roam freely.<sup>134</sup>

At the age of thirteen, he wrote a few poems such as *Yang gdan sa chen por mtshams mal nas gsungs pa* (*Once again Spoken from the Retreat Room at the Great Seat*) and *O rgyan bde chen rtser mtshams mal nas gsungs pa* (*Spoken from the Retreat Room in O rgyan bde chen rtse*) from his retreat room.<sup>135</sup> *Yang gdan sa chen por mtshams mal nas gsungs pa* consists of only thirteen lines of six words written in a poetic form, giving dharmic advice to an unspecified audience. ).

In this way, gTsong lag phreng ba portrays himself as a child inclined towards meditative practices. He also indicates being born into a family of noble descent and possessing some extraordinary qualities, including, as mentioned above, being born with his eyes open.<sup>136</sup> It is also significant to note that his compositions of a religious, rather than philosophical, nature (although shorter in length) started as early as the age of thirteen.

### 2.2.2 Recognition as *sprul sku* of the First dPa' bo

Recognition of *sprul sku*, in the Tibetan tradition, usually takes a rigorous process of testing a child with divinatory endorsement from a highly respected lama. It often involves disputes over recognition, as in the case of the Eighth Karmapa's recognition. The Second Dalai Lama dGe 'dun rgya mtsho had to flee bKra shis lhun po in 1494 due to the dispute related to his reincarnation.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>132</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 63: *spyir bus pa chung ngu'i dus nyid na// gnas mi med ri khrod kho na 'grim// dka' thub dang chu 'thung rde 'cha' byes// gos rkyang re tsam la brten no snyam// sems rtag tu de nyid bsam na yang // rnam g.yeng gi 'dam du rtag par bying.*

<sup>133</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022: 14) note that gTsong lag phreng ba started to meditate at the age of around five and had experience of meditation.

<sup>134</sup> *Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 7: *gzhon pa'i dus su nyams snang yengs thabs su// rtse kun gangs ri phreng bas bskor ba yi// ri bo'i spo ba lung sul shar lta ba// spang ljongs me tog bkra shing nags phran can// ri dwags du ma bag yangs rgyu ba yi// byang gi ngos su brag phug bde ba'i nang // rang nyid gcig pur bsam gtan bgyid pa'i tshul.* Since he does not specify the name of the place, one can assume that it might have been in the vicinity of Gro bo lung. Considering his younger age, it would be unlikely for him to go far. According to his auto-hagiography *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, gTsong lag phreng ba narrates these contemplative events, before he starts his education at the age of six. Therefore, it appears to be between the ages of five and six. It is important to note that he narrates events of his life in chronological order in the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*.

<sup>135</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Ched tu brjod pa rdo rje glu'i snying po'i gtam gyi phreng ba mi zad pa'i bang mdzod*, p. 75–76: *'di yan ni rang lo bcu gsum pa'i skabs 'ga' zhig tu smras pa'o.*

<sup>136</sup> Considering the absence of other biographies, one is left with no choice but to rely on his auto-hagiographies. Even his biography, present in the *Kam tshang Biographies*, is by and large a condensation of his auto-hagiographies.

<sup>137</sup> For the Eighth Karmapa's recognition, see Rheingans (2017: 72–85). See Schwieger (2015: 25–29) for dGe 'dun rgya mtsho's recognition.

It is not explicitly stated who recognised gTsong lag phreng ba as the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.<sup>138</sup> In his auto-hagiographies, gTsong lag phreng ba makes no mention of a specific religious figure who recognised him as an incarnation. He simply narrates accounts in which the public endorsed him as a reincarnation of the First dPa' bo and recounts some of the tests conducted on him by his previous disciples to confirm him as a genuine *sprul sku*.

In contrast to some Tibetan masters, the recognition of gTsong lag phreng ba as a reincarnation of the First dPa' bo Rinpoche appears undisputed, since there is no record of other claimants of the reincarnation.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, gTsong lag phreng ba narrates many events directed towards establishing himself as a true reincarnation of the First dPa' bo. While tradition would assume that he narrated these events to instil faith in his disciples and thereby inspire them to religious life, one cannot rule out that it was an attempt to consolidate his status as an authentic reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.

According to gTsong lag phreng ba, many individuals spuriously claimed to be reincarnations of past masters during his time (as discussed in the section 'Religious Context'). The title of *sprul ku* was, as Schwieger pointed out, the most highly honoured position in Tibetan society.<sup>140</sup> The 16<sup>th</sup> century was an era when the system of reincarnation in Tibet was being consolidated, including in the dGe lugs pa school.<sup>141</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba wrote that it was an era filled with individuals famed as *sprul sku*.<sup>142</sup> Considering his accounts regarding reincarnated beings, it appears that *sprul sku* status was a major topic of interest during his time.

In what appears to show public endorsement of him as a reincarnation of the First dPa' bo, gTsong lag phreng ba narrates a circumstance that led to his rebirth:

Having retreated into his bedroom,  
[The First dPa' bo] showed the mode of feeling ill for three nights  
And dissolved the display of *rūpakāya* at dawn on the fourth day of the seventh  
month of the water pig [year].  
Encouraged by the lights of rainbows, rain of flowers, and so on,  
People of that place gathered to circumambulate and make offerings [to the remains  
of the First dPa' bo].  
On the eighth day when the time of noon had come,  
My mother came with a ritual feast (*tshogs*),  
Cried, and having requested to see the face of the remains,  
Touched [her] head [on the remains] through the curtains upon which  
The manner of transferring/ending meditative absorption appeared clearly.  
Therefore, it was decided that reincarnation would be born from this [woman].  
[His mother?] was even commanded to refrain from having defiled food and so on.

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 145).

<sup>139</sup> For instance, the recognition of the reincarnation of the Eighth Karmapa (who was only three years younger than gTsong lag phreng ba) was contentious. See Rheingans (2017: 75–83).

<sup>140</sup> Schwieger (2015: 9).

<sup>141</sup> Rheingans (2021: 35).

<sup>142</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 1: *sprul par grags pas sa steng gang ba'i dus*.

[This] was discussed by many, being passed on from one to another.<sup>143</sup>

According to tradition, the First dPa' bo ended his meditative absorption when his future mother touched her head on his body, and people noticed it.<sup>144</sup> This narrative, impossible to verify owing to the lack of documentary evidence, appears to be an attempt to prove his status as a genuine reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.<sup>145</sup> However, from the emic point of view, this narration would be accepted without question of the evidence and would reinforce devotion in the minds of disciples.

gTsong lag phreng ba further reiterates that he does not recall remembering past lives as a child, although other people stated that he recounted them.<sup>146</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that he was born nine months and ten days after this event.<sup>147</sup> Subsequently, people proclaimed that he was the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.<sup>148</sup> It was also reported that some people even declared that the First dPa' bo conducted a 'body entering' (Tib. *grong 'jug*, Skt. *parapurapraveśa*).<sup>149</sup> Possibly on account of this, gTsong lag phreng ba asserts he was known as the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo even before he was born.<sup>150</sup>

Later, Śākya Dhvaja<sup>151</sup> and Sangs rgyas blo gros<sup>152</sup> endorsed gTsong lag phreng ba as a reincarnation of their previous teacher (the First dPa' bo) and took care of him, providing him with materials and dharma.<sup>153</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba says they were honest and noble (*gzur gnas skyes bu dam pa*).<sup>154</sup>

In support of his recognition as a reincarnation, gTsong lag phreng ba simply offers the statements of others. He explicitly denies possessing extraordinary qualities such as recollecting previous lives.<sup>155</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba is critical of those practitioners who claim themselves to be reincarnations without support from the public or an endorsement from a reliable lama.

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<sup>143</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 3: nyid kyi gzims gur nang byon zhag gsum du// bsnyun pa'i tshul mdzad chu phag gro bzhin zla'i// tshes bzhi'i tho rangs gzugs sku'i g.yo ba bsdus// 'ja' 'od me tog char sogs kyis bskul te// yul 'di'i mi rnams bskor mchod bya phyir 'dus// tshes brgyad nyin gung dus la bab pa'i tshe/ bdag gi ma yis tshogs 'khor khyer nas ni/ ngu zhing gdung zhal mjal bar gsol btab nas/ yol ba'i bar nas spyi bos gtugs pa'i mod/ thugs dam 'phos pa'i rnam pa gsal byung bas// 'di las sku skye 'byung zhes kha tshon bcad/ grib zas sogs la 'dzems ces ngag kyang bsgos/ gcig nas gcig brgyud mang gis glengs bar gyur.

<sup>144</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 145) also share an emic viewpoint from Khenpo Ngedon that the First dPa' bo Rinpoche ended his meditative pose when touched by the woman who would be his future mother.

<sup>145</sup> The *Kaṃ tshang Biographies* also does not mention this narrative.

<sup>146</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 68: *gzhan dran pa mang po bshad do skad// rang dngos su dran pa mi bdog go*.

<sup>147</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 3: *de nas zla dgu ngo bcu 'das pa yi*.

<sup>148</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 3: *kun gyis bla ma de yi sku skyer bsgrags*.

<sup>149</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 3: *la las grong 'jug byas zhes sgrog pa'ang byung*. For the term 'grong 'jug', see Kragh (2011: 133, footnote 5). It seems to mean the consciousness of the First dPa' bo directly entered the womb of his future mother.

<sup>150</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 56.: *mngal ma btsas gong nas sku skyer grags*.

<sup>151</sup> Information regarding this figure is provided in the section 'Teachers of Spiritual Connection.'

<sup>152</sup> Sangs rgyas blo gros appears to be the full name of Sang blo ba, one of the eight kind teachers of gTsong lag phreng ba. Therefore, he is described in the section 'The Eight Kind Teachers.'

<sup>153</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p.6: *mos gus mthar phyin Śākya Dhvaja dang // mkhas shing grub sangs rgyas blo gros sde// gzur gnas skyes bu dam pa 'di gnyis kyis// bdag gi bla ma'i sprul pa khyod nyid ces// khyad par ched du nan tan bdag gir mdzad*.

<sup>154</sup> By stating that Śākya Dhvaja and Sangs rgyas blo gros were honest and noble, it is likely that gTsong lag phreng ba was making his case stronger since it could mean that they did not endorse him as the reincarnation through their personal prejudice.

<sup>155</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 6: *rgyu mtshan de dag tsam zhig kho na las// bdag la sku skye'i ming du grags ste// mngon gnas gsal ba ci yang ma dran to*.

Apart from inspiring and engendering devotion in students, it also appears gTsug lag phreng tries to prove his reincarnation as genuine by contrasting himself with many individuals who falsely claimed to be reincarnations with the hope of gaining fame and status. He also shares reports that narrate that he himself was tested several times and proved successful in establishing himself as the *sprul sku* of the First dPa' bo.

gTsug lag phreng ba states that he had heard of accounts when convictions arose beyond doubt in the minds of those who tested him. He recognised monks and students of the First dPa' bo when they tried to test him by impersonating beggars, merchants, and so on.<sup>156</sup> At the same time, Don yod rdo rje commanded two of his tax officials to test him. gTsug lag phreng ba, admitting he heard the account from others later, says that they were delighted when he profoundly answered them without fear.<sup>157</sup> These tests appear to have occurred before he turned five, since he arrived at Gro bo lung at the age of five as the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.

gTsug lag phreng ba also reports that he was invited to Gro bo lung at the behest of a local deity (*gzhi bdag*) named dGe bsnyen tsha lung brag btsan of an old monastery. The local deity, amidst many predictions, said that he wished to invite a certain rNal 'byor Rol pa'i ye shes who lived in sNye thang.<sup>158</sup> Here, the local deity refers to gTsug lag phreng ba as rNal 'byor Rol pa'i ye shes, the name of one of his previous reincarnations.<sup>159</sup>

As mentioned above, gTsug lag phreng ba arrived at Gro bo lung at the age of five.<sup>160</sup> On his way to Gro bo lung, although he was only a young child, he was presented before a ruler (*mi dbang*)<sup>161</sup> at sKyid smad<sup>162</sup> at the urging of Don yod rdo rje. He refused to prostrate to the ruler when advised by his retinue to do so, saying he was a lama but the ruler was a layperson like *hor 'dra* (a government representative)<sup>163</sup>.<sup>164</sup> Later, the ruler and the ministers

<sup>156</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 4: *cung zad lon nas grwa slob che phran kun// kha cig ldom bu bsod snyoms spyod tshul dang // tshong dang klog mkhan sogs su gzugs bsgyur nas// du mas brtag tshe ngos 'dzin lan mang byas// the tshom med pa'i yid ches skyes so skad.*

<sup>157</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 4: *de tshe sa skyong don yod rdo rje yis// dpya khral sdud pa'i bkrabs pa zung dag la// brtag par bsgos nas de dag gis bos te// brod rig tshod nyul du ma byas pa'i tshe// nyam nga med cig sgam pa'i lan btab nas// rangs par byas zhes phyi dus gzhan las thos.*

<sup>158</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 5: *de tshe lho rgyud shar phyogs gnas shed du// dge bsnyan tsha lung brag btsan zhes bya ba'i// sngon gyi dgon gnas rnying pa'i gzhi bdag zhig /mi la babs nas rtsub 'gyur sna tshogs byas// bla rdol lung bstan mang po byas pa'i zhar// da lta rnal 'byor rol pa'i ye shes yod// kho bo nyi zer 'di la spyen 'dren 'dod.*

<sup>159</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa zab gsal gi gter mdzod rab tu sbas pa'i gtam mo*, 4b identifies rNal 'byor Rol pa'i ye shes as one of his previous incarnations. mKhas btsun bzang po. *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. IX, p. 34 mentions the names of gTsug lag phreng ba's previous incarnations.

<sup>160</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. 'Og min sras mkhar gyi gnas sprul pa'i pho brang chen por gser thog ji ltar sgrub pa las brtsam pa'i dkar chag gi yig tshangs brjod pa ngo mtshan rgya mtsho rmad du byung ba'i gtam, Vol. XIII, p. 20: *sku skye'i ming du skye bo dag gis bsgrags pa rgyu mtshan du byas nas rang lo lnga pa la gdan sa 'dir sleb.*

<sup>161</sup> The ruler here is likely to be mTsho skyes rdo rje.

<sup>162</sup> Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 19) note that "The area downstream from lHa-sa is generally called sKyid-smad, an indication that the division into sKyid-stod and smad was made from the vantage point of lHa-sa itself."

<sup>163</sup> *Hor* appears to refer to Mongolians here. Zhang Yisun describes *hor 'dra* as *sngar bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi sku tshab bang chen te*, which means someone who was a representative, as a messenger, of a government in Tibet in earlier times.

<sup>164</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 5: *lam du sa skyong don yod rdo rje bkas// bskul te skyi smad lhun po'i rtse ru phyin// mi dbang skyed tshal 'dug pa'i mdun du khrid// rang 'khor rnam kyid phyag la bskul ba'i tshe// kho ni khyim pa hor 'dra yin pa ste// nga ni btsun pa'i bla ma yin pas na// phyag mi byed ces nan tan smra bar byas.*

brought before him another child of his age, claiming to be the reincarnation of dPa' bo. However, he reports that the child was scared and could not make any claims of reincarnation. They also brought some novice monks before him and asked him to recognise them, claiming they were disciples during his previous life. However, gTsong lag phreng ba denied knowing them. In this way, gTsong lag phreng ba asserts that his mind remained steadfast, although attempts were made to deceive him through numerous tests and tricks.<sup>165</sup>

Nonetheless, he does maintain that he was able to recognise and call by name monks, disciples, and patrons he knew from the previous incarnation, and identify property of his previous life and sang *mgur* (spiritual songs) even without being taught them by others.<sup>166</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba also narrates accounts (as heard from others) in which he displayed extraordinary qualities, such as possessing clairvoyance. However, he denies remembering performing such extraordinary feats as a child.

While there had been no actual dispute regarding his recognition as a *sprul sku* of the First dPa' bo, his attempts to prove himself as a genuine reincarnation through public endorsement and so on indicate that there were many doubters regarding the authenticity of *sprul sku* or reincarnated beings in Tibet during his time.

### 2.2.3 Ordination

gTsong lag phreng ba's ordination began early at the age of nine. When he was eight, Don yod rdo rje assured him that he would support him by supplying him with the necessities. However, gTsong lag phreng ba said that Don yod rdo rje died soon after.<sup>167</sup> Don yod rdo rje did not live to see gTsong lag phreng ba receiving the ordination of novice vow.

In 1513, the male water monkey year, when he was nine, gTsong lag phreng ba received the novice ordination vow (*dge tshul*) at Yangs pa can monastery.<sup>168</sup> The '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long* records that the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524) presided over the ordination as *upādhyāya mkhan po*, the principal master.<sup>169</sup> His *karmācārya* (*las kyi slob dpon*) or master of ceremonies was Shes dpal from sNar thang monastery.<sup>170</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba was named Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa (Invincible Dharma King who Fully Accomplishes all Goals).<sup>171</sup> However,

<sup>165</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 5–6: *khong gis bdag mnyam byis pa 'ga' khrid nas// 'di ni dpa' bo'i skye ba yin no zhes// bdag gi drung du dkri bar brtsams pa'i tshes// de dag bkad sa'i gral du nye ba na// dngangs shing ngus te dkri bar ma nus so// dge tshul gzhon nu chung ngu 'ga' dkris te// 'di dag khyod kyi sngon gyi slob ma yin// ngos 'dzin byin rlabs gyis zhes zer ba'i tshes// 'di dag bdag gi ngo mi shes zhes smras// de sogs nyams sad du mas co dris kyang// bdag gi sems rgyud g.yo bar ma nus pas.*

<sup>166</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 6–7: *'on kyang sngon gyi grwa slob yon bdag sogs// du ma gsal bar ming nas brjod sogs dang // yo byad lhag chad nor 'khrul sel ba dang // mgur ma len dang chos 'brel 'chad pa ni// gzhon gyis ma bslabs thogs med 'byung ba sogs.*

<sup>167</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 11: *brda sbyor mthun rkyen ma lus byed do zhes// sa skyong de yi dbugs dbyung cher mdzad kyang // ring por ma thogs dus kyi gnam du gshegs.*

<sup>168</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 11: *gnas ni lha brgyad gangs kyi ra ba'i dbus// 'brang rgyas ri zhol yangs can gtsug lag khang.* Yangs pa can was constructed in 1503/1506 by Don yod rdo rje under the direction of the Fourth Zhwa dmar (Rheingans 2021: 29).

<sup>169</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 11: *rgyu mtshan du mas dogs pa bsal ba'i rjes// zhwa dmar cod pon 'dzin pa mkhan por 'os.*

<sup>170</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, Vol. XI. p. 11: *dge tshul nyid kyi las kyi slob dpon ni// snar thang gdan sa sdom brtson shes dpal yin.*

<sup>171</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, Vol. II. p. 56: *mtshan mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa zhes bya bar gngang.*

the 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long simply gives the abbreviation Chos rgyal don grub.<sup>172</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba received his full monk's vow at the age of 22 in 1526, the male fire dog year. According to the gTsong lag phreng ba, he was ordained at the centre of the king's garden.<sup>173</sup> The *upādhyāya* for his ordination was Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1527).<sup>174</sup> Chos grub seng ge, one of his teachers of spiritual connection, was his *karmācārya*.<sup>175</sup> Nam mkha' dpal ldan acted as his preceptor, with the role of asking private questions (*gsang ston*) of the candidate for ordination.<sup>176</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Education and an Overview of His Life

From a young age, gTsong lag phreng ba alternated between study and meditation. He says that since he did not prioritise material gain and honour in the present life, he divided his time between listening, contemplation, and meditation (*thos bsam sgom gsum*).<sup>177</sup> When he was twenty-three, he entered a three-year retreat. He later began his philosophical studies under the Eighth Karmapa at the age of twenty-nine. One can speculate, therefore, that education, in the form of purely theoretical learning, did not take priority over meditation in his life. Rather, he appears to have placed equal emphasis on both. He says that he studied the vast *sūtras* and *śāstras* methodically by analysing abstruse points hundreds of times, with an honest mind, to gain certainty over the meaning.<sup>178</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba had started his general education when he was six years old in Gro bo lung. It commenced with learning the alphabet under Bla ma rtogs ldan dGe 'dun rgya mtsho during a two-year retreat.<sup>179</sup> He says he could memorise *Prajñāpāramitā in Eight Thousand Verses (brGyad stong pa)*, the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, Vajravārāhī ritual texts, and others by merely reading them, although his intellect was mediocre and his articulation of words was not clear. Later, he maintains that he could memorise texts by merely reading and gained

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<sup>172</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 11: *chos rgyal don grub ces par ming du btags*. The abbreviation of names, usually taking the first syllables of first name and surname, is a frequent phenomenon. He also uses this full name himself. See the translation of the colophon for his auto-hagiography *Don tshan dgu pa'o* under the section 1.4 'Textual Sources for the Study of gTsong lag phreng ba's Life.'

<sup>173</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 22: *mi zad pa zhes me pho khyi yi lo// dbyar zla ra ba snron gyis nya ba yi// dmar po'i gral tshes bco lnga pa yi nyin// snga dro grib tshod skyes bu gcig gi dus// rgyal po'i skyed mos tshal gyi dbus shed du// mang thos tshul ldan bdun gyi tshogs dbus su// mkhan pos dbyar ngo mdzad de gsol btas// bsnyen par yongs su rdzogs pa'i sdom pa nos.*

<sup>174</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 22: *mkhan po don gyi slad tu mtshan smos na// lo chen chos skyong bzang po'i zhabs yin no.*

<sup>175</sup> However, Chos grub seng ge was *upādhyāya* for the ordination of the Eighth Karmapa (Rheingans 2017: 95). For the early Vinaya and Vinaya texts, see Frauwallner (1956). For the procedure of ordination, see Schopen (2017).

<sup>176</sup> Rheingans (2017: 96), in footnote 127, explains: "The *karmācārya*'s role at a ceremony is to read the texts, while 'the teacher for the secret' or 'private instructor' (*raho'nuśāsaka*, *gsang ston*) enquires about hindering conditions (the term *raho'nuśāsaka* is confirmed in Edgerton 1953)."

<sup>177</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 40–41: *'on kyang sngon nas rnyed dang bkur sti dang // tshe 'di'i bya ba gso bor ba byas te// thos bsam sgom pa spel ma'i tshul du spyad.*

<sup>178</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 41: *cung zad tsam gyis chog 'dzin ma bgwis te// bka' dang bstan bcos rab 'byams gsung rab bllas// kun la gzu bor gnas pa'i blo yis dpyad// bklag lung tsam la thob ces ma bzhag ste// shin tu dka' na lan brgyar brtags nas kyang // the tshom chod pa'i nges pa rnyed par byas.*

<sup>179</sup> This would have been in Gro bo lung, although he does not mention the place. At the age of five, he was invited to Gro bo lung as the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo.

some understanding of the larger biography of Naropa's disciple Maitripa and of treatises on profound inner topics (*zab mo nang don*) of the Third Karmapa.<sup>180</sup>

At the age of seventeen, he moved to Legs bshad gling, the monastic seat of Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>181</sup> There he studied logic (*bsdus pa*)<sup>182</sup> for one year.<sup>183</sup> However, he had to return to Gro bo lung owing to the outbreak of an epidemic and remained idle there. During that time, he occasionally engaged in the renovation of *sras mkhar*.<sup>184</sup>

He returned to Legs bshad gling again at the age of twenty and remained there for three years until the age of twenty-three. gTsong lag phreng ba states that there were no teachers at that time. Nevertheless, he studied Karma 'phrin las pa's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* commentary, the *mNgon rtogs rgyan rtsa 'grel gyi sbyor t̄ik 'jig rten gsum sgron la 'jug pa*,<sup>185</sup> with Paṅ chen gZhon nu nor bzang.<sup>186</sup> During this period, he studied extensively under Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>187</sup>

In the female fire pig year in 1527, gTsong lag phreng ba entered a three-year retreat in his residence named O rgyan tse in Gro bo lung and remained there until 1530. After the retreat, he returned to Legs bshad gling and received many teachings from Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>188</sup>

With the Eighth Karmapa, he studied the five major philosophical fields (excluding Abhidharma, which he studied through the *Abhidharmakośa* with Karma 'phrin las pa) after

<sup>180</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p.8: *de nas rang lo drug pa'i ngo shar nas// lo ngo gnyis su dben par mtshams bgyis te// bla ma rtogs ldan dge 'dun rgya mtsho yis// ka kha nas bzung yig 'bru klog pa bsblabs// lce ngag mi bde shes rab 'bring gyur yang // slob pa 'jur bas bklag pa byang gyur nas// brgyad stong pa dang grwa lnga sdud pa dang // mtshan brjod do ha phag mo'i cho ga ste// 'di dag bklag chos kho na byas pa yis// blo la byang ba nyid du chud par gyur// phyi dus mai tri'i rnam thar che ba dang // zab mo'i nang don gzhung mang nyin bzhin du// bklags pa kho nas blo la chud pa yin// de dag yi ge'i don yang cung zad go.*

<sup>181</sup> Regarding the location of Legs bshad gling, see Rheingans (2021: 85–86). One can assume that he stayed most of the time in Gro bo lung till the age of seventeen.

<sup>182</sup> Onoda (1996: 187) explains *bsdus pa* as “The term *bsdus grwa* or *bsdus rwa* originally probably meant *bsdus pa slob pa'i sde tshan gyi grwa* or ‘the schools or classes in which [primary students] learn *bsdus pa* or summarised topics [of logic or dialectics].’ Later, the term was etymologised as *rig pa'i rnam grangs du ma phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i grwa*, or “the class where many arguments are summarised together.”

<sup>183</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 57: *mkhas grub kyi 'dun sa legs bshad gling // dpal karma yi grwa tshang du// lo gcig tu bsdus pa rdzas ldog sbyangs.*

<sup>184</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 18: *bcu bdun pa la lung rigs smra ba'i grwa/ mkhas mang 'dun sa legs bshad gling du phyin// klog pa'i grwar zhugs bsdus pa'i thar 'gyur sbyangs// lo gcig tsam na nad kyi bska pa ni// bar ma 'dra ba'i mi ngas cher byung nas// slar yang lho yi phyogs phyin btang snyoms 'dug /res 'ga' sras mkhar gtsug lag khang chen gyi// zhig gso ming du gdags pa'ang 'ga' zhig byas.* Sras mkhar is a nine-storeyed tower built by Mi la ras pa. It houses the residence of Marpa (Dorje 1999, p. 211).

<sup>185</sup> Rheingans (2021: 114) provides some information about this commentary. It is most likely that gTsong lag phreng ba refers 'jig rten gsum sgron to this text since one cannot find other commentaries with this phrase.

<sup>186</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 18: *nyi shu pa yi rang lo gsar ma thag /klog pa'i grwar phyin lo ngo gsum du 'dug /de dus gdan sa snga phyi'i bar stong dang // 'chad po'i slob dpon tsam yang med pa yi// gand'i sgra tsam grags pa'i skabs su son// 'on kyang rnam dpyod ral gri gsal 'dzin pa// paṅ chen gzhon nu nor bzang grogs dan du// bsten nas kar t̄ig 'jig rten gsum sgron dang.*

<sup>187</sup> What he studied under Karma 'phrin las pa is discussed in the section ‘Teachers of gTsong lag phreng ba.’

<sup>188</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 26: *stag lo zla ba dang po'i tshes gsum la// dag sbyar nas byung zhag 'gag tsam 'dug nas// chos rje bla ma dam pa'i spyang sngar phyin// legs bshad gling gi chos grwar gdan phebs nas.*

meeting him at Zing po 'bum pa gang in Kong po when he was twenty-nine.<sup>189</sup> He says the Eighth Karmapa taught him Madhyamaka, Pramāṇa, Prajnāpāramitā, Vinaya, and so on.<sup>190</sup>

Around the same time, the Eighth Karmapa urged him to be a recitation tutor (*glog pa'i slob dpon*) and bestowed on him a statue of himself made of jewels, the manuscript of his commentary on Vinaya and a covering cloth with the pattern of a lion.<sup>191</sup> Thereafter, gTsong lag phreng ba served as a recitation tutor for five years from 1533 to 1537 until he was thirty-three.<sup>192</sup>

Following the command of the Eighth Karmapa, he later served as the head of a recitation seminar (*klog grwa*) in Klung shod, part of 'Bri gung.<sup>193</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba composed his auto-hagiography, the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, when he was thirty-nine, and thus it is a source of biographical information up to this point. Another auto-hagiography, the *Don tshan dgu pa*, contains little information regarding his significant activities, and as a result, biographical information is sketchy. The *Kaṃ tshang Biographies* also mentions that he remained in retreat at Khyung rdzong for three years.<sup>194</sup>

As directed by the Eighth Karmapa, gTsong lag phreng ba established the monastic seat Karma rig 'dzin sgrub mchog sde bzhi.<sup>195</sup> While the timeline for these activities cannot be established beyond doubt, they may have occurred after gTsong lag phreng ba turned thirty-nine, since they are not mentioned in his *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*.

gTsong lag phreng ba passed away in 1566 at the age of sixty-three on the sixteenth day of the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar.<sup>196</sup>

#### 2.2.4.1 Teachers of gTsong lag phreng ba

This section will explore gTsong lag phreng ba's teachers, thus shedding light on his education. The *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, in the main, narrates his encounters with his teachers chronologically and progressively. Thus, through the presentations of studies undertaken with his teachers, this section will also show his journey toward

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<sup>189</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 30: *de nas rang lo nyi shu rtsa dgu pa// dga' ba zhes bya chu pho 'brug gi lo// cho 'phrul chen po'i dus chen bco lnga'i nyin// bod yul lte ba g.yus ri nag po'i rgyud// kong yul bla med gsang sngags spyod pa'i zhing // zing po 'bum pa sgang zhes bya ba ru// sangs rgyas dngos su mjal ba'i skal ba thob.*

<sup>190</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 57: *rje karma pa yi zhabs pad kyis// dbu tshad dang phar 'dul spyod phyogs sogs// chos du ma nan gyis sbyor bar mdzad.*

<sup>191</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 35–36: *sngon gyi smon lam rten 'brel yod pa'i phyir// klog pa'i slob dpon gyis zhes bka' bsgos nas// nyid sku'i snang brnyan rin chen las byas dang // 'dul ſik chen mo phyag bris ma nyid dang // ding phon seng ge'i ris kyi rten khebs te// rnam gsum rten 'brel don du gnang bar mdzad.*

<sup>192</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 36.: *de ltar sbrul lo zla ba dgu pa nas// bya lo zla ba bzhi pa'i bar dag gi/ lo lnga'i bar du klog pa'i gnas brtan bgyis.*

<sup>193</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 38–39: *de nas gdan sa chen po 'bri gung gi /yul gyi bye brag klung shod ces bya bar// bdag la bka' yi 'ching ba rab bkrol nas// rgyal ba nyid kyi thugs dam brtag pa bzhin// sde snod gsum pa phyogs kyi glang po la// klog grwa'i gtsug gi ston par dbang bskul mdzad.* He does not specify the institute and the number of years he served there. Only the most reliable source after his autobiographies, the *Kaṃ tshang Biographies* does not report this investiture. This appears to be around the age of thirty-eight.

<sup>194</sup> *Kaṃ tshang Biographies* vol. II, p. 59: *rig 'dzin padma'i gnas mtsho dkar gyi khyung rdzong du lo gsum rnams bzhugs.*

<sup>195</sup> *Kaṃ tshang Biographies*, vol. I p. 59: *rje thams cad mkhyen pa mi bskyod zhabs kyi bka' phebs ltar dpal karma rig 'dzin sgrub mchog sde bzhi'i dge 'dun gyi sde btsugs.*

<sup>196</sup> *Kaṃ tshang Biographies*, vol. I p. 62: *de nas dgung lo re gsum pa zla ba bcu pa'i tshes bcu drug gi tho rangs su mya ngan las 'da' ba'i tshul bstan no.*

scholarship and becoming a holder of lineages. It will also present the teachings he received from the teachers of different religious traditions, and show their impact on him in the form of tolerance and appreciation for practices from other traditions, as will be discussed in the section ‘Non-sectarian Outlook’.

gTsong lag phreng ba categorises his teachers into four sections: teachers of ordination (*rab byung dang bsnyen rdzogs kyi mkhan po*), eight teachers of incomparable kindness (*drin mtshungs med ldan pa rnam pa brgyad*), teachers of spiritual connection (*chos 'brel thogs pa'i bla ma*), and a teacher capable of all roles (*kun go chig chod kyi bla ma*).<sup>197</sup> However, these four categories do not include all the teachers with whom he studied. It appears that he only included teachers with whom he had a special connection.

The Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes and Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po are the teachers of ordination. According to gTsong lag phreng ba, they engendered a sense of renunciation in his mind.<sup>198</sup>

The eight teachers of kindness are Karma 'phrin las pa, sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa (1458–1515), Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa (1449–1524), dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po (1458–1532),<sup>199</sup> 'Chi med dpal bzang (b.15<sup>th</sup> Century), Blo gros dbang phyug, Buddha Mati (Sangs blo ba), and Tshul khriims dbang phyug.<sup>200</sup>

The teachers of spiritual connection are Śākya Dhvaja, Chos grub seng ge (1451–1528),<sup>201</sup> rJe btsun sNyan grags bzang mo, the Third bSam lding rDo rje phag mo (1503–1542/1543), Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po (16<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>202</sup> and Bya 'Jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal.<sup>203</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba regarded the Eighth Karmapa, Mi bskyod rdo rje, as a teacher who could fulfil all roles. He calls him an embodiment of all buddhas and refuge.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>197</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba appears to mean *kun go chig chod* as ‘one who fulfils all kinds of roles’ since for him the Eighth Karmapa meant everything from being a teacher of philosophical doctrine to giver of meditative instructions. gTsong lag phreng ba asserts that he received all blessings and severed doubts about all dharma by merely seeing him. *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 59 states *byin rlabs kyi tshan kha cig car zhugs// chos kun gyi sgro 'dogs dus gcig chod*.

<sup>198</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 58: *rje rgyal ba zhwa dmar cod pan can// dpal chos kyi grags pa'i zhabs pad dang // rje mnyen lcug mthar phyin brnyes pa yi// dpal zha lu lo chen bka' drin can// rje mnyam pa med pa 'di gnyis ni// rab byung dang bsnyen rdzogs kyi mkhan po ste// rgyud nges 'byung gi bsam pa smin par mdzad*.

<sup>199</sup> See DiValerio (2016) for his biography. It provides the translation of his biographies, one by sMyuk la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa (1458–1515) and the other by bShes gnyen rnam rgyal (b.1512). DiValerio suggests sMyuk la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa as the cousin of Don yod rdo rje (Ibid. 43).

<sup>200</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 58–59: *rje karma'i phrin las dbang po dang // dpal snyug la paṅ chen ngag dbang grags// shar dwags po'i paṅ chen chos rgyal bstan// rje grub thob chen po kun dga'i mtshan// mgon smra ba'i nyi ma 'chi med dpal// thugs byang sems 'byongs pa blo gros dbang // rje mkhas grub buddha ma ti dang // dpal mkhas mchog tshul khriims dbang phyug ste// drin mtshungs med ldan pa rnam pa brgyad*.

<sup>201</sup> Chos grub seng ge was a teacher of the Eighth Karmapa who gave him many sūtric and tantric teachings (Rheingans 2017: 96).

<sup>202</sup> Rheingans (2021: 24) identifies Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po as the second Karma 'phrin las pa. The title Karma 'phrin las pa was given to him by the Eighth Karmapa (ibid).

<sup>203</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 59: *grub chen gyi dam pa sākya'i mtshan// sdom brtson gyi snying po chos grub seng // mkha' spyod kyi dbang mo snyan grags bzang // mishan ldan gyi ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal// bya 'jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal te// chos 'brel pa thogs pa'i bla ma yin*.

<sup>204</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 59: *sangs rgyas kun gcig bsdu pa karma pa// mtshan brjod dka' mi bskyod rdo rje'i zhabs// 'di skyabs gnas kun gcig tu bsdu pa ste// sgar mthong ba tsam gyi bzod ma nus// byin rlabs kyi tshan kha cig car bzhugs// chos kun gyi sgro 'dogs dus gcig chod// kun go chig chod kyi bla mar byung*.

## The Eight Teachers of Kindness

gTsong lag phreng ba probably considered teachers of kindness to be those from whom he mainly received tantric connections, such as empowerments and a substantial amount of teaching, in contrast to the teachers of spiritual connection. Immediately after enumerating the eight teachers of kindness, he states they opened the treasure house of profound and vital teachings of sūtra and tantra through empowerment (*dbang*), instruction (*khrid*), oral transmission (*lung*), and the esoteric precepts (*man ngag*) of various lineages.<sup>205</sup>

## Karma 'phrin las pa

gTsong lag phreng ba's education, leaving aside learning the alphabet, appears to have started only after meeting Karma 'phrin las pa at the age of nine at Thub chen monastery.<sup>206</sup>

Therefore, Karma 'phrin las pa is probably the teacher with whom he started his scholarly journey. One can also say that it is appropriate to count Karma 'phrin las pa among the eight kind teachers since gTsong lag phreng ba's associated with him until the age of twenty-eight, and in the course of his studies received various teachings which impacted him. It is important to note that he primarily received tantric initiations, empowerments, and oral transmission from Karma 'phrin las pa, along with some non-tantric teachings, including on poetry and astrology.

gTsong lag phreng ba received various Vajrayāna teachings, including co-emergent union (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*),<sup>207</sup> a treatise on one taste (*Ro snyoms skor drug gi nyams len sgang du dril ba* of Pad ma dkar po), and the treatise on pointing out the three bodies of buddhas (*sku gsum ngo sprod* of the Second Karmapa).<sup>208</sup>

Between the age of twenty and twenty-three, as narrated in his auto-hagiography *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, gTsong lag phreng ba also studied *Zab mo nang don*; Two Segments (*brtag gnyis*, *Hevajratāntra*); Uttaratantra (*nang brtag rgyud gsum*); dohā and other treatises with Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>209</sup> Karma 'phrin las pa taught him the Third Karmapa's *Zab mo nang don* based on his commentary on it, the *Zab mo nang don gyi rnam bshad snying po gsal bar byed pa'i nyin byed*. Karma 'phrin las pa taught him Saraha's Dohā-

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<sup>205</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 59: *drin mtshungs med ldan pa rnam pa brgyad// chos mdo sngags dbang khrid lung man ngag/ bka' babs kyi brgyud pa du ma can// zab gnad kyi gter kha phye ba yin.*

<sup>206</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 11–12: *thub chen chos kyi 'khor lo'i sde chen por// rgyal ba karma'i phrin las 'dzin pa'i zhabs// dgung lo nga bdun bzhes pa zhig mjal te.* Rheingans (2021: 107) mentions that Thub chen monastery is located in the eastern part of Lhasa and was founded by the Seventh Karmapa and Karma 'phrin las pa.

<sup>207</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba defines *lhan cig skyes* as simultaneous emergence of mind, conceptualisation, and *dharmakāya* (*sems, rnam rtog, chos sku*) and *sbyor* as unifying these through instructions. *Lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi nyams len gnad bsdu gsal ba'i sgron me*, p. 46: *sems dang rnam rtog chos sku gsum/ dang po lhan cig skyes pa ste/ gdams pas gcig tu sbyor ba'i phyir/ lhan cig skyes sbyor yin zhes bshad.*

<sup>208</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 12: *lhan cig skyes sbyor ro snyoms sgang dril dang // sku gsum ngo sprod la sogs khrid kyi tshogs// mang zhig nyams khrid lta bu'i tshul du gnang.* Going by the chronological narration of his events, these teachings appeared to have occurred from the age of nine to eleven. With regard to the authorship of *sKu gsum ngo sprod*, see Draszczyk (2018: 147–152).

<sup>209</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 57: *rje phrin las zhabs kyi bka' drin las// kar lugs kyi nang brtag rgyud gsum dang // do ha sogs gzhung lugs ci rigs sbyangs.*

Trilogy based on his commentary on it *Do ha skor gsum gyi tshig don gyi rnam bshad sems kyi rnam thar gsal bar bston pa'i me long*.<sup>210</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also received an oral transmission from Karma 'phrin las pa on his *Abhidharmakośa* commentary *mNgon pa mdzod kyi ṭī ka*.<sup>211</sup> He asserts that he understood the text thoroughly, since he had learned it by heart, although it was simply an oral transmission.<sup>212</sup> According to the chronological narration of events in his auto-hagiography, the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, this occurred before he started to study with the Eighth Karmapa. gTsug lag phreng ba does not report studying the *Abhidharmakośa* again under the Eighth Karmapa.

gTsug lag phreng ba also studied one of the chapters of *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i rtogs pa* of the Third Karmapa with Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>213</sup> Later, he composed a detailed commentary on this treatise (which will be discussed in the fourth chapter). He also learned Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* (*sNyan ngag me long ma*) based on sNar thang lo tsā ba's (14<sup>th</sup> century) commentary on it, the *sNyan ngag me long gi ṭī ka*, and did a composition test (*rtsom rgyugs*).<sup>214</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba says that although he did not study the whole text of the *Kāvyādarśa*, he could understand the remaining parts.<sup>215</sup>

He received the empowerment, in full, of the *Collection of Works* of the First Karmapa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), of the Third Karmapa Rang 'byung rdo rje (1284–1339), of the Fourth Karmapa Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383) and of the Fifth Karmapa De bzhin gshegs pa (1384–1415), as well as two volumes of the *Collection of Works* of the Sixth Karmapa mThong ba don ldan (1416–1453).<sup>216</sup>

In the catalogue of his works, *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*, gTsug lag phreng ba includes the title of a particular writing on the teachings he received from Karma 'phrin las pa, although this material is not found in his *Collected Works*.<sup>217</sup> Therefore, this work is likely to be missing.

gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that although he mostly relied on Karma 'phrin las pa from the age of nine till twenty-eight, he could not drink the ocean of dharma as desired

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<sup>210</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 19: *rnam shes sems kyi rnam thar gzahir mdzad nas// legs par btsal zhing kho thag chod par byung*. For information regarding Karma phrin las pa's commentary on Doha-Trilogy, see Rheingans (2021: 196).

<sup>211</sup> Karma 'phrin las pa's *Abhidharmakośa* commentary is considered to be unique in the bKa' brgyud tradition (Rheingans 2021: 118). Karma 'phrin las pa is also reported to have seen Vasubandhu in a dream while composing his commentary on it (Rheingans 2021: 160).

<sup>212</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 20: *mdzod kyi sbyor ṭīk lung du gngang mod kyang // sngon nas gzhung tshig blo la bzung ba'i phyir// gzhung chos nyid dang khyad par med par byung*.

<sup>213</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 20: *rang byung zhabs kyi rtsis kun bsdu pa las// lo bdag spo ba'i le'u phyung ste gngang*.

<sup>214</sup> van der Kuijp (1996: 396) enumerates seven stages in the spread of *Kāvyādarśa* in Tibet, of which the fourth stage occurred under sNar thang lo tsā ba.

<sup>215</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 20: *snar thang lo tsā'i ṭikka gzhi bkod nas// gzab bshad mdzad la bskyar chos rtsom rgyugs bgyis// ha cang tshang ba'i pha mthar ma phyin yang // lhag ma rnams kyang dngos bstan go bar byung*. In many cases gTsug lag phreng ba reports failing to complete the texts while professing, at the same time, to have understood them fully. From the emic point of view, the Tibetan tradition would accept these reports without question since he was a reincarnated being.

<sup>216</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 2: *dus mkhyen rol pa'i zhabs dang de bzhin gshegs// don ldan zhabs kyi bka' 'bum tshang ba dang // rang byung bka' bum po ti gnyis la sogs// dbang lung tshang dang kha 'thor mang zhig thob*.

<sup>217</sup> This title is mentioned as *rJe btsun dam pa phrin las zhabs kyi bka' drin las gsung gi bdud rtsi'i nod pa'i rnam grangs bkod ma* (sic!) *ku mu ta'i chon bu*.

owing to lack of fortune and perseverance.<sup>218</sup> Here, he appears to use the term ‘dharma’ in the sense of both scholarly and contemplative pursuits.<sup>219</sup>

Taking into account the number of teachings he received from him, Karma 'phrin las pa was arguably the most significant teacher among the eight.<sup>220</sup> Furthermore, unlike for his other teachers, gTsong lag phreng ba experienced visions of Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>221</sup> Therefore, Karma 'phrin las pa was gTsong lag phreng ba's most important teacher aside from the Eighth Karmapa.

### **sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa (1458–1515)**

When he turned eleven in 1515, gTsong lag phreng ba received teachings from sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa. He received empowerment, oral transmission, and instruction on the scriptures of bKa' gdams, the Father and Son Teachings (*bKa' gdams glegs bam*). He also received the explanation of the four deities of bKa' gdams and Lam yig.<sup>222</sup> sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa is identified as a holder of the bKa' gdams tradition.<sup>223</sup>

In the self-written catalogue of his *Collected Works*, gTsong lag phreng ba includes the title of writings regarding the teachings he received from sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa titled *sMyug la rin po che paṅ chen ngag dbang grags pa'i drung du chos thob pa'i rnam grangs brjod pa padma dkar po'i chun po* (*Enumeration of the Number of Teachings Received before sMyug la rin po chen Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa: The Bunch of White Lotus*). It is not possible, however, to evaluate the extent of the teachings received by gTsong lag phreng ba since this material is not included in the *Collected Works* and appears to be missing.<sup>224</sup>

In the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* gTsong lag phreng ba declares his special connection with sMyug la Paṅ chen. Before they parted, sMyug la Paṅ chen bestowed upon him the life empowerment of White Tārā, and wore the mantra knot (*sngags mdud*) around his neck as a good omen (*rten 'brel*) for longevity.<sup>225</sup> When he arrived outside the residence as they were parting, sMyug la Paṅ chen asked him to come over again and gave him the cymbal of 'Jig rten mgon po, blessed him by placing the soles of his feet on gTsong lag phreng ba's head, and commanded him to work for the sake of buddha-dharma. gTsong lag phreng ba recounts that

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<sup>218</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 12: *lo dgu nas ni rang lo nyer brgyad bar// phel cher dam pa 'di la bsten mod kyang // shas cher skal pa dman zhing brtson 'grus zhan// bsti stang srid zhu'i yo byad dman phyir dang // klog pa'i dus dang 'brel ba nyid kyi phyir// gghan zhor zogs ma'i chos khu 'thung ba las// chos kyi bdud rtsi'i chu gter gting yangs la// ji tsam 'dod par gtung du ma byung ngo*. However, it is important to note that the period between when he was nine and he was twenty-eight was interspersed with some years of retreat.

<sup>219</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba appears to mean that he could not engage both in study and meditative practice during this period since he started to study philosophical subjects after meeting with the Eighth Karmapa. One can also conclude that his meditative practice reached another level after the Eighth Karmapa became his root guru.

<sup>220</sup> It is also noteworthy that gTsong lag phreng ba names Karma 'phrin las pa first while enumerating the eight kind teachers.

<sup>221</sup> See Rheingans (2021: 94–95).

<sup>222</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 12–13: *rang lo bcu gcig lon pa thag nyid du// spyang lnga tshul khrims 'bar gyi sprul pa ni// skyes chen dam pa smyug la rje dang mjal// bka' gdams glegs bam dbang lung khrid bcas dang // lha bzh'i khrid dang rjes gnang dpe chos dang // lam yig la sogs bka' gdams skor 'ga' dang // mkha' spyod zhabs kyi gser phreng chen mo sogs// zla gsum bar du nyin mshan chos kyis 'das*.

<sup>223</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Vol. III, p. 345: *lo pa spyang lnga bsod nams legs mchog sogs la bsten nas bka' gdams kyi srol kyi srod dngos 'dzin*.

<sup>224</sup> The title of this text is mentioned in the *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*.

<sup>225</sup> For the association of sMyug la Paṅ chen with the White Tārā practice, see Rheingans (2021: 72).

when they parted from each other sMyug la paṅ chen gazed at him until he could no longer see him. He mentions that sMyug la Paṅ chen, who accepted him as his disciple with great compassion, passed away eight or nine months after their encounter.<sup>226</sup>

While their brief association of no longer than nine months may have been significant in gTsong lag phreng ba's religious progress, one can say that sMyug la Paṅ chen had minimal scholarly impact on him, as gTsong lag phreng ba did not receive teachings from him on any philosophical subjects.

### Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa

At the age of twelve, gTsong lag phreng ba met Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa at Yer pa, in dBu ru.<sup>227</sup> Dwags po Paṅ chen was one of the remarkable students of Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>228</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba praised him highly in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, saying that he had not encountered a learned person as well-versed in exposition, debate, and composition (*'chad rtsod rtsom*) as Dwags po Paṅ chen.<sup>229</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba received many empowerments from Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa, including Kālacakra according to the tradition of Luhipa, and the four-armed aspect of Mahākāla protective deity (*mgon po phyag bzhi pa*).<sup>230</sup> He also received explanatory transmission (*bshad lung*) on Vinaya (*'Dul ba mdo rtsa ba*) and astrology.<sup>231</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba associated with Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa for fourteen months.<sup>232</sup>

In the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, gTsong lag phreng ba mentions that he invited Chos rgyal bstan pa to Thub chen monastery and, at his request, Chos rgyal bstan pa conferred the empowerment of Kālacakra and Vajra Garland (*rdo rje phreng ba*) and the oral transmission of the Seventh Karmapa's *Tshad ma rig gzhung rgya mtsho* on most of the lamas and learned individuals of the bKa' brgyud pas of dBu. Only Chos rgyal bstan pa, according to gTsong lag phreng ba, had the transmission lineage of the *Tshad ma rig gzhung rgya mtsho*.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>226</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 13: nan gyis zhush nas 'gro bar chas pa'i tshes// sgrol dkar yid bzhi' 'khor lo'i tshes dbang mdzad// rgyas pa'i mdog can sngags mdud rab bsngags pa// 'di la tshes yi rten 'brel yod do zhes// nyid kyi phyag gis bdag gi mgul du btags// zang zing mang po'i bka' drin mdzad de btang // phyi rol sleb tshes slar yang shog cig gsungs// skyob pa 'jig rten mgon po'i phyag sil gnang // zhabs mthil spyi bo'i gtsug tu bzhag nas kyang // smon lam mang mdzad bstan pa'i don gyis gsungs// bdag kyang mos gus gdung ba drag po skyes// ji srid snang bar gyur pa de srid du// ring du g.yo ba med par gzigs shing bzhugs// de ltar brtse ba chen pos rjes bzung yang // zla ba bgyad dam dgu nas sku thim ste// mjal ba'i skal ba'ang bdag gis ma rnyed do.

<sup>227</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 13: rang lo bcu gnyis pa la dbu ru'i yul// lha ri yer pa'i mgul gyi gtsug lag tu// zhwa ljang cod pon 'dzin par rab bsngags pa'i// shar phyogs dwags pa'i yul gyi paṅdi ta/ mkhas grub chos rgyal bstan pa'i zhabs la gtugs.

<sup>228</sup> Rheingans (2021: 102).

<sup>229</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. III, p. 351: bdag gis kyang 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum ga la sbyangs pa'i mkhas pa'i nang na rje 'di lta bu gzhan ma mthong.

<sup>230</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 14: khyad par dpal ldan dus kyi 'khor lo yi// byis pa 'jug pa'i dbang sngon 'gro bas//... bde mchog lū hi drug cu pa dang ni// nā ro lha lnga mgon pa phyag bzhi pa'i// bzhi rdzogs dbang sogs smin byed mang zhig dang.

<sup>231</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 14: dam chos 'dul ba'i rtsa ba lung sde bzhi// bshad lung tshul du gtan la phab cing gnang //... grub mtha' rtsis kyi lnga bsdu nyi zlog dang.

<sup>232</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 14: zla ba bcu bzhi tsam gyi bar bsten te/ /bka' drin mtshungs pa med pa spyi bos nod.

<sup>233</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. III, p. 352: bdag gis thub chen du spyang drangs te chos kyi gsol ba btab nas dbus kyi kar sde rnams kyi bla ma dang dge bshes phar cher 'dus pa la dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang dang rdo rje phreng

Apparently, as a gesture of appreciation, gTsong lag phreng ba composed a praise to Dwags po Paṅ chen Chos rgyal bstan pa. This, however, does not appear to be extant.<sup>234</sup> He also wrote concerning the teachings he received from him, but this is not available.<sup>235</sup>

### **dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po**

At the age of twelve, gTsong lag phreng ba met dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po for the second time. gTsong lag phreng ba recounts that dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po bestowed presents upon him, establishing a spiritual connection at this tender age.<sup>236</sup> He also enjoined gTsong lag phreng ba to meet him later.<sup>237</sup> Although gTsong lag phreng ba does not narrate this event in detail in his auto-hagiographies, it appears in the biography of dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po composed by bShes gnyen rnam rgyal (b.1512). DiValerio translates the account as follows:

On one occasion, the reincarnation of Gampopa [the Second Pawo, Tsuklak Trengwa] came with his students to visit the Master. When he was received at the window to the Master's sealed retreat, the Master said that it was like when Gampopa Daö Zhönnu, "Youthful Moonlight," first went before noble Milarepa. He said things such as "The milk of the white lion of the east is certainly potent! Only the Indra, 'Lord of the Gods,' can drink it..." After welcoming the boy in that way, they cut his hair. The Master gave him all the profound Dharma teachings that he needed, including the tummo practice as transmitted by glorious Galo. After finishing the instructions, the Master gave the boy a deerskin rug, a mother-of-pearl ladle, a horn made from an antler, and other things, thereby establishing many avenues of dependent connection between them. Carrying those objects, and bearing within his heart the honey of great respect for the Master, the young Pawo went back to Dakpo in the Kongpo area.<sup>238</sup>

Following the exhortation to meet him later, dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po called gTsong lag phreng ba repeatedly through messengers. One summer when he was twelve, he met Kun dga' bzang po again. dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po informed gTsong lag phreng ba that he had been his disciple in his past life, and it was appropriate that he be his teacher in the present life.<sup>239</sup> Having bestowed many teachings upon him, dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po

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*ba'i dbang / tshad ma rig gzhung rgya mtsho'i lung rje 'di la ma gtogs pa gzhan la mi bzhugs pas de'i bshad lung sogs gnang.*

<sup>234</sup> The title of the text reads *mKhas grub chen po chos rgyal bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la bstod pa bla ma'i yon tan dran byed de rtsa brgyud kyi bla ma'i bstod pa rnam dang*. It is listed in his self-written catalogue of his works.

<sup>235</sup> *Glegs lam 'di rnam kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba* mentions the texts as *rJe mkhas grub chen po dwags po'i pandi ta chos rgyal bstan pa'i gsung gi bdud rtsi'i rnyed pa'i rnam grangs brjod pa gser gyi bang mdzod*.

<sup>236</sup> dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po was one of the 'madmen' in Tibet who provided an alternative to scholasticism, monasticism and rationalism as a path to enlightenment.

<sup>237</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 15: *grub thob kun dga' bzang po yis// chung ngu'i dus nas rten 'brel gnang sbyin sogs// lan mang bskul zhing phyi nas phrad dgos gsungs*.

<sup>238</sup> DiValerio (2016: 172–73).

<sup>239</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 154–155) note that one comes to know the First dPa' bo as dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po's teacher only through gTsong lag phreng ba's auto-hagiography, and that is not mentioned in the biography of Kun dga' bzang po.

informed gTsong lag phreng ba that he had given him every empowerment, reading transmission, and instruction that he had himself received.<sup>240</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba received teachings from Kun dga' bzang po during more than ten sessions a day. He received the Four-letter Māhamudrā, the Five-fold Mahāmudrā, *lhan cig skyes sbyor*, four scrolls of tantric text (*shog dril bzhi pa*),<sup>241</sup> the aural lineage of Cakrasaṃvara of Ras chung pa (*ras chung snyan brgyud*),<sup>242</sup> the esoteric practice of Nāropa (*nā ro sang spyod*), and instruction on longevity according to the tradition of Ma gcig grub pa'i rgyal mo<sup>243</sup> (*grub rgyal tshe khrid*).<sup>244</sup> Kun dga' bzang po also gave him his own meditation belt and requested that he wear it during his wanderings (*'khyam pa*),<sup>245</sup> saying that it would be a good omen for the practice of channels and winds (*tsa rlung*).<sup>246</sup> He also named him sPrul sku Kun bzang 'dzam gling nyi zla ltar grags pa (as discussed in the section 'Title of dPa' bo and Different Names of gTsong lag phreng ba').

### Blo gros dbang phyug (16<sup>th</sup> Century)

gTsong lag phreng ba met Blo gros dbang phyug at the age of thirteen.<sup>247</sup> He received empowerments of the Varja Garland (*rdor rje phreng ba*), Vajravīdāraṇa (*rDo rje rnam 'joms*) and Kālacakra (*Dus kyi 'khor lo*) from him. He also received the empowerment and oral transmission of some writings from the *Collected Works* of the Lord of Conquerors (Karmapa).<sup>248</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba also studied the astrology of the Indian system (*skar rtsis*) of the mTshur phu tradition and some other minor teachings on astrology.<sup>249</sup> The *Kam tshang Biographies* mentions that gTsong lag phreng ba studied with this teacher for six months.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 15: *nga yi dbang lung man ngag ji snyed pa/ /yongs su rdzogs kyiis gang la gang 'dod ston*. This probably cannot be taken in a literal sense since he stayed with Kun dga' bzang po only for a week.

<sup>241</sup> It appears to be Marpa's *Bla ma mar pa'i shog dril bzhi pa*. One can find this title on BDRC, but not yet the text: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/WA0XLEB7BD4AD3EEC>.

<sup>242</sup> According to *Dung dkar tshig mdzod*, under the entry Ras chung ba rDo rje grags pa, this is a teaching on the nine formless *dākinī* teachings (*lus med mkha' 'gro'i chos skor dgu*) transmitted from Ras chung rDo rje grags pa (1084–1161). See also Smith (2001: 41).

<sup>243</sup> Siddharājñī is the 12th-century yogini, the teacher of Ras chung pa (<https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-18090.html>).

<sup>244</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 15: *spyang snga phyag chen yig bzhi lnga ldan dang // lhan cig skyes sbyor shog dril bzhi pa dang // ras chung snyan brgyud nā ro gsang spyod dang // grub rgyal tshe khrid la sogs dmar khrid du// nyin re la yang chos thun bcu lhang mdzad*.

<sup>245</sup> The text reads as *'cham pa* which means 'to agree upon' or 'concord.' Therefore, it appears to be the misspelling of *'khyam pa*, meaning wander as a yogī.

<sup>246</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 15–16: *nyid kyi sku las pus 'khyud phud nas ni// re zhi de ni dad pa'i rten du chongs// ma 'ongs 'cham pa'i dus su lus la gon// rtsa rlung thabs kyi rten 'brel yod do gsungs*.

<sup>247</sup> Rheingans (2021: 246) provides the portion of the text (*rNam par thar pa ngo mtshar yid kyi shing rta*) by Karma phrin las pa where he enumerates his students, among whom Blo gros dbang phyug pa is mentioned. Apart from this piece of information, other biographical details could not be obtained.

<sup>248</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba does not specify which Karmapa. It could be the writings of the Eighth Karmapa, who was only three years older than him. The Eighth Karmapa started to compose texts as early as the age of eight (Rheingans 2017: 85).

<sup>249</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 16: *bcu gsum lon tshe rgyal ba'i sras po ni// byang chub sems dpa' blo gros dbang phyug las// rdor phreng dbang dang rnam 'joms rgya ston lugs// dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang bskur mtshur lugs dang // rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung 'bum thor bu sogs// dbang lung 'brel pa du ma thob par gyur// mtshur lugs skar rtsis sa ris legs par khrid// kyal ka'i tshul du'ang rtsis phran mang zhi gngang*.

<sup>250</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol II, p. 57: *sems dpa' chen po blo gros dbang phyug zla ba drug gi bar du bsten te*.

## Buddha Mati (Sang blo ba)

When he turned fourteen, gTsong lag phreng ba met Buddha Mati in Gro bo lung.<sup>251</sup> The *Kam tshang Biographies* identifies Buddha Mati as a disciple of the First dPa' bo. He was well-versed in sūtra and tantra and founded the Brag rtsa monastery.<sup>252</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba received teachings on the four scrolls teachings of Marpa (*mar pa'i shog dril bzhi*), seven-day inner heat practice (*gtum mo zhag bdun ma*), secret *sādhana* (*gsang sgrub*), co-emergent union (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*), four-word Mahāmudrā instruction (*yig bzhi*), and other tantric teachings. He also received teachings on the biography and the collection of songs (*mgur 'bum*) of the First dPa' bo.<sup>253</sup>

## 'Chi med dpal bzang

At the age of sixteen, gTsong lag phreng ba went to Yar 'brog mngon dga' monastery. There he studied the *Two Segments* (*brtag gnyis*) and *Lam 'bras*, a treatise on the general tantric teachings (*rgyud sde spyi rnam*),<sup>254</sup> general sūtric teaching (*bstan pa spyi rnam*), six teachings of rDo rje phag mo (*phag mo chos drug*), and other teachings. With 'Chi med dpal bzang he also studied the Sanskrit text on sandhi rules (*mtshams sbyor lnga pa*).<sup>255</sup>

It should be noted that gTsong lag phreng ba's connection with 'Chi med dpal bzang had started earlier when he was seven years old. During their first encounter, he received a life empowerment and Blue Wrathful Guru (*guru drag po thing ga*) along with other dharma and material support.<sup>256</sup>

'Chi med dpal bzang belonged to the Bo dong tradition.<sup>257</sup> He was also responsible for recognising sNyen grags bzang mo, one of the gTsong lag phreng ba's teachers of spiritual connection, as the Third rDo rje phag mo.<sup>258</sup> This indicates that gTsong lag phreng ba had

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<sup>251</sup> Buddha Mati appears to be the Sanskrit translation of Sangs blo ba. 'Buddha' is likely to have been translated for *sangs* as in *sangs rgyas* (buddha) while 'mati' appears to be the translation of *blo* (intelligence) and *ba* as the male personifying particle. Zhang Yisun describes *ba* as *pho mtshon par byed pa'i bdag sgra zhig*.

<sup>252</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*. vol. I, p. 674: *rje dpa' bo mjal zhing chos gsan pas skyes bu gsum gyi lam rnal ma 'khrungs/ rig gnas dang mdo sngags kyi mkhyen pa che zhing gsan rgya mtha' yas/ phyis brag rtsa'i dgon btab ste dbang lung khrid gsung gsum gyi phrin las sogs gzhan yang 'gro don cher byung ngo*.

<sup>253</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 16: *m khas sgrub dam pa buddha ma ti las// mar pa'i shog dril bzhi dang bco lnga dang // gtum mo zhag bdun ma dang gsang sgrub dang // lnga ldan lhan cig skyes sbyor yig bzhi dang // bram ze snyan brgyud bsnyen sgrub phran 'ga' dang // tshes sgrub rin chen nyi 'od grub rgyal bcas// rje btsun dpa' bo'i rnam thar mgur 'bum sogs// dpa' bo che las brgyud pa'i chos 'gag thob*.

<sup>254</sup> Since gTsong lag phreng ba uses abbreviations for the texts, it is hard to determine the text he meant. The text appears to be the *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag bshad pa* by Bo dong Pañ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal since 'Chi med dpal bzang belonged to the Bo dong tradition. This text was printed in 1411 at Shel dkar chos sde. Ehrhard and Sernesi (2019: 120). There are also other texts such as *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog* by Padma dkar po.

<sup>255</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 17: *bcu drug lo la yar 'brog mngon dgar phyin// 'jam dbyangs gnyis 'chi med zhabs pad bsten// de nyid snying po sbas don kun gsal dang // brtag gnyis ũg chen lam 'bras bshad chen bcas// rgyud sde spyi rnam bstan pa spyi rnam sogs// gsang bas byin gyi bstan bcos mang zhig dang // bsnyen sgrub mkhas btsun lugs dang zla seng lugs// de sogs lung dang rjes gnang 'ga' zhig gnang // mtshams sbyor lnga pa ming le dang por bcas// sa ris nyid kyiis gtan phab dpyis phyin gnang*.

<sup>256</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 10: *lo bdun tshes na 'jam dbyangs gnyis pa ni// dpal ldan 'chi med zhabs kyiis rjes bzung nas// drag sgrub mthing ga'i dbang dang tshes dbang sogs// chos dang zang zing bka' drin du ma mdzad*.

<sup>257</sup> Hildegard (2007: 27).

<sup>258</sup> Hildegard (2007: 262).

some connection with the Bo dong tradition.<sup>259</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba states that 'Chi med dpal bzang was kinder to him than other teachers, although he received fewer teachings from him.<sup>260</sup>

### **Tshul khrim dbang phyug<sup>261</sup>**

gTsug lag phreng ba received oral transmission from Tshul khrim dbang phyug on the *Hundred Thousand Tantras (rgyud 'bum)* and seventy-three volumes of the Words of Buddha (*bKa' 'gyur*), *Khro phu byams pa dpal gyi man ngag brgya rtsa*<sup>262</sup> by Khro phu Byams pa dpal (1173-1236/7).<sup>263</sup> Later, he also received the oral transmission of around one hundred volumes on various topics from him. He stayed with Tshul khrim dbang phyug for nearly six months.<sup>264</sup>

### **A Teacher Capable of Fulfilling all Roles (*kun go chig chod kyi bla ma*)**

At the age of twenty-nine, gTsug lag phreng ba met his most important teacher, the Eighth Karmapa, whom he considered a teacher who fulfils all the roles on his own. The Eighth Karmapa was the root guru from whom he received tantric and major sūtric philosophical teachings. From his auto-hagiographies, it is clear that gTsug lag phreng ba's philosophical studies started in a more serious way only after encountering the Eighth Karmapa.

The first teaching gTsug lag phreng ba received from the Eighth Karmapa related to some Varja songs (*rdo rje'i mgur*) as the first spiritual connection. He also received four empowerments of Cakrasaṃvara according to the Vajraghaṅṅapāda tradition.<sup>265</sup>

He studied the *Abhisamayālamkāra* from the Eighth Karmapa based on his commentary *Sher phyin kar ſik rje btsun ngal gso*.<sup>266</sup> The *Don tshan dgu pa* mentions that gTsug lag phreng ba studied *Abhisamayālamkāra* for three years.<sup>267</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba insistently sought clarification from the Eighth Karmapa on difficult points while studying the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and the *Pramāṇavārttika* and, according to gTsug lag phreng ba's account, he understood them easily. His study of these texts was based on the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho's commentary *Tshad ma*

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<sup>259</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba's teacher Karma 'phrin las pa also received teachings from Bo dong ras chen (Rheingans 2021: 59).

<sup>260</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 17: *mdor na kun mkhyen 'jam pa'i dbyangs 'di nyid/ /bdag gis chos thob ha cang mi mang yang / /bka' drin gzhan las mi chung lhag pa yin*.

<sup>261</sup> BDRC identifies Tshul khrim dbang phyug as another name for Rab 'byams chos rje Tshul khrim dbang phyug (b. 15<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>262</sup> bdr.io mentions the main title as *Man ngag brgya rtsa*.

<sup>263</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba appears to have met Tshul khrim dbang phyug only after the age of twenty-nine since he narrates this event only after encountering the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>264</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 40: *rab 'byams gsungs pa tshul khrim dbang phyug las// rgyud 'bum mdo mang phal cher sher phyogs te// bka' 'gyur nang tshan po ti don gsum dang // grub snying man snye chos chung brgya rtsa dang // don dam bsnyen pa lta 'dod mdor bstan dang // dpag bsam 'khri shing nā ro'i 'grel chen gnyis// chos rgyal bka' 'bum khro phu brgya rtsa sogs// po ti brgya phrag longs pa'i bklag lung dang // dbang dang rjes gngang che phran mang zhig nod// zla ba drug tu nye ba tsam zhig bsten*.

<sup>265</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 31: *rang bzhin don grub ma yi rdo rje'i mgur// thog ma'i dam chos 'brel pa nyid du gngang // rgyal ba nyid kyi sku yi dkyil 'khor du// 'khor lo sdom pa dril bu pa yi lugs// dbang bzhi yongs su rdzogs par legs par bstsal*.

<sup>266</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 34: *sher phyin man ngag sgsal ba'i bstan bcos ni// drung mdzad rje btsun ngal gso'i gzhung lugs nyid*.

<sup>267</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 57: *lo gsum du phar phyin cung zad bsalbs*.

legs par bshad pa thams cad kyi chu bo yongs su 'du ba rigs pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgya mtsho<sup>268</sup> Sa skya paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rig gter* was also studied along with the *Tshad ma rigs pa'i rnam bshad sde bdun ngag gi rol mtsho* by Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507). gTsug lag phreng ba says he was taught it with clarification of difficult points.<sup>269</sup>

The Eighth Karmapa extensively taught gTsug lag phreng ba the *Madhyamakāvātāra* based on Dharmakīrti's auto-commentary *dBu ma 'jug pa'i rang 'grel* with Jayānanda's lengthy commentary (*dBu ma la 'jug pa'i 'grel bshad ces bya ba*) on it. gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that he fully understood it, except for a few refutations and establishments of doctrinal points (*dgag sgrub*),<sup>t</sup> through comprehension of the linguistic roots (*byings*).<sup>270</sup>

Regarding Vinaya, the Eighth Karmapa simply gave him the oral transmission (*lung*) of his detailed commentary on the Vinayasūtra.<sup>271</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that he understood it merely by reading since he was already familiar with the subject.<sup>272</sup>

The Eighth Karmapa taught him the *Uttaratantra* through the tradition of other-empty (*gzhan stong*) of Sa bzang ma ti Paṇ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan's (1294–1380) commentary *Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos kyi rnam par bshad pa nges don rab gsal snang ba* (*A Māhāyana Uttaratantra Commentary: The Light that Perfectly Illuminates Definitive Meanings*) and through the self-empty (*rang stong*) tradition of Red mda' ba's (1349–1412) commentary *Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i 'grel pa dgongs pa nges gsal* (*A Māhāyana Uttaratantra Commentary: the Certain Clarity of Intentions*).<sup>273</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also received *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag* of Bu ston<sup>274</sup> and received elaborated teachings on Mahāmāyā from the Eighth Karmapa. The Eighth Karmapa conferred on him the detailed explanation of the *Single Intention*, the practice propounded by 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143–1217).<sup>275</sup> In the self-written catalogue of his works, the *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*, gTsug lag phreng ba includes the title of this work among the titles in the list of teachings he received from the Eighth

<sup>268</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 34: rigs gzhung rgya mtsho'i bstan bcos chen po las// tshad ma'i mdo dang rgyas pa rnam 'grel la// rnam bshad rmad du byang bas gsal bar mdzad// de tshe don rnams slar yang skyor ba dang // dka' ba'i gnad na dogs dpyod nan tan zhus// bde blag nyid kyi khong du chud pa yin.

<sup>269</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 34: tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi bstan bcos kyang // sde bdun ngag gi rol mtsho dang sbyar te// dka' gnad dogs dpyod bcas pas dpyis phyin mdzad.

<sup>270</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 34: dbu ma che la 'jug pa'i bstan bcos ni// dpal ldan zla ba'i zhabs kyi rang 'grel nyid// dza yā nanta'i rgyas 'grel dang sbyar te// zhib bshad rmad du byung bas brda sprod mdzad// don rnams bskyar zhing dka' gnad dogs dpyod bgyis// sgra yi byings kyi nus pa la brten nas// dgag sgrub byas pa'i phran 'ga' ma gtogs pa// dpyis phyin nyid du shes par gyur pa yin.

<sup>271</sup> The commentary on it is titled 'Dul ba mdo rtsa'i rgyas 'grel spyi'i don mtha' dpyad dang bsdu don sa bcad dang 'bru don mthar chags su gnyer ba bcas.

<sup>272</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 34: bstan pa'i rtsa ba 'dul ba'i rnam bshad ni// nyid kyi rgyas 'grel chen mo lung du gnang // sngon nas 'dul ba'i lung la 'dris pa'i phyir// dngos bstan dgongs pa bklag pa tsam gyis go.

<sup>273</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 35:

<sup>274</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 35: mkhas pa chen po khro phu bu ston gyi// rgyud sde'i spyi rnam chen po brda sprod mdzad.

<sup>275</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 35: ma hā mā ya'i rgyud sde zab mo la// tshig don rnam phye legs par gtan dbab mdzad// skyob pa 'jig rten mgon po'i rdo rje'i gsung // dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i rgyas bshad bstsal.

Karmapa. However, the text is not included in the *Collected Works* and appears to be missing.<sup>276</sup>

### Teachers of Spiritual Connection

It seems that the teachers whom gTsong lag phreng ba considers teachers of spiritual connection are those from whom he simply received some minor teachings, such as the reading transmissions of texts, and from whom he received fewer teachings. This is also supported by the fact that gTsong lag phreng ba does not even mention which teachings he received from some of the teachers of spiritual connection, as discussed below. They are included in this section to demonstrate the extent of teachings he received from various teachers.

### Śākya Dhvaja

Śākya Dhvaja was both a personal tutor for gTsong lag phreng ba and also one of the two teachers who endorsed him as the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo. He met Śākya Dhvaja at the age of six and received life empowerment of Ma gcig grub pa'i rgyal mo, inner heat teachings (*gtum mo*) according to the six doctrines (Tib. *chos drug*, Skt. *ṣaḍdharma*),<sup>277</sup> the *terma* of religious history and biography (*gter ma'i thang yig*) revealed by O rgyan gling pa and various other teachings given as a mere religious connection (*chos kyi 'brel ba*).<sup>278</sup>

### rJe btsun sNyan grags bzang mo

gTsong lag phreng ba received some life empowerment and Vajravārāhī empowerment.<sup>279</sup> He likely received those empowerments from sNyan grags bzang mo at the age of sixteen in the same year he received teachings from 'Chi med dpal bzang. He mentions receiving those empowerments along with the narration of the event of teachings received from 'Chi med dpal bzang, and says it was around that time (*de tshe*) during a lunar eclipse.<sup>280</sup>

sNyan grags bzang mo was considered the third reincarnation of rDo rje phag mo and was associated with the Bo dong tradition.<sup>281</sup>

### Chos grub seng ge

Chos grub seng ge was *karmācārya* (*las kyi slob dpon*) during the ordination of monk's vow (as discussed in the section 'Ordination'). gTsong lag phreng ba received from him instructions on Guru Yoga. Placing both feet on his head, Chos grub seng ge also conferred prayers and blessings on him. Chos grub seng ge urged him to work to benefit the Buddha's

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<sup>276</sup> The title of the text reads as *Chos kyi rje thams cad mkhyen pa rdo rje 'chang chen po mi bskyod rdo rje'i zhabs drung du gsung gi bdud rtsi'i thob pa'i yi ge padma dkar po'i phreng ba*.

<sup>277</sup> See Torricelli (1993) on the six doctrines and their transmission.

<sup>278</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 10: *lo drug tshe na yongs 'dzin śākya las// grub rgyal tshe dbang sras mkhar chos drug gi/ gtum mo'i zhor khrid o rgyan gling pa yi// gter ma'i thang yig tho thing bka' chems rnam/ dam pa'i chos kyi 'brel pa tsam du thob. Kaṁ tshang Biographies*, vol. I, p. 673–674, mentions Śākya Dhvaja as dGe shes of Byar monastery who studied under the First dPa' bo and founded lCang lo can monastery.

<sup>279</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 17: *tshe dbang 'ga' dang phag mo don grub ma// hrī bskyed ma dang bcas pa'i dbang bskur ni// dpal ldan mkha' spyod dbang mo zhal las thob*.

<sup>280</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 17: *de tshe zla ba gza' yis bzung skabs shig*.

<sup>281</sup> Hildegard (2007: 260).

teachings, since he now possessed all three vows (*sdom pa gsum*).<sup>282</sup> Although Chos grub seng ge was only a teacher of spiritual connection for gTsug lag phreng ba, he was among the four most significant teachers of the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>283</sup>

### Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po

Although gTsug lag phreng ba includes Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po, the second Karma 'phrin las pa, as his teacher of spiritual connection, he does not mention the manner of his connection and the teachings he received.<sup>284</sup> It has been suggested that Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po was born in gTsang and lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>285</sup> According to the *Kam tshang Biographies*, he was directed by the Eighth Karmapa to study medicine and is said to have become proficient in it. He is also reported to have revised the *Four Medical Tantras* and composed commentaries on them. Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po also served as an abbot of Thub chen and Chims phu.<sup>286</sup>

### Bya 'Jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal

gTsug lag phreng ba does not provide any information regarding the teachings he received from Bya 'Jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal. The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* includes him among the main disciples of the Seventh Karmapa. The Second Karma phrin las pa, rJe btsun Sa skya se, and Dus zhabs pa Śākya dbang phyug were also his teachers. Having become well-learned, Bya 'Jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal is said to have composed many commentaries and founded a monastic seat in Padma bkod.<sup>287</sup>

### Teachers Outside the Four Categories

gTsug lag phreng ba also had other teachers not included in the categories mentioned above. One of them is dGe 'dun rgya mtsho who taught him the alphabet at the age of six. He also

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<sup>282</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 23: *las slob nyid kyis bla ma'i rnal 'byor ni// yan lag drug gi snying por gyur pa bstsal// zhabs zung spyi bo'i gtsug tu bkod nas kyang // smon lam dang bka' bsgo rgya cher mdzad// da ni sdom gsum rnam par dag pa yis// bstan la phan par byin zhes yang yang gsungs*. The three vows are categorised differently according to the traditions. For instance, from a tantric point of view, the three vows are *prātimokṣa* vow, the bodhisattva vow, and Vajrayāna vow. From the Vinaya viewpoint, the three vows are the layperson vow (*dge bsnyen*), novice vow (*dge tshul*), and monk's vow. In this context, it cannot be the first category since gTsug lag phreng ba received the bodhisattva vow only at the age of twenty-nine. Therefore, here the three vows probably means the second category, given that he completed the three vows with the reception of the monk's vow, the highest *prātimokṣa* vow. See Sobisch (2002: 9–10) regarding the term 'three vows.'

<sup>283</sup> Rheingans (2021: 95).

<sup>284</sup> One can speculate here that gTsug lag phreng ba could have received some teachings on medicine from Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po since he was reported to have mastered medicine. It is also important to note that gTsug lag phreng ba was much older than the second Karma 'phrin las pa. The Eighth Karmapa was the student of the First Karma 'phrin las pa. The Second Karma 'phrin las pa, Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po, was the Eighth Karmapa's student. See Rheingans (2021: 27–28).

<sup>285</sup> Rheingans (2021: 28).

<sup>286</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 65: *gso rigs la dpyis phyin par sbyongs shig gsungs nas ming legs bshad 'tshol du gngang / des kyang gso rig la mkhas par mdzad/ rgyud bzhi la zhus chen dang pa par du bkod nas 'grel pa mes zhal dang sman 'byung sogs gso rig gi bstan bcos du ma mdzad do*.

<sup>287</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. III, p. 335: *bya 'jam dbyangs bkra shis rnam rgyal ni gtso bor rje bdun pa'i dngos slob yin la/ spyir rje btsun skya se/ rje phrin las pa/ dus zhabs pa rnams bsten zhing mkhas pa chen por gyur/ nor spyad rgya mtsho sogs 'jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos dang / nang don gyi 'grel pa pod chen bzhi la sogs pa bstan bcos mang du mdzad/ chos 'khor lhun po bskal dus kyis nyams kyang slar padma bkod pa'i dge 'dun gyi sde btsugs*. *Kam tshang Biographies* simply repeats almost verbatim from the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* on this figure.

studied grammatical treatises on the *Thirty Verses* (*Sum cu pa*) and the *Guide to Signs* (*rTags 'jug*) and some teachings on astrology with another teacher, mKhyen rab rnam rgyal.<sup>288</sup>

### Teachers of Ordination (*rab byung dang bsnyen rdzogs kyi mkhan po*)

Teachers or the *upādhyāyas* of ordination not only ordained gTsong lag phreng ba but also bestowed upon him some important teachings. These teachers are as follows:

#### Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes

The Fourth Zhwa dmar pa was not simply gTsong lag phreng ba's *upādhyāya*. gTsong lag phreng ba received some teachings from him while staying with him in Yangs pa can monastery for half a month.<sup>289</sup> He received teaching on Fivefold Māhamudrā (*lnga ldan*),<sup>290</sup> and Dwags po rin po che's four dharmas (*dwags po'i chos bzhi* or *sGam po po'i chos bzhi*).<sup>291</sup>

#### Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po

Apart from the monk's vow, gTsong lag phreng ba also received some other teachings from Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1527/28)<sup>292</sup> such as the oral transmission of the sūtra of confessions of misdeeds of bodhisattvas (*ltung bshags*), the hundred-syllable Vajrasattva mantra and *dhāraṇī* for the longevity of Uttarakuru (*sgra mi snyan gyi tshe gzungs*) and teachings on Guru Yoga.<sup>293</sup>

In his catalogue of his own writing, gTsong lag phreng ba lists a composition in praise of Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po, indicating his appreciation and admiration for him.<sup>294</sup> However, this text is not available and is not included in the dPal brtsegs edition of his *Collected Works*.

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<sup>288</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 20: ngo khro'i slob dpon mkhyen rab rnam rgyal las// grogs dan tshul du sum rtags rnam gnyis dang // bsdu pa'i rgyud kyi rgyud tshig gzhir byas nas// byed pa'i rtsis kyi lnga bsdu tsam yang bslobs. It has been suggested that mKhyen rab rnam rgyal was the abbot of a certain college in mTshur phu. See Rheingans (2021: 154 footnote 679).

<sup>289</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 11: zla phyed nye ba'i bar du bsten nas kyang.

<sup>290</sup> The Fivefold Māhamudrā is teaching ascribed to Phag mo gru pa, condensing all the practices of the Three Baskets and Four Classes of Tantra into five practices (generating bodhicitta, meditating on the tutelary deity, meditating on the guru, meditating on Māhamudrā, and sealing with dedication). Chos grags ye shes, Zhwa dmar 04. *Nyams rtogs nor bu'i 'byung gnas lnga ldan khrid yig rgya mtsho*, p. 310: de yang phyag chen lnga ldan zhes grags pa ni/ 'gro ba'i mgon po phag mo gru pas/ sde snod gsum dang rgyud sde bzhi'i don rnam nyams su len lugs lnga ru bsdu nas phun sum tshogs pa'i dge 'dun stong phrag lnga la tshogs su gsungs pas. Fivefold Māhamudrā emphasises devotion to the guru (Sobisch 2011: 214).

<sup>291</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 11: mkhan po'i drung du spyan lnga'i phyag chen dang // lnga ldan dwags po'i chos bzhi'i rnam bshad thob.

sGam po pa bsod nams rin chen. *Dwags po rin po che'i chos bzhi mdor bsdu pa*. vol. VIII, p. 398 enumerates four dharmas as *chos chos su 'gro ba/ chos lam du 'gro ba/ lam 'khrul pa sel ba/ 'khrul pa ye shes su shar ba* (turning dharma into dharma, turning dharma into the path, dispelling delusion on the path, and the arising of delusion as wisdom).

<sup>292</sup> Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po was also the teacher of Karma phrin las pa (Rheingans 2021: 73)).

<sup>293</sup> 'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long, p. 23: mkhan po'i drung du ltung bshags nyid 'gyur dang // yig brgya'i bzlas lung bla ma'i rnal 'byor ni// zab rgyas bskyed rdzogs kun gyis brgyan pa dang // sgra mi snyan pa'i tshe yi rang gzungs te// dam pa'i chos kyi 'brel par de dag thob.

<sup>294</sup> The title of the text reads *rJe btsun mkhan chen lo tsā ba chen po don gyi slad tu mtshan nas smos te rje chos skyong bzang po la bstod pa yon tan mi zad pa'i 'byung gnas*.

### 2.3 gTsong lag phreng ba's Prominent Students and Teachings Given to Them

The principal disciples of gTsong lag phreng ba were the Ninth Karmapa, the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag (1525–1583) and two successive rGyal tshab *sprul sku* (the Third rGyal tshab Go shri Grags pa dpal 'byor (1516–1546) and the Fourth rGyal tshab Grags pa don grub (1547–1613). The *Kam tshang Biographies* mentions that gTsong lag phreng ba conferred on them innumerable empowerments and oral transmissions of the bKa' brgyud tradition.<sup>295</sup> Other students include 'Jam dbyangs don grub dpal bzang po, mKhan chen Legs pa don grub dpal bzang po, Grub chen dNgos grub bzang po and Sangs rgyas dpal grub.<sup>296</sup>

According to the *Kam tshang Biographies*, gTsong lag phreng ba taught Vinaya, Abhisamaya, and Pramāṇa to the Third rGyal tshab Go shri Grags pa dpal 'byor. gTsong lag phreng ba also conferred oral transmission of the *Collected Works* of Zhang brTson 'grus grags pa (1123–1193),<sup>297</sup> *sKyes rabs brgya rtsa* (*One Hundred Life Stories of Buddha*) by the Third Karmapa and *bKa' brgyud gser phreng* (*The Golden Chain of bKa' brgyud Hagiographies*) and many empowerments of Unexcelled Tantra (*sngags bla med*).<sup>298</sup>

According to the *Kam tshang Biographies*, gTsong lag phreng ba acted as a *karmācārya* during the ordination of the Ninth Karmapa and the ordination of the Fourth rGyal tshab *sprul sku* Grags pa don grub with novice vow in 1566.<sup>299</sup> Interestingly, he was also one of the *karmācārya* for the Third rGyal tshab Go shri Grags pa dpal 'byor's ordination of the novice vow.<sup>300</sup>

When the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag was ordained with the monk's vow, gTsong lag phreng ba was *karmācārya*.<sup>301</sup> Later, when he was ordained with the novice vows, gTsong lag phreng ba took the role of keeping the time (*dus bsgo ba*) while the Eighth Karmapa acted as *upādhyāya*, and Karma 'phrin las pa as *karmācārya*.<sup>302</sup> According to the

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<sup>295</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 62: *rgyal ba 'di nyid kyi zhal slob kyi gtso bo rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas dbang phyug rdo rje/ thams cad mkhyen pa dKon mchog yan lag /rgyal tshab skul sku na rim gnyis rnams la bka' brgyud rin po che'i zab chos dbang lung mtha' yas bum gang byo'i tshul du 'bul ba mdzad.*

<sup>296</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II p. 62–63: *rgyal ba nyid dang rnam dbyer med pa'i 'jam dbyangs don grub dpal bzang po dang mkhan chen legs pa don grub dpal bzang po dang grub chen dngos grub bzang po sogs bstan pa la bya ba rgya cher mdzad pa du ma dang.* Sangs rgyas dpal grub was also a student and the biographer of the Eighth Karmapa (Rheingans 2017: 66).

<sup>297</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba simply mentions Zhang. He likely refers to Zhang brTson 'grus grags pa.

<sup>298</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, Vol. II, p. 64: *rje dpa' bo'i drung nas snga phyir 'dul ba/ phar phyin/ tshad ma rnams kyi bshad pa dang / zhang gi bka' 'bum/ skeyes rabs brgya rtsa/ bka' brgyud gser phreng dang sngags bla med kyi skor dbang rab tu mang po zhus.*

<sup>299</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 61: *rje zhwa dmar pas mkhan po dang rgyal ba nyid kyi las slob mdzad de dad pa'i dge 'dun bcu'i dbus su mchog gi sprul sku dbang phyug rdo rje dang / rgyal tshab sprul sku grags pa don grub gnyis dge tshul sgrub par mdzad.* It is also worth noting that it is the year gTsong lag phreng ba passed away. (Si tu Paṅ chen and 'Be lo, *ibid.* p. 144: *me stag nag zlar sras mkhar du rje dgu pa dang lhan cig du/ rgyal ba gar gi dbang po 'i drung nas rab byung dang dge tshul mdzad.* It is in 1566, the third month of the Tibetan calendar. gTsong lag phreng ba passed away in the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar in the same year. (Si tu Paṅ chen and 'Be lo, *ibid.* p. 62: *de nas dgung lo re gsum zla ba bcu pa'i tshes bcu drug gi tho rangs su mya ngan las 'da' ba'i tshul bstan no.*

<sup>300</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies* vol. II, p. 64: *dpal karma pas mkhan po dang / gtsug lag phreng ba'i slob dpon mdzad de bar ma rab byung dang dge tshul gnang.*

<sup>301</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 74: *rje rgyal dbang mi bskyod zhabs nyid mkhan po dang las slob gtsug lag phreng ba.*

<sup>302</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol II, p. 74: *yol gyi yang dben theg chen rtser rje thams cad mkhyen pas mkhan po dang / rje phrin las zhabs kyi las slob rje dpa' bos dus bsgo mdzad de/ dgung lo bcu bzhi pa la dge tshul gyi bslab pa zhe.*

*Kam tshang Biographies*, gTsug lag phreng ba also bestowed the oral transmission of bKa' 'gyur on the Fifth Zhwa dmar.<sup>303</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also gave teachings to the Ninth Karmapa on Nāropa's six doctrines,<sup>304</sup> *O rgyan bsnyen sgrub*,<sup>305</sup> six unions (*sbyor drug*), generation and perfection stages teachings of Vajravārāhī (*Phag mo'i bskyed rdzogs*), Four-lettered Mahāmudrā (*yi ge bzhi pa*), Fivefold Mahāmudrā (*Inga ldan*) and others. He also bestowed on him the bodhisattva vow of both traditions (Madhyamaka tradition of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and the Cittamātra tradition of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*).<sup>306</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba also gave teachings to the Fifth Zhwa dmar and the Fourth rGyal tshab sprul sku, including the six doctrines (Tib. *chos drug*, Skt. *ṣaḍdharma*), six yogas (*sbyor drug*), threefold vajra approach (*rdo rje bsnyen sgrub*)<sup>307</sup> and tantric consent for Dud sol ma (*Dud sol ma'i rjes gnang*).<sup>308</sup>

The editors of the *Collected Works* count the Second Karma 'phrin las pa, Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po, as a student of gTsug lag phreng ba.<sup>309</sup> However, gTsug lag phreng ba only includes him among his teachers of spiritual connection.<sup>310</sup>

The *Kam tshang Biographies* lists some political leaders as gTsug lag phreng ba's students, including the Yar 'brog ruler Khri dpon g.Yu lo, Sa skyong bSod nams rab brtan,<sup>311</sup> and the Lho stod ruler gSang bdag rdo rje.<sup>312</sup>

It can be seen that the gTsug lag phreng ba's students include figures of the highest status in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, such as the Ninth Karmapa. Besides conferring tantric teachings on them, gTsug lag phreng ba also played an active role in bestowing their ordination vows. However, it appears that his engagement in teaching philosophical subjects is not as significant as his other duties, such as conferring empowerments and tantric initiations or writings.

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<sup>303</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 74: *rje dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i drung du bka' 'gyur ro 'tshal rin po che'i lung dbu tshugs*.

<sup>304</sup> From the tantric point of view, there is no separate instruction of Mahāmudrā from Nāropa's six doctrines (Rheingans 2021: 169). See also Kragh (2011) on Nāropa's six doctrines.

<sup>305</sup> *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* describes it as a practice transmitted from Grub thob o rgyan pa (*Grub thob o rgyan pa nas brgyud pa'i rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub*).

<sup>306</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 61: *rgyal ba'i dbang por phyag chen chos drug /o rgyan bsnyen sgrub/ sbyor drug /phag mo'i bskyed rdzogs/ yi ge bzhi pa ro snyom lnga don sogs dang / gzhan yang byang sdom lugs gnyis/ phag mo'i dbang sogs phul*.

<sup>307</sup> Kapstein (1996: 279–280) explains: 'rDo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub, the "Service and Attainment of the Three Indestructible Realities," represents an extremely rare tradition, closely allied with the *Kalacakra Tantra*, and stemming from the teaching of the divine Vajrayogini, as gathered by the Tibetan Siddha O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) during his travels in the northwestern quarters of the Indian subcontinent.'

<sup>308</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, p. 104–105: *de nas rje dpa' bo'i drung nas dpon slob lhan rgyas kyis phyag chen chos drug sbyor drug rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub bka' srung dud sol ma'i rjes gnang bcas pa rnams gsan pa dang*.

<sup>309</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 13.

<sup>310</sup> Given gTsug lag phreng ba was older than the Second Karma 'phrin las pa, he might likely have been the teacher of the Second Karma 'phrin las pa. However, there is no evidence of the teachings of the Second Karma 'phrin las pa received. Similarly, gTsug lag phreng ba counts the Second Karma 'phrin las pa as his teacher, but he does not mention any specific teachings he received from him.

<sup>311</sup> Sa skyong bSod nams rab brtan was the one who requested gTsug lag phreng ba to write the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

<sup>312</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 62: *yar 'brog khri dpon g.yu lo ba/ sku rabs sa skyong rab brtan/ lho stod sa skyong gsang bdag rdo rje sogs zhabs tog shin tu che ba'i stobs kyi sa skyong du ma dang*.

## 2.4 Title of dPa' bo and Different Names of gTsug lag phreng ba

Being the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo Chos dbang lhun grub, gTsug lag phreng ba inherited the title 'dPa' bo'. Concerning this title that the First dPa' bo had obtained, he wrote:

In the past life, [there] appeared a supreme sovereign yogi  
Known as Chos dbang lhun grub  
[Who had] achieved clairvoyance and yogic discipline.  
To him, others declared the name 'dPa' bo.'<sup>313</sup>

In his biography of the First dPa' bo in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* gTsug lag phreng ba explains the title.

That time, for the Lord dPa' bo, because of mainly practising meditative commitment of Heart Essence of the *Dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro snying thig*),<sup>314</sup> the excitement of mind [to perform tantric feats] occurred in general. In particular, as a manner of entering many *dākinīs* in [his] mindstream, there appeared innumerable [supernormal events] such as speaking spontaneously on tantras not previously known, purifying broken *samayās* of students, prophesying future [events], walking on the lake as if on the land, showing the print of the horse of the land protectors and [drawing out] the statue of Re ma ti from the lake and returning it to the lake, hiding many handprints and footprints by casting them onto the lake, and so on. All [people] were amazed by this and some determined that [he] was insane. Most of [the people] thought [him] to be a 'dPa' bo.' [Thus] the name dPa' bo came to be known.<sup>315</sup>

Therefore, it appears that the title 'dPa' bo', which is generally translated as 'hero,' has yogic or tantric connotations rather than the ordinary meaning of bravery.<sup>316</sup> This indicates that the title portrays the dPa' bo as an accomplished tantric master steeped in the practice of the Heart Essence of the *Dākinīs*.

gTsug lag phreng ba had his own name bestowed upon him by the Eighth Karmapa when he received the bodhisattva vow of both traditions (of Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna). In the

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<sup>313</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 2: *sngon tshe rnal 'byor dbang phyug dam pa zhig/ mtshan ni chos dbang lhun grub ces bya ba// mngon shes thob cing brtul zhugs grub pa byung // de la gzhan gyis dpa' bo'i mtshan du bsgrags.*

<sup>314</sup> *mkha' 'gro snying thig* is terma teachings revealed by Pad ma las 'brel rtsal. It is one of the Four Heart-Essences (*snying thig ya bzhi*). Buswell and Lopez (eds.) 2013, under s.v. *mkha' 'gro snying thig*, explains that 'These RDZOGS CHEN teachings are said to have been transmitted by PADMASAMBHAVA to Princess PADMA GSAL and to YE SHES MTSO RGYAL. The treasure texts were discovered by PADMA LAS 'BREL RTSAL and were later included in the SNYING THIG YABZHI, the fourfold collection of snying thig teachings by KLONG CHEN PA.'

<sup>315</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. III, p. 358: *de'i tshe rje dpa' bo 'di thugs dam gyi gtso bo mkha' 'gro snying thig la mdzad pa'i dbang gis spyir thugs nyams 'ur zhing khyad par du mkha' 'gro mang po thugs rgyud la zhugs pa'i tshul gyis sngon ma grags pa'i rgyud mang po sha ra ra gsung ba dang chos nyan rnam ki dam tshig nyams chag sel ba dang ma 'ongs pa lung bstan pa dang mtsho'i steng la sa gzhi la bya ba ltar 'byon pa dang mtsho nang nas zhing skyong gi chibs rjes dang re ma ti'i sku sogs bstan zhing slar mtshor bskyal/ phyag rjes zhabs rjes mang du byang ba rnam mtshor bskiyur zhing sbas pa sogs dpag med byung bas thams cad ha las te kha cig gis smyor bar thag good/ phal cher gyis dpa' bo zhig yin pa 'dra zhes mtshan dpa' bor chags.*

<sup>316</sup> Buswell and Lopez (eds.) 2013, s.v. *vīra* explain 'In Sanskrit and Pāli, "hero" is a common epithet of the Buddha. The word is also used for a bodhisattva skilled in tantric practices who accompanies a *dākinī* during the *ganacakra* (tantric feast) ritual.' Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 144) also point out that the First dPa' bo earned the title as a token of attaining results in religious practice.

*Kam tshang Biographies*, Belo and Situ explain *gtsug lag* as a general term for scriptures and sciences.<sup>317</sup> They caution that *gtsug lag* should not be understood as *vihāra* (*gtsug lag khang*), which means monastery.<sup>318</sup> Thus, they repudiate the translation of his name as *Vihāra Mālā* (Garland of Monasteries) as erroneous.<sup>319</sup>

*gTsong lag phreng ba* appears to allude to some form of divination sought by the Eighth Karmapa while giving this name to him. He mentions that the Eighth Karmapa ordered his attendants to place an astrological diagram (*sa ris*) in front of him. Having looked at it for a while, the Eighth Karmapa named him *gTsong lag phreng ba* which can be roughly rendered as *Garland of Scriptures* (hermeneutically, as the one with ceaseless knowledge of scriptures).<sup>320</sup>

*gTsong lag phreng ba* also had other names given to him. *dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po* named him *sPrul sku Kun bzang 'dzam gling nyi zla ltar grags pa* (All-Good Reincarnated Being Famed like the Sun and Moon in the World).<sup>321</sup> Upon reception of the novice vow, he was named *Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa*.<sup>322</sup>

## 2.5 Deeds as a Scholar

As is the case for many Tibetan scholars, the assessment of *gTsong lag phreng ba* as a scholar is based on his compositions of texts. These cover almost all the genres known to Tibetan studies.

*gTsong lag phreng ba* served as a scribe of the Eighth Karmapa's commentaries on many occasions, including for the *So sor thar pa'i mdo'i 'grel pa rin chen 'byung gnas* and the *Slob dpon dbyangs can bzang pos nye bar stsal ba'i dril bu rim pa lnga pa'i khrid*.<sup>323</sup> Serving as a scribe to an established scholar like the Eighth Karmapa and writing a sophisticated commentary could also be considered a scholarly deed since it would demand a highly advanced level of familiarity with the content as well as grammatical erudition.

Furthermore, at the command of the Eighth Karmapa, *gTsong lag phreng ba* wrote the introductory part (*gleng gzhi*), linking parts in the middle (*bar gyi mtshams sbyor*), and the

<sup>317</sup> Zhang Yisun also defines *gtsug lag* as '*sde snod dam gsung rab*' (scriptural collections or Buddha's words).

<sup>318</sup> MW, s.v. *vihāra*, defines it as '(with Buddhists or Jains) a monastery or temple (originally a hall where the monks met or walked about; afterwards these halls were used as temples).' MAC also defines it as 'Buddhist (or Jain) monastery or temple.'

<sup>319</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*. vol. II, p. 58: *byang sdom gyi lugs gnyis ka stsal/ dpal gtsug lag phreng ba zhes pa'i mtshan gsol/ gtsug lag ni sde snod dang rig gnas thams cad kyi spyi ming yin pas/ bihāra bsgyur ba'i gtsug lag khang gi don ni min pas bihar mā lā bri ba rnams ni ches rmod pa'i las so*.

<sup>320</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 32: *rtsis kun btus pa'i ri mo thob cig gsungs// legs par btab pas gzigs pa'i tshul du mdzad// gtsug lag phreng ba zhes byar ming du btags*. One can speculate here that *gTsong lag phreng ba* meant to say that the Eighth Karmapa foresaw through divination that he would become well-versed in scriptures since it was before he started to study under the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>321</sup> '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 15: *sprul sku kun bzang 'dzam gling nyi zla ltar// grags pa zhes byar bdag gi ming du btags*.

<sup>322</sup> See section 'Ordination' regarding the meaning of the name. For the variations in the abbreviation of *dPal Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa*, see Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 148).

<sup>323</sup> In the colophon to the *So sor thar pa'i mdo'i 'grel pa rin chen 'byung gnas*, The Eighth Karmapa writes *zhes bya ba 'di ni karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje zhes bya ba'i lhag pa'i bsam pas/ rjes 'jug rnams la chos sbyin du byas pa'i yi ge pa ni sākya'i dge slong spong ba pa gtsug lag phreng bas bgyis pa'o*.

final homogenisation (*tha ma'i mthun 'gyur*)<sup>324</sup> to the commentary of the *Single Intention* (*dgongs gcig*).<sup>325</sup>

As discussed in the section 'Education and an Overview of His Life', gTsong lag served as a recitation tutor for five years at the command of his root teacher, the Eighth Karmapa. In these ways, he engaged in various scholarly activities. Owing to the scarcity of materials on his life and events, it is, however, difficult to be certain about the significance of information left abbreviated and condensed in his auto-hagiographies.

## 2.6 Other Major Activities of His Life

The *Kam tshang Biographies* mentions that gTsong lag phreng ba acted as a regent for Zhwa dmar and the Karmapa until Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag and rGyal tshab sprul sku Grags pa don grub returned from Kham, where they travelled to invite the young Ninth Karmapa, the reincarnation of the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>326</sup> Establishing the monastic seat, Karma rig 'dzin sgrub mchog sde bzhi, was also one of gTsong lag phreng ba's significant activities (as pointed out in the section 'Education and an Overview of His Life').

As an important figure in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, gTsong lag phreng ba installed the Fifth Zhwa dmar as regent after the passing of the Eighth Karmapa. He built a new temple (*mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang*) at Gro bo lung and transferred the body of the Eighth Karmapa to mTshur phu after he passed away in Yar stod ra mo.<sup>327</sup>

## 2.7 Non-sectarian Outlook

gTsong lag phreng ba's non-sectarian outlook likely began to take shape at a young age while studying under teachers of different traditions. The *Kam tshang Biographies* mentions that at the age of sixteen, he had even received teachings of Bo dong Thams cad mkhyen pa from Bo dong sprul sku 'Chi med dpal bzang.<sup>328</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba's connection with 'Chi med dpal bzang had begun at the age of seven.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> The term *tha ma'i mthun 'gyur* appears to mean making the text a coherent whole, and final polishing to make the text presentable.

<sup>325</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 35: *legs par bstsal nas de nyid gleng gzhi dang // bar gyi mtshams sbyor tha ma'i mthun 'gyur bcas// zin bris nyid kyi tshul du gyis shig gsungs// de ltar bgyis te bka' 'bum nang na bzhugs*. This text is dealt with in the fourth chapter.

<sup>326</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. I, p. 60: *thams cad mkhyen pa dkon mchod yan lag dang rgyal tshab sprul sku grags pa don grub gnyis mdo khams su mchog gi sprul sku dbang phyug rdo rje spyen 'dren la phebs nas/ rje yab sras rnams khams phyogs nas ma phebs kyi bar du zhwa dmar nag gi rgyab tshab kyi khur bzhes*. gTsong lag phreng ba does not mention the duration, would not have been more than a few months.

<sup>327</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 11: *rgyal dbang mchog yar stod ra mor dgongs pa chos dbyings su mnal ba'i sku dgung mtshur phur gdan drangs te zhugs 'bul sogs dgongs rdzogs sgrub cing / zhwa dmar lnga pa rgyal tshab tu mnga' gsol/ gro bo lung du mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang rten dang brten pa gsar bzhengs dang*. However, the *Kam tshang Biographies* does not mention the body of the Eighth Karmapa being transferred to mTsur phu.

<sup>328</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 57: *dgung lo bcu drug pa la smra ba'i dbang po 'chi med dpal bzang dang mjal te/ sbas snying spyi gshessum sogs bo dong thams cad mkhyen pa'i bka' chos mang po dang sgra snyan ngag sogs dpyis phyin par gsan*. Here *sbas snying spyi gsum* appears to be the three texts composed by Bo dong Thams cad mkhyen pa: *sBas don gsal ba'i nyi ma (sbas)*, *De nyid 'dus pa'i snying po'i chos spyod rab tu gsal ba (sying po)*, and *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag bshad pa (spyi)*.

<sup>329</sup> *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 10: *lo bdun tshe na 'jam dbyangs gnyis pa ni// dpal ldan 'chi med zhabs kyi rjes bzung nas*.

Additionally, at eleven, he received empowerment and instruction in the bKa' gdams tradition from sMyug la Paṅ chen Ngag dbang grags pa (as discussed in the section 'The Eight Kind Teachers').

gTsong lag phreng ba was tolerant of the Bon religion. In a letter to Rin spungs pa leaders mTsho skyes rdo rje and Don yod rdo rje, he even advocated performing longevity rituals (*sku rim*) according to the Bon tradition.<sup>330</sup> Although he clarifies that they are to be done only to avert harm and obstacles in the present life, this acceptance still shows some form of tolerance. He does not simply reject the Bon religious tradition as devoid of any benefits.<sup>331</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba professes himself to be a practitioner of various religious traditions. For instance, he counts himself as a practitioner of rDzogs chen, admitting that he has arrived at a point where all the appearances are exhausted into *dharmadhātu* (*chos nyid zad sar 'khyol*).<sup>332</sup> However, gTsong lag phreng ba admits that he did not receive rDzogs chen teachings, but their meaning arose clearly to him.<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, he considers himself a practitioner of Mahāmudrā since he understood that all phenomena are sealed in the Great Seal from the very beginning.<sup>334</sup>

Although he is not the first bKa' brgyud pa master to accept their validity, gTsong lag phreng ba vigorously defends the teachings of rDzogs chen. The appreciation of this tradition goes back to the bKa' brgyud pa hierarchs. sGam po pa occasionally affirmed the parallel nature of rDzogs chen and Mahāmudrā.<sup>335</sup> The Second Karmapa Karma Pakshi held Dzogchen and Mahāmudrā to be one in essence and meaning.<sup>336</sup> The Third Karmapa is even said to have declared himself as the emanated figure of Vimalamitra. bDud 'joms rin po che notes:

The venerable Karma Pakshi [Karmapa II], who had been Garap Dorje's disciple Toktsewa, remembered that previous life in which he had comprehended the six million four hundred thousand verses of the Great Perfection. Owing to this, and to his study of the Great Perfection under Katokpa Campabum, and so on, he obtained accomplishment. The all-knowing Rangjung Dorje [Karmapa III] asserted himself to be the emanation of Vimalamitra and, having become the master of the teaching of the Innermost Spirituality, brought forth treasures of intention as well.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Rin spungs pa khu dbon la chab shog*, p. 177: *gshen rab gzhung sogs 'jig rten la bsten pa'i pa'i /sku rim rnams kyang mi 'dor mdzad pa'i rigs*.

<sup>331</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Rin spungs pa khu dbon la chab shog*, p. 177: *'bras bu phun tshogs dpyad bzod ma yin kyang // gnas skabs nyer 'tshe cung zad sel byed pa*.

<sup>332</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 61.: *snang gsum chos nyid zad sar 'khyol// rdzogs chen pa zhig yin nam snyam*.

<sup>333</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa zab gsal gi gter mdzod rab tu sbas pa'i gtam mo*, fol. 17b–18a: *rdzogs pa chen po'i chos bka' ma thob kyang / rdzogs chen don kun shin tu yid la gsal*.

<sup>334</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 61: *phyag rgyas chos rnams thams cad la// gzod nas btab med thebs par shes// phyag chen pa zhig yin nam snyam*.

<sup>335</sup> Jackson (1994: 29–30).

<sup>336</sup> Kaptstein (1985: 170).

<sup>337</sup> dDud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje; trans. Dorje, Gyurme, (1991: 922).

gTsong lag phreng ba also acknowledges practising the Six Unions (*sbyor drug*) of the Kālacakra tradition.<sup>338</sup> He also professes to know the resultant state as intrinsic to oneself in line with the practices of the Path and Result (*lam 'bras*) teaching of the Sa skya tradition.<sup>339</sup> Having realised all appearances as awareness, gTsong lag phreng ba feels that he also practised the Pacifying Tradition (*zhi byed*) founded by Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>340</sup>

Another practice done by gTsong lag phreng ba was *gcod*, which literally means 'cutting'. It is a religious system established by Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas (d.1117) and Ma gchig lab sgron (1055–1153) to cut off self-clinging.<sup>341</sup>

It is also evident that gTsong lag phreng ba thinks of himself as a bKa' gdams practitioner. He asserts that he continually practises exchanging self and other (*bdag gzhan brje ba*), one of the main practices of the bKa' gdams tradition.<sup>342</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba also stresses that he practised the different traditions of the bKa' brgyud pa school. For instance, he sees himself as a lineage holder of the Dwags po tradition in general because of possessing characteristics such as having deep devotion to the lama, devoting one's life to religion, and renouncing the concerns of this life.<sup>343</sup> More specifically, he regards himself as a 'Bri gung pa in line with the 'Bri gung understanding of the nonduality of Vajrayāna and Vinaya.<sup>344</sup> This appears to be one of the meanings of the *Single Intention* (*dgongs gcig*) teaching of the 'Bri gung tradition, which he received from the Eighth Karmapa.

gTsong lag phreng ba was also confident that he practised the Tshal pa tradition within the bKa' brgyud school. He says that he holds the ground of *sgom ma mo chen mo*,<sup>345</sup> and sees himself identical, in the sense of being a hidden yogi (*sbas pa'i rnal 'byor*), to sTag lung thang pa, the founder of the sTags lung branch of the bKa' brgyud tradition. Having

<sup>338</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *nam pa kun gyi mchog ldan pa'i// stong nyid dbyings su 'bad rtsol zhing // ting 'dzin gyi rab mchog las mi ldang // sbyor drug pa zhig yin nam snyam.*

<sup>339</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *'bras bu rang chas nyid du shes// lam 'bras pa zhig yin nam snyam.* Buswell, and Lopez (eds.) 2013, s.v. 'lam 'bras' state 'The practices convey to the practitioner the insight that the nature of the basis (*gzhi*), path (*lam*), and result (*'bras bu*) is the same...' Stearns (2002:9) states that *lam 'bras* teachings were first taught to Virūpa by Vajra Nairātmyā.

<sup>340</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *blo yi 'jur mdud rang sar zhig/ cir snang rig pa dri ma med// zhi byed pa zhig yin nam snyam.*

<sup>341</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *gang dang gang du 'du shes pa// chos nyid thad ka'i ngo bor bca'd// bsn'yems byed 'dzin pa shul ma lus// lha med 'dre med kyi tshar tshad byung // gcod yul ba zhig yin nam snyam.* Edou (1996: 6) asserts that the *gcod* stands as an autonomous tradition with its own history and doctrines dissimilar from other religious traditions. *Chod* is said to have derived from the Prajñāpāramitā ideal and bodhisattva means of compassion (Edou 1996: 9). One can assume that gTsong lag phreng ba's practice of *gcod* need not be taken in the sense of performing it, wielding drum and trumpet while dwelling in charnel grounds. He appears to mean that he understood the essence of *gcod*, which means severing attachment to one's body.

<sup>342</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *kun rdzob byang sems legs bsgoms pas// bdag gzhan du brje la thogs pa med// kun rdzob kyi klong nas don dam brdol// dbyer med du tshogs gnyis rgyun mi 'chad// bka' gdams pa zhig yin nam snyam.*

<sup>343</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *bla ma'i mos gus rgyun chad med// lus srog chos kyi phyogs su btang // tshe 'di snying nas phyi phyag 'tshal// dwags po'i brgyud 'dzin yin nam snyam.*

<sup>344</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 62: *stong nyid rgyu 'bras dbyer med go/ ci byed lnga ldan gyis lam du gtong // gsang sngags dang 'dul ba dbyer med shes// 'bri gung pa zhig yin nam snyam.*

<sup>345</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p.62–63: *gzer gcig gi gnad kyis gzer lnga thebs// sgom ma chen mo'i rang sa 'dzin// lam mchog mthar thug rgyud la 'dres// zhang tshal pa'i brgyud 'dzin yin nam snyam.* The Tsal pa branch of the bKa' brgyud school is considered to have been founded by Zhang tshal pa (1123–1193) also known as brTson 'grus grags pa. *sgom ma mo chen mo* is probably the Mahāmudrā form of practice according to Zhang tshal pa.

renounced the eight worldly concerns (Tib. *aṣṭalokadharmā*: Skt. *'jig rten chos brgyad*), he takes himself to be following in the footsteps of two disciples of gTsang pa rga ras, Lo (Lo ras pa dBang phyug brtson 'grus (1187–1250)) and rGod (rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, (1189–1258)).<sup>346</sup>

Having realised the empty nature of reality and being accustomed to the vital points of Vajrayāna, gTsug lag phreng ba also understands himself to have obtained the blessings of gTsang pa rgya ras, the founder of the 'Brug pa bKa' rgyud pa tradition.<sup>347</sup> This shows some form of appreciation toward the tradition.

In conclusion, one can gather that gTsug lag phreng ba adopted an ecumenical outlook toward different religious traditions, ranging from the Sa skya to the Bon and Bo dong traditions. One can also hypothesise that the adoption of this tolerance was an attempt to bring unity among religious traditions that were antagonistic toward each other. gTsug lag phreng declares that he dwells in the free and all-pervasive sphere of mind where sectarianism and prejudice do not operate.<sup>348</sup>

The fact that gTsug lag phreng ba attempts to show that the various traditions are all compatible and can be practised by a single person indicates the likelihood that he saw difficulties in the relationship even between bKa' brgyud pa traditions such as 'Bri gung pa, Tshal pa, and so on.<sup>349</sup> While it is difficult to ascertain whether gTsug lag phreng ba practised the various religious traditions as he professed, his willingness to put them into practice shows tolerance towards religious systems outside his own.<sup>350</sup>

In the self-written catalogue of his works, gTsug lag phreng ba also wrote on bKa' gdams traditions. He titles this writing *bKa' gdams thig le bcu drug gi yang snying*.<sup>351</sup>

One can conclude that some form of non-sectarianism, as evident in gTsug lag phreng ba, was present from this early period. However, it only became self-consciously and widely promoted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. E. Gene Smith also notes that gTsug lag phreng ba was sympathetic to the traditions targeted.<sup>352</sup> The term '*ris med*',<sup>353</sup> which means non-sectarianism, was used systematically for the first time by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899).<sup>354</sup> However, the idea of non-sectarianism was as old as sectarianism.

<sup>346</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 63: *chos brgyad thal ba rlung la phyar// rkyen bzang ngan kun la ro snyoms pa// lo rgod kyi rnam thar 'khyongs sam snyam*.

<sup>347</sup> *Don tshan dgu pa*, p. 63: *yin lugs kyi rtogs pa nang nas shar// thabs gsang sngags lam gyi gnad la 'dris// rten 'brel gyi 'char sgo ngang gis byung // dpal rgya ras kyi byin rlabs zhugs sam snyam*.

<sup>348</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal gTsug lag phreng ba 'i rang tshul mdor bsdus pa don tshan dgu pa 'o*, vol. XI, p. 63: *chos kun gyi gnad gsang dus gcig go/ su yi phyogs su ma lung zhing // gang gi rgya ru ma chad pa// gu yangs khyab brdal gyi klong na 'khyams*.

<sup>349</sup> For instance, Rheingans (2021: 215) reports a contest between the Karma and 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud school for patrons. However, they enjoyed good relations in Bya yul (ibid. p.76).

<sup>350</sup> At times, his practice of different traditions appears symbolic and need not be taken literally.

<sup>351</sup> IHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med also mentions this title in his catalogue of the transmission of gTsug lag phreng ba's writings he received.

<sup>352</sup> Smith (2001: 239).

<sup>353</sup> Ringu Tulku (2006: 1–2) explains *ris med* as follows: '*Ri* or *chok-ri* in Tibetan means “one-sided,” “partisan,” or “sectarian.” *Me* means “no.” So, *Ri-me* means “not taking sides,” “non-partisan,” or “nonsectarian.”’ However, he notes that non-sectarian practitioners can choose one tradition over others as their principal tradition while appreciating others at the same time (ibid. p. 2).

<sup>354</sup> Oldmeadow (2012: 60).

E. Gene Smith declares, “The roots of eclecticism and tolerance are sunk as deep into the soil of Tibetan tradition as those of sectarianism and bigotry.”<sup>355</sup>

## 2.8 Geopolitical Networks and Political Involvement

Being the reincarnation of the First dPa' bo, gTsong lag phreng ba inherited a political network and support. Don yod rdo rje relied on the First dPa' bo as his root guru (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*).<sup>356</sup> He also gained the support of the Rin spungs pas more generally because he was a religious master of the Karma bKa' brgyud school that had started to gain support from the Rin spungs pas in the 1480s.<sup>357</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba also appears to have nurtured good connections with the various political leaders of his time, as evidenced by the letters sent to them in the form of religious instructions and condolences for their bereaved family members. Nevertheless, he was not actively involved in political affairs, as were other bKa' brgyud pa masters, including the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa and the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>358</sup> There is no evidence of any political involvement, such as mediation between political factions. His letters to political leaders and their family members appear to be religious in character, at least on the surface, although one cannot fully understand the motives behind them.<sup>359</sup> The letters are sometimes only a verse long. For instance, he writes to sDe pa Phun tshogs pa:<sup>360</sup>

Even if this life endures for a hundred years, [it is a] mere dream.  
Constant association [with this life?] is not free from the duality of virtue and non-virtue.<sup>361</sup>  
Now, at this time when [you have] qualities of liberation,  
Strive to make the aspiration for permanent [salvation] meaningful.<sup>362</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba's letters also contain religious advice on illness and condolences for bereaved families. For instance, he writes to Chod mdzad ma rDo rje sgröl ma, the daughter of Phun tshogs pa, sDe pa of Yar stod, on the means to cope with an illness.<sup>363</sup> He counsels her that illness should be considered a shade of conceptualisation (*rnam par rtog pa'i grib*

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<sup>355</sup> Smith (2001: 237).

<sup>356</sup> Don yod rdo rje had been a patron to many masters, mainly the bKa' brgyud pas, including dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po (1458–1532), and gTsang smyon He ru ka (1452–1507). DiValerio (2015: 144–145).

<sup>357</sup> Rheingans (2017: 41).

<sup>358</sup> Czaja (2013: 249). Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 52) also note that a contemporary of gTsong lag phreng ba, the Second Dalai Lama dGe 'dun rgya mtsho (1475–1542), was also involved in political matters.

<sup>359</sup> It is important to note that he groups all those letters under the title *skal ldan byang chub tu bskul ba'i pho nya snying po'i skyes kyi dam pa 'phrin yig tshigs bcad kyi tshogs* (*A collection of letters in verse that is the essence of noble gifts: the messenger that encourages fortunate ones to liberation*). Therefore, the title of the collections implies that these letters are of a religious nature. However, one cannot deny the possibility of political impact and gain given that some of the letters are sent to political leaders.

<sup>360</sup> Czaja (2013: 287) gives some information on Phun tshogs pa as sDe pa of Yar stod.

<sup>361</sup> Here gTsong lag phreng ba appears to mean transcending worldly virtue and non-virtue.

<sup>362</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *sDe pa phun tshogs pa la chab shog*, p. 210: *tshe 'di lo brgya thub kyang rmi lam tsam// rtag tu 'grogs pa dge sdig gnyis las med// da lta mtho ris yon tan ldan dus 'dir// gtan 'dun don dang ldan par 'bad 'tshal lo*.

<sup>363</sup> She is identified as the daughter of Phun tshogs pa, sDe pa of Yar stod (Czaja 2013: 289).

ma).<sup>364</sup> He advises that harmful spirits (*gdon*) are merely concepts, to be taken as one's lama.<sup>365</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also gave meditation instructions to leaders such as sDe pa Kun dga'.<sup>366</sup> In a letter, he advised sDe pa Kun dga' to remain simply undistracted in the union of generation and completion phase (*bskyed rim and rdzogs rim*), since the appearance aspect of the mind is Vajrayoginī while the empty aspect is Cakrasaṃvara.<sup>367</sup>

In a letter to a certain sDe pa, he acknowledges the receipt of a letter requesting him to live longer. He shares his state of old age poignantly. He further advises that the sDe pa should be a spiritual teacher (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*) in the guise of a king and rule his subjects with loving kindness. gTsug lag phreng ba also urges him to pacify discord among the traditions of Buddha-dharma.<sup>368</sup>

Although his relationship with mTsho skyes rdo rje and Don yod rdo rje had been strong since childhood, gTsug lag phreng ba appears to have nurtured and perpetuated this connection through the exchange of letters. In one letter, gTsug lag phreng ba praises them by applauding their performance of the vast deeds of a great king while simultaneously taking steps toward the staircase of liberation. He lauds them for their religious enterprise, advancing like a waxing moon and their gaining popularity.<sup>369</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also sent letters to some leaders, such as Chos blon (religious minister) Ja kā Chen po and dPon po Shar pa. However, without biographical information, these two figures remain obscure, rendering it difficult to understand the nature of their relationship with gTsug lag phreng ba.

In addition to letters sent to various political leaders, gTsug lag phreng ba also included a significant amount of material about them in the section of songs *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs* (*The Collections of the Treasury of Songs Uttered at the Exhortation of Others*). For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba lauds Ngag gi dbang po as the one who ruled according to dharma:

The one who is born in the land of Lhasa,  
Known as Chos kyi rgyal po [gTsug lag phreng ba],  
Wrote down whatever came to mind, avoiding poetry  
To please [you], the king of people known as Ngag gi dbang po

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<sup>364</sup> It appears to be the orthographic error of *rnam par rtog pa'i grib pa* (*obscuration of conceptualisation*).

<sup>365</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Chos mdzad ma rdo rje sgröl ma la chab shog*, p. 213: *gdon bya ba rang gi rnam rtog ma gtogs med pas gdon 'dzin khyug byung dus de ga bla ma yin pas gsol ba thob*. Here one can speculate that it was a means to maintain a good political network since Chos mdzad ma rDo rje sgröl ma was the daughter of sDe pa Phun tshogs pa.

<sup>366</sup> sDe pa Kun dga' appears to be the leader of sKyid ru. Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 119) report on Tāranātha's visits to sKyid ru on the invitation of sDe pa Kun dga'.

<sup>367</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *sDe pa kun dga' ba la chab shog*, p. 212: *shes pa'i rang bzhin stong pa de rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang rnam pa gsal myong de 'khor lo sdom pa yin pas nam yang 'bral mi shes par lhun grub tu gnas pas gang snang gi rnam pa bskyed rim/ ngo bo rdzogs rim ste bskyed rdzogs dbyer med du gnas pa de nyid la lhod de ba'i ngang du ma yengs tsam du 'jog pa lags*.

<sup>368</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Bya yul nas sde pa la btsal ba*, p. 214: *'gro kun pha mar mkhyen pa'i byams pas skyongs// chab 'bang gtogs pa'i skye bo thams cad la// rgyal po'i tshul gyis dge ba'i bshes gnyen mdzod// sde 'khrug gtogs tshes mnar med skye bar gsungs// de bas bstan pa'i dben kun zhi bar mdzod*.

<sup>369</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Rin spungs pa khu dbon la chab shog*. vol. XI, p. 176: *rlabs chen rgyal po chen po'i bgyi ba dang // lhan cig thar pa'i them skal gzud pa ni// nyin bzhin zla ltar gong du 'phel ba yi// snyan pa'i rnga gsang rna ba'i bcud len gyur*.

The [one who] ruled the land through Dharma  
[And] who controlled some [parts] of the southern land.<sup>370</sup>

Furthermore, there are instances where gTsong lag phreng ba wrote on Mahāmudrā including the *Phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan gyi gdams pa dgos 'dod stsol ba mchog gi nor bu'i gter* (*The Instructions on the Fivefold Mahāmudrā: The Treasury of Supreme Jewels that Grants Wishes*) specifically for political leaders such as Don yod bstan 'dzin rdo rje rgyal po.<sup>371</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that gTsong lag phreng ba was born and lived in an era of growing religious sectarianism and political upheavals. The pervasive religious partisanship and political turmoil led him to enunciate repeatedly and explicitly his disillusionment with Tibet. However, in the midst of religious partisanship involving physical conflict, gTsong lag phreng ba expressed appreciation for different religious traditions.

Despite the political turmoil in which religious figures often became entangled, gTsong lag phreng ba appears to have remained unaffected. He seems to have maintained good relationships, as evident in his exchange of letters with political leaders and his conferring of teachings on them.

This chapter has indicated that the recognition of him as a *sprul sku* was unique. He was recognised by the public as a reincarnated being without a qualified lama seeking the recognition. Moreover, his narration of the extraordinary events in which, as a child, he proved to others his status as the genuine reincarnation also seems unique. While insiders to the tradition would take this account of events as a means to inspire students on the path of dharma, it is also probable that there had in fact been a need to establish the authenticity of his reincarnation against the backdrop of many religious figures falsely claiming to be incarnations during his time. gTsong lag phreng ba likely considers that the genuine *sprul sku* has to follow certain recognition criteria such as endorsement by a respected lama or a performance of tests on *sprul skus* to ensure authenticity, as in the case of the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>372</sup>

It has also been made clear in this chapter that gTsong lag phreng ba placed an equal emphasis on both study and meditative practices, as evidenced by the alternation between them.<sup>373</sup> While he has studied all five philosophical fields mainly under the Eighth Karmapa, the duration is reported to have been short. Yet gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that he understood them. Insiders of the tradition would take this as the hallmark of an enlightened being.

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<sup>370</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs*, p. 294: *yul lha ldan ljongs su skyes pa gang / /ming chos kyi rgyal po zhes bya des/ /yul lho rgyud 'ga' la dbang bsgyur ba/ /sa chos kyi skyong ba mi yi rje/ /dpal ngag gi dbang po zhes pa'i slad/ /tshig sdeb sbyor spangs nas gang shar bkod.*

<sup>371</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan gyi gdams pa dgos 'dod stsol ba mchog gi nor bu'i gter*, p. 44: *lnga ldan nyams len mdor bsdu pa 'di ni/ dbang phyug dam pa'i mnga' bdag dpal lha btsan po rnams kyi gdung rigs las byung ba sa skyong Don yod bstan 'dzin rdo rje rgyal po'i don du dpal gTsong lag phreng bas bris pa.*

<sup>372</sup> Regarding the Eighth Karmapa's recognition and tests performed on the young Eighth Karmapa, see Rheingans (2017: 75–83).

<sup>373</sup> It is also important to note that philosophical studies are not the sole source of enlightenment and must be combined with meditative practices, as pointed out by Samuel (1993: 434).

With regard to his studies, we have also come to know from this chapter that gTsong lag phreng ba studied under many teachers in almost all the various fields, ranging from grammar to astrology and to philosophical subjects such as Madhyamaka. Through the discussion on the relations gTsong lag phreng ba formed with his multiple teachers, and the teachings he received from them, this chapter has also presented historical information about those teachers.

This chapter has also established that gTsong lag phreng ba was, and remains, an important figure in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. He was the root guru of the Ninth Karmapa, on whom he conferred many teachings still transmitted in the tradition. He also briefly served as the regent of the Karmapa and the Zhwa dmar pa.

Having presented an overview of the life of gTsong lag phreng ba, including a contextual study of his time, his recognition as a reincarnation, his education, and major events of his life, we shall now turn to his scholarly activities by exploring his *Collected Works* and the nature of their composition.

### Chapter III: gTsong lag phreng ba's Writings and His Scholarly Contributions

This chapter explores gTsong lag phreng ba's writings by studying the genres in which he wrote and the contents of his works to show the breadth of his output and give an impression of the topics that interested him. The extent of his work will also be explored by scanning the available texts contained in his *Collected Works*, the catalogue of his work he himself prepared, the *Glegs bam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba (A List of these Volumes that were Written by Myself)*, and the lists of his teaching received by later scholars. Different editions of his *Collected Works* and fragmented literature will also be explored to that end. This chapter will conclude by outlining the reception and transmission of his works to gain insight into the impact of his writing, and consider various writing styles adopted in his writings.

#### 3.1 The Overview of Genres and Contents of gTsong lag phreng ba's Writings

An equivalent term for 'genre' does not exist in Tibetan; only implicit ideas about it.<sup>374</sup> Nonetheless, from the beginning of the literature system in Tibet, the Tibetans classified their texts into different categories.<sup>375</sup> As a result, they implicitly generated genres.<sup>376</sup> It is noteworthy that the Indian literary system had a significant impact on the Tibetans after the twelfth century.<sup>377</sup> For instance, Indian Buddhist divisions of scriptures and sciences (*rig gnas*) were incorporated into Tibetan literary systems.<sup>378</sup>

In most cases, Tibetans classified their writing based on the subject matter.<sup>379</sup> The Tibetan *Collected Works* is an excellent ground for understanding the Tibetan way of classifying literature.<sup>380</sup> As Rheingans notes, academic research on the genre system of Tibetan texts is in its early stages.<sup>381</sup> Nevertheless, academic literature on the Tibetan genre system, such as Rheingans (2015) and Schwieger (2011), provides excellent material from which to gain an understanding of the typology of Tibetan literature.

It appears that one can chart genres in Tibetan studies on various grounds. For instance, Cabezón and Jackson note that Tulku Thondup divided them into religious and secular sections with subsections based on various factors, such as the genesis of the literature.<sup>382</sup> The classification appears fluid without a standard genre system. Rheingans observes:

Scholars in pre-modern Tibet did not theorise extensively about genre or literature, but, encountering a mass of texts, developed implicit schemes and classifications through their cataloguing of work titles, table of contents and the like.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 21).

<sup>375</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 21).

<sup>376</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 29).

<sup>377</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 15). Rheingans (2015: 2) notes that the Indian concept of literature and Buddhism has impacted the Tibetan literature systems.

<sup>378</sup> Roesler (2015: 33–38).

<sup>379</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 25).

<sup>380</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 23). For the classification of the *Collected Works* of various scholars including Bu ston, see Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 23–25).

<sup>381</sup> Rheingans (2015: 3).

<sup>382</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 26).

<sup>383</sup> Rheingans (2015: 2).

Furthermore, Rheingans sums up the state of academic studies on the classifications of Tibetan works:

In sum, most academics have considered implicit Tibetan classifications (i.e. canon organization, Tibetan title designations, tables of content-categorisations etc.) incomplete, and expanded them with additional etic categories, which are based on the extant Tibetan texts' content and form. Thereby Tibetologists created an overarching typology with meta-categories (Cabezón and Jackson's typology, Almogi's "genre categories"). In other words, researchers employed a variation of what Schoening called a "combination strategy", which, in essence, Taube (1966, 1969) had already laid out. Such a typology allocates a text to a certain category on the basis of more or less strictly defined criteria of title, content, form/structure. Herein lie a major challenge and various questions.<sup>384</sup>

This section will attempt to understand the genre, classification and contents of gTsong lag phreng ba's writing through the self-written catalogues of his works and the list of teachings received by some scholars.

### **3.1.1 An Overview of gTsong lag phreng ba's Works According to His Self-Written Catalogue**

This catalogue that gTsong lag phreng ba compiled himself contains most of the titles of his compositions and, on occasion, the table of contents of some specific texts such as the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Roesler notes that most Tibetan catalogues are organised based on subject matter and some based on chronology.<sup>385</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba's catalogue appears to have been largely organised by subject matter. He grouped his works into thirteen sections mainly on this basis.

gTsong lag phreng ba lists almost all his works in his catalogue. However, occasionally the listings do not present the title of his writings but only a statement of contents. Furthermore, it is often difficult to ascertain whether gTsong lag phreng ba refers to titles or simply contents, since many texts gTsong lag phreng ba enumerated are not extant.<sup>386</sup> In the absence of the texts, it is difficult to glean from the titles alone what the contents might be. Furthermore, gTsong lag phreng ba also sometimes does not provide the titles of his texts, but provides only the number of compositions on certain topics. For instance, he mentions 'nine sections on *brtan bzhus*,' rather than their titles. Since his writings on *brtan bzhus* (long life prayers) are no longer available, it is not possible to determine their content, size, and so on.

Not all his writings are listed in his self-written catalogue. It is also possible that gTsong lag phreng ba wrote some material after the composition of the self-written catalogue and did not update it. Additionally, he may not have found some writings worth including

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<sup>384</sup> Rheingans (2015: 14).

<sup>385</sup> Roesler (2015: 41).

<sup>386</sup> The missing texts, determined after comparing gTsong lag phreng ba's catalogue and the dPal brtsegs edition, are provided in the appendix.

because of their insignificance in size and content. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba does not list the title of his secret auto-hagiography. However, lHa bstun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650)<sup>387</sup> mentions it in his catalogues of gTsug lag phreng ba's teachings he had received.<sup>388</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba groups his *Collected Works* into the following thirteen categories:

- 1) Eulogy and collection of hymns of praise (*mchod brjod bstod tshogs kyi skor*)
- 2) Hagiography and the history of religion (*rnam thar chos 'byung gi skor*)
- 3) Language and medicine (*sgra dang sman dpyad kyi skor*)
- 4) Collection of sūtric and tantric scripture (*mdo rgyud lung bsdus kyi skor*)
- 5) Notes on commentaries (*rnam bshad zin bris kyi skor*)
- 6) *Sādhanas* of visualising maṇḍala (*mngon dkyil sgrub thabs kyi skor*)
- 7) Writings on daily dharma conduct (*bya ba chos spyod kyi skor*)
- 8) Unique writings such as auto-hagiography (*rang gi rtogs brjod la sogs pa thun mong ma yin pa'i skor*)
- 9) Explanatory texts of practice (*nyams len khrid yig gi skor*)
- 10) Writings known as advice, the teachings that strike the vital points (*gnad tu phog par 'doms pa zhal gdams su grags pa'i skor*)
- 11) Miscellaneous pith instructions (*man ngag sna tshogs pa'i skor*)
- 12) Catalogues and records of arrangement (*dkar chag bkod yig gi skor*)
- 13) Works on dedications and auspicious wishes (*bsngo ba bkra shis kyi skor*)

gTsug lag phreng ba subsumes all his writings of different genres under the thirteen categories.<sup>389</sup> However, comparing his catalogue with the available works contained in the *Collected Works* reveals that a substantial number of works remain undiscovered or lost.<sup>390</sup> The publishing note to the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* states that the edition could publish only one-third of the texts enumerated in gTsug lag phreng ba's self-written catalogue. Those who collected the texts believed that many had been lost due to political changes in Tibet.<sup>391</sup> They were likely referring to the power tussle between the dGe lugs and Karma bKa' brgyud schools, in which many bKa' brgyud pa sites were occupied or destroyed by the dGe lugs pa in the 1640s during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682).<sup>392</sup>

During the time of the Third dPa' bo incarnation, it is reported that sixteen volumes were available, since it is evident that the Third dPa' bo received their oral transmission from

<sup>387</sup> lHa bstun Nam mkha' 'jigs med was a rNying ma pa rDzogs chen master. Born in Byar in 1597, the rNying ma tradition considers him as an emanation of Vimalamitra and a fourteenth-century rNying ma master Kun mkhyen Dri med 'od zer (1308–1364). For his biography, see *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* pp. 488–490.

<sup>388</sup> lHa bstun Nam mkha' 'jigs med. *rDzogs chen pa kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba'i thog yig las/ rje btsun dam pa gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum gyi skor thob tshul*, p. 1230: *gsang ba'i rnam thar*.

<sup>389</sup> A full list of the texts under each classification is provided in the appendix.

<sup>390</sup> The appendix provides lists of the titles of the texts in the catalogue, and information on the texts extant and lost.

<sup>391</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 3: 'on te srid 'gyur rim pa'i skabs 'thor gyang song rkyaen da lam bka' 'bum dkar chag las 'byung ba'i chos tshan gyi rnam grangs sum cha gcig lag son byung bar (dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung 'bum) zhes mtshan gsol te dpe skrun 'grem spel zhu ba yin.

<sup>392</sup> Samuel (2021: 65).

the Fifth Zhwa dmar.<sup>393</sup> However, the total number of gTsug lag phreng ba's writings is difficult to know with certainty even by using the list given by him in his *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba simply lists *gZhan yang smon lam gyi rigs mang ba* (*And Other Many Forms of Aspirational Prayers*) without giving any definite number of his writings about it.

### 1) Eulogy and Collection of Hymns of Praise (*mchod brjod bstod tshogs kyi skor*),

In this section, gTsug lag phreng ba lists forty-six items of writing under this group with some further subitems under those. For instance, he mentions four praises to *dharmapālas* (*chos skyong la bstod pa bzhi*) under praises to *dharmapālas*. His objects of praise include Tibetan masters, including his root guru (the Eighth Karmapa) and his other teachers, including Chos rgyal bstan pa, one of his eight kind teachers. His hymns of praise are extended to the Buddha, Indian masters including Nāgārjuna and bKa' brgyud lineage holders such as Nāropa.

Another subsection, the *Collection of Hymns of Praise to Tutelary Deities* (*Lhag pa'i lha yi dam gyi lha la bstod pa'i tshogs*) includes praise of Amitāyus, Ratnasambhava, and Vajrasattva. As indicated in the section title, it appears that gTsug lag phreng ba composed hymns of praise as an offering (*mchod brjod*).<sup>394</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also includes literature on *brtan bzhugs* in this section.<sup>395</sup> Furthermore, two sections of praise for the sacred place of Tsā ri tra, poetically describing its qualities, are also listed under this section. gTsug lag phreng ba generally includes many kinds of praise, from praises to the historical Buddha to Indian masters and to the sacred sites of Buddhism. The majority of the texts for which titles are listed in this section remain undiscovered, however.

### 2) Hagiography and the History of Religion (*rnam thar chos 'byung gi skor*)

Five items in this section are listed in the self-written catalogue of gTsug lag phreng ba's works *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*.<sup>396</sup> This section includes hagiographical texts on Marpa and the Bodhisattva Mañibhadra. gTsug lag phreng ba also mentions the titles of the hagiographies of the lamas of the bKa' brgyud tradition, including the successive dPa' bo incarnations.<sup>397</sup> Regarding the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, gTsug lag phreng

<sup>393</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 243: *rje gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum po ti bcu drug dang/ rje zhwa dmar ba rang gi bka' 'bum rnams kyi ljags lung gnang*. A publishing note to the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* mentions that the biography of the Third dPa' bo mentions the existence of seventeen volumes. However, this is not mentioned in the Third dPa' bo's biography in the *Kam tshang Biographies*.

<sup>394</sup> *mchod pa* (offering) in Tibetan is broadly understood to include acts that generate merit (Makransky 1996: 315).

<sup>395</sup> Cabezón (1996: 350) reports that '*brtan bzhugs*' literally means 'abiding with stability' or 'remaining stable' and that such literature started in the 16th century in Tibet. Rheingans (2021: 153, footnote 675) also discusses the possibility of gTsug lag phreng ba composing *brtan bzhugs* for Karma 'phrin las pa. In the *Glegs lam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*, gTsug lag phreng ba mentions writings on *brtan bzhugs*. However, this material is not included in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>396</sup> *rJe dpa' bo sku skye na rim gyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snying po* is listed twice which appears to be an error.

<sup>397</sup> Concerning the dPa' bo incarnations, *rJe dpa' bo sku skye na rim gyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snying po* (*A Biography of the Successive Reincarnations of dPa' bo: the Essence of Marvel*) appears twice in the list. This seems to be an error since the titles do not differ in any way.

ba provides its full table of contents in this catalogue. Except for the biography of Marpa<sup>398</sup> and the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the other three writings are missing.

### 3) Language and Medicine (*sgra dang sman dpyad kyi skor*)

Under this heading, gTsong lag phreng ba lists his writing in two sections: language and medicine. The language section contains eleven pieces of literature, such as a manual for reading Sanskrit (*glegs sbyar klag thabs*), and an interlinear commentary (*mchan 'grel*) of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa* and commentaries for grammatical treatises (*Sum cu pa* and *rTags 'jug*). However, one can find only three of these writings in the *Collected Works*: a manual on reading Sanskrit, and commentaries for two grammatical treatises (*Sum cu pa* and *rTags 'jug*).

gTsong lag phreng ba also has one title on medicine listed as *Zur mkhar ba'i bye ba ring bsrel grangs can grangs med kyi snying po bsdus nas bkod pa* (*A Statement in Brief of the Finite and Infinite Essence of Zur mkhar ba's One Million Relics*). This writing appears to be a commentary on Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje's (1439–1475) *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel pod chung rab 'byams gsal ba'i sgron me* (*Ten Million Relics of Instructions: the Small Volume of Lamp that Illuminates Boundlessly*).<sup>399</sup> However, gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary appears to be only on some selected medical practices, rather than the whole medical text of Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje.<sup>400</sup>

### 4) Collection of Sūtric and Tantric Scriptures (*mdo rgyud lung bsdus kyi skor*)

gTsong lag phreng ba lists nine items under this section, including his writings on the scriptures from the sūtras and tantras such as the *Collection of Scriptures from Various Sūtras* (*mDo sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus*), *A Synopsis of Damamūkonāmasūtra* (*mdo mdzangs blun gyi don bsdus*), and a word summary of the *Damamūkonāmasūtra* (*mdo mdzangs blun gyi dom tshig*).

This section contains not only the collection of scriptures verbatim from sūtras and tantras but also the commentarial dimension and the simplification of the sūtric texts. However, because these texts are absent from the *Collected Works*, it is difficult to determine their nature, their content and their size.

### 5) Notes on Commentaries (*rnam bshad zin bris kyi skor*)

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<sup>398</sup> Ducher (2017: 43) notes that the biography of Marpa written by gTsong lag phreng ba provides extra information on the work of earlier biographers. Ducher used gTsong lag phreng ba's hagiography of Marpa as a primary source for the study of the life of Marpa in his monograph *Building a Tradition: The Lives of Mar-pa the Translator*. See Ducher (2017: 152–158).

<sup>399</sup> Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje was the maternal uncle of Karma 'phrin las pa, the prominent teacher of gTsong lag phreng ba (Rheingans 2021: 105). Karma 'phrin las pa also learned medicine from him starting in 1466 (Rheingans 2021: 241). Rheingans (2021: 51–52) provides some biographical information about Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje.

<sup>400</sup> Sikkim edition of Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje's *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel pod chung rab 'byams gsal ba'i sgron me* has two volumes.

This section appears to comprise notes (*zin bris*) on commentaries. It contains thirty-six pieces of writing.<sup>401</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba categorises this section into three parts: sūtra section, a section common to both sūtra and tantra, and a section exclusive to tantra.

The sūtra section has nine writings, including commentaries on Vinaya and the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. However, only the commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* is extant.

The section on both sūtra and tantra has only one text on *Single Intention* since this includes discussion of both sūtric and tantric points.<sup>402</sup> The section of exclusive tantra has twenty-two writings that deal purely with tantric teachings, such as teachings on Vajrayoginī.<sup>403</sup> It is also interesting to note that gTsong lag phreng ba subsumes his detailed commentary on astrology *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod* (*A Detailed Commentary of the Great Concise Treatise of Astrology, the Pith Instructions of Kālacaka: The Treasury of Jewels*) under the section of exclusively tantric writing.<sup>404</sup> Many texts listed in this section are missing.

### 6) *Sādhanas of Visualising Maṇḍala (mngon dkyil sgrub thabs kyi skor)*

In this section, gTsong lag phreng ba lists forty-six pieces of literature on various topics such as visualising deities with their retinues and environmental settings, largely known as *sgrub thabs*.<sup>405</sup> Apart from *sādhanas* of various deities such as Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, this section also includes much other literature associated with visualising deities. For instance, one can find literature on granting permission (*rjes gnang*)<sup>406</sup> to meditate on certain deities listed in this section.<sup>407</sup> Literature on consecration (*rab gnas*) and *torma* rituals is also included in this section.

gTsong lag phreng ba probably felt the need to have liturgical materials according to his own tradition. The systematisation of liturgical practice in the Karma bKa' brgyud school began with the Sixth Karmapa mThong ba don ldan (1416–1453).<sup>408</sup> It appears, however, that

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<sup>401</sup> Zhang Yisun has two definitions for *zin bris*: 1) *tshig don blo la zin rim bzhin du bris pa'i yi ge* 2) *thog ma'i ma yig*.

<sup>402</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba categorises his work on it under a section common to both sūtra and tantra. gTsong lag phreng ba discusses both sūtric and tantric matters, particularly the Buddhas of the sūtra and mantra tradition, in his commentary on the *Single Intention*.

<sup>403</sup> Discussion on the commentary of *Single Intention* is provided in the fourth chapter, which presents gTsong lag phreng ba's main commentaries.

<sup>404</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba may have listed his astrological commentary under the tantric section since it is a commentary on the first chapter of the Kālacakra tantra.

<sup>405</sup> Zhang Yisun defines it as *lha sgrub pa'i cho ga* (means of visualising deities or means of achieving deities, since it appears to be a means through which practitioners ultimately apotheosise into the deities). English (2002: 30) states 'the *sādhana* is therefore, a "means of attainment" because it is a tool for the transformation of the mundane into the transcendental.' Cozort (1996: 332) rightly puts it, "In short, a *sādhana* is the handbook that deity *yogis* recite, in solitude or with others, as they vividly imagine the divine environment, its occupants, their speech, and their transformations."

<sup>406</sup> According to Zhang Yisun, *rjes gnang* means *lha'i sgom bzlas dang 'chad nyan byed par dbang ba'i byin rlabs gnang ba* (granting of empowering blessing for the engagement in the visualisation and recitation, and study of deities).

<sup>407</sup> However, Nam mkha' lha dbang's section on Karma 'phrin las pa's *Collected Works* contains both *sādhana* and *rjes gnang* as *sgrub thabs rjes gnang gi skor* (Rheingans 2021: 109).

<sup>408</sup> Komarovski (2011: 22–23).

liturgical materials and practices were not fully developed in the school during gTsong lag phreng ba's time.

### **7) Writings on Daily Dharma Conduct (*bya ba chos spyod kyi skor*)**

This section of gTsong lag phreng ba's writings mainly contains literature on the routine conduct of religious practitioners. He has also framed regulations for the monks of his monastery, dPal Karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sde, but these are missing. gTsong lag phreng ba also included his writing on the performance of religious conduct in a single day *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi chad pa* (*A Process of Performing Conduct of Dharma in a Single Day: The Uninterrupted Flow of the River of Virtues*), rituals on mountain dharma (*ri chos*), and essence extraction (*bcud len*).<sup>409</sup> Four of the nine pieces of writing in this section are missing.

### **8) Unique Works Such as Auto-hagiography (*rang gi rtogs brjod la sogs pa thun mong ma yin pa'i skor*)**

gTsong lag phreng ba further categorises this section into five subsections: 1) lists of teachings received (*thob yig*), 2) hagiographies (*rtogs brjod*), 3) spiritual songs (*glu*), 4) letters (*zhu yig 'phrin yig*), 5) questions and answers (*dris lan*).<sup>410</sup>

In the subsection of lists of teachings received, he enumerates fourteen pieces of writing concerning the teachings he received from his teachers, including the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>411</sup> However, none of these writings is found in the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works*, indicating that they are either lost permanently or undiscovered.

The subsection on hagiographies lists six of his writings, such as his auto-hagiographies, *Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long* and *Don tshan dgu pa*. In addition, one piece of literature about questions and answers is listed in this subsection. Since this text is missing, one can only speculate that it may have been hagiographical in terms of content. Although this subsection is on biographies, one can also find a text giving a historical account of the temple he built, called Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug khang<sup>412</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba lists only three compositions on spiritual songs but many writings are included under them: 1) *Ched du brjod pa rdo rje glu'i bang mdzod gsang ba'i gtam gyi phreng ba* (*The Treasury of the Vajra Songs of Purposeful Expressions: the Garland of Accounts*) 2) *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i yang dag pa'i do ha* (*The Perfect Dohā of Glorious gTsong lag phreng ba*) 3) *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs* (*The Collections of the Treasury of Songs Uttered at the Exhortation of Others*). All of them are extant and included in the dPal rtsegs edition of his *Collected Works*.

*Ched du brjod pa rdo rje glu'i bang mdzod gsang ba'i gtam gyi phreng ba* contains twenty-four songs, while *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs*

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<sup>409</sup> Zhang Yisun describes *bcud len* as *me tog sogs rdzas la brten nas tshe sring lus stobs skyed byed kyi thabs shes shig* (a method of generating longevity and physical strength based on materials such as flowers).

<sup>410</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba's self-written catalogue of his works mentions eighteen sections and *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyis gtam rgyud rnams* under questions and answers. However, there are twenty-one letters included in the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works*.

<sup>411</sup> The full list is provided in the appendix.

<sup>412</sup> *rtogs brjod* is usually understood for biographies of a person, not an account of other inanimate objects. Yisun also describes it as *skyes rabs dang rnam thar* (successive life stories and biographies).

contains one hundred and twenty-five songs. *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i yang dag pa'i do ha* is one unit expressing the true nature of the mind in the form of a song. However, one can find many texts titled *mgur* and *glu* in gTsug lag phreng ba's writings. *mgur* is arguably a form that has evolved to be distinctly Buddhist.<sup>413</sup> Roger Jackson enumerates the characteristics of Mi la ras pa's *mgur* and explains:

The themes, moods and styles of Mi la's *mgur* range widely: though the Dharma almost always is the real subject, it is expressed in verses at various times simple or complex, devout or wrathful, puritanical or ribald, humorous or stern, intensely autobiographical or impersonally didactic.<sup>414</sup>

The writing of *mgur* in Tibet gained momentum after, and through the influence of, Mi la ras pa.<sup>415</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba's *mgur* follows the style and, in some cases, even the wordings of Mi la ras pa's *mgur*. gTsug lag phreng ba's poetry also resembles Mi la ras pa's, as in the case of many other Tibetan yogis such as Karma 'phrin las pa.<sup>416</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba's *mgur* also appears as an expression of his own meditational experiences.<sup>417</sup>

Regarding his composition of letters (subsection 4), gTsug lag phreng ba enumerates five groups: 1) letters sent to the Karmapa and his spiritual son, 2) letters from the Karmapa and their annotation, 3) collections of letters to encourage enlightenment, 4) peaceful and wrathful letters to dharma protectors, and 5) letters of encouragement to perform virtues. While the first two groups of letters are missing, the third group has fifty-six letters in the form of spiritual advice to religious and political leaders. Letters written to prominent figures such as mTsho skyes rdo rje and the Fifth Zhwa dmar indicate his influence in the political and religious sphere. From the emic point of view, letters written as a command to the religious protectors and local deities (*bka' srung gzhi bdag*) also show his esoteric power to bring them under his control and make them work for the sake of sentient beings and the dharma.

The fifth and last subsection (*dris lan*) of the Unique Works consists of twenty-two compositions as answers to the questions posed by his disciples on various religious topics. It is interesting to note that gTsug lag phreng ba subsumes his work *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyis gtam rgyud rnams* (*Stories of the Jewel Ornament of Liberation*) under this subsection, although it is not characteristically question-and-answer in nature.

In conclusion, the Unique Works section is significant since it contains the autobiographies of gTsug lag phreng ba, the primary source for studying his life. The subsection on questions and answers is also helpful in understanding his important philosophical stances. Most of the writing in this section is extant.

## 9) Meditation Guidance and Practice (*nyams len khrid yig gi skor*)

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<sup>413</sup> R. Jackson (1996: 369).

<sup>414</sup> R. Jackson (1996: 373).

<sup>415</sup> Rheingans (2021a: 753). R. Jackson (1996: 373).

<sup>416</sup> Rheingans (2021: 120). On Karma 'phrin las pa's *mgur*, see Rheingans (2021a).

<sup>417</sup> R. Jackson (1996: 372) notes that from the eleventh century onwards *mgur* increasingly became a means of expressing spiritual experiences. For the three kinds of songs, see Samuel (1993: 424–427).

gTsong lag phreng ba divides his writings on explanatory texts of spiritual practice into general and specific sections. The general section contains twenty-three pieces of writing on topics such as Guru Yoga, while the specific section has thirteen compositions. The literature under the general section appears concise, without elaborate explanations, while the literature in the specific section is more detailed. Most of the texts in this section are missing and not included in the dPal rtsegs edition of his *Collected Works*.

#### **10) Writings Known as Advice, the Teachings that Strike the Vital Points (*gnad tu phog par 'doms pa zhal gdams su grags pa'i skor*)**

gTsong lag phreng ba categorises his writings on oral instructions (*zhal gdams*)<sup>418</sup> into individual (*so so*) instructions and fragmented instructions compiled into sections (*thor bu sde tshan du bsdebs pa*). Cabezón and Jackson (1996) do not use the term *zhal gdams*. Rheingans (2015) suggests a broader category for instructional texts that could cover *zhal gdams*:

In order to examine this instructional dimension, I have, for example, created the meta-category called “instruction texts” (a text with an informative function of religious instruction). With regard to text types according to Tibetan title designations, those coming to mind are: spiritual instructions (*gdams ngag*), esoteric precepts (*man ngag*), meditation instructions (*khrid*), and pieces of advice (*bslab bya*). Looking at the theme as well as the function of information, letters (*'phring yig*), epistles (*chab shog*), and questions and answers (*dris lan*) may be included.<sup>419</sup>

Kapstein described *gdams ngag* (spiritual instructions) as follows:

In this short essay I shall focus on the category of *gdams ngag*, “instruction,” as understood in connection with meditational and yogic practice. In this context, *gdams ngag* refers essentially to the immediate, heartfelt instructions and admonitions of master to disciple concerning directly liberative insight and practice. *gDams ngag* in this sense is, in the final analysis, a product solely of the interrelationship between master and disciple; it is the non-repeatable discourse event in which the core of the Buddhist enlightenment comes to be manifestly disclosed.<sup>420</sup>

The section on *zhal gdams* by gTsong lag phreng ba does not appear to match fully the above definition of *gdams ngag* by Kapstein. gTsong lag phreng ba seems to mean *zhal gdams* as spiritual advice, irrespective of sūtric or tantric nature. For instance, this section contains material on the mind training (*blo sbyong*) of taking suffering on the path (*skyid sdug lam 'khyer*), which cannot be considered exclusively tantric teaching. They (*zhal gdams*) are also

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<sup>418</sup> *zhal gdams* literally means oral instruction but it appears to be understood synonymously with *gdams ngag* since *gdams ngag* can also appear in the written form (Kapstein 1996: 275). Zhang Yisun also appears to understand them in a synonymous sense by defining *zhal gdams* as *gdams ngag gam slob ston* (instruction or teaching).

<sup>419</sup> Rheingans (2015: 18).

<sup>420</sup> Kapstein (1996: 275).

not necessarily, as per Kapstein’s abovementioned classification, “the non-repeatable discourse event in which the core of the Buddhist enlightenment comes to be manifestly disclosed.”

The individual subsection contains eleven pieces of writing on such topics such as consciousness transference (*'pho ba*) and intermediate state (*bar do*), while the subsection *thor bu sde tshan du bsdebs pa* (fragmented instructions compiled into sections) contains four pieces of literature on topics such as instruction on the mind training (*blo sbyong*) of taking sufferings on the path (*skyid sdug lam 'khyer*) and visualisation and meditation of deities.<sup>421</sup> Many texts in this section are missing.

### **11) Miscellaneous Pith Instructions (*man ngag sna tshogs pa'i skor*)**

While *gdams ngag* and *man ngag* share common features, the latter is considered superior to the former. Kapstein notes:

In any of these areas, they may refer to “esoteric” instructions, i.e., advice not usually found in theoretical textbooks but derived from the hands-on experience of skilled practitioners, and thus intended primarily for those who are actually engaged in the practice of the discipline concerned. *Man ngag* seems often to connote a higher degree of esotericism than does *gdams ngag*, particularly where both terms are employed together contrastively, and despite their essential synonymy.<sup>422</sup>

Judging by gTsong lag phreng ba’s titles and the content of the texts mentioned under them, the hierarchical distinction between the *zhal gdams* and *man ngag* does not appear straightforward. For instance, in the *zhal gdams* section, one can even find instructions on Mahāmudrā with the word *man ngag* in the title.<sup>423</sup>

From the titles listed by gTsong lag phreng ba under this section, one can glean that he meant instructions on tantric practices by the term *man ngag*. He lists the title of instructions mainly on *sādhana*s and a few titles on wrathful tantric practices such as suppression and killing (*mnan bsad*).

gTsong lag phreng ba further divides *man ngag* into principal (*gtso che ba*) and miscellaneous (*sna tshogs pa*) pith instruction. In the principal section, he enumerates seven pieces of writing on the six-armed Mahākāla (*mgon po phyag drug pa*), while the section of miscellaneous pith instructions comprises twenty-two pieces of writing on various tantric topics.

### **12) Catalogues and Records of Arrangement (*dkar chag bkod yig gi skor*)<sup>424</sup>**

This section consists of writings on various catalogues of a number of objects and the records of arrangement, such as mural paintings in places such as the nine-storeyed tower of Mi la ras

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<sup>421</sup> Visualising deities such as Avalokiteśvara is also present in the sixth section ‘*Sādhana*s of Visualising Maṇḍala.’ However, it can be noted that here it is more of an instruction than an exposition.

<sup>422</sup> Kapstein (1996: 275).

<sup>423</sup> The title of the text reads *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag zab mo'i mdzod*.

<sup>424</sup> *bkod yig* appears to be the abbreviation of *bkod pa'i yi ge* (documents or records of arrangement).

pa and the temple *Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang*. Most of gTsong lag phreng ba's twenty-four listings under this section are extant.

### 13) Works on Dedications and Auspicious Wishes (*bsngo ba bkra shis kyi skor*)

gTsong lag phreng ba lists six main sections on dedications and expression of auspiciousness with numerous subitems under each heading. However, the text in this section is missing in its entirety.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, gTsong lag phreng ba's categorisation is fluid, as pointed out by Rheingans, since one can see overlapping content in other sections. Writings on *sādhanas*, for instance, are found in the *man ngag* section since they are written as pith instructions although gTsong lag phreng ba has a separate classification for them: '*Sādhanas of Visualising Maṇḍala*.'

gTsong lag phreng ba also classifies his writings in a nuanced manner. For instance, he has a separate classification for *zhal gdams* and *gdam ngag*.

### 3.1.2 Some Remarks on the Genres/Classifications of His Writings

gTsong lag phreng ba's writings contain various genres ranging from grammar to astrology and tantric teachings. Cabezón and Jackson classify Tibetan literature, along with sub-categories, into eight: 1) history and biography, 2) canonical and quasi-canonical texts, 3) philosophical literature, 4) literature on the path, 5) ritual, 6) literary arts, 7) non-literary arts and sciences, 8) guidebook and reference works.<sup>425</sup> Although their classification does not cover many textual materials, as Rheingans points out, it encompasses the majority of Tibetan literature.<sup>426</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to survey the writings of gTsong lag phreng ba in relation to those categories. His writings include works in all these classifications except for canonical and quasi-canonical texts.<sup>427</sup>

### History and Biography

In the history and biography classification, gTsong lag phreng ba has written many texts, such as religious history, auto-hagiographies, and letters.<sup>428</sup> One of the notable writings on history is his widely read *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Cabezón and Jackson have subsumed letters and *thob yig* under this section, while gTsong lag phreng ba lists them under a section 'Unique Writings such as Auto-hagiography.'<sup>429</sup>

### Canonical and Quasi-Canonical Texts

Since canonical and quasi-canonical texts belong to the *bKa' 'gyur*, *bsTan 'gyur*, and to treasure texts (*gter ma*), gTsong lag phreng ba's texts do not belong in this genre. Although gTsong lag phreng ba has the title *mDo sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus* (*A Collection of Quotations from Various Sūtras*) in his self-written catalogue of his work, it cannot be considered his

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<sup>425</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 30–31). For the sub-categories of literature, see *ibid*.

<sup>426</sup> Rheingans (2015: 3).

<sup>427</sup> Canonical texts are generally the ones that originated with the Buddha in the form of the Three Baskets (Harrison 1996: 70).

<sup>428</sup> Rheingans (2015: 18) assumes that letters could be subsumed under a broader category "instruction texts", considering their purpose and subject matter.

<sup>429</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 30).

work since it appears to be a verbatim transfer of words from sūtras. The *mDo sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus* is not available.

### **Philosophical Literature**

Regarding philosophical literature, gTsong lag phreng ba has some texts, such as commentaries on the Indian treatises *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and *Uttaratantra*. His broad-ranging commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* can be considered philosophical since it includes a discussion of various philosophical questions.

### **Literature on the Paths**

Under the classification of literature on the paths, gTsong lag phreng ba includes writings on Mahāmudrā and tantric texts.<sup>430</sup> Additionally, he lists literature on stages of the path (*lam rim*), mind training (*blo sbyong*), and pith instruction (*gdams ngag*). However, gTsong lag phreng ba locates these writings in various sections or genres, reinforcing the fluid nature of the genre system in Tibetan literature.

### **Rituals**

gTsong lag phreng ba's literature on rituals such as *rab gnas* (consecration) is found in a large number of works in his *Collected Works*. gTsong lag phreng ba has a distinct section for *sādhana*, while Cabezón and Jackson include it under the classification 'ritual.' gTsong lag phreng ba's writings on rituals are mainly written in the form of step-by-step instructions on the procedure for conducting them. In his liturgical materials, gTsong lag phreng ba transcribes, on occasions, material written by other authors that can be recited in the ritual sessions. For instance, the *Bram ze mchog srid kyi mdzad pa'i rngam pa sgra sgrog ma* (*The Sounding of Wrath Composed by Bram ze mChog srid*) is simply a complete verbatim transfer of the material composed by Bram ze mChog srid. In addition to these transcriptions, gTsong lag phreng ba includes a substantial number of his own writings on rituals.

### **Literary Arts**

Regarding the literature on literary arts, gTsong lag phreng ba has many writings of spiritual songs (*mgur*). However, while gTsong lag phreng ba has a separate classification for praises (*bstod tshogs*), Cabezón and Jackson subsume them under literary arts.

### **Non-Literary Arts and Sciences**

gTsong lag phreng ba has numerous writings on non-literary arts and sciences such as grammar, astrology, and medicine. His writing on medicine appears to have been lost.

### **Guidebook and Reference Works**

In the typology of guidebooks and reference works, gTsong lag phreng ba lists many catalogues and records of arrangement (*bkod yig*).

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<sup>430</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 30) include the writings on Māhamudrā and rDzogs chen under the category of 'literature on the paths.'

## Conclusion

As detailed above, almost all gTsong lag phreng ba's works can be subsumed under the typology of genres suggested by Cabezón and Jackson. There are, however, some texts that cannot be subsumed explicitly under the above categories of genres.<sup>431</sup> For instance, *rDo rje slob dpon bsten tshul mdor bstan pa śloka ka nyi shu rtsa bzhi* (*A Brief Manner of Relying on the Vajra Master in Twenty-four Verses*) does not appear to fit in any of the above categories delineated by Cabezón and Jackson. However, since they have some flexibility in subsuming texts under different categories, this text about the manner of relying on the teacher could be classified within 'Literature on the Paths,' since it can be considered instructional material.<sup>432</sup> Rheingans (2015) is also useful in allocating certain types of literature. For instance, *zhal gdams* can be subsumed under a broader category, 'Instruction Text,' as he suggests.<sup>433</sup> Rheingans (2015) also makes some valuable suggestions for future research on the categorisation of Tibetan literature.<sup>434</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba includes the *Bla ma bar le ba'i dris lan*, which could have been written in the question-and-answer format about life events, in the auto-hagiography section.<sup>435</sup> It appears that he classified his writing not simply based on format but on content, and audience, on occasion. This way of classification indicates that the textual materials cannot be classified based on title or format alone.

In this light, the categorisation by gTsong lag phreng ba shows that his classification of texts is fluid and can be based on the author's discretion to classify into particular genres, taking into consideration various factors such as audience, format, content and the purpose of compilation. Therefore, studying genre through the *Collected Works* also demands studying contextual factors such as the rationale of the author and compilers.

gTsong lag phreng ba also has a separate classification 'Unique Works Such as Auto-hagiography.' This includes materials such as lists of teachings received (*thob yig*), hagiographies (*rtogs brjod*), spiritual songs (*glu*), letters (*zhu yig 'phrin yig*), and questions and answers (*dris lan*). While these materials could have been included within other classifications, gTsong lag phreng ba categorised them under 'Unique Works.' This further demonstrates that an author can exercise their own rationale to classify their works in a certain way, and that classifications are not always straightforward.

gTsong lag phreng ba's classification also demonstrates nuanced details that need to be considered while categorising texts. For instance, gTsong lag phreng ba lists tantric teachings in general under *zhal gdams*. In contrast, according to gTsong lag phreng ba, *man ngag* appears to mean instructions on tantric practices such as *sādhana*s and wrathful activities, including killing and suppression.

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<sup>431</sup> Rheingans (2015: 3–4) also observes that Cabezón and Jackson (1996) do not cover many kinds of textual materials such as *gdan yig*.

<sup>432</sup> Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 32) discuss the flexibility in arranging under different categories by stating that 'Literature on the observance of vows and pledges gives important guidance along the Buddhist path, hence its inclusion in Literature on the Paths; however, these texts contain a great deal of philosophical interest as well, and might well be classed as Philosophical Literature, too.' Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 31) list writings on instructions under the category 'Literature on Path.'

<sup>433</sup> Rheingans (2015: 18).

<sup>434</sup> See Rheingans (2015: 15–21).

<sup>435</sup> However, this text is missing.

### 3.1.3 Catalogue by lHa btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650)

lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med catalogued the teachings of gTsong lag phreng ba that he had received. It appears from this catalogue that he received the majority of what was in fifteen huge volumes. One can also assume that most of gTsong lag phreng ba's writing remained intact at that time, since lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med lived in the generation directly after gTsong lag phreng ba. lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med also provides the lineage of transmission beginning with the author, followed by Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag, the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho, and another master, Karma rig 'dzin rnam par rgyal ba.<sup>436</sup> lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med received the transmission of the lineage of gTsong lag phreng ba's works from Karma rig 'dzin rnam par rgyal ba.<sup>437</sup>

Like gTsong lag phreng ba, lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med, does not always provide the entire title of texts, but on occasion only the content of the texts. Sometimes one can only find the number of texts he received on a particular topic. Therefore, as is the case with the catalogue by gTsong lag phreng ba himself, the definite number of writings is hard to ascertain through lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med's catalogue.

lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med follows the order of gTsong lag phreng ba's self-written catalogue in listings of the teachings he received; however, the wording of the titles differs. This indicates that lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med either referred to gTsong lag phreng ba's self-written catalogue or to the *Collected Works* and arranged his catalogue accordingly.

### 3.2 Number of gTsong lag phreng ba's Writings and Their Bibliographical Information

lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med mentions that he received the oral transmission of the fifteen huge volumes (*pod chen*) of gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>438</sup> Comparing the lists provided by gTsong lag phreng ba in his self-written catalogue and the extant texts included in the *Collected Works*, it is evident that many of his writings have been lost.

The following table shows the preliminary findings about the number of his writings available or missing in the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* compared with the writings gTsong lag phreng ba enumerated in his self-written catalogue.

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<sup>436</sup> This figure appears to be rTse le sNa tshogs rang grol (1605/1608 – 1677). DBRC provides his biographical profile that identifies lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med as his student and the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho as his teacher. Karma rig 'dzin rnam par rgyal ba is his other name. In the colophon to his Mahāmudrā writing *sMin byed kyi dbang dang grol lam phyag rgya chen po'i gnad don gyi dri lan*, it is mentioned *spong ba'i brtul zhugs la mos pa lam du byed pa'i mi rgan sna tshogs rang grol lam/ ming gzhan karma rig 'dzin rnam par rgyal ba*. (rTse le sNa tshogs rang grol. *sMin byed dbang dang grol lam phyag rgya chen po'i gnad don gyi dri ba lan du phul ba bskal bzang dga' byed bdud rtsi'i 'dod 'jo*, p.319 – 320).

<sup>437</sup> lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med. *rDzogs chen pa kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba'i thog yig las/ rje btsun dam pa gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum gyi skor thob tshul*, p. 1235: *rje btsun mi 'pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa de nyid nas/ rje zhwa dmar ba gar dbang dkon mchog yan lag dpal gtsug lag rgya mtsho dga' ba'i dbyangs kyi zhal snga nas/ de nyid kyi drung du dpal gyi gro bo lung gi zhol/ sras mkhar sprul pa'i phreng sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i zhal med khang chen por/ bdag kong rong gi btsun pa karma rig 'dzin rnam par rgyal ba la bka' drin du stsal ba legs par thob pa des/ bdag lha btsun kun bzang rnam rgyal la legs par gngang ba'o*.

<sup>438</sup> lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med. *rDzogs chen pa kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba'i thog yig las/ rje btsun dam pa gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum gyi skor thob tshul*, p. 1235: *bcas pa yongs su dril bas bod chen bco lnga rnams legs par thob pa'i rgyud rim ni*. Although here it is written as *bod chen*, it plausibly meant *pod chen* (huge volume), given the context of the teaching that lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med received.

Classification of his writings in the self-written catalogue	Total number of writings according to the self-written catalogue	Number of available texts in the dPal brtsegs edition of the <i>Collected Works</i>	Number of missing texts in the dPal brtsegs edition of the <i>Collected Works</i>	Number of Texts of which the availability cannot be ascertained
1. Eulogy and Collection of Hymns of Praise	48	3	44	1
2. Hagiography and the History of Religion	5	2	3	0
3. Language and Medicine	12	3	9	0
4. Collection of Sūtric and Tantric Scriptures	9	0	9	0
5. Notes on Commentaries	36	6	29	1
6. <i>Sādhanas</i> of Visualising Maṇḍala	46	8	37	1
7. Writings on Daily Dharma Conduct	9	4	5	0
8. Unique Works such as Auto-hagiography	30	13	17	0
9. Medication Guidance and Practice	36	6	29	1
10. Writings Known as Advice, the Teachings that Strike the Vital Points	15	1	12	2
11. Miscellaneous Pith Instructions	39	10	24	5
12. Catalogues and Records of Arrangement	25	17	7	1
13. Works on Dedications and Auspicious Wishes	6	0	6	0
Total	316	73	231	12

gTsong lag phreng ba did not include some of his works in his self-written catalogue. Furthermore, he does not mention the number of writings on certain genres. For instance, gTsong lag phreng ba simply says he has written much material on prayers titled *gZhan yang smon lam gyi rigs mang ba* (*And Many Other Kinds of Prayers*). Against this backdrop, one cannot determine the precise number of his writings.

Apart from some major commentaries, gTsong lag phreng ba does not, for the most part, provide an elaborate colophon for his writings. On many occasions, he only mentions the place where he wrote a work. This incomplete bibliographical information makes it difficult to determine the time of writing and other bibliographical details.

### 3.3 Different Editions of *Collected Works*

The *Collected Works* of gTsong lag phreng ba is extant in two editions: the dPal btsegs edition in fourteen volumes made available in 2019, and an earlier edition in four volumes without bibliographical information.

#### 3.3.1. dPal brtsegs Edition and Its Compilation

The dPal brtsegs edition published by Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang in 2019 contains fourteen volumes. The publishing note to the edition remarks that the original textual sources (*ma dpe*) of the *Collected Works* used were those found in the libraries in various places of Tibet, such as rTse pho brang, 'Bras spungs, mTshur phu and dPal spungs, and also includes texts owned by private individuals.<sup>439</sup> One can see that this edition of the *Collected Works* was based on multiple sources.<sup>440</sup>

Regarding the historical existence of the *Collected Works*, the *Lho gnas mchog gro bo lung 'og min sras mkhar kyi gtsug lag khang chen po'i rten bshad mdor bsdu* (*A Brief Explanation of the Objects in the Unsurpassed Sras mkhar in the Southern Supreme Sacred Place Gro bo lung*) states that the *Collected Works* of gTsong lag phreng ba, written in gold and silver, is contained in the Sras mkhar.<sup>441</sup> However, it does not mention the number of volumes. While the exact date for the compilation of his work as the *Collected Works* is difficult to ascertain, one can be sure that it occurred not long after gTsong lag phreng ba's passing, since lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650) (who lived not long after gTsong lag phreng ba) received the transmission of the *Collected Works*.

The publishing note also reports that the guidebook to a sacred place (*gnas yig*) of dBus gtsang by Kaḥ thog Si tu mentions the existence (but not the number) of gTsong lag phreng ba's works in woodblock print, including the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary, a religious history (probably the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*), some fragments of the *Collected Works*

<sup>439</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 3: *gsung 'bum 'di'i ma dpe'i yongs khungs ni/ rtse phro brang / 'bras spungs/ mtshur phu/ dpal spungs sogs bod khul gyi dpe mdzod khang du ma dang / mi sger nyar tshags gnang bar nga tshos bsdu thub pa dag rim pas risis 'phrul du phab bshus kyis mtha' zhus zhib bsdur gang nan byas pa yin.*

<sup>440</sup> The practice of using various sources in producing publications was reported to have been used during the production of *bKa' 'gyur* as well. For instance, the Lhasa edition of *bKa' 'gyur* in 1934 was based on sDe dge and sNar thang editions (Harrison 1996: 82).

<sup>441</sup> Bya bral ye shes grub pa, *Lho gnas mchog gro bo lung 'og min sras mkhar kyi gtsug lag khang chen po'i rten bshad mdor bsdu* in *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. XII, p. 464: *rgyal ba gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum gser dngul khra mas bzhengs pa dang bcas pa grwa tshang gi bkod pa bsam yas na bzhugs.* The author of this text is identified as Bya bral ye shes.

and biographies in Lha lung monastery in Lho brag.<sup>442</sup> However, the editors of this edition do not report having access to them.

The publishing note also lays out the editorial principles of the edition. According to the publishing note, the arrangement of the *Collected Works* was based on the catalogue by gTsug lag phreng ba himself, while some texts were arranged based on the convenience of ordering according to the number of pages.<sup>443</sup> Nevertheless, the arrangement of many texts did not follow the order of the self-written catalogue by gTsug lag phreng ba. The publishing note also mentions that the table of contents, in line with modern practice, was prepared separately. For example, the titles are accompanied by page numbers. However, some titles provided in the table of contents do not fully correspond with the titles that appear at the beginning of the texts. For instance, the title in the table content reads *rGya chen spyod pa'i gzhung byang sa'i lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi cho ga* (*The Ritual of Arousing Bodhicitta According to the Vast Conduct Tradition of Bodhisattvabhūmi*) while the title at the beginning of the text reads *rGya chen spyod pa'i gzhung thogs med sku mched las brgyud pa'i smon 'jug byang sdom gyi cho ga* (*The Ritual of the Aspirational and Applied Bodhisattva Vow Transmitted from the Treatise of Vast Conduct of Asaṅga and his Brother [Vasubandhu]*). Although the two titles largely concur in conveying the textual content, it is important to look closely to ascertain the nuanced differences.

The editors of the dPal brtsegs edition note that unclear and missing words are added in brackets along with their explanations. They also note that unintelligible old orthographies (*brda rnying*) and local dialects (*yul skad*) are left unchanged.<sup>444</sup> Apart from some simple avoidable orthographical errors, the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* is generally coherent.

The editors of the dPal brtsegs edition also note that they made some additional insertions to the parts of royal annals in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* as directed by gTsug lag phreng ba and made insertions to the text if it was possible to transcribe from the Lhasa pillar (*lHa sa'i rdo ring*). They state that they have transcribed parts of the royal annals from the pillar, compared them with their other versions, and inserted them into the texts.<sup>445</sup> The transcription in this edition contains nine pages transcribed from the east and north sides of the Lhasa pillar.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. 1, p. 2: *kaḥ thog si tu'i dbus gtsang gnas yig tu lho brag lha lung dgon par/ dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i spyod 'jug 'grel pa dang / chos 'byung / bka' 'bum thor bu/ rnam thar sogs kyi spar shing bzhugs par gsungs kyang glegs bam gyi grangs ji tsam yod par mi gsal.*

<sup>443</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. 1, p. 3: *gsung 'bum gyi go rim sgrig stangs ni/ rje nyid kyi gsung dkar chag rnying pa ltar go rim sor bzhag byas shing / deb kyi ldeb grangs la ltos nas tshan pa 'ga' re skabs thob kyi gong 'og gang bder bzhag cing / deng dus kyi 'gros ltar gzhung gi sa bcad rnam zur du phyung ste/ klog pa po rnam la gzigs bde'i ched dkar chag zhib phrar bkod yod kyang / rtsa ba'i gzhung nyid yig rnying kho na ltar bcos slad med pa rang sor bzhag yod.*

<sup>444</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. 1, p. 4: *brda rnying ngam yul skad gang yin ngo ma chod pa'i ming tshig re zung mchis pa'ang ham bcos ma byas par rang sor bzhag yod/ ma dpe'i yig 'bru mi gsal ba dang / ldeb chad yod rigs rnam skabs thob kyi gsal bshad mchan bu bcas gug rtags su bzhag yod.*

<sup>445</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. 1 p. 5: *chos 'byung gi rgyal rabs skabs rtsom pa pos lha sa'i rdo ring gi yi ge bshu bar nus na bar 'dir chug cig ces gsungs pa ltar/ rdo ring gi yi ge dngos bris bshus thog bka' gtsigs kyi yi ge sogs dpe mang po dang bsdur zhing lhag chad dang nor 'khrul med par zhu dag legs par byas nas bcug yod.*

<sup>446</sup> The editors noted that the pillar had been erected more than eleven hundred years earlier and, as a result, is missing many words.

Regarding the structure of the *Collected Works*, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* covers the first three volumes and some parts of the fourth volume of the edition. The remaining parts of the fourth volume contain some texts on languages and writings on hymns, such as the praise of the twelve deeds of the historical Buddha. The fifth and sixth volumes contain the commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, while the seventh volume is gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the treatise on Vajrayoginī by Nāropa. The commentary on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa makes up the eighth volume. The ninth volume contains commentary on the *Single Intention* and writings on supplications. The tenth volume is dedicated to the writings of rituals and some other materials, such as mountain dharma practice (*ri chos*). The eleventh volume includes gTsong lag phreng ba's auto-hagiographies, songs, questions and answers, and letters. In the twelfth volume, one can find writings on Mahāmudrā, such as instructions on the Fivefold Māhamudrā. Materials on other topics, such as an introduction to the intermediate state (*bar do*) are also found in this volume. The thirteenth and fourteenth volumes principally contain writings on catalogues.<sup>447</sup>

### 3.3.1.1 Fragmented Works of gTsong lag phreng ba in the dPal brtsegs Edition

Some of the texts in this edition of the *Collected Works* are incomplete and some appear to have been lost. For instance, the publishers note that the *rTsa gsum rdo rje'i chos skyong rnams la gtor 'bul gyi cho ga dngos grub dpal 'bar phrin las 'grub* (*A Torma Offering Ritual to Vajra Dharmapāla of Three Roots that Blazes the Glory of Accomplishment and Swiftly Accomplishes Activities*) does not contain the final parts. *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi chad pa* (*A Process of Performing Dharmic Activities in a Single Day: The Uninterrupted Flow of the River of Virtues*) is also incomplete, with no final parts including the colophon. However, one of its fragments is included in the *Collected Works* as a separate title. For instance, *Sātstsha gdab pa'i cho ga* (*The Ritual of Casting Sātstsha*) is included, with an editor's note that it has been extracted from *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi chad pa*.<sup>448</sup>

*Thugs rje chen po'i bskyed rdzogs smar khrid du nyams su blang ba'i rim pa* (*The Stages of Practising the Generating and Completion Phases of the Compassionate One as Direct Instructions*) remains incomplete and is supplemented with the work of the Fifth Zhwa dmar. The publishers note that the concluding parts of the text are missing and that they have inserted the Fifth Zhwa dmar's work. They also urged that additions be made if an original copy becomes available.<sup>449</sup>

### 3.3.1.2 Writings of other Authors included in the dPal brtsegs Edition

The publishing note also states that some of the texts of the later reincarnations of dPa' bo have been incorporated in the *Collected Works*, in order to preserve texts that might otherwise be lost. For example, two works by the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho (1567–

<sup>447</sup> For their brief descriptive catalogue, see appendix.

<sup>448</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Sātstsha gdab pa'i cho ga*, p. 298: *zhes pa rje dpa' bo'i nyin zhag drug* (sic!) *gcig gi chos spyod las so*.

<sup>449</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Thugs rje chen po'i bskyed rdzogs smar khrid du nyams su blang ba'i rim pa*, vol. XII, p. 273: *ma dper 'di phyin mjug mi tshang bas/ gnas skabs zhwa dmar dkon mchog yan lag gi gsung bzhag yod kyang / slad nas dpa' bo'i gsung ma dpe gzhan rnyed na kha gsab gnang bar zhu*.

1633), the *Lam rim rgyud don rnam nges* (*A Definitive Treatment of the Tantric Meaning of the Stages of Path*) and *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lha khrid kyi nyams len 'don sgom dang sbyar du rung ba nyung 'dus su bkod pa* (*An Arrangement in Brief of the Practice of Deity Instruction of Vajrayoginī Applicable for Recitation and Meditation*), and two works of the Eighth dPa' bo gTsug lag chos kyi rgyal po (1782?-?), *dGongs gter zab mo'i skor las tshe yi gsang sgrub* (*A Secret Sādhana of Life from the Cycle of Profound Mind Treasure*) and *Dus sol ma'i bstod pa* (*A Praise to Dus sol ma*) are included in the *Collected Works*.<sup>450</sup> There is also a writing of the Seventh dPa' bo gTsug lag dga' ba (1718-1781?), *Phung po'i mchod sbyin rgyun khyer shin tu bsodus pa* (*An Extremely Condensed Daily Practice of the Sacrifice of Form*). In all, four writings of the Third dPa' bo, two writings of the Eighth dPa' bo and one writing of the Seventh dPa' bo are included in the *Collected Works* of gTsug lag phreng ba.<sup>451</sup> The *Collected Works* also include the long-life prayer for the Tenth Karmapa Chos dbyings rdo rje, composed by the Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho.<sup>452</sup> The Third Karmapa's astrological treatise *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i rtog pa* is also included in the eighth volume of the dPal brtsegs edition.<sup>453</sup>

Furthermore, two sections of the history of sacred places (*gnas yig*) of Gro bo lung and Sras mkhar, with additional information written by a certain author based on the catalogue of Sras mkhar by gTsug lag phreng ba are also incorporated into the *Collected Works*.<sup>454</sup> There is also a text called *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sbyin sreg* (*The Fire Ritual of Vajrayoginī*) by Sangs rgyas blo gros.<sup>455</sup> The publishing note to this edition does not explain why this was included in the *Collected Works* of gTsug lag phreng ba.

An astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa is also included in this edition. One also finds the writings on the eight *sādhana*s of Mahākāla of Indic origin written largely by Śavari. In the self-written catalogue of his works, gTsug lag phreng ba lists these *sādhana*s combined into one as *rGya zhung brgyad* (*Eight Indian Treatises*). These could have been included in the *Collected Works* to provide comprehensive materials on Mahākāla, despite not being works by gTsug lag phreng ba. The publishers of the dPal brtsegs edition note that

<sup>450</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 4-5: *dpa' bo gtsug lag rgya mtsho'i gsung* (*Lam rim rgyud don rnam sel*) *dang* (*rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lha khrid kyi nyams len 'don sgom dang sbyar du rung ba nyung 'dus su bkod pa ja*) *mchod o rgyan ma bcas dang / gzhan yang dpa' bo gtsug lag chos rgyal gyi gsung* (*dGongs gter zab mo'i skor las tshe yi gsang sgrub*) *bcas dpa' bo sku phreng gzhan gyi gsung 'di rnam ma gtogs btsal rnyed ma thub pas 'thor gyar du 'gro dogs kyis gsung 'bum gyi gras su bzhag pa yin*.

<sup>451</sup> Titles are provided in the appendix.

<sup>452</sup> The seven-verse long-life prayer is titled *dPal rgyal dbang karma pa chos dbyings rdo rje'i zhabs brtan* (*A Long-life Prayer of the Glorious Karmapa Chos dbyings rdo rje*).

<sup>453</sup> This is included in the same volume as gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on it. The publishers of this edition added 'mchan 'grel', which means an interlinear commentary, to the title in the table of contents. However, this does not appear to be an interlinear commentary but, instead, the Third Karmapa's treatise itself in verse.

<sup>454</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsug lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 5: *ma zad rtsa bar dpa' bo'i gsung sras mkhar gyi dkar chag gzhir bzhag la gzhan zhig gis kha gsab phran bu bgyis pa gro bo lung dang sras mkhar gyi gnas yig tshan pa gnyis kyang bzhag yod*. One of the texts appears to be *Lho gnas mchog gro bo lung 'og min sras mkhar kyi gtsug lag khang chen po'i rten bshad mdor bsodus* by Bya bral ye shes.

<sup>455</sup> The colophon to the text mentions Buddha Mati as an author. Since there is no instance when gTsug lag phreng ba was known by the name Buddha Mati, the author is likely to have been Sang blo ba, one of his eight kind teachers.

they have included those texts since they were found among the old original manuscripts (*ma dpe*) of gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>456</sup>

The editors of the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* also indicate that gTsong lag phreng ba was not the author of *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar lam bzang gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (*The Biography of Marpa: The Lamp that Illuminates the Excellent Path*). They argue that it was included in the *Collected Works* because the author was the abbot (*gdan rabs*), or a significant figure, of Gro bo lung, and that it was composed at Gro bo lung.<sup>457</sup> However, there are no grounds to conclude that gTsong lag phreng ba was not the author. gTsong lag phreng ba was also known as Chos rgyal don grub (as reflected in the colophon of this biography), and he also composed many works at Sras mkhar in Gro bo lung.<sup>458</sup> Although not listed in the self-written catalogue of his works, there are a number of instances where gTsong lag phreng ba did not mention works that he had written.

*Nang sgrub rgya gzhung* (*The Indian Treatise of Inner Sādhana of Mahākāla*) by Khyung po rnal 'byor is also included in the dPal brtsegs Edition. The publishers do not mention why this was included in the edition. Neither did gTsong lag phreng ba mention the title in his catalogue.

Some texts written based on the works of gTsong lag phreng ba are also included in this edition of the *Collected Works*. For instance, *Lho gnas mchog gro bo lung 'og min sras mkhar kyi* (sic!) *gtsug lag khang chen po'i rten bshad mdor bsdu* (*A Brief Explanation of the Objects in the Unsurpassed Sras mkhar in the Southern Supreme Sacred Place Gro bo lung*) by Bya bral Ye shes grub pa is included in the *Collected Works*. The editors of this edition note that two pieces of the guidebook about Gro bo lung and Sras mkhar were included in the *Collected Works* since they were based on gTsong lag phreng ba's catalogue of Sras mkhar with minor additions.<sup>459</sup>

### 3.3.1.3 Some Writings of Uncertain Authorship

The dPal brtsegs edition also contains some material that cannot be fully attributed to gTsong lag phreng ba. For instance, there are two pages of writing, without a title, in the ninth volume that appear similar to the sūtric material in terms of syntactical structure. The publishers of the edition note that these pages were included in the *Collected Works* since they were found in the original text (*ma dpe*) of gTsong lag phreng ba's work. They further

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<sup>456</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 4: *gzhan yang gnod sbyin spyi sgrub sogs dpa' bo'i gsung min pa'i mgon pa'i las tshogs tshan pa 'ga' res mchis pa dag kyang sngon gyi ma dpe rnying pa rnam su khong gi gsung mgon po phyag drug pa'i sgrub thabs kyi gras su bzhugs 'dug pa dang.*

<sup>457</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 4: *sgra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā'i rnam thar lam bzang gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me yi rtsom pa po chos rgyal don grub yin kyang / khong ni gro bo lung gi gdan rabs pa'am gal che'i mi sna zhid dang / brtsams chos 'di mar pa lo tsā'i rnam thar rgyas shos dang / brtsams pa'i gnas kyang gro bo lung yin pa bcas rgyu mtshan du byas nas da lam gsung 'bum 'di'i gras su bzhag pa yin.*

<sup>458</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar lam bzang gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me*, vol. IV, p. 563: *sākya'i btsun pa chos smra ba chos rgyal don grub kyi/ bcom ldan sākya'i rgyal po mya ngan las 'das nas/ lo nyis ston bzhi brgya lon zhing / mnga' bdag rin po che mar pa nyid zhing gzhan du gshegs nas lo bzhi brgya dang nyi shu rtsa gsum lon pa chu mo lug gi lo/ snron gyi zla ba'i gza' tshes dus sbyor phun sum tshogs pa dang ldan pa la 'go brtsams te/ bka' brgyud thams cad kyi 'byung khungs/ mnga' bdag yab sras kyi yun du bsten zhing byin gyis brlabs pa'i gdan sa chen po dpal gro bo lung sras mkhar du sbyar ba.*

<sup>459</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 5: *dpa' bo'i gsung sras mkhar gyi dkar chag gzhir bzhag la gzhan zhid gis kha gsab khran bu bgyis pa'i gro bo lung dang sras mkhar gyi gnas yig tshan pa gnyis kyang bzhag yod.*

state that, if and when other editions become available, verification may be possible as to whether these writings were by gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>460</sup>

Some of the liturgical texts attributed to gTsong lag phreng ba included in the dPal brtsegs edition also need to be accepted with caution. For instance, *dPal ye shes mgon po'i nang mchod kha skong dang gzhan zur pa kha shas bcas* (*A Supplementary Inner Offering to Glorious Mahākāla and Some Other Additions*) does not appear to have been composed by gTsong lag phreng ba. In the first place, it does not contain a colophon. In addition, Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774) is mentioned in the text.<sup>461</sup> This indicates that this was written by the students of Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, or later. Another possibility is that additions were made to the material written by gTsong lag phreng ba. In either case, sole authorship cannot be attributed to gTsong lag phreng ba.

In addition, *Ri chos kyi sa bcad* (*The Topical Outline of Mountain Dharma*) is included in the *Collected Works*. At the end of the text, in what appears to have been added by editors, it states that the text was probably the work of gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>462</sup> However, there are not sufficient grounds to conclude that gTsong lag phreng ba wrote it. He does not list this title in the self-written catalogue of his works.

This edition also included a text on Mahāmudrā, the *Grub chen mar pa'i lugs kyi phyag chen khrid kyi man ngag gnad kyi lde mig* (*The Key to the Vital Points of Instruction on Mahāmudrā According to the Tradition of the Great Siddha Marpa*). However, this writing cannot be fully attributed to gTsong lag phreng ba. The editors note that it was included in the *Collected Works* even though they were uncertain about the authorship since the colophon mentioned that the text was a copied portion of *Ri chos gnad kyi lde mig ces bya ba thun mong ma yin pa'i gdams pa* (*Unique Instructions Known as the Key to the Vital Points of Mountain Dharma*) by gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>463</sup>

The text entitled *bKa' dge'i lta skyong gnad gcig gi dgongs gsal* (*Clarifying on the Single Intention of the Point of Maintaining the View of the bKa' brgyud [Schools]*) included in the *Collected Works* also cannot be attributed to gTsong lag phreng ba. The colophon simply says it was written by a person bearing the name *Chos* (*chos kyi ming can*), which does not unambiguously refer to gTsong lag phreng ba.<sup>464</sup> Furthermore, gTsong lag phreng ba does not mention this title in the self-written catalogue of his works.

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<sup>460</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*. vol. IX, p. 205: 'dir ma dper 'dug pas bzhag yod kyang / slad nas dpe gzhan rnyed na dpa' bo'i gsung yin min dpyad dgos. The nature of the writing appears identical to the sūtras from which gTsong lag phreng ba is likely to have drawn. The subject matter of this material is emptiness.

<sup>461</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal ye shes mgon po'i nang mchod kha skong dang gzhan zur pa kha shas bcas*, p. 215: gtsug lag phreng ba dbang phyug rdo rje'i zhabs/ /chos kyi dbang phyug chags med dar rgyas pa/ /chos kyi snying po chos kyi don grub dang / /chos kyi 'byung gnas rtsa ba'i bla ma sogs.

<sup>462</sup> *Ri chos kyi sab cad*. In *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. X, p. 450: ri chos sa bcad dang bcas pa 'di ni dpal gtsug lag phreng bas mdzad par snang ngo.

<sup>463</sup> *The Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*, vol. I, p. 4: mjung byang du dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung ri chos gnad kyi lde mig las zhal bshus thor bu tsam mo zhes gsungs 'dug pas dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung dngos min cha ma 'tshal yang da lam khong gi gsung 'bum gyi gris su bzhag yod.

<sup>464</sup> *bKa' dge'i lta skyong gnad gcig gi dgongs gsal*. In the *Collected Works*. vol. XII, p. 237: btsun pa chos kyi ming can gyis smras pa'o. This text attempts to present views of the sub-schools of the bKa' brgyud tradition as the same.

The following table is a summary regarding the authorship of textual materials included in the dPal brtsegs edition of gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works*.<sup>465</sup>

Total Works listed in the <i>Collected Works</i>	Authored by gTsug lag phreng ba	Written by other authors	Uncertain Authors
162	143	13	6

### 3.3.1.4 gTsug lag phreng ba's Writing Not Included in His Catalogue

Some of his extant writings are not mentioned in the self-written catalogue of his works. For instance, *dPal karma pa brgyad pa'i zhabs kyi mtshan rab brjod pa'i 'grel pa* (*A commentary on the Perfect Expression of the Eighth Karmapa's Names*),<sup>466</sup> and *dGe slong gTsug lag phreng bas rgyal ba'i dbang po'i drung du smon lam phul ba byin gyis rlabs pa'i dkor mdzod* (*The Treasury of Prayers to Grant Blessing Offered Before the Lord Conqueror by Monk gTsug lag phreng ba*) are not mentioned by gTsug lag phreng ba in his catalogue. *rDo rje slob dpon bsten tshul mdor bstan pa slo ka nyi shu rtsa bzhi* (*A Brief Teaching on the Manner of Relying on a Vajra Master in Twenty-Four Ślokas*)<sup>467</sup> and *gSang sngags bzla tshul phreng bshad* (*An Exposition on the Manner of Reciting Secret Mantras and Rosary*) are also not listed in the self-written catalogue. The fact that gTsug lag phreng ba's catalogue is incomplete reflects the sheer immensity of his works.

### 3.3.2 The *Collected Works* Without Bibliographical Information

This edition of gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works* consists of eighteen writings in four volumes. The first volume contains all his auto-hagiographical writings, songs and letters. The second volume consists of the *bCom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ngan 'gro thams cad yongs su sbyong bar byed pa* (*The Ritual of the Maṇḍala of Bhagavān that Fully Purifies all the Bad Realms*), while gTsug lag phreng ba's detailed commentary on Vajrayoginī makes up the third volume. The fourth volume consists only of a portion of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* from the third section on Tibet about 'Bri gung bka' brgyud until the end of the text.

This edition does not contain bibliographical information nor any editorial remarks or publishing notes. The only writing in the edition not in cursive script (*dbu med*) is the auto-hagiography *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*. It is possible that this edition used some of the author's manuscripts. Furthermore, it also appears that some of the texts in this edition were used as a basis for the dPal brtsegs edition. Photographs of some of the pages from this edition are placed at the beginning of all fourteen volumes of the dPal brtsegs edition and captioned *dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung 'bum dpe snying bris par 'ga'* (some old manuscripts of gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works*). Some material in this early edition

<sup>465</sup> See 'Descriptive Catalogue of gTsug lag phreng ba's Works according to the dPal brtsegs Edition of the *Collected Works*' in the appendix for more details.

<sup>466</sup> However, this work is included in the *Collected Works* of the Eighth Karmapa in the dPal brtsegs edition of *Karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*. [beta.bdrc.io/](http://beta.bdrc.io/) includes this work in the *Karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>467</sup> IHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med includes this text in the catalogue of the transmission of gTsug lag phreng ba's works he received.

of the *Collected Works* is not legible due to blotches on the pages, and some pages are torn, showing the signs of old age.

### 3.4 Other Fragmented Editions of gTsong lag phreng ba's Works

There are other collections and individual publications of gTsong lag phreng ba's work. These editions appear to have been used for the recent dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works* published in 2019.

#### 3.4.1 sTod lung Edition

Titled *rJe dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung sna tshogs phyogs bsdebs* (*The Collection of Various Writings of the Lord dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba*), this collection of his work in modern print was published by Ma hā śri gsung rab gling in sTod lung.<sup>468</sup> This edition is relatively recent since the foreword was written by the Eleventh dPa' bo gTsong lag smra ba'i sgra dbyangs (1993–). It consists of only nine pieces of writing, mainly on tantric topics and does not provide any editing principles or the name of the original prints on which it was based.

The following table shows the number of volumes and main titles in different editions of gTsong lag phreng ba's *Collected Works*.

Edition	Number of Volumes	Number of Titles
dPal brtsegs	14	162
No Bibliographical Information	4	18
sTod lung	1	9

### 3.5 Styles of His Writings

gTsong lag phreng ba adopted various writing styles, ranging from poetic to polemical, depending on the genre. Many of his works, for example, his auto-hagiographies, are written in a poetic form. Some commentaries, such as on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and *Single Intention*, are more polemical and aim to establish a philosophical standpoint by refuting other points of view.<sup>469</sup>

Much of gTsong lag phreng ba's writings are in verse, including both of his auto-hagiographies. There is also a significant amount of versified writing in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

One wonders whether gTsong lag phreng ba was influenced by the Eighth Karmapa's polemical approach (evident even in the Karmapa's *Abhidharmakośa* commentary).<sup>470</sup> In his

<sup>468</sup> sTod lung monastery is located in the north-west of Lhasa.

<sup>469</sup> Both of his principal teachers, the Eighth Karmapa and Karma 'phrin las pa, adopted a polemical style of writing. See Rheingans (2021) for Karma 'phrin las pa and Rheingans (2017: 106) and Wangdi (2023) for the Eighth Karmapa's polemical style.

<sup>470</sup> Wangdi (2023: 497) notes that it is not common in the Tibetan tradition to have *Abhidharmakośa* commentary of a polemical nature.

*Single Intention* commentary, gTsong lag phreng ba uses scathing language to brand some opponents as foolish as sheep (*lug ltar lkugs pa*).<sup>471</sup>

### 3.6 Reception and Transmission of the *Collected Works of gTsong lag phreng ba*

gTsong lag phreng ba's works appear to have been compiled and printed either during his lifetime or else soon after his passing. His commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* was printed at Gro bo lung while gTsong lag phreng ba was still alive. The colophon to the commentary states that his disciple Chos rgyal bstan pa started the printing in Gro bo lung at gTsong lag phreng ba's monastic institute Karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sde during the summer of the female earth sheep year, corresponding to 1559, and completed it in the male water dog year, corresponding to 1562.<sup>472</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* was completed in 1556 at the age of fifty-three. It can therefore be established that its printing commenced three years after its composition.<sup>473</sup> Many of gTsong lag phreng ba's works do not indicate a publication date. Printing was an expensive enterprise in early Tibet, requiring the support of the affluent ruling classes.<sup>474</sup> Later, the printing of religious texts became possible through the initiatives of religious figures without the need for financial assistance from the ruling classes.<sup>475</sup> The printing works carried out at the monastic institute Karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sde founded by gTsong lag phreng ba, also point to the fact that religious figures were able to fund the printing projects by his time.

While some of gTsong lag phreng ba's writings were printed during his lifetime, some were printed only in the following generations. For instance, the *'Phags ma yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs 'dod 'jo'i bum bzang* (*The Sādhana of the Noble Wish-Granting Wheel, The Sublime Vase of Fulfilling Wishes*) was printed during the lifetime of the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho. The publication colophon notes that it was printed for the longevity of gTsong lag rgya mtsho.<sup>476</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba continued writing until the final years of his life. For instance, he drafted *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i sgrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba* (*Sādhana Integrated with Pith Instructions the Glorious Six-armed Mahākāla*) and finalised

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<sup>471</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 8: *yang lug ltar lkugs pa kha cig mdo sngags kyi sangs rgyas la mchog dman med de...*

<sup>472</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po*. vol. VI, p. 506: *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i bstan bcos kyi rnam par bshad pa zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po phyung ba zhes bya ba/ rje btsun dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i zhal snga nas bstsal pa 'di nyid bdag sākya'i dge slong bstan pa rab rgyas kyis do dam ched gnyer du bgyis te/ bstan pa dang sems can la phan pa rgya chen po 'byung ba'i slad du 'phags pa'i yul na don grub ces pa nyi 'og pa'i rtsis lugs las sa mo lug gi lor grags pa/ de'i dbyar lo nas par gyi dbu brtsams te/ rnga chen grags pa chu pho khyi'i lo'i dbyar nang du bka' brgyud kyi chu bo ji snyed pa'i 'byung gnas rje btsun mar pa nyid kyi gdan sa chen po lho gnas mchog dpal gyi gro bo lung sras mkhar sprul ba'i pho brang sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang dpal karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sder par du grub par bgyis pa'o. From this one can also learn that the printing facilities were present at his own institute. Xylographic printing began in Tibet at the beginning of the fifteenth century (Sernesì 2017: 196).*

<sup>473</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022: 159).

<sup>474</sup> Sernesì (2021: 25). Diemberger (2016: 269).

<sup>475</sup> Sernesì (2021: 25).

<sup>476</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *'Phags ma yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs 'dod 'jo'i bum bzang*, vol X, p. 51: *phan bde 'byung gnas rgyal bstan rin chen gyi/ /bstan 'dzin sprul sku gtsug lag rgya mtsho yi//zhabs kyi padma ring du brtan ring du brtan pa'i ched/ /sgrol dkar yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs 'di.*

it at the age of sixty.<sup>477</sup> The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* was also completed two years before his passing.<sup>478</sup>

The works of gTsug lag phreng ba have found a positive reception in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, where they are accepted as standard texts, with transmission kept intact among the followers of the tradition. For instance, the Ninth Karmapa conferred upon the Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho the oral transmission of one volume from the *Collected Works* of gTsug lag phreng ba.<sup>479</sup>

The Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag also bestowed the oral transmission of the sixteen volumes of gTsug lag phreng ba's writings on the Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho.<sup>480</sup> The Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho further maintained the continuity of the lineage by conferring it on later scholars. For instance, he conferred the oral transmission of gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works* on Zur mang sprul sku.<sup>481</sup>

This shows that later scholars of the Karma bKa' brgyud school received the oral transmission properly and maintained an unbroken transmission lineage. The oral transmission of gTsug lag phreng ba's works was even received by a renowned rNying ma master, lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650).<sup>482</sup>

## Conclusion

gTsug lag phreng ba's writing comprises almost all genres known to Tibet, starting from the mundane framing regulations of daily affairs for the monks, through historiographies and astrology, to works on highly sophisticated philosophies such as Madhyamaka and Mahāmudrā, or key yidam instructions such as those on the practice of Vajrayoginī. While Vajrayoginī remained an important deity in all major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, gTsug lag phreng ba's contemporaries or predecessors, such as Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456) and Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), had not written on her practice.<sup>483</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba's work on astrology also remains the most extensive material on the astrological tradition of mTshur phu. It was written as a commentary to the Third Karmapa's treatise, a work not commented on by other Karma bKa' brgyud scholars such as the Eighth Karmapa. Although Karma 'phrin las pa wrote a commentary on the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise, it was allegedly not analytical, as discussed in the section '4.3.3 Context and Rationale of Composing the Commentary.'

Given the number of writings and variety of genres, it is evident that gTsug lag phreng ba was a polymath who deeply explored many subjects. He was highly regarded

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<sup>477</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i sgrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba*. vol X, p. 345: *dPal gtsug lag phreng bas sngon rang lo so bdun pa'i tshe zin bris su byas pa las/ phyis rang lo drug cu pa'i dus legs phab pa'o*.

<sup>478</sup> Dell (2021: 113).

<sup>479</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 243: *rje dgu pas tshe mdo dang / rje gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum po ti gcig gi ljags lung stsal*.

<sup>480</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 243: *rje gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum po ti bcu drug dang/rje zhwa dmar ba rang gi bka' 'bum rnam kyi ljags lung gnang*.

<sup>481</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, vol. II, p. 251: *zur mang sprul sku sogs zur mang ba sogs la rje gtsug lag phreng ba'i bka' 'bum par ma rnam kyi lung gnang*.

<sup>482</sup> A catalogue of transmission lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med received is provided in the appendix.

<sup>483</sup> For the title lists and catalogue of Ngor chen's works, see Heimble (2017a). For Śākya mchog ldan's works, see Caumanns (2017).

during his time and by later generations. The reception of works extended beyond the bKa' brgyud tradition, including in the rNying ma pas, as evident in the above-mentioned transmission of his *Collected Works* to lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med.

gTsong lag phreng ba's writings appear to have been vast, but many works were lost with the passing years. His *Collected Works* was only comprehensively published in 2019, although some more fragmentary collections were printed earlier. Since many of his texts are not extant, it is not possible to fully evaluate gTsong lag phreng ba's work in terms of content and extent.

The exact number of gTsong lag phreng ba's writings cannot be ascertained. Some of his texts are not included in his self-written catalogue. On the other hand, some of his texts not mentioned in his self-written catalogue exist. One can also conclude that many of his texts are not extant. Furthermore, some of the texts are incomplete and remain as fragments. While some parts of his texts might have been lost, it is also possible that gTsong lag phreng ba did not complete them.

gTsong lag phreng ba categorised his textual materials into genres in a liberal manner based on various grounds such as format, function and content. His writing styles also varied according to the genre of his compositions, such as poetry and polemics.

#### Chapter IV: Main Scholarly Writings and Some Major Doctrinal Positions

This chapter will discuss the main works and major doctrinal views of gTsong lag phreng ba and their significance in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. This will shed light on the specific contributions of gTsong lag phreng ba as a scholar of his time and on how his thought influenced the tradition of his own and those of others.

Regarding his principal scholarly writings and commentaries, they will be examined in terms of their content, style, reception, unique characteristics, and historical context. As outlined in the first chapter, out of his many writings, the following works have been selected due to their significance and impact: his extensive commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and Vajrayoginī practice, his commentaries on the common fields of knowledge, such as astrology and language, along with his monumental historical work *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. These are among the earliest of their kind and the most elaborate in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition.

gTsong lag phreng ba's commentaries on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa and the Vajrayoginī treatise of Nāropā have not been studied so far. One can only find some scattered references to them in academic writings. This chapter will provide an overview of these works.

While there is a translation of the wisdom chapter of gTsong lag phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary, this thesis will treat the commentary as a whole and discuss its context by analysing its historical background and rationale for its composition. This section will also explore its present significance and reception in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. It will contain the translation of some passages that have not been translated, which are crucial to the discourse on emptiness. Although Brunnhölzl (2004) highlights some of the characteristics of gTsong lag phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary, this chapter will analyse further aspects, for example, the consultation and refutation of earlier Tibetan commentators of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

Although the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is widely referenced and praised in academic studies, its historical contexts are not sufficiently studied. Only the paper "Feast of the Wise": Author, Structure and Textual Witnesses of the 16th Century Religio-Historical Work Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston by the Second dPa' bo, gTsong lag phreng ba (1504–1566)" by Dell (2021) studies content, structure and editions of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. This chapter will give further attention to the contextual factors of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, such as political and religious factors that could have contributed to its composition.

This chapter will also discuss his hitherto unstudied commentaries on language, including a manual for reading Sanskrit. gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the grammatical treatises *Sum cu pa* (*The Thirty Verses*) and *rTags 'jug* (*The Guide to Signs*). This section will provide a brief discussion about them as to how gTsong lag phreng ba conforms or differs from some earlier commentators of the two treatises.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to study all the commentaries' subject matter in depth, it is hoped that this study will, through an initial analysis of their context and content, provide some direction for further research.

The significant doctrinal positions of gTsong lag phreng ba presented in this chapter include his positions on *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* theories of Madhyamaka, Tathāgatagarbha, and the hierarchical distinction between the buddhas of Sūtrayāna and

Mantrayāna as discussed in his *Single Intention* commentary. While one can find viewpoints of the Eighth Karmapa and Karma phrin las pa represented in academic studies on Tathāgatagarbha by Draszczyk and Higgins (2019), gTsug lag phreng ba's standpoints have been largely overlooked. In his commentary *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, gTsug lag phreng ba – although similar to the standpoint of the Eighth Karmapa – makes a hierarchical distinction between the buddhas of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna explicit, focusing on it as the main discourse. While *The Buddha's Single Intention: Drikung Kyobpa Jikten Sumgön's Vajra Statements of the Early Kagyü Tradition* by Sobisch (2020) is an excellent work on the *Single Intention*, it presents the topic mainly from the perspective of the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud tradition, which created the *Single Intention* way of interpretation. The Karma bKa' brgyud commentaries differ significantly from the 'Bri gung pa interpretations and have not yet been researched. This chapter will, for the first time, provide an understanding of the *Single Intention* from the perspective of the Karma bKa' brgyud scholar, gTsug lag phreng ba. It will also show how gTsug lag phreng ba occasionally goes beyond the thought of the *Single Intention*.

#### 4.1 Commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, the *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po* (*A Commentary on the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra: the Ocean of Mahāyānic Dharma and the Essence of Infinite Depth and Vastness*) is arguably the most extensive and the first commentary on this text in the bKa' brgyud school of Tibetan Buddhism. The commentary is probably his most significant text articulating many sūtric philosophical points, such as the correct understanding of emptiness. This section will explore its contextual background, unique characteristics and contribution to the doctrinal discourse of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. Although Brunnhölzl has highlighted many characteristics of gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary in *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition*, this section will explore them further. For instance, this section will present how gTsug lag phreng ba extensively consulted sūtras, Indian materials, and earlier Tibetan *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries.

##### 4.1.1 A Brief Background on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* in Tibet

T Tibetans consider the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* a significant treatise of philosophical study and mind training. It was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan in the ninth century by sKa ba dpal brtsegs and Sarvajñādeva.<sup>484</sup> The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* has also become the text most often referred to in the study of the enlightened mind (Tib. *byang chub sems*, Skt. *bodhicita*).<sup>485</sup> For this reason, the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* is one of the most commented-on Indian treatises by Tibetan scholars of all the major religious traditions in Tibet. gTsug lag phreng ba stands among the early Tibetan commentators on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* after

<sup>484</sup> Viehbeck (2016: 9). This first translation is reported to have been recently discovered from Dunhuang (ibid).

<sup>485</sup> Wangchuk (2007: 67). Regarding the translations of the term 'bodhicitta' into English, see ibid. p. 70–71.

Bu ston (1290–1364) established it as a significant treatise in the later diffusion (*phyi dar*) in Tibet by including it and its commentaries in the *bsTan 'gyur*.<sup>486</sup>

The *sDe dge bsTan 'gyur* lists eight commentaries of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.<sup>487</sup> It is reported that there had been more than a hundred Indian commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, of which only a few are extant today.<sup>488</sup> Bu ston lists the eight Indian commentaries he referred to while composing his commentary on the treatise.<sup>489</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba, as discussed below, extensively uses Tibetan translations of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries.<sup>490</sup>

The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* is among the Buddhist texts with the highest number of translations.<sup>491</sup> Ernst Steinkellner and Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek did the recent one in *Buddha Mind—Christ Mind: A Christian Commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatāra* (2019). Other notable translations include *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, published in 1997 by Vesna A. Wallace and B. Allan Wallace.

Although there are many translations of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, there is only a partial translation of gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary. Brunnhölzl provides the translation of the ninth chapter of gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary in *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition*. He appears to have translated it to elucidate the meaning of Madhyamaka philosophy in the bKa' brgyud pa school.<sup>492</sup> Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell, in their article “The Second dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566): Life and Work of the Great Sixteenth-Century Historian,” provide a short introduction to the commentary. Apart from these works, the commentary has not been studied, although it is significant in size and content.

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<sup>486</sup> Saito (1997: 79). Bu ston is reported to have found imperfections in the Tibetan renditions of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, which prompted him to make his translation while composing his commentary on it (Saito 1999: 177). It is also suggested that Bu ston, Mi pham, and gTsug lag phreng ba were Tibetan scholars who took note of disparities in the Tibetan editions of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (Brunnhölzl 2004: 938, footnote 1482).

<sup>487</sup> 1) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i legs par sbyar ba* by dGe ba'i lha (Kalyāṇadeva), 2) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rtogs par dka' ba'i gnas gtan la dbab pa zhes bya ba'i gzhung* by Kṛṣṇapa, 3) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel* by Vairocanarakṣita, 4) *Shes rab le'u'i dka' 'grel* (anonymous), translated by Mi nyam khol po and rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, 5) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i shes rab le'u dang bsngo ba'i dka' 'grel* (anonymous), 6) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don sum cu rtsa drug bsdu pa* by gSer gling bla ma Chos skyong 7) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don bsdu pa* by gSer gling bla ma Chos skyong 8) *Byang chub kyi spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dgongs pa'i 'grel pa khyad par gsal byed ces bya ba* by Vibhūticandra. Many *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries in Indic languages have not been translated into Tibetan or have been lost.

<sup>488</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 611).

<sup>489</sup> Bu ston rin chen grub. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa byang chub sems gsal bar byed pa zla ba'i 'od zer*. p. 502: *nub kyi sgo glegs pa shes rab 'byung gnas kyi blo gros kyi mdzad pa'i 'grel pa chen po dang / bai ro tsa na rak ši tas mdzad pa'i 'grel pa dang / dge ba lha dang / bi bhū ti tsan dras mdzad pa'i 'grel pa dang / nag po pa'i dka' 'grel dang / sher le'i 'grel pa rngog lo'i bsgyur ba dang / spyod 'jug le dgu ma'i 'grel pa smad dang*. 1) An intensive commentary by Prajñākaramati, 2) a commentary by Vairocanarakṣita, 3) a commentary by Vibhūticandra, 4) a commentary by Kalyāṇadeva, 5) a commentary by Kṛṣṇapa, 6) Shes rab le'u commentary translated by rNgog lo tsa wa, 7) the second part of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary in nine chapters (author is anonymous).

<sup>490</sup> Although one can confirm that gTsug lag phreng ba had some knowledge of Sanskrit, as evidenced by the composition of the pronunciation guide of Sanskrit, there is no evidence that he used original Sanskrit commentaries of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

<sup>491</sup> Nelson (2016: 405). Regarding its translation into Asian and European languages such as French, see *ibid*.

<sup>492</sup> Nelson (2016: 426) also notes that scholars researched the ninth chapter of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* in the latter part of the twentieth century to study the philosophy of emptiness.

### 4.1.2 Characteristics of the Commentary

gTsong lag phreng ba enumerates some of the qualities of his commentary. He explains how this commentary was composed in his colophon:

This [text] that explains the meaning of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* known as *An Ocean of Dharma of Mahāyāna, the Essence of Boundless Profound and Vast [Teachings]* consolidated the treatise [*Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*] into a summarised meaning, explained the meanings of words generally, separated difficult points specifically, delineated even the indispensable secondary meanings, stated the differences of all the commentaries of India and Tibet separately, and relied primarily on the Conqueror's canons and solely the *śāstras* of the traditions of the two charioteers [Nāgārjuna's tradition of profound and Asaṅga's tradition of vast conduct].<sup>493</sup>

He indicates that his commentary consolidated the subject matters of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, not stressing a word-by-word explanation. gTsong lag phren ba also maintains that he dealt with difficult points and relied on sūtras, which is evident from their extensive citations in his commentary. He asserts that he distinguished the differences between the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries of India and Tibet, indicating his extensive consultation while writing this commentary. His assessment of the qualities, by and large, appears valid. Some of the qualities are discussed below.

Brunnhölzl summarises the characteristics of gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*:

Of all the commentaries on Śāntideva's text, it is by far the most voluminous (975 folios). However, not only its length distinguishes it from other Tibetan commentaries. First, in terms of its scriptural sources, there is an unparalleled abundance of at times extensive quotes from the sūtras to support the main points of the commentary. It is the only commentary that gives synopses of the relevant passages from the major Indian commentaries for each topic of the text. In addition, it quotes a number of the earliest Tibetan commentaries, such as those written by the Sakya master Sabsang Mati Panchen Jamyang Lodro (1294–1376) and the Kadampa master Tsonaba Chenbo Sherab Sangbo (fourteenth century).<sup>494</sup>

As observed by Brunnhölzl, gTsong lag phreng ba also extensively refers to Indian commentators of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, such as Bibhuti and Kalyāṇadeva, and their *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries. This commentary not only cites sūtras and Indian masters but also earlier Tibetan scholars. It also elucidates the philosophical viewpoint of the

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<sup>493</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 499–500: *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i gzhung don rnam par bshad pa theg pa chen po'i chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba 'di ni gzhung bsdu don du bcings/ tshig don rags par bshad/ dka' ba'i gnas bye brag tu phye/ med du mi rung ba'i phyi'i don rnams kyang gtan la phab/ rgya bod kyi 'grel pa mtha' dag gi khyad par tha dad pa brjod/ gts'o bor rgyal ba'i gsung rab chen po rnams dang shing rta'i srol gnyis kyi bstan bcos kho nar dpang du byas.*

<sup>494</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004:614).

Karma bKa' brgyud school in general, and more particularly, the views of the Eighth Karmapa. Situ and Belo, in the *Kam tshang Biographies*, recognise gTsug lag phren ba's detailed commentary of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* as 'the one that nurtures the viewpoints of the Lord Eighth Karmapa' (*rje brgyad pa'i bzhed pa skyong ba*).<sup>495</sup> In fact, gTsug lag phren ba frequently closely mirrors philosophical viewpoints held by the Eighth Karmapa.

Brunnhölzl has identified distinctive characteristics of the commentary. This section delves more deeply into these by exploring them and how gTsug lag phren ba's commentary stands out from other early commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. gTsug lag phren ba's commentary is more extensive than earlier prominent commentaries such as those by Buxton and Ma ti Pañ chen, not simply in size but also in the number of references to the Indian commentaries and sūtras.

#### 4.1.3 Context Surrounding the Composition of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* Commentary

As one of the earliest commentators, one can assume that gTsug lag phren ba felt the need to comment on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, particularly for the adherents of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. Concerning the rationale, place and time of composition, he remarks:

[I] Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa alias gTsug lag rgya mtsho'i phren ba<sup>496</sup>, — [who] claims to be a monk of Śākya [muni] [and who] appeared in the land of Lhasa, the Magadha<sup>497</sup> of the Land of Snow, the partial holder of the fields of knowledge (*rigs pa'i gnas*), scriptural collection (*sde snod*), and tantra (*rgyud sde*), [and who] alternated [between meditating and] preaching owing to [evolving] time,— started [to compose this commentary] to bring to mind the ways of practising in these ways with the intention solely to benefit others in the meditation hut at the mountain of practice (*grub pa'i ri bo*)<sup>498</sup> [which is] arisen spontaneously as a body of Vajravārāhī in the southern part of the Land of Snow. It was fully completed in the morning of the twelfth day of the ninth month in the fire dragon year, coinciding with the completion of Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang at the age of fifty-three in the emanated mansion of Sras mkhar in the great seat of Gro bo lung, which has become like a snowy mountain, the provenance of all the streams known as bKa' brgyud in this Land of Snow.<sup>499</sup>

<sup>495</sup> *Kam tshang Biographies*, p. 62: *rje brgyad pa'i bzhed pa skyong ba'i spyod 'jug gi rgyas 'grel sogs mang du bzhugs so*. This can be understood by his expressions of the standpoints of the Karma bKa' brgyud school, particularly on emptiness, despite the fact that gTsug lag phren ba does not mention the Eighth Karmapa in this commentary or identify the viewpoints as those of the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>496</sup> This name should not be confused with that of the Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho, since by using his full name preceding the alias, gTsug lag phren ba clearly identifies himself.

<sup>497</sup> Buswell, Robert E., and Donald S. Lopez (eds.) 2013, under s.v. Maghada points out 'Maghada has been described as the birthplace of Buddhism, and its language, the language of the Buddha.' gTsug lag phren ba appears to compare Lhasa with Maghada as the birthplace of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet.

<sup>498</sup> This mountain appears to be the sacred Tsa ri. Rheingans (2021: 171, footnote 757) notes 'According to the informant mKhan po chos mchog, Bod som mgo is supposed to be a part of this site, a "place of the bKa' brgyud practice" (*bka' brgyud gyi sgrub gnas*).'

<sup>499</sup> gTsug lag 'phren ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas miha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 500: *ji ltar nyams su len pa'i tshul rgyud la sbyor ba kho na'i ched du rigs pa'i gnas dang sde snod dang rgyud sde'i phyogs tsam 'dzin pa dus kyi dbang*

gTsug lag phreng ba, following the usual rhetoric of Tibetan scholars, maintains that he composed this commentary so that he could practise the instructions and help others. The commentary was completed at the Mi la ras pa tower in Gro bo lung when the construction of the temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang was concluded.

The printing of the commentary at Gro bo lung started in 1559 and was completed in 1562, corresponding to the male water dog year.<sup>500</sup> Thus, printing commenced three years after the completion of his commentary and was completed in four years during gTsug lag phreng ba's lifetime.

#### 4.1.3.1 Extensive Consultation of Sūtras

As Brunnhölzl points out, gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary consists of extensive citations from the sūtras, indicating his attempt to make his work comprehensive. The length of the citations varies from a few words to entire lengthy paragraphs.

In support of his points, gTsug lag phreng ba refers to as many as seventy-seven different sūtras in the commentary.<sup>501</sup> He mainly provides these citations to support and establish the validity of his points as thoroughly as possible. This vast number of sūtras cited in this work suggests his considerable effort in making it authoritative. However, it is important to note that although the citations align with his own interpretation, other scholars would have their own alternative interpretations of the sūtras.<sup>502</sup>

While gTsug lag phreng ba's citations of sūtras would not necessarily make his commentary more reliable and authoritative than earlier ones, the citations are certainly more frequent and greater in number than in earlier popular Tibetan commentaries such as the *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa gzhung don rab gsal snang ba* (*A Commentary on Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra: the Light that Fully Illuminates the Textual Meaning*) by Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1294–1376) and the commentary by Bu ston rin chen grub (1290–1364) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa byang chub sems gsal bar byed pa zla ba'i 'od zer* (*A Commentary on Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra: the Rays of the Moon that Illuminates the Enlightened Mind*).<sup>503</sup>

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*gis chos smra ba'i re mos su son zhing gangs can gyi dbus 'gyur tshal lha ldan gyi ljongs su byung ba sākyā'i dge slong du khas 'che ba mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa ming gzhan gtsug lag rgya mtsho'i phreng ba can gyis gzhan la phan pa'i bsam pa kho nas gangs can gyi lho'i cha grub pa'i ri bo 'phags pa'i skur lhun gyis grub pa'i bsam gtan gyi khang bur mgo brtsams te/ gangs can gyi ljongs 'dir bka' brgyud du grags pa thams cad kyi chu rgyun gyi 'byung gnas ri bo gangs can lta bur gyur pa/ gdan sa chen po dpal gro bo lung sras mkhar sprul ba'i pho brang du/ rang lo so nga gsum pa me 'brug la sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang chen po legs par grub pa dang lhan cig par tha skar gyi zla ba'i dkar tshes bcu gnyis kyi nga dro legs par grub pa'o.*

<sup>500</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 506: *sa mo lug gi lor grags pa/ de'i dbyar lo nas par gyi dbu brtsams te/ rnga chen zhes grags pa chu pho khyi lo'i dbyar nang du bka' brgyud kyi chu bo ji snyed pa'i 'byung gnas rje btsun mar pa nyid kyi gdan sa chen po lho gnas mchog gro bo lung sras mkhar sprul pa'i pho brang sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang dpal karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sder par du grub par bgyis pa'o.* Text printing was also carried out by other entities such as religious groups although it was initially done by ruling elites (Sernesi 2017: 196–197).

<sup>501</sup> Attempts have been made to determine the number of sūtras by scanning the whole two volumes.

<sup>502</sup> One can also argue that the different religious traditions in Tibet and India arose as a result of divergent interpretations of Buddha's word among scholars.

<sup>503</sup> However, one needs further study whether their fewer references to sūtras were owing to the nature of their commentaries compared to that of gTsug lag phreng ba.

#### 4.1.3.2 Consultation of the Tibetan Translations of Indian Commentaries

gTsong lag phreng ba extensively references the Tibetan translations of Indian commentaries of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. Since Indian commentaries were considered authoritative in Tibet, one can assume that he did this in an attempt to make his commentary authentic and grounded in reliable sources

In terms of the number of references to the Indian commentaries, gTsong lag phreng ba refers to five Indian commentaries of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*: 1) *Commentary on the Difficult Points of The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*<sup>504</sup> (Tib. *Byang chub kyi spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel*, Skt. *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*)<sup>505</sup> by Prajñākaramati (Shes rab 'byung gnas blo gros), which gTsong lag phreng ba calls '*Grel chen* or *bKa' 'grel chen mo*, 2) *The Excellent Composition of The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. (Tib. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i legs par sbyar ba*, Skt. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārasaṃskāra*) by Kalyāṇadeva, 3) *Commentary on the Intention of The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Called the Illumination of the Distinctive Features* (Tib. *Byang chub kyi spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dgongs pa'i 'grel pa khyad par gsal byed ces bya ba*, Skt. *Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanināma*) by Vibhūticandra, 4) *The Commentary on the Difficult Points of Wisdom Chapter* (Tib. *Shes rab le'u'i dka' 'grel*, Skt. *Prajñāparricchadapañjikā*) which gTsong lag phreng ba calls *Sher le'i 'grel chung*, and 5) a commentary which gTsong lag phreng ba calls *bKa' 'grel chung ngu*.<sup>506</sup> Among the five, gTsong lag phreng ba cites from the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* by Prajñākaramati the most.

In line with the general practice of Tibetan scholars, gTsong lag phreng ba mainly cites Indian commentaries to substantiate his case in the text. Furthermore, he presents differing interpretations found in the Indian commentaries without assigning any value or making any judgment about them, and without attempting to reconcile them. For instance, in the debate between the Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna traditions regarding the authenticity of their canons as Buddha's words, gTsong lag phreng ba presents the viewpoints of many Indian scholars and texts without judging the validity of the arguments or expressing a preference for one over the other. Here, gTsong lag phreng ba juxtaposes the interpretations from the three Indian treatises – *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i legs par sbyar ba*, *dKa' 'grel chung ngu* and *Sher le'i dka' 'grel chung ngu* – without appraisal of their cogency.

*'di dag tu dGe ba'i lhas* (Kalyāṇadeva) *ni/ dang po khyod la 'di ma grub/ /ces pa theg chen med par 'tshang rgya bar mi 'gyur la de med par khyod kyi lung grub pa yang ma yin no zhes bshad la/ dKa' 'grel chung ngur/ (The Small Commentary on the Difficult Points) bden pa ste yang dag par yod pa'i dngos po mthong bas grol bar 'gyur gyi ci yang ma grub pa mthong bas ni ma yin no zhes phyogs snga bkod cing /*

<sup>504</sup> English translations of the titles of this and other following commentaries used here are from Brunnhölzl's *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition*. see (Brunnhölzl 2004: 611–612).

<sup>505</sup> Peter Oldmeadow did the English translation of the ninth chapter of the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* as a part of his PhD thesis titled 'A Study of the Wisdom Chapter (Prajñāpāramita Parrichedda) of the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* of Prajñākaramati' in 1994. The translation was mainly based on the Sanskrit text.

<sup>506</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 941, footnote 1530) notes that the identification of this treatise what gTsong lag phreng ba calls *bKa' 'grel chung ngu* could be possibly one of the two commentaries: *Vairocanarakṣita's Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapañjikā* or *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāravivrttipañjikā* (anonymous).

*Sher le'i dka' 'grel chung ngu (The Small Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Knowledge Chapter) las ni/ gnyi ga la zhes pa ni rgol ba dang phyir rgol ba gnyis ka la grub pa'o/ /dang po khyod la 'di ma grub ces pa ni khas blangs pa'i sngon ngol du ma grub pa ste zhes 'bru gnyer to.*<sup>507</sup>

The fact that gTsug lag phreng ba presents different explanations, including those from the Indian commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, helps substantiate his claim that he explicitly states the interpretations of both Indian and Tibetan commentaries.

#### 4.1.3.3 Consultation and Refutation of Earlier Tibetan Commentators

gTsug lag phreng ba employs earlier Tibetan commentaries for various purposes, including to present divergent interpretations. He also refutes earlier commentators. For instance, he refutes Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan concerning his understanding of the aspirational and applied mind of bodhicitta (*smon 'jug sems bskyed*) and the bodhisattva vow.

Again Sa bzang pa [says]: ‘The generation of bodhicitta, as explained earlier, is the nature of both aspirational and applied [enlightened mind], and the [bodhisattva] vow is a discipline infused by the Mahāyānic mind that is the nature of engagement in other’s benefit through the three doors in all aspects, irrespective of body and wealth.’ This, too, is a point to be examined. Is the engagement for the benefit of others through three doors in all aspects, irrespective of body and wealth, a property of the vow or a property of the person? In the former [case], the vow that benefits others through the three doors, irrespective of body and wealth, is even more amazing (*ngo mtshar che*)<sup>508</sup> than that of bodhisattvas.<sup>509</sup>

Here, Sa bzang pa, according to gTsug lag phreng ba, maintains that the bodhisattva vow benefits others without bodily actions of helping others or practising generosity for others. gTsug lag phreng ba argues that one cannot benefit others without the actions of body and wealth. His refutation not only expresses his qualms over Sa bzang pa’s understanding but also gives his own perspective. While gTsug lag phreng ba engages in a detailed disputation of Sa bzang pa’s stance, it is beyond the scope of this section to discuss it at length.

<sup>507</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 328–329. For the English translation of this passage, see Brunnhölzl (2004: 668–669). The capitalisation and bold font has been added to the proper names and the titles of the commentaries to make them more easily identifiable in the quoted passage.

<sup>508</sup> The word *ngo mtshar che* (amazing) is used sarcastically to mean that the property of the vow cannot be greater than that of bodhisattvas.

<sup>509</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V p. 51: *yang za bzang pas/ sems bskyed ni sngar bshad pa ltar smon 'jug gnyis ka'i bdag nyid can yin la/ sdom pa ni lus dang longs spyod la ltos pa med par sgo gsum gyis rnam pa thams cad du gzhan la phan par zhugs pa'i bdag nyid can te theg pa chen po pa'i rgyud kyi bsdu pa'i tshul khrims so zhes pa yang dpyad pa'i gzhi ste lus dang longs spyod la ltos pa med par sgo gsum gyis rnam pa thams cad du phan par zhugs pa de bren pa sdom pa'i chos yin nam rten gang zag gi chos yin/ dang po ltar na sdom pa rang gi lus dang longs spyod la ltos pa med par sgo gsum gyis gzhan phan par byed pa de byang chub sems dpa' las kyang ngo mtshar che'o.*

At times, points made in earlier Tibetan commentaries are paraphrased rather than cited verbatim in order to present a variety of interpretations without validating or refuting them. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba paraphrases Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen only to enumerate different interpretations. gTsug lag phreng ba's paraphrase of Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen's words:

*sa bzang pos ni/ theg chen dman ni theg chen gyi gang zag gnyi gas bkar 'dod pas bka' yin la theg chen ni nged nyan thos pas bkar mi 'dod pa'i phyir bka' ma yin no zhe na 'o na theg dman gyi lung la yang dang por gzhan yid ches ma zhugs pa'i dus na bka' yin par ma grub par 'gyur ro zhes bshad snang ngo.<sup>510</sup>*

Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan's original text:

*de la gang gi phyir khyed theg chen pa dang nged nyan thos pa gnyi ga la lung sde bzhi la sogs pa 'di dag bka' yin par grub ste/ gnyi gas lung rnam dag tu khas blangs pa'i phyir ro/ theg chen ni bka' ma yin te/ nged kyi lung rnam dag tu khas ma blangs pa'i phyir ro zhe na/ 'o na dang po lung la gzhan yid ma ches ma zhugs pa'i dus na khyod kyi lugs la lung sde bzhi la sogs pa 'di dag bka' yin pa ma grub par 'gyur te/ gzhan gyi lung rnam dag tu khas ma blangs pa'i phyir ro.<sup>511</sup>*

In his *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba also engages, on many occasions, in refuting some Sa skya paṇḍita's theories related to bodhicitta. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba notes that Sa skya paṇḍita finds the bodhicitta generated through the rituals (Tib. *cho ga*, Skt. *vidhi*) of the two traditions (Madhyamaka tradition of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and the Cittamātra tradition of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*) different and highly hierarchical as a result of the difference in the ritual involved in generating bodhicitta, and so on.<sup>512</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba rebukes Sa skya paṇḍita, saying that it does not befit the wise (*mkhas pa*) to maintain that the bodhicitta of the two traditions differ because of their difference in ritual. He argues that it would be similar to claiming the vast difference in content of the two Indian manuscripts of the *Compendium of Instructions* (Tib. *bSlab btus*, Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*), on the basis that one is written in *lañca* script and the other in *vartu*.<sup>513</sup>

<sup>510</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 330.

<sup>511</sup> Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. *sPyod 'jug 'grel pa gzhung don rab gsal snang ba*, p. 347.

<sup>512</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 69: 'dir shing rta'i srol gnyis kyi cho ga las skyes pa'i sems bskyed de gcig gam tha dad ce na/ 'di la chos rje sa skya pa sogs shin tu tha dad cing mchog dman yod par bzhed la/ legs bshad bsdu par yang gzhung 'di gnyis dang po len pa'i cho ga mi 'dra bar du srung bya ltung ba'i grangs mi 'dra tha mar phyir bcos mi 'dra. Wangchuk (2007: 169) presents Sa skya paṇḍita's three questions or qualms related to the bodhicitta generated through its rituals. gTsug lag phreng ba has writings on the ritual of taking the bodhisattva vow according to both traditions. See the appendix for the titles.

<sup>513</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 70: *spyir de gnyis kyi byang chub kyi sems de gcig gam tha dad ces dris pa la cho ga la tha dad do zhes pa sogs ni mkhas pa'i lan min la/ tha dad tshul de dag kyang bslab btus kyi rgya dpe de gnyis shin tu mi gcig te gcig la lañca dang gcig vartu lar bris pa'i phyir zhes pa'i rigs pa kho nar snang ngo.*

gTsong lag phreng ba refutes Sa skya paṇḍita's position by synthesising the two traditions:

Therefore, although there is no difference in the essence of rituals, the tasks (*bya ba*) are presented concisely by arranging into primary topics to the trainees (*gdul bya*) [who are] inclined to concision (*bsdus pa*) in the context of tradition. In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, this alone is presented in detail by separating it into many aspects for [the trainees who are] inclined towards elaborations (*spros pa*). [However], the essence of the ritual is the same.<sup>514</sup>

#### 4.1.3.4 bKa' brgyud pa Interpretation

This section will explore the bKa' brgyud pa way of exegetical interpretation through focusing on some doctrinal topics presented by gTsong lag phreng ba. While commenting and disputing with the scholars of other traditions, gTsong lag phreng ba makes explicit the bKa' brgyud pa stance on various significant philosophical points.

#### Madhyamaka Standpoint

gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary, as his largest composition on sūtric tradition, elaborates several doctrinal standpoints of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. Brunnhölzl rightly observes the nature of gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary in these words:

In the Karma Kagyu school, Pawo Rinpoche's commentary on *The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* is considered both the standard commentary on this text and—together with the Eighth Karmapa's *Chariot of the Tagbo Siddhas*—the standard presentation of Madhyamaka, especially in its Consequentialist approach. Since the Second Pawo Rinpoche was a disciple of the Eighth Karmapa, his commentary preserves many of the Centrist pith instructions of Karmapa Mikyö Dorje.<sup>515</sup>

Some of the earlier *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentaries did not contain the viewpoints of their schools. For instance, Bu ston's commentary, as mentioned in the publishing note to the edition published by Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, is traditionally understood not to lean towards doctrinally oriented views and does not engage in disputation with viewpoints held by scholars of other traditions.<sup>516</sup> In contrast, gTsong lag phreng ba uses an exegetical approach that disputes with other scholars over some of their positions. This way of polemical engagement with the standpoint of other scholars and schools could be a reflection of the milieu of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the systematisation of religious schools was at its height.

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<sup>514</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 73: *des na cho ga'i don la khyad par med na gnas skabs spyod 'jug gi lugs ni gdul bya bsdus pa la dga' ba'i ngor don gtso bor bsdus te bya ba nyung ngus bstan la/ byang sar ni/ spros pa la dga' ba'i ngor de nyid rnam pa du mar phyas nas rgyas par bstan pa ste cho ga'i ngo bo ni gcig kho na'o.*

<sup>515</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 613).

<sup>516</sup> Bu ston rin chen grub. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa byang chub sems gsal bar byed pa zla ba'i 'od zer*, p. 1: *grub mtha' dang yig cha'i phyogs 'dzin gyi shan ma zhugs pa.*

The commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* of gTsong lag phreng ba and the commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra* of the Eighth Karmapa are considered to be the two main texts that expound the philosophical view of emptiness of the Karma bKa' brgyud school.<sup>517</sup> The Eighth Karmapa's treatment of Madhyamaka is considered bKa' brgyud pa in nature since he expounds it in connection to Mahāmudrā.<sup>518</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba stands with the Eighth Karmapa as the next most significant Madhyamaka philosopher in the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

Brunnhölzl recognises the viewpoint of the Eighth Karmapa and gTsong lag phreng ba as 'centrist.' In a passage not translated by Brunnhölzl, gTsong lag phreng ba explains the term *dbu ma* by refuting the understanding of some Tibetan scholars regarding the 'centre':

Some scholars as famous as the sun and moon in Tibet maintain that the centre (*dbus*) of two extremes (Tib. *mtha'*, Skt. *anta*) should certainly be posited since that [centre] is the great ultimate other-empty (*gzhan stong chen po*) free of the unchanging permanent entity and adventitious stains, while [it is] a vast kingdom of wisdom, not empty of all qualities such as strength (Tib. *stobs*, Skt. *bala*). However, since the modes of Buddha's teachings are boundless, [this was taught] to eliminate the partial grasping to emptiness [which is] clinging to the non-existence (*med pa*) as the ultimate and there are many [instances] where the reality is taught as permanent and steady to the pure subjects in whom there will be no generation of the conception of superimposition and denigration (*sgro skur*) regardless how they are taught since [they are] liberated from the extremes of externalism and nihilism. They are cured of illnesses similar to a person with a complete body and strength who enjoys all foods of good taste and nutrition. However, it is not as such when the perception is seized by a severe tuberculous illness of philosophical view that needs to be treated by the washing lotion of emptiness. The extremes and centre are established by mutual dependence. Therefore, if the extreme is negated, its centre is not established because it is impossible to have a centre without extremes in the world. If there is a 'centre,' there is an 'extreme' dependent on it. Even in a single atom, [there occur three dimensions of] right, left, and centre. Its centre alone will have three [dimensions of] right, left, and the centre and so on, since there will be the engagement grasping to the extremes [such as] to right, left, and so on, as long as there is grasping to the centre.<sup>519</sup>

<sup>517</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 21).

<sup>518</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 21).

<sup>519</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 282–283: *yang bod yul na nyi zla ltar grags pa'i mkhas pa cig mtha' gnyis kyi dbus nges par khas len dgos te de ni don dam gzhan stong chen po rtag pa'i dngos po mi 'gyur ba ther zug pa blo bur gyi dri mas stong zhing stobs sogs kyi yon tan thams cad kyis mi stong ba ye shes kyi rgyal khams chen po'o zhes 'chad mod/ spyir sangs rgyas kyi chos tshul mtha' yas pas med pa la don dam du zhen pa nyi tshe'i stong 'dzin sel ba'i phyir dang gdul bya dag pa rtag chad kyi mtha' las grol bas ji ltar bstan yang sgro skur gyi dmigs pa mi skye ba rnam la chos nyid rtag britan du bshad pa mang du yod kyang de dag ni nad byang zhing lus stobs rdzogs pa'i skyes bu ni ro beud bzang po'i kha zas thams cad la longs spyod pa lta bu yin la dmigs par lta ba'i bad kan gyi nad lci bas zin pa stong nyid kyi bkru sman gyis sbyang dgos pa'i skabs su de lta ma yin te/mtha' dbus ni phan tshun bltos te bzhag pa yin pas mtha' bkag na de'i dbus mi 'grub ste mtha' med pa'i dbus 'jig rten na mi srid pa'i phyir/ dbus yod na de la bltos pa'i mtha' yang yod de rdul phra rabs gcig la yang g.yas g.yon dbus gsum du 'gyur zhing de'i dbus kyi cha kho na la'ang rang sa'i g.yas*

In this way, gTsong lag phreng ba proposes a Madhyamaka path free of extreme apprehensions, including holding to the middle:

Having relinquished all extremes of apprehensions such as  
Material, immaterial and both,  
Even the middle is not seen.  
Abide by not abiding in any [extremes].  
This is called the path of Madhyamaka.<sup>520</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba also denounces some viewpoints on emptiness, probably including that of Tsong kha pa, as bordering on nihilism:

Although [it remains] this way, some [scholars], while commenting on this kind of text in the later generations of Tibet, say that conventional truth (Tib. *kun rdzob bden pa*, Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*) is not non-existent and the ultimate truth is not existent, and [phenomena are] not non-existent in the conventional truth and not existent in the ultimate truth out of fear [to accept that] conventional truth as intrinsically non-existent. In the ultimate, [this] deceptively generates a false perception that perceives the illusory conventional truth as intrinsically existent and the ultimate truth as an absolute nothingness similar to a hare's horn.<sup>521</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba further argues that emptiness should transcend extremes of non-affirming negation (*med dgag*) or affirming negation (*ma yin dgag*):

In general, there are many positions, such as positing the ultimate [truth] as non-affirming negation, positing the ultimate as affirming negation, and positing the ultimate as permanently established. All of these [positions] do not contradict [with the ultimate sense of emptiness] if they are explained provisionally as a non-affirming negation to counteract the apprehension of [phenomena] as established, explained as affirming negation to counteract clinging to it (non-existence), and presented as permanently established, not empty of qualities to counteract clinging to non-existence as ultimate. However, if one speaks clinging to it or in it, then all these [explanations] stray from the ultimate [truth] since negation is [the imputation] of the negating [mind] and affirmation is the imputation of the affirming mind. All [kinds of] clinging to anything is thoroughly mistaken.<sup>522</sup>

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*g.yon dbus gsum du 'gyur ba sogs ji srid dbus su 'dzin pa yod pa de srid g.yas g.yon sogs mtha' i 'dzin pa yang 'jug pa'i phyir.*

<sup>520</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 259: *dnegos dang dnegos med dang gnyi ga'i/ 'dzin pa'i mtha' ni rnam par spangs/ /dbu ma nyid kyang mi dmigs la/ /gang la'ang mi gnas par gnas pa/ /'di ni dbu ma'i lam zhes brjod.*

<sup>521</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 281: *de ltar mod kyi bod phyi rabs 'di na gzhung 'di lia bu 'grel ba na kha cig kun rdzob ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa ma yin pa la skrag ste kun rdzob med pa ma yin don dam yod pa ma yin zhes dang kun rdzob tu med pa ma yin don dam du yod pa ma yin zhes don gyis na kun rdzob 'khrul snang ngo bo nyid kyis yod cing don dam ri bong gi rwa ltar cang med du 'dzin pa'i log shes shig 'khyog 'gros kyis bskyed pa dang.*

<sup>522</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi*

gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that the ultimate truth is neither non-affirming negation nor affirming negation, while conceding that it can be espoused provisionally to counteract clinging to the extremes. This concession probably provides an exception to Karma 'phrin la pa's position of affirming negation.<sup>523</sup>

#### 4.1.3.5 Presentation of Other Philosophical Topics

gTsug lag phreng ba also discusses many philosophical points that can be considered the bKa' brgyud pa way of interpretation. Brunnhölzl identifies a range of topics:

In addition to being a commentary on *The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Pawo Rinpoche's text provides several long accounts on such topics as Madhyamaka in general, the distinction between Autonomists and Consequentialists, prajñā, emptiness, the two realities, and the nature and qualities of Buddhahood. It describes the four major Buddhist philosophical systems and how the great vehicle represents the words of the Buddha. In addressing the issue of so-called Shentong-Madhyamaka, he also elaborates on the lineage of vast activity and shows that it is not the same as Mere Mentalism.<sup>524</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also discusses some other significant topics, such as the difference between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika.<sup>525</sup> He enumerates many distinctions between them while highlighting their non-contradictory nature, maintaining that Prāsaṅgika is meant for simultaneists and Svātantrika for gradualists.<sup>526</sup> Therefore, gTsug lag phreng ba apparently does not ascribe a hierarchical distinction between them, nor does he identify himself as the adherent of either of these two doxographical classifications. The Eighth Karmapa likewise did not see a distinction between the two systems in propounding ultimate emptiness.<sup>527</sup> However, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, scholars in Tibet favoured one system over the other. For instance, rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109) is considered Svātantrika, while Pa tshab Nyi ma grags pa Prāsaṅgika.<sup>528</sup> Later, in the early 15th century, Tsong kha pa also favoured Prāsaṅgika over Svātantrika as a doxographical system to unlock the true meaning

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*rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, Vol. V, p. 277–278: *spyir don dam med dgag tu 'dod pa dang don dam ma yin dgag tu 'dod pa dang don dam rtag brtan gyi sgrub par 'dod pa sogs mang mod kyang re zhig pha rol gyi grub 'dzin ldog pa'i phyir med dgag tu 'chad pa dang / der zhen pa ldog pa'i phyir ma yin dgag tu 'chad pa dang / med pa la don dam du zhen pa ldog pa'i phyir yon tan gyis mi stong ba'i rtag brtan du 'chad na ni mi 'gal la rang nyid de dang der zhen nas smra na ni de thams cad kyang don dam las ring tu 'gyur te dgag pa ni med 'dzin dang sgrub pa ni yod 'dzin gyi blos btags pa yin la gang du 'dzin pa thams cad ni gnas tshul la bltos te phyin ci log kho na yin pa'i phyir.*

<sup>523</sup> Karma 'phrin la pa argues that ultimate truth is not a non-affirming negation. However, he appears to espouse affirming negation since he proposes non-dual wisdom instead of nothingness. See the section 4.7.1 for the discussion on it.

<sup>524</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 615).

<sup>525</sup> The terms Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika are not attested in the Indian sources, thus are suggested to have been the invention of the Tibetans. See, for instance, Ruegg (2010: 160–161).

<sup>526</sup> See Brunnhölzl (2004: 747–748) for the translation of all differences listed by gTsug lag phreng ba. This kind of reconciliatory interpretation between them is also echoed by later scholars such as Mi pham, the twentieth-century rNying ma pa scholar, who stated that both traditions reach the same understanding ultimately (Phuntsho 2005: 238, note 38).

<sup>527</sup> Dreyfus (2003: 321–322).

<sup>528</sup> Cabezon (2003: 294).

of Madhyamaka.<sup>529</sup> However, Mi bskyod rdo rje argued that their distinction would render Svātantrika non-Madhyamaka.<sup>530</sup> It can be seen that gTsong lag phreng ba is among the earliest scholars to suggest the reconciliatory approach to the two systems in delineating emptiness. Later, the 19th-century rNying ma pa scholar Mi pham (1846–1912) affirmed a similarity between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika in reaching the final meaning of emptiness.<sup>531</sup>

While ultimately suggesting that Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika are of one nature, gTsong lag phreng ba explains the differences between the two approaches in the treatment of emptiness. Brunnhölzl translated the following passage from gTsong lag phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary.

Thus, the differences between Autonomists and Consequentialists [in terms of ground, path, and fruition] are as follows: In the context of the ground, there is the difference that [Autonomists] present the seeming in accordance with proponents of philosophical systems [such as the Sūtra Followers or the Yogācāras] and that [Consequentialists] present it in accordance with common worldly consensus. When presenting the ultimate, [Autonomists] accept objects (that is, seeming [phenomena]) that bear the nature of phenomena, while [Consequentialists] do not accept this. [885] [Another difference is] that [Autonomists] accept valid cognition that is undeceiving concerning objects (that is, conventional reality), and [Consequentialists] do not accept it.<sup>532</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba's detailed treatment of the distinctive characteristics of the two approaches can be taken as a bKa' brgyud pa interpretation.<sup>533</sup>

As pointed out by Brunnhölzl, gTsong lag phreng ba also treats the philosophical points of various doctrinal systems. In addition to his detailed treatment of Madhyamaka, gTsong lag phreng ba briefly points out some doxographical viewpoints, ranging from the Vaibhāṣika school to the highest Mantrayāna. For instance, he presents the tantric view of considering sentient beings as buddhas, which can be regarded as a Mahāmudrā practice. He writes:

Therefore, [this] very saṃsāra is nirvāṇa,  
The nature of sentient beings is buddha.  
All phenomena are perfectly pure from the beginning  
By not being bound or freed.<sup>534</sup>

While explaining ultimate reality, gTsong lag phreng ba also engages in an etymological discussion of many terms, such as buddha and *dharmakāya*, by studying Sanskrit and Tibetan

<sup>529</sup> Cabezon (2003: 295–296).

<sup>530</sup> Dreyfus (2003: 322).

<sup>531</sup> Dreyfus (2003: 322).

<sup>532</sup> Brunnhölzl (2004: 747–748).

<sup>533</sup> These differences, by and large, also come closer to the rNying ma tradition. For instance, the 19th-century rNying ma scholar Mi pham voices similar distinctions. See Phuntsho (2005: 142).

<sup>534</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 261: *des na 'khor ba nyid myang 'das/ /sems can rang bzhin rjogs sangs rgyas/ /chos kun ma bcings ma grol bar/ /gzod nas rnam par dag pa 'o.*

equivalents, sometimes including grammatical analysis. For instance, he analyses *dharmakāya* in this way:

From the term *dharmatākāya* known as *chos nyid kyi lus*, the suffix *nyid* in Tibetan or *tā* in Sanskrit is cancelled. Thus, it is said ‘*dharmakāya* or *chos lus*.’ It is *chos kyi sku* since the honorific term [*sku*] is attached [in place of *lus*].<sup>535</sup> For example, the aggregate without incomplete limbs is known as the body. Likewise, *chos kyi sku* (*dharmakāya*) is the perfect manifestation of the reality of phenomena and mode of existence of things as they are without incompleteness in an indivisible [manner].<sup>536</sup>

While gTsug lag phreng ba makes some comparative etymological analysis of terms, generally, grammatical study is avoided.<sup>537</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Structure of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba starts his commentary by discussing the number of chapters and *ślokas* in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. A brief biography of Śāntideva follows this. He presents the accounts found in the Indian and Tibetan sources. gTsug lag phreng ba also provides the transmission lineage of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* up to his root guru, the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>538</sup>

Of the ten chapters in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, gTsug lag phreng ba’s commentary devotes the largest portion of the discussion to the ninth chapter, which deals with emptiness (Tib. *stong pa nyid*, Skt. *śūnyatā*). Comprising 286 pages out of the 1003 pages in the dPal brtsegs edition, the ninth chapter makes up 28.5 per cent of the commentary.

In the first chapter of the commentary, a substantial amount of treatment is given to the bodhisattva vow of the two traditions.<sup>539</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba also describes the procedure of taking the bodhisattva vow according to both traditions.<sup>540</sup> In brief, one can find almost everything related to the vow in great detail, ranging from the procedures of taking the vow to the precepts (*bslab bya*) and the restoration (*phyir bcos*) when the vow is transgressed.

#### 4.1.5 Significance and Reception

The significance of gTsug lag phreng ba’s commentary comes mainly from its treatment of Madhyamaka, paralleling the Eighth Karmapa’s commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.

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<sup>535</sup> The honorific term for the *lus* (body) is *sku*.

<sup>536</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha’yas pa’i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. VI, p. 222: *dharmā tā kā ya zhes chos nyid kyi lus zhes pa’i sgra las dngos po’i rkyen bod skad la nyid sgra’am/ sam skṛ ta la tā yig phyis pas dharmā kā ya zhes sam chos lus zhes brjod la de la zhes sa’i sgra sbyar bas chos kyi sku ste/ dper na yan lag ma tshang ba med pa’i tshogs pa la lus su brjod pa ltar chos thams cad kyi chos nyid dngos po’i gnas lugs ji lta ba ma tshang ba med par dbyer med du yongs su rjogs pa mngon du byas pa ni chos kyi sku ste*. The Sanskrit suffix *tā* is generally translated as *nyid* in Tibetan.

<sup>537</sup> The suffix *tā* is usually added to form an abstract noun. However, the usage of *nyid* does not necessarily denote abstract nouns in Tibetan.

<sup>538</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba enumerates four transmission lineages from which he received the transmission.

<sup>539</sup> Wangchuk (2007: 170–177) deals in depth with the two traditions of the vow according to Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

<sup>540</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba lists in his self-written catalogue a separate writing on the procedures for taking the vow according to the three traditions, but this material is not extant.

Even two centuries after gTsong lag phreng ba's passing, Si tu Pan chen and 'Be lo, in the eighteenth century, maintained that this commentary perpetuated the philosophical intention (*dgongs pa*) of the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>541</sup>

This commentary is also widely referenced in the study of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* in the contemporary Karma bKa' brgyud monastic institutes, indicating its authority. For instance, gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary is presently studied as part of the curriculum in the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute, a Karma bKa' brgyud centre in Sikkim, India. It is also used as a reference in the Rigpe Dorje Institute, one of the Karma bKa' brgyud institutes located in the north-east Indian state of Bengal.<sup>542</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary appears to have achieved quasi-canonical status in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. The recent commentary, the *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho'i tshig 'grel gces btus* on *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* by mKhan chen Khra 'gu rin po che (1933–2023) is comprised mainly of extracts from gTsong lag phreng ba's *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po*.

mKhan chen Khra 'gu rin po che notes that he extracted the word-for-word commentary from gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary. He further lauds gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary as a work in which one can find divergent viewpoints from the Indian commentaries, versified writings on the intention of sūtras and tantras, and the Karma bKa' brgyud positions presented with an excellent analysis and clarity.<sup>543</sup>

## Conclusion

This section delved into the context and reception of gTsong lag phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary and some of its characteristics. This commentary is certainly among the most extensive in employing early Tibetan commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. In addition, no Tibetan *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary before gTsong lag phreng ba employed canonical and Indian sources in the way he did. gTsong lag phreng ba not only employed authoritative sources but also engaged in philological analysis of some Sanskrit terms.

Possibly the first in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, gTsong lag phreng ba's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary remains the most authoritative and extensive in the tradition. Its continued use in Karma bKa' brgyud institutes indicates that it is treated as a quasi-canonical text in the tradition.

gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary contains many doctrinal points of the bKa' brgyud pa school. For instance, gTsong lag phreng ba synthesised bodhicitta of the two traditions (Madhyamaka tradition of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and the Cittamātra tradition of

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<sup>541</sup> This appears to be mainly on Madhyamaka.

<sup>542</sup> Through personal correspondence with Lopen Tshering Tashi.

<sup>543</sup> Khra 'gu rin po che. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho'i tshig 'grel gces btus*, p. 714: *zhes pa 'di yang dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng bas mdzad pa'i spyod 'jug gi 'grel chen nyid du/ rgya 'grel gyi bzhed pa mi 'dra ba rnams phyogs bsduḡs gnang ba dang/ mdo dang bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa rgya che ba rnams tshigs bcad du bsgrigs nas blo la 'dzin bde bar mdzad/ rang lugs thun mong ma yin pa'i gnad rnams spyi don gyis gsal bar phyed te/ rnam dpyod phun sum tshogs shing zhal gsal nyams phan che bas.*

*Bodhisattvabhūmi*), refuting Sa skya paṇḍita's position that they are different and hierarchical as a result of the difference in the rituals involved in generating bodhicitta and so on.

gTsug lag phreng ba also either harmonised positions or avoided one-sided positions. For instance, he advocates emptiness to be beyond the dichotomy of *med dgag* (non-affirming negation) and *ma yin dgag* (affirming negation). He also understands *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* beyond dualistic distinction as discussed below in the section 'Rang stong and gzhan stong Theories of Emptiness.' In the main, gTsug lag phreng ba aligns with the viewpoint of the Eighth Karmapa rather than Karma phrin las pa on emptiness. Therefore, the prominence of this commentary in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition also stems from its perpetuation of the Eighth Karmapa's intention in Madhyamaka philosophy. Since he completed this commentary in his mature years at the age of fifty-three, one can safely conclude that the commentary expresses his final views on philosophical topics such as Madhyamaka.

#### 4.2 Commentary on *dGongs gcig*

gTsug lag phreng ba's *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba* (*Notes on the Seventh Section of the Single Intention that Emerged from the Instructions of the Lord of Victors*)<sup>544</sup> is a significant text on the *Single Intention*, which is based on teachings by the Eighth Karmapa. It covers essential topics from the seventh section of the *Single Intention* about the resultant state and other tantric matters, such as empowerment (*dbang*) from the fifth section of the *Single Intention* on mantra (*sngags kyi tshoms*). It elucidates bKa' brgyud pa positions while refuting different positions held by other scholars. This section discusses significant topics, such as its authorship, significance, and content.

While the *Single Intention* is essentially the teaching that propounds the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud practices and doctrinal positions, the Eighth Karmapa wrote extensively and taught on it. Only a small number of earlier commentators on the *Single Intention*, such as Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187–1241) and rDo rje shes rab (13<sup>th</sup> century) commented on it before the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>545</sup> The Eighth Karmapa was the most prolific commentator on the *Single Intention*, with twelve commentaries on it.<sup>546</sup> This probably generated interest among the Karma bKa' brgyud scholars, such as gTsug lag phreng ba and led to some additions and interpretations that went beyond the intent of the *Single Intention*. Sobisch suggests that the Eighth Karmapa employed a scholastic style in his commentaries on the *Single Intention*.<sup>547</sup> Furthermore, the hierarchical distinction between the Buddhahood of the Sūtra and Mantra traditions does not appear in the Vajra statements in the seventh section of the *Single Intention* on the resultant state of Buddhahood (*'bras bu'i tshoms*). However, gTsug lag phreng ba makes it the central point of discussion in his *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*.

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<sup>544</sup> Here gTsug lag phreng ba probably intends *rgyal ba'i dbang po* (Lord of Victors) to refer to the Eighth Karmapa, since he took notes while receiving teachings from the Eighth Karmapa on the *Single Intention*.

<sup>545</sup> See Sobisch (2020: 733–735) provides the timeline of the *Single Intention* commentaries composed from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries.

<sup>546</sup> See Sobisch (2020: 734) for the list of commentaries on the *Single Intention* by the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>547</sup> Sobisch (2020: 2).

While gTsong lag phreng ba remained within the intent of the *Single Intention*, he occasionally engages in more elaborate discussions than some 'Bri gung pa scholars on certain topics, which is presented in section 4.2.2.

### **Background of *dGongs gcig***

Although the *Single Intention* teaching was propounded by 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143–1217), it sparked considerable interest in the Karma bKa' brgyud as evidenced by commentaries on it by the Eighth Karmapa, gTsong lag phreng ba, and the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa. Sobisch characterises the teaching: “The *Single Intention* is the program of a tradition that chiefly seeks to attain the realisation of the mind by making the disciple’s devotion meet the guru’s blessing.”<sup>548</sup> The *Single Intention* summarises Mahāmudrā teaching in 150 Vajra statements.<sup>549</sup>

The *Single Intention* has been the subject of some academic study. *The Buddha's Single Intention: Drikung Kyobpa Jikten Sumgön's Vajra Statements of the Early Kagyü Tradition* by Sobisch is probably the most authoritative on the subject. This work provides the general introduction and background of the *Single Intention*, along with translations of its significant commentaries. However, gTsong lag phreng ba’s voice in the discourse of *Single Intention* is missing in academic writings.

The *Single Intention* teaching attracted the attention of traditional scholars as early as the thirteenth century. Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187–1241), the nephew of 'Jig rten gsum mgon, is said to have started to write on the *Single Intention* in 1225.<sup>550</sup> Later, the Karma bKa' brgyud scholars, notably the Eighth Karmapa, wrote extensively on the *Single Intention*, including a biography of its originator, 'Jig rten gsum mgon.<sup>551</sup> The Eighth Karmapa allotted three volumes of his *Collected Works* to the discourse of this teaching.<sup>552</sup> The Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524) also wrote a commentary on it: the *Dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i gsal byed* ([*A Commentary*] that *Elucidates the Dharma of Single Intention*).

#### **4.2.1 Authorship of the *dGongs gcig* Commentary**

gTsong lag phreng ba’s commentary, the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, does not contain a colophon.<sup>553</sup> As a result, it is difficult to ascertain detailed information, including its date and place of composition. While this commentary is included in gTsong lag phreng ba’s *Collected Works*, he does not mention the full title, *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, in his self-catalogue of his works. He simply mentions the '*Bras bu sangs rgyas pa'i tshoms kyi zin bris* (*A Note on the Section of the Resultant State of Buddhahood*) under the title *rDzogs pa'i sangs rgyas karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje'i zhabs kyi skyob pa 'jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i dbon mkhyen rab kyi dbang phyug rin chen rnam rgyal chos kyi grags pa la dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i bshad pa dgyes par gnang ba* (*A Detailed Explanation on the*

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<sup>548</sup> Sobisch (2020: 24).

<sup>549</sup> Sobisch (2020: 1).

<sup>550</sup> Sobisch (2020: 14).

<sup>551</sup> Rheingans (2017: 102).

<sup>552</sup> Rheingans (2017: 54).

<sup>553</sup> *Tshoms bdun pa* (the seventh section) deals with matters related to Buddha land.

*Sublime Single Intention by the Perfect Buddha Karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje to Lord of Supreme Knowledge Rin chen rnam rgyal chos kyi grags pa, the Newphew of 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po).*<sup>554</sup>

In the title, gTsug lag phreng ba adds *rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba* (emerged from the instructions of the lord of victors), where *rgyal ba'i dbang po* is most likely to have referred to the Eighth Karmapa. This probably led some entities to attribute its authorship to the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>555</sup> A collection of texts of the 'Bri gung tradition, the '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, also contains the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, and the compilers of this collection attribute its authorship to the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>556</sup> However, *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba* is not listed in the catalogue of the Eighth Karmapa's works *rGyal ba thams cad kyi ye shes kyi sku rnam pa thams cad pa'i thugs can karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje bzhad pa'i gsung 'bum gyi dkar chag* (*The Table of Contents of the Collected Works of Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje bzhad pa, who has the Enlightened Mind which Consists of All Expressions of the Jñānakāya of All Jinas*)<sup>557</sup> by the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag. Therefore, attributing authorship of this text to the Eighth Karmapa appears erroneous.

It is worth noting that gTsug lag phreng ba served as a scribe and took notes of teachings when the Eighth Karmapa taught the *Single Intention*. gTsug lag phreng ba also made some additions to the Karmapa's *Single Intention* commentary.<sup>558</sup> As discussed in the second chapter, gTsug lag phreng ba records in his auto-hagiography that he wrote the introductory part (*gleng gzhi*), linking parts in the middle (*bar gyi mtsams sbyor*), and final homogenisation (*tha ma'i mthun 'gyur*) to a *Single Intention* commentary.<sup>559</sup>

In addition to the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, gTsug lag phreng ba has writings on the first section of *Single Intention* on *dharmacakra*, and on the third, fourth and fifth sections on *prātimokṣa*, *bodhisattva* and *mantrayāna* vows, respectively. gTsug lag phreng ba also wrote on the second section of the *Single Intention* on dependent origination (*rten 'brel gyi tshoms*), as evident in the self-written catalogue of his works. lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med also lists these writings in his catalogue of the transmission of gTsug lag phreng ba's works he had received.<sup>560</sup> However, all of the writings on other sections of the *Single Intention* teaching appear to be missing.

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<sup>554</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba is likely to have referred to *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba* while he mentioned '*Bras bu sangs rgyas pa'i tshoms kyi zin bris* in his self-written catalogue.

<sup>555</sup> beta.bdrc.io identifies its author as the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>556</sup> Lhasa edition of the '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* printed in 2004 contains 151 volumes. The 80<sup>th</sup> volume is the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*.

<sup>557</sup> The translation of the title appears in the Rheingans (2017).

<sup>558</sup> Rheingans (2017: 102, footnote 160) notes that the commentary of the first section (*tshoms dang po*) of the *Single Intention* (*dPal rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje*) was written from the notes of gTsug lag phreng ba.

<sup>559</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. '*Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 35: *legs par bstsal nas de nyid gleng gzhi dang // bar gyi mshams sbyor tha ma'i mthun 'gyur bcas// zin bris nyid kyi tshul du gyis shig gsungs// de ltar bgyis te bka' 'bum nang na bzhugs*. Since the Eighth Karmapa asked him to complete this text, it also shows, from the emic point of view, some trust in the capacity of gTsug lag phreng ba in relation to the subject concerned. Furthermore, it also suggests that they occupied the same ground on philosophical points.

<sup>560</sup> The whole catalogue of gTsug lag phreng ba's texts by lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med is in the appendix.

In the colophon to the *dGongs gcig gi kar ṭik chen mo las 'bras bu'i tshom*, the Eighth Karmapa notes that gTsug lag phreng ba, along with the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag and rDo rje rgyal po, was among the students who received *dgongs gcig* teachings from him based on the commentary on the *Single Intention* composed by rDo rje shes rab.<sup>561</sup> The Eighth Karmapa also mentions gTsug lag phreng ba took summary notes (*reg zig*)<sup>562</sup> during his teachings.<sup>563</sup> It is also noteworthy that the Eighth Karmapa's *dGongs gcig gi kar ṭik chen mo las 'bras bu'i tshom*, deals with the section of resultant section (*'bras bu'i tshom*), but does not contain subject matters discussed in gTsug lag phreng ba's *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*.

Although it is not as extensive as his other commentaries, the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba* can be considered one of gTsug lag phreng ba's main commentaries. It contains significant discussions on *dgongs gcig* and other tantric topics important to the Karma dKa' brgyud school. For instance, here one can also find expressed gTsug lag phreng ba's displeasure about Tsong kha pa's qualm over the authenticity of the teachings of the Six Sections of Nāro (*na ro chos drug*) in the Dwags po and Shangs pa traditions (to be discussed below). While some of the discussion on tantric topics presented by gTsug lag phreng ba in his commentary might not have originated from, and may even be beyond, the interest of 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon, evidently gTsug lag phreng ba wanted to discuss them in association with *dgongs gcig* teachings. gTsug lag phreng ba's treatment of empowerment is an example.

#### 4.2.2 Contents of the *dGongs gcig* Commentary

The seventh section of the commentary is on matters related to the resultant state of Buddhahood. gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary engages in discourse on various topics related to Buddhahood. It covers some significant discourses regarding the hierarchical distinction between buddhas as understood in Mantrayāna and Sūtrayāna. It also features in-depth discussions on the tantric path and teachings, as well as empowerments (Tib. *dbang*, Skt. *abhiṣeka*) as a means of initiation on the path of Mantrayāna.

At the beginning of the commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba comments on the Vajra statement where 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon maintains that there is no Buddha's teaching without Mantrayāna. The actual statement 5.1 reads "Mantra also occurs in the

<sup>561</sup> rDo rje shes rab was a disciple of 'Jig rten gsum mgon and composed a commentary on it in 1267 (Sobisch 2020: 15).

<sup>562</sup> *reg zig* is the archaic form of *zin dris* (Yisun).

<sup>563</sup> Mi bskyod rdo rje, Karmapa VIII (1507–1554). *dGongs gcig gi kar ṭik chen mo las 'bras bu'i tshom*, p. 724–725: *da ni re gzigs 'di'i byung ba brjod par bya ste/ kho bo karma pa'i mtshan gyis byin gyis brlabs pa dpal mi bskyod rdo rje'i dbyangs snyan dgur grags pa zhes bya ba la/ 'bri khung gi khri pa bco lnga pas bos te/ dgongs gcig gi bshad lung zhig gyis zer ba la brten nas rdo rje shes rab pas byas pa'i dgongs gcig gi thog nas brda don gzhäl bar byas nas/ dus der 'dus pa'i slob ma ni/ rgyal ba dkon mchog yan lag gi rnam 'phrul rtogs ldan zhwa dmar ba dkon mchog 'bangs/ rje btsun zhi ba 'od kyi rnam 'phrul a ba rgyu ti pa chen po grags pa dpal 'byor gyi zhal snga nas/ skyob pa 'bri khung ba chen po'i seng ge'i khri pa rgyal ba'i mtha' can/ slob dpon gtsug lag phreng ba gsung rab mtha' dag gi gleb bam gcig pu pa/ 'dzam gling du dus de tsa na/ ston pa śākya'i sras kyi rjes su 'brangs te phyi nang gi rigs pa'i gnas lnga smra ba la 'gran zla thams cad dang bral ba mahā paṇḍita rdo rje rgyal po sogs ci rigs par yod pa las/ slob dpon gtsug lag phreng bas reg zig chung ngu zhig byas snang mod.*

teachings of [all] other [buddhas].”<sup>564</sup> With this commentary, gTsong lag phreng ba also sets the stage for the hierarchical distinction between the Mantra and Sūtra traditions.

Regarding the meaning of the adamantine statement (*rdo rje'i gsung*) [that says] that there is no teaching of a buddha that does not teach the secret Mantra provisionally: there is no teaching of a buddha that does not teach the secret Mantra ultimately. Because the true path of great bliss that eradicates subtle yogic (*'dzag*) defilements that obscure, an unsurpassed buddha does not emerge without relying on the mantra path. And because the activity of a buddha is not possible in the ultimate teaching of buddhas, that does not purify up to the final veil of sentient beings. And because the ultimate buddha activity is impartial, regarding bias and limitations, [not the one] that removes [only] the trifling defilements of sentient beings.<sup>565</sup>

The stance that Buddhahood cannot be attained without following the path of Mantrayāna appears to have originated in Nāropa. According to gTsong lag phreng ba, Nāropa asserted that full enlightenment cannot be achieved without Mantrayāna. However, Maitripa accepted that both the Mantrayāna and Sūtrayāna traditions can achieve Buddhahood, although the former is swifter to attain Buddhahood and superior to the latter.<sup>566</sup>

The commentary then delves into the difference between the buddhas of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. gTsong lag phreng ba remarks that most of the scholars of Tibet and India maintain that buddhas, regardless of whether they became buddhas through Sūtrayāna or Mantrayāna, have the same nature. gTsong lag phreng ba observes that those scholars accept the only difference between them is that attaining Buddhahood is swifter in the case of Mantrayāna. They maintain that Buddhahood is achieved over a prolonged period following the path of Sūtrayāna.<sup>567</sup> This view on the length of time required to achieve Buddhahood through Sūtrayāna contradicts the 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon's vajra statement 8.12 “One can also achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime through the causal vehicle of characteristics.”<sup>568</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba contends that the distinction between the Sūtra and Mantra traditions has to be predicated upon the fact that they lead to hierarchical resultant states of

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<sup>564</sup> Sobisch (2020: 395).

<sup>565</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 1: *rdo rje'i gsung / gnas skabs gsang sngags mi ston pa'i sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa med bya ba'i don ni/ mthar thug gsang sngags mi ston pa'i sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa med de/ sngags lam la (ma?) brten par phul du dbyung du med pa'i sangs rgyas la sgrib byed kyi 'dzag sgrib phra mo spong byed kyi bde chen gyi lam bden sngags lam la ma rag par mi 'byung ba'i phyir dang / sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa mthar thug sems can gyi sgrib pa mthar thug gi bar sbyong bar mi mdzad pa'i sangs rgyas kyi phrin las mi srid pa'i phyir dang / sangs rgyas kyi phrin las mthar thug pa ni sems can gyi sgrib pa nyi tshe ba sbyong bar byed pa'i rgya chad phyogs lung gi ris can ma yin pa'i phyir ro.*

<sup>566</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dBang gi rnam gzhas mdor bsdu pa*, p. 183: *bstan pa'i shing rta chen po dpal nā ro pas sngags la ma brten par sangs mi rgya bar bzched/ mnga' bdag mai tri pas mdo sngags re res kyang sangs rgyas thob mod kyi myur bar skyob pa dang bde bar skyob pa'i phyir sngags khyad par du 'phags par bzched de.*

<sup>567</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 4: *gzhan don 'di khong du bzung nas rgya bod phal mo che mdo sngags kyi sangs rgyas lam nye ring tsam ma gtogs khyad par med par 'dod do.*

<sup>568</sup> Sobisch (2020: 686).

Buddhahood.<sup>569</sup> In contrast, according to gTsong lag phreng ba, Tsong kha pa maintained that the only difference concerning Buddhahood between the Sūtra and Mantra traditions lay in practising or not practising deity yoga, not in the result. Likewise, Sa skya paṇḍita (1182–1251) understood the difference between Sūtra and Mantra as with or without the rituals of deity yoga.<sup>570</sup> Thus, gTsong lag phreng ba indicated that Tsong kha pa and Sa skya paṇḍita do not propose a difference between the buddhas of the Mantra and Sūtra traditions.

A discourse on the differences between the buddhas of the Mantra and Sūtra traditions is followed by various topics on tantra, particularly in relation to the tantric path. Their hierarchical distinctions are discussed in section 4.7.3.

gTsong lag phreng ba also discusses some tantric topics elaborately. For instance, his position on empowerment (*dbang*) adheres to the intent of the *Single Intention*. He maintains that the disciples of higher calibre (*bdang rnon*) are ripened through word empowerment (*tshig dbang*) without other means, such as the vase and coloured powder (*rdul tshon*).<sup>571</sup> This understanding can be confirmed as falling within the *Single Intention*, at least by the 'Bri gung pa commentator of the *Single Intention*, Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa. Much later, after gTsong lag phreng ba wrote *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa composed *Dam pa'i chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i rnam bshad lung don gsal byed legs bshad nyi ma'i snang ba* in 1633.<sup>572</sup> In it, Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa notes: “The supreme type of adepts realize the four empowerments as soon as [the four] are introduced by mere words and then, like King Indrabhūti, they are liberated.”<sup>573</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba engages further discussion on it and refutes the allegations of other scholars, such as Sa skya paṇḍita. However, Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa's disputation with other scholars is not as elaborate as gTsong lag phreng ba's.

This position of ripening disciples with the word empowerment alone was questioned by Sa skya paṇḍita. gTsong lag phreng ba rebuts with reasons that there are instances where word empowerment is emphasised in Kālacakra for the disciples of supreme fortune (*skal mchog*), and there is historical evidence in the biographies of the eighty siddhas of India where all the four empowerments are perfected by words alone.<sup>574</sup> Earlier extensive commentaries on the *Single Intention*, such as rDo rje shes rab's *Dam pa'i chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i 'grel chen snang mdzad ye shes sgron me* composed in 1267, do not contain this

<sup>569</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. vol. ix, 5: *kho bo'i bsam pa ltar na ni/ mdo sngags kyi 'bras bu'i theg pa gong 'og tu yod pa'i khyad par las mdo sngags kyi khyad par 'jog pa de'i phyir*.

<sup>570</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 4: *'di la shar tsong kha pas/ mdo sngags kyi khyad par bdag nyin lha'i rnal 'byor sgom pa yod med kyi khyad par gyis 'byed par 'dod pa dang / sa skya paṇḍita rje pas/ mdo sngags kyi khyad spyir lha'i rnal 'byor tsam gyi cho ga yod med kyis 'byed par 'dod de*.

<sup>571</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 35: *de'ang dwags po phag gru 'jig rten gsum mgon rnam kyis sngags kyi dbang rnon rnam la/ rdul tshon dang phyag rgya dang bum pa sogs med par tshig tsam gyi bkas 'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i drang nges kyi dbang bskur bar mdzad nas smin par mdzad pa la*.

<sup>572</sup> Sobisch (2020: 735).

<sup>573</sup> Sobisch (2020: 398).

<sup>574</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 36: *khyad par dus kyi 'khor lo las dkyil 'khor dang phyag rgya'i longs spyod dang bral ba'i skal mchog la tshig tsam gyi dbang bskur dmigs kyis bsal nas rgyas par bstan pa'i phyir dang / grub thog brgyad cu sogs rgya gar ba'i rnal 'byor pa phal mo che'i rnam thar la'ang tshig tsam dang lus ngag gi brda tsam gyi dbang bzhi yongs su rdzogs par bskur ba'i rnam grangs mtha' yas pa'i phyir*.

kind of rebuttal. Sobisch observes that Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa responded to the critique made by Sa skya paṇḍita about the *Single Intention* concepts.<sup>575</sup> As noted earlier, 'Bri gung pa Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa wrote his commentary much later than gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on the *Single Intention*. This also shows gTsug lag phreng ba as one of the early defenders of the *Single Intention*.

The following section will also discuss some of the arguments made by gTsug lag phreng ba against the positions of other scholars, including Tsong kha pa and Śākya mchog ldan on tantric topics.

### 4.2.3 Refutation of the Positions of Prominent Scholars

gTsug lag phreng ba refutes various positions held by prominent scholars, including rJe Tsong kha pa, Sa skya paṇḍita and Śākya mchog ldan in relation to Buddhahood and the tantric path.<sup>576</sup> For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba strongly argues against allegations made by Tsong kha pa that teachings on the illusory body (Tib. *sgyu lus*, Skt. *māyakāya*) present in the Dwags po and Shangs pa bKa' brgyud traditions are not genuine as found in tantric texts such as the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. He refutes this by stating that the allegation is analogous to denying that the seven royal treasures (*rgyal srid sna bdun*) possessed by a Cakravartin are genuine.<sup>577</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also disputes the position held by Śākya mchog ldan that only an enlightened being depicted with face and hands can represent a buddha to sentient beings.

Here, Śākya mchog ldan says: “The meaning of representing the definitional instance (*mtshan gzhi*) is: One who is capable of representing as Buddha to other [beings] is solely Vajradhara appearing with face and hands. But when a Sugata has become one taste with the *dharmadhātu*, it means that [he] cannot represent as Buddha to anyone.” In that case, it follows that the Sugata, the Buddha of the Pāramitāyāna, cannot represent Buddha to the retinue of the tenth level [Bodhisattvas]. Because such Sugata [of Pāramitāyāna] has become one taste with the *dharmadhātu* and [such Sugata] does not show as Vajradhara of the Mantra tradition appearing with face and hands.<sup>578</sup>

<sup>575</sup> Sobisch (2020: xi–xii).

<sup>576</sup> It is significant to note here that his teacher, the Eighth Karmapa, also engaged in disputations with the scholars of other traditions, which indicates, to some extent, that gTsug lag phreng ba inherited the traits of his teacher. For instance, the Eighth Karmapa challenged many of the Abhidharma viewpoints held by Śākya mchog ldan (see Wangdi 2021).

<sup>577</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 24: 'dir shar tsong kha pas/ dwags shangs la grags pa'i nā ro ni gu'i chos drug gi sgyu lus de/ 'dus pa sogs sngags nas bshad pa'i sgyu lus mi 'dug go zer ba ni/ 'khor lo bsgyur rgyal la yod pa'i rgyal srid sna bdun de ni/ rgyal srid sna bdun ma yin te/ zhes pa ltar skur 'debs su zad de. The illusory body practice is one of the six doctrines of Nāropa practised in the bKa' brgyud and dGe lugs tradition (Kragh 2011: 134).

<sup>578</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 13: 'dir Śākya mchog ldan na re/ mtshan gzhi mtshon pa'i don ni/ gzhan ngor sangs rgyas su mtshon nus pa ni rdo rje 'chang zhal phyag gi rnam pa can kho na yin gyi/ bde bar bshegs pa chos nyid dang ro gcig tu song bas ni gzhan su zhig gi ngor sangs rgyas su mtshon par mi nus pa'i don no zer ba de lta na/ phar phyin theg pa'i sangs rgyas bde bar gshegs pa de 'khor sa bcu pa'i gzhan ngor sangs rgyas su mtshon mi nus par thal/ de lta'i bder gshegs de chos nyid du ro gcig tu song zhing sngags lugs kyi rdo rje 'chang zhal phyag gi rnam pa can du'ang mtshon par ma byas pa'i phyir.

Here, gTsug lag phreng ba argues that buddhas need not manifest with bodily features to represent Buddha. He also states that buddhas need not be mantric buddhas in the form of Vajradhara to represent buddhas to sentient beings.<sup>579</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba is in agreement with the ninth Vajra statement of 'Jig rten gsum mgon in the chapter on The Resultant State of Buddhahood, which states: “The Buddha performs the activity with anything existing within the objects of knowledge.”<sup>580</sup> Sobisch provides the translation of the commentary by Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa (1595–1659) on the Vajra statement:<sup>581</sup>

"Furthermore, due to the beings' various individual karma, there is no certainty that he reveals himself only as the Buddha. Hence, when the time has come to train a trainee, he reveals himself to pure trainees as the sambhogakāya, to others as the supreme emanation body, to lower trainees as a fabricated or material emanation body, a born emanation body, or a lower emanation body. He furthermore reveals himself as a buddha, a bodhisattva, a śrāvaka, a pratyekabuddha, Brahma, Indra, the Four Great Kings, or a cakravartin king. Still furthermore, if it is his intention, he also trains them by appearing as [a being of] the three lower realms and as material things such as earth, water, fire, wind, and space. Buddha activity is the fundamental nature of the aspiration to teach whoever needs training."<sup>582</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba repudiates the views held by other scholars who maintain that the buddhas of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna are equal:

Again, some as stupid as sheep [say] that there is no hierarchy in the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra [traditions], since the *paramanirmāṇakāya* free of attachment (*chags bral mchog gi sprul sku*) (Buddha) acts as a chief figure of the *maṇḍala* of Navoṣṇīṣa (*gtsug dgu'i dkyil 'khor*) [in the] yogatantra. This [statement] simply does not even cover a fraction of [the point], because this appearance of the *paramanirmāṇakāya* free of attachment in [this *maṇḍala*] is not the Buddha of the sūtric tradition. Because the Buddha of the mantra displays the various *maṇḍalas* of attachment, free of attachment, wrathfulness, ignorance, and peace. For instance, when Cakrasaṃvara is displayed as donkey-faced, there doesn't need to be a buddha of the path of a donkey.<sup>583</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba argues that the *Paramanirmāṇakāya*, free of attachment, who acts as a chief of the *maṇḍala* of Navoṣṇīṣa, is not the buddha of the Sūtra tradition. On the contrary, he maintains that it is the buddha of the Mantra tradition, who, in reality, is one of the manifestations of the mantric buddha.

<sup>579</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba understands that Vajradhara is a tantric Buddha, as do other scholars

<sup>580</sup> Sobisch (2020: 652)

<sup>581</sup> Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa was an illustrious figure who held the throne of the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud school (Sobisch 2020: 16). For his biography, see Sobisch (2020: 16–22).

<sup>582</sup> Sobisch (2020: 652).

<sup>583</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 8–9: *yang lug ltar skugs pa kha cig mdo sngags kyi sangs rgyas la mchog dman med de/ rnal 'byor rgyud gtsug dgu'i dkyil 'khor gyi gtsbo bo chags bral skus byas pa'i phyir zer ba ni phyogs su'ang ma phyin par zad de/ de'i chags bral gyi sprul sku'i cha byad can de ni mdo lugs kyi sangs rgyas ma yin pa'i phyir te/ sngags kyi sangs rgyas de chags pa dang chags bral khro rmongs zhi ba'i dkyil 'khor sna tshogs ston pa'i phyir/ dper na bde mchog bong zhal can du ston pa na bong bu'i lam gyi sangs rgyas yod mi dgos pa bzhin no.*

In this commentary, gTsong lag phreng ba also clarifies the practice of Cakrasaṃvara in relation to the questions posed by Sa skya paṇḍita.

Here, the Lord of Dharma Sa paṇ says that: “Visualising sKyoḅ pa 'bri gung pa ('Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon) in the form of a monk as a chief [figure] of the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala* by some Dwags po adherents is inappropriate. Because when [one] indulges in sensual objects such as ladies with the pride of the Heruka, the chief [figure] with great attachment, virtue arises. But if indulging [in sensual objects] with the pride of an ordained monk [who is] free of attachment, there is no greater wrongdoing [than this]. By the [inauspicious] omens of having practised this way, there is no king of Tibet, and the foreign enemy has come [to Tibet].” [I] understand [Sa paṇ’s statement] as incorrect. Because the root guru, the chief figure of the *maṇḍala*, not separated from the pride of the very essence Heruka, is manifested as whatever aspect, [be it] a layperson or an ordained [monk]. [And it is] not required to hold the pride of the person [who] assumes the appearance. For instance, although Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra are Heruka in nature, they are visualised as the body in the aspects of divine *ṛṣis* such as Īśvara and Viṣṇu, having fallen from one’s [precepts of] teachings, indulging in objects with attachment and aversion, such as U ma (the wife of Śiva). At that time, [visualisers] need not hold the pride of other [deities such as] Īśvara [while visualising] Heruka.<sup>584</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba clarifies that even when the adherents of the Dwags po tradition visualise 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon in the form of an ordained monk as the principal figure of the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala*, he is visualised as having the nature of Heruka. In this way, according to gTsong lag phreng ba, the act of visualising 'Jig rten gsum mgon as Heruka in the appearance of a monk, is free of any wrongdoing.

## Conclusion

As presented in the above sections, gTsong lag phreng ba’s writing on the *Single Intention* sheds light on some significant tantric topics. In his commentary, he discusses the main subject matter of the text: the difference between Buddhahood in the sūtric and mantric traditions. The indispensability of tantric practice in attaining full enlightenment is also a significant theme. Refuting many tantric positions held by prominent masters of other

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<sup>584</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 9: 'dir chos rje sa paṇ gyis dwags po ba la la dag gis bde mchog gi dkyil 'khor gyi gtso bor skyob pa 'bri gung pa dge slong gi tshul gyis sgom pa de lta bu ni mi 'thad de/ dkyil 'khor gyi gtso bo chags chen he ru ka'i nga rgyal gyis bud med sogs 'dod yon la spyad na dge ba 'byung gi chags bral dge slong sogs nga rgyal gyis spyad na de las sdig che ba med pa'i phyir/ 'di ltar nyams len byas pa'i rten 'brel gyis bod kyi rgyal po med cing mtha' dmag lhags pa yin/ zhes gsungs pa ni mi 'thad par go ste/ dkyil 'khor gyi gtso bo rang gi rtso ba'i bla ma he ru ka de'i ngo bo nyid kyi nga rgyal dang ma bral bzhin du rnam pa khyim pa'am rab byung gi cha byad gang du sprul bsgyur byas/ cha byad de 'dzin pa'i gang zag gi nga rgyal 'dzin mi dgos pa'i phyir/ dper na bde mchog dang kye rdor rnam ngo bo he ru ka yin kyang rnam pa dbang phyug dang dang khyab 'jug sogs lha'i drang srong rnam rang gi bstan las nyams te u ma sogs kyi yul la chags sdang gi long spyod pa'i skur sgom pa na/ de'i tshe he ru ka la gzhan dbang phyug gi nga rgyal 'dzin mi dgos pa bzhin no.

traditions, such as Sa skya paṇḍita and Śākya mchog ldan, gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary expounds their bKa' brgyud pa interpretations.

### 4.3 Commentary on Astrology

gTsug lag phreng ba's extended commentary, the *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod* (*A Detailed Commentary of the Great Concise Treatise of Astrology, the Pith Instructions of Kālacakra: The Treasury of Jewels, henceforth The Treasury of Jewels*) on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa, Rang byung rdo rje, the *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa* (*A Concise Treatise of Astrology*) remains the most extensive commentary on the astrological system of mTshur phu. This section will discuss its background, characteristics, content, and reception.

#### 4.3.1 A Brief Background of Astrological Traditions in Tibet

Kālacakra astronomy started as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century with the works on calendrical calculations by Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), the third of the Five Sa skya Patriarchs.<sup>585</sup> Later, astronomical works by 'Phags pa (1235–1280), such as the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i rtsis dus gsal ba'i sgron me*, became foundational works on Kālacakra astronomy and calendar calculation.<sup>586</sup> Some decades later, in 1318, the Third Karmapa wrote his astrological treatise, and Bu ston did his own in 1326. Dieter Schuh discusses these works in his section on the initial adoption of Kālacakra astronomy in Tibet.<sup>587</sup>

The 16<sup>th</sup> century was an era when Kālacakra astrological tradition (*dkar rtsis*) flourished in Tibet through the works of Padma dkar po (1527–1592) and the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682).<sup>588</sup> In this time of efflorescence of astrological writings, gTsug lag phreng ba commented on the Third Karmapa's *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa*. Much later, Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899) wrote *rTsis kyi bstan bcos nyer mkho bum bzang las skar rtsis kyi lag len 'jug bder bsdebs pa legs bshad kun 'dus* according to the mTshur phu tradition of astrology.<sup>589</sup>

Traditionally, astrology is usually categorised into Indian astrology (*dkar rtsis*), Chinese astrology (*nag rtsis*), and *dbyangs 'char* astrology according to the Svarodaya Tantra.<sup>590</sup> Tibetan astrology is regarded to have incorporated both Indian and Chinese astrological components.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> Schuh (1973: 30).

<sup>586</sup> Schuh (1973: 31).

<sup>587</sup> Schuh (1973: 30–36).

<sup>588</sup> See Schuh (1973: 36–37).

<sup>589</sup> Schuh (1973: 43) mentions *rTsis kyi bstan bcos nyer mkho bum bzang las skar rtsis kyi lag len 'jug bder bsdebs pa legs bshad kun 'dus* in the later works on astrology in Tibet. Schuh (ibid. p. 4) also suggests that it must have been written earlier than 1852. Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas did not provide the composition date in the colophon.

<sup>590</sup> Drungtsho (2002: 1).

<sup>591</sup> Cornu (2002: 50). Erlewine (2012:36). Drungtsho (2002: 1).

Tibetan astrology has two principal lineages: mTshur phu and Phug pa.<sup>592</sup> The mTshur phu tradition started with the Third Karmapa.<sup>593</sup> Astrology of the mTshur phu tradition has followers in the bKa' brgyud tradition, while the Phug pa tradition has practitioners in the Sa skya, rNying ma, and dGe lugs schools.<sup>594</sup> Schuh also mentions the Third Karmapa's *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa* among works that adopted Kālacakra astrology in Tibet. He also refers to gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on it.<sup>595</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba commented on the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise written in verse, the *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa (A Concise Treatise of Astrology)*. Maria Bjerregaard and Dominik Dell (2022b: 160) note: "This work thus forms a specific Karma Kagyu commentary providing the astrological tradition of the Third Karma pa."<sup>596</sup> The commentary by gTsong lag phreng ba is arguably the main text that delineates the astrological system of the mTshur phu tradition, founded by the Third Karmapa.<sup>597</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba lived in a period when, according to Schuh, *dkar rtsis* (astrological tradition) flourished in Tibet. Great scholars such as Padma dkar po (1527–1592) wrote on it during this period.<sup>598</sup>

Teachings on astrology are categorised under the section of the outer Kālacakra Tantra.<sup>599</sup> As a commentary on the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise, gTsong lag phreng ba emphasises the *dkar rtsis* tradition according to the Kālacakra tradition.<sup>600</sup> Tibetan astrology, which is based on the Kālacakra Tantra, is believed to have an Indian origin.<sup>601</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba also provides some discourse on *dbyangs 'char* astrology as a commentary on the Third Karmapa's treatise.

Academic literature on Tibetan astrology is limited except for the seminal contributions by Schuh such as *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Kalenderrechnung* (1973) and *Tibetischen Mathematik, Kalenderrechnung und Astronomie (skar-rtsis) sowie zu den Sinotibetischen Divinationskalkulationen (nag-rtsis)* (2012). Some English literature on Tibetan astrology includes, among others, the *Tibetan Astrology* by Phillippe Cornu, and the *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar* by Edward Henning. One can also find some references to gTsong lag phreng ba in their literature, as discussed in the following sections.

<sup>592</sup> Henning (2007: 2). The Phug pa tradition began in 1447 with Phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho and mKhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho, while the mTshur phu tradition began with Jam dbyangs don grub 'od zer (ibid. p. 8–9.). The difference between the mTshur phu and Phug pa traditions appears to be minor. See ibid. p. 338–339, for instance, for the difference between the two systems about the solstice.

<sup>593</sup> Berzin (1987:23).

<sup>594</sup> Berzin (1987:23).

<sup>595</sup> Schuh (1973: 34–35).

<sup>596</sup> Bjerregaard and Dell (2022b: 160). gTsong lag phreng ba also makes an explicit statement identifying the positions in his commentary as that of mTsur phu tradition. gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, Vol VIII p. 222: 'dir mTshur lugs pa dag ni.

<sup>597</sup> Seegers (2009: 93) maintains that the mTsur phu system relies on the Third Karmapa's treatise.

<sup>598</sup> Schuh (1973: 36).

<sup>599</sup> Hammal (2005: 6). The first chapter of the *Kālacakra* deals with astrology (Ramble 2013: 202).

<sup>600</sup> The *Kālacakratāntra* is believed to have been written early eleventh century in India ((Orofino 2023: 131).

<sup>601</sup> Schuh (2012: lxvi).

### 4.3.2 Content and Structure of the Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on astrology has been instrumental in aiding the understanding of astrological concepts, including in academic research. For instance, among the few academic writings, Henning's *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar* notes:

In this section on the sīddhānta definitions, and particularly the following extract from the Mūlatantra, I have relied heavily on the explanation given by Pawo Tsuklag in his "Treasury of Jewels". (Tlkuntu, p. 203, etc.). This text is a commentary on an original work, the "Compendium of Astronomy," by the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, that unfortunately now seems to be lost. However, it could be reconstructed, as Pawo Tsuklag appears to quote every single line of it.<sup>602</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary follows the structural sequence of the astrological treatise by the Third Karmapa, which was composed in verse and is divided into two parts: the first part has thirteen chapters (*rtog pa*) and the second part has twenty-one chapters. In his commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba extensively explains all the chapters.

gTsug lag phreng ba covers almost all aspects of astrology according to the Kālacakra. Furthermore, he provides some additional subject matters not found in the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa, such as observing various signs (*ltas*) in objects, such as the sky and animals.

In addition to the commentary on the Third Karmapa's treatise, gTsug lag phreng ba also summarises astrological points according to various sūtras and tantras. For instance, gTsug lag phreng ba presents in verse the calculation based on stars (*rtsis 'bras*) from six sūtras and tantras: *Vyāghrakarṇavadana (mDo stag sna)*, *Śrīvajradākanāmatantrarājā (rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba)*, *mDo nyi ma'i snying po*, *rGyud dgan bzhi*,<sup>603</sup> *Rab gnas kyi rgyud*,<sup>604</sup> and *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa ('Jam dpal rtsa rgyud)*.<sup>605</sup> This shows that gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary is not only a commentary on the Third Karmapa's treatise but also a text that presents various astrological traditions.

At the beginning of the commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba considers claims about the time when the Buddha taught Kālacakra. In particular, he disputes that Kālacakra was taught one year after his enlightenment, as maintained by some Tibetan scholars and traditions.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Henning (2007: 260). The Third Karmapa's treatise appears to be extant in fragmented editions. The edition of this treatise included in the dPal brtsegs edition of gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works* is made complete. One can find interlinear notes from the editors that the missing pages were replaced with the materials found in other editions.

<sup>603</sup> This is probably *Śrīcatuṣpīthamahāyoginītantrarājanāma (rNal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal dgan bzhi pa zhes bya ba)* since this tantra deals with astrological matters.

<sup>604</sup> Its Sanskrit title could not be traced. This tantra is probably about consecration (*rab gnas*).

<sup>605</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 291: *gzhan yang mdo rgyud tshad ldan las byung ba'i skar 'bras rnamts tshig sna bstus te bdag gis brjod par bya'o'/de yang 'jam dpal rtsa rgyud dang / mdo stag rna'i lugs/ mdo nyi ma'i snying po'i lugs/ dus sbyor gyi 'bras bu gts'o bor ston pa rgyud rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i lugs dang / rab gnas kyi rgyud kyi lugs te drug.*

<sup>606</sup> One of the traditions holding this position appears to be the dGe lugs pa (Newman 1985: 53).

Tāranātha also held the position that the Buddha taught Kālacakra a year after his enlightenment.<sup>607</sup>

### 4.3.3 Context and Rationale of Composing the Commentary

Regarding the place and the timeline of the composition of the commentary, gTsong lag phreng ba remarks:

The detailed commentary of the *Great Concise Treatise on Astrology* that fully opens the treasury of jewels in one volume [that condenses] all the commentaries [on astrology] was completed up to the second chapter of the latter part (*rtog pa phyi ma*) at a recitation seminar while pitching a large encampment on the mountain Nags phu, the great ornament of the world at the age of thirty-three in the seventh month of fire monkey year. Later, at the age of thirty-seven, during the waxing moon in the last summer month of the male iron mouse year, [I], the learned (Tib. *mang du thos pa*, Skt. *bahuśruta*), monk and mendicant gTsong lag phreng ba alias Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don thams cad yongs su grub pa, fully composed [the commentary] on the hillside of a mountain near Chos 'khor bsam yas.<sup>608</sup>

While it is not stated when gTsong lag phreng ba started to write this commentary, the second chapter of the latter part (*rtog pa phyi ma*) was completed at the age of thirty-three, and the work was fully completed at the age of thirty-seven. Without a start date, it is difficult to ascertain how long it took to write the commentary. According to the colophon, the commentary was completed near Chos 'khor bsam yas.<sup>609</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba provides the reasons that prompted him to write the commentary. He also considers the Third Karmapa as the pioneer in the introduction of astrological studies of the Kālacakra system in Tibet:

Now [I] shall summarise the points of the commentary. The glorious Rang byung [rdo rje], having been born in the male wood monkey year, composed this commentary at the age of thirty-five in the earth horse [year].<sup>610</sup> Omniscient Bu [ston] was born seven years after the Rang byung [rdo rje] was born and (Bu ston) composed the *mKhas pa dga' byed* at the age of thirty-seven. Although many commentators on astrology emerged later, the pioneering [work] of the astrological volume on the unique

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<sup>607</sup> Tāranātha. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i chos bskor gyi byung khungs nyer mkho*, p. 392: *rGyud thams cad kyi mchog tu gyur pa mchog gi dang po'i sangs rgyas dus kyi 'khor lo ni/ ston pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas mngon par sangs rgyas pa'i phyi lo nag pa'i nya pa/ dpal ldan 'bras spungs kyi mchod rten por...*

<sup>608</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 457–458: *rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod kha kun nas yongs su bye ba zhes bya ba bstan bcos thams cad kyi glegs bam gcig tu nye bar gnas pa 'di ni mang du thos pa'i dge slong bsod snyoms pa gtsug lag phreng ba ming gzhan mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don yongs su grub pas gdong ngan nam me spre'i lo ston zla ra ba rang lo so gsum pa'i dus sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan chen po dpal ldan nags phu'i ri bor gdan phab pa'i tshe klog pa'i grwar rtog pa phyi ma'i le'u gnyis pa yan grub par bgyis shing slar rang lo so bdun pa'i kun ldan gyi lo dbyar zla tha chung gi dkar po'i phyogs la chos 'khor bsam yas dang nye ba'i ri bo'i mgul du rdzogs par sbyar ba'o.*

<sup>609</sup> bSam yas probably meant to be bSam yas temple believed to have been built by Khri srong de'u btsan.

<sup>610</sup> Seegers (2009: 92) mentions that the Third Karmapa composed this text in a hermitage in mTshur phu and also explains the favourable circumstances under which he composed it.

Kālacakara is solely this commentary (the Third Karmapa's treatise). Nevertheless, since the subject matters are profound and written in verse (*rdo rje'i tshig*),<sup>611</sup> most [of the readers] failed to comprehend it. Hence, [it did] not spread widely. Later, although [there is] a word by word [explanation] on the commentary of Rang byung [rdo rje] from the mouth of the venerable guru (Karma 'phrin las pa?),<sup>612</sup> [he] did not provide a detailed analysis. Therefore, I became interested in composing a commentary as a result of the writings [on astrology] being insufficient when [I] needed to explain [astrology] in depth.<sup>613</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that it was the Third Karmapa who pioneered the astrological system of Kālacakra in Tibet, not other scholars such as Bu ston. As gTsong lag phreng ba stated, Bu ston was born in 1290, seven years after the birth of the Third Karmapa in 1284. The Third Karmapa completed his commentary in 1318.<sup>614</sup> Bu ston composed his astrological commentary in 1326.<sup>615</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba also mentions that Bu ston wrote his commentary *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rtsis kyi bstan bcos mkhas pa rnams dga' bar byed pa* (*An Astrological Commentary of the Glorious Kālacakra that Pleases the Wise*) at the age of thirty-seven. Bu ston's colophon to his astrological commentary mentions that he completed it in the *zad byed kyi lo*.<sup>616</sup> Therefore, one can conclude that Bu ston composed his astrological commentary after the Third Karmapa. Although the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise was a pioneering work on the astrological system of Kālacakra, gTsong lag phreng ba reasons that it had not become widely accepted owing to its profound and terse nature of composition, written in verse.

gTsong lag phreng ba also notes the insufficiency of sources on astrology while explaining the astrology of the Kālacakra system. He cites this as the cause and motivation for composing his commentary, a work that established him as a significant commentator on

<sup>611</sup> Zhang Yisun defines *rdo rje'i tshig* as *gsang sngags kyi tshig sogs zab cing brling ba'i tshig ...* (deep and profound words such as the words of secret tantra). DAS defines it as 'lit. the precious or holy words: truth: the word of Buddha, held to be free from deception, unchangeable, of profound sense, and hard to comprehend.' Therefore, gTsong lag phreng ba appears to mean the text to be profound, rather than being tantric in nature. On the other hand, *rdo rje'i gsung* (which is an honorific term for *rdo rje'i tshig*) or the Vajra statements are suggested to be quintessentially Mahāmudrā (Sobisch (2020: 1).

<sup>612</sup> This appears to be Karma 'phrin las pa since gTsong lag phreng ba calls him 'guru'. Moreover, Rheingans (2021: 119) reports that Karma 'phrin las pa commented on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa. Rheingans notes that this text is not extant (ibid. footnote 535).

<sup>613</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 453–454: *da ni 'grel pa'i don bsdu bar bya ste/ de yang dpal rang byung zhabs shing pho spre'u'i lo la 'khrungs nas dgung lo so lnga bzhes pa'i sa rta la bstan bcos 'di mdzad cing / rang byung zhabs 'khrungs nas lo bdun na kun mkhyen bu 'khrungs shing des dgung lo so bdun na mkhas pa dga' byed mdzad la/ phyis rtsis kyi bstan bcos byed po gzhan mang du byung yang bod yul du dus kyi 'khor lo'i thun mong ma yin pa'i rtsis kyi glegs bam shing rta'i srol byed ni bstan bcos 'di kho na yin mod kyang / gzhung brling zhing rdo rje'i tshig tu gnas pas phal gyis rtogs ma nus te ches dar bar ma gyur la/ phyis bla ma'i zhal snga nas kyi Tikka rang byung zhal lung gi 'bru gnon gsal bar mdzad kyang mtha' dpyod pa rgyas par ma mdzad pas dpyis phyin par 'chad dgos pa'i tshe rtsom pa lhag ma dang bcas pa kho nar gyur pa'i rgyus 'grel pa rtsom par spro ba skyes shing.*

<sup>614</sup> Seegers (2009: 92).

<sup>615</sup> Schuh (1973: 33).

<sup>616</sup> Bu ston rin chen grub. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rtsis kyi bstan bcos mkhas pa rnams dga' bar byed pa*. p. 856: *khro phu bu ston gyis zad byed kyi lo/ ston zla tha chung gi tshes nyi shu la rdzogs par sbyar ba 'di'i grogs ni/* As highlighted in bold, *zad byed kyi lo* most likely means the year *zad pa* (*me pho stag*) which corresponds to 1326.

Kālacakra astrology. While sources from other traditions might have been available to him, astrological writings of the mTshur phu tradition appear to have been limited to the Third Karmapa's treatise and possibly Karma 'phrin las pa's commentary on it.

gTsug lag phreng ba appears to have based his work on Karma phrin las pa's astrological commentary (which is not extant) while composing his commentary. At the beginning of the commentary, he states that a detailed commentary of 'our teacher' (*bdag cag gi 'dren pa*) rJe btsun Phyogs las rnam rgyal<sup>617</sup> has been the force behind this commentary.<sup>618</sup> One may glean that gTsug lag phreng ba referred to it when he wrote in his own commentary. However, gTsug lag phreng ba appears to suggest in the colophon provided above that Karma 'phrin las pa's astrological commentary lacked analytical dimension.

At the beginning of his commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba mentions that the Third Karmapa composed *A Great Concise Treatise on Astrology*. He also notes that a detailed commentary on it was written by rJe btsun Phyogs las rnam rgyal, who was probably Karma phrin las pa, as discussed in the preceding paragraph. These circumstances suggest that the gTsug lag phreng ba was, probably, the second commentator on the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise.

#### 4.3.4 The Characteristics of *The Treasury of Jewels Astrological Commentary*

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa has numerous aspects that aid understanding of Tibetan astrology, particularly the mTshur phu tradition. Henning, for instance, notes that gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary is helpful in comprehending Kālacakra Tantras: 'Also useful in helping understand parts of the original Tantra and the Vimalaprabhā has been a work by Pawo Tsuklag (dpa' bo gtsug lag) called the "Treasury of Jewels" (Tlkuntu).'<sup>619</sup>

In the colophon to his commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba enumerates its qualities:

[I] acquired independent confidence free of doubt on the points of *dkar [rtsis]* as a [result of] receiving the blessing [of the Eighth Karmapa] through supplicating [the Eighth] Karmapa, the Lord of all [Buddha] families and the perfect Buddha by placing [him] on the crown of the head and in the centre of the heart. Furthermore, because I obtained permission through [his direction] to write a commentary, and because of the immediate circumstances of requests from enthusiasts, [I] delineated the difficult points in depth, analysed [the points of] speculation and doubts, and acquired exact detailed [astrological] drawings and summarised [them] in words, and explained the general meaning by not elaborating on the mere word-by-word [explanation] of the [points] that were easy to comprehend. [The points] stated in the other sūtras and tantras were also provided that allowed an analysis [of them]. [This

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<sup>617</sup> Phyogs las rnam rgal appears to be Karma 'phrin las pa Phyogs las rnam rgyal, one of the various names of Karma phrin las pa (Rheingans 2021: 20). Furthermore, gTsug lag phreng ba refers to him as 'our teacher.'

<sup>618</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 3: *phyis zhig nas bdag cag gi 'dren pa/ bstan pa'i mig gcig rje btsun phyogs las rnam rgyal gyi zhal snga nas rnam bshad shin tu rgyas pas 'grel par mdzad pa'i mthu las gzhung 'di cung zad dgrol bar bya'o.*

<sup>619</sup> Henning (2007: 2).

commentary] is a commentary that arranges in order all the fragmented and standard astrology of sūtra and tantra found in Tibet. [It is] a commentary on words and meanings of every astrological point taught in the *Great Commentary* [of Kālacakra]. [It is] a detailed commentary of this (the Third Karmapa's) treatise, and an addition for [those points] absent in *Ṭikka* (of Karma 'phrin las pa)<sup>620</sup>, and also a commentary on difficult points. Furthermore, this [commentary] that is auspiciously completed can [lead to] understanding the great ocean of [astrology]. The [point where] every river of Buddhist astrological tradition converges [can be understood] by reading [it].<sup>621</sup>

According to the colophon, gTsong lag phreng ba wrote this commentary as directed by the Eighth Karmapa. Alleged requests from enthusiastic followers also prompted him to write it, as is often the case in the writings of Tibetan scholars.

In summary, gTsong lag phreng ba, according to the colophon provided above, enumerates many achievements of his commentary: 1) delineation of the difficult points in depth, 2) finalisation of the points of speculation and doubts 3) presentation of detailed [astrological] drawings in summarised words, 4) provision of points stated in the other sūtras and tantras, 5) identification of the points of convergence in the Buddhist astrological traditions, 6) arrangement in order of all fragmented and standard astrology of sūtra and tantra found in Tibet, 7) provision of a commentary on the words and meanings of every astrological point taught in the *Great Commentary* [of Kālacakra], and 8) a detailed commentary on the treatise by the Third Karmapa.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to analyse and validate all the points mentioned by gTsong lag phreng ba, some of them will be discussed here.

#### 4.3.4.1 The Second Point: The Finalisation of the Points of Speculation and Doubts

gTsong lag phreng ba asserts in his commentary that he analysed speculative points and established them as untrue due to a lack of documentary evidence. One example is that gTsong lag phreng ba refutes the speculation of some Tibetan scholars who considered that the sexagenary cycle started in the wood mouse year:

Since [it] appears that sNyal pa lha mdzes<sup>622</sup> stated, in the past, that the sexagenary cycle and the wood mouse year are the same, this [speculation] is also indeed not a discovery of the wealth of intelligence. And it is difficult to believe. If that were the

<sup>620</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 3.

<sup>621</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p.454: *rigs thams cad kyi bdag po rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas dus kyi 'khor lo karma pa'i zhabs nyid spyi bo'i gtsug dang snying gi thig ler bsten te gsol ba btab pa'i byin brlabs kyi 'jug pa kho nas dkar ba'i gnas rnam la yang gzhan dring mi 'jog pa'i spobs pa the tshom dang bral ba rnyed cing / 'grel pa gyis shig par yang rjes su gnang ba thob pa kho na'i rgyu dang / don du gnyer ba dag gis kyang 'phral du bskul ba'i rkyen las dka' ba'i gnas rnam dpyis phyin par gtan la phab/ bshad yams dang dogs pa'i mtha' dpyad/ ri mo zhib mo rnam kyang ji lta ba lag tu blangs ste sdom tshig tu bkod/ rtogs sla ba rnam kyi 'bru snon tsam la nan tan du ma byas par don gyi gtso bo bshad/ mdo rgyud gzhan las bshad pa rnam kyang mtha' dpyod pa'i phyr bkod de/ mdo rgyud kyi rtsis tshad ldan bod yul na yod do cog gi 'khrugs pa go rim du bsdeb pa'i 'grel ba dang / rgyud 'grel chen po'i rtsis kyi gnad ji snyed gsungs pa thams cad kyi tshig dang don gyi 'grel pa/ gzhung 'di nyid kyi rgyas 'grel/ Ṭikka'i ma tshang kha skong dang dka' gnad kyi 'grel pa yin la/ sangs rgyas pa'i lugs kyi rtsis kyi chu bo ji snyed pa 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho chen po bklags pas grub pa 'di dge bar mthar phyin to.*

<sup>622</sup> This figure could not be identified, despite some efforts.

case, why did the [past scholars] such as dBus pa Blo gsal<sup>623</sup> who received teachings from many scholars of China and Yu gur<sup>624</sup> not recognise [it]? If it is said that it is the tradition of earlier China, show the appropriate sources. If [you] say that it is the tradition of later China<sup>625</sup>, why did they not recognise it [since] China and Tibet had a close connection with Tibetan translators learned in the Chinese language during the time of [the Fifth Karmapa] De bzhin gshegs pa, and so on? Therefore, if it is declared to be an oral speculation, there ends [the argument]. However, [it] lacks any essence to hold on to the [proposition] with absolute certainty.<sup>626</sup>

Here gTsong lag phreng ba demonstrates that he did not accept speculation in the absence of documentary materials. gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that the first *rab byung* year is the fire hare, which corresponds to 1027.<sup>627</sup> 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal also contends that the Tibetan *rab byung* cycle started in the fire hare year.<sup>628</sup>

#### 4.3.4.2 The Fourth and the Sixth Points: The Presentation of Astrological Points Found in Sūtras and Tantras

The fourth and sixth achievements of this commentary, identified by gTsong lag phreng ba in his colophon, state that the commentary arranges in order the fragmented and standard astrology of sūtra and tantra found in Tibet and contains points mentioned in the other sūtras and tantras.

gTsong lag phreng ba draws materials from sūtras and tantras related to astrology, including the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* ('*Jam dpal rtsa rgyud*). gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary has more citations from tantras than many other Tibetan commentaries. For example, one of the oldest astrological commentaries, Bu ston's *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rtsis kyi bstan bcos mkhas pa rnam dga' bar byed pa* has far fewer references to tantras than gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary.

gTsong lag phreng ba cites numerous tantras relevant to the point under discussion without passing judgment. For instance, in discussing different methods of temporal measurements such as *chu tshod* (*nāḍi*) and *chu srang* (*pāñīpala*), he provides citations from

<sup>623</sup> BDRC provides his timeline as 1270–1355.

<sup>624</sup> Zhang Yisun identifies it as an old name of the land that connects Tibet, Zhin cang, and A mdo (*bod dang/zhin cang/ a mdo'i sa 'brel yul lung gi ming rnying*).

<sup>625</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba appears to identify Later China around and after the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In explaining Later China, he notes that the period was briefly ruled by emperor Tai zu (927–976). *rgya nag phyi ma ni tha'i ju rgyal pos lo 'ga' rgyal sa mdzad* (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. IV, p. 97).

<sup>626</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 25: *rab byung dang shing byi gcig par sngon smyal pa lha mdzes kyis smras snang bas 'di yang blo gros kyi rnyed nor gsar pa ni ma yin mod/ yid brtan par ni dka' ste de ltar na sngon dbus pa blo gsal sogs rgya nag dang yu gur gyi mkhas pa mang po las chos nyan pa de dag gis ci'i phyir ngos ma zin/ rgya nag snga ma'i lugs so zhe na 'thad pa'i khungs ston cig /rgya nag phyi ma'i lugs so zhe na rje de bzhin gshegs pa sogs kyi dus rgya bod kyi 'brel che zhing rgya nag gi skad byang pa'i bod kyi lo tsā ba ches mang na de dag gis ngos ma 'dzin pa'i rgyu ci/ des na bshad pa'i na yams su de ltar smra na der zad mod/ mtha' gcig tu nges bzung bgvis pa snying pos dben no.*

<sup>627</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, vol. VIII, p. 19: *rab byung me mo yos la zhes yang yang bka' bsisal ba'i phyir dang.*

<sup>628</sup> Roerich (1996: 754). By sNyal pa lha mdzes's reckoning, the start of the sexagenary cycle has to be 1024 corresponding to wood mouse year. Regarding the early study on the *rab byung* cycle in Tibet, see Berthold Laufer's article 'The Application of the Tibetan Sexagenary Cycle' published in 1913.

as many as five tantras: *Vyāghrakarṇavadana* (*mDo stag sna*), *Śrīvajradākanāmatantrarājā* (*rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba*), *Two Segments* (*brTag gnyis*, the *Hevajratantra*), *Samvarodaya Tantra* (*sDom 'byung gi rgyud*), and *Kālacakra*.<sup>629</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba presents material from the traditions of three sūtras, namely *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*'Jam dpal rtsa rgyud*), *Vyāghrakarṇavadana* (*mDo stag sna*), and *Dāśalocaṇasūtra* (*Mig bcu gnyis pa zhes bya ba'i mdo*)<sup>630</sup> when describing the various omens (*ltas*). These include earthquakes, seeing planets (Tib. *gza'*, Skt. *graha*), and so on, as harbingers of various events. It appears that gTsong lag phreng ba included them in his commentary because the omens are based on the astrological and astronomical observations, which are the main foundation of the Kālacakra astrological system. He did this even though they are not found in the Third Karmapa's treatise.

#### 4.3.4.3 The Eighth Point: A Detailed Commentary on the Third Karmapa's Treatise

The eighth achievement of his commentary, identified by gTsong lag phreng ba, appears valid since the commentary is the most extensive on the Third Karmapa's treatise. In it, gTsong lag phreng ba unravels the cryptic astrological writings composed in verse by the Third Karmapa. gTsong lag phreng ba also maintains that the Third Karmapa's treatise did not gain wide currency because of its terse nature.

In the absence of other commentaries on the Third Karmapa's astrological treatise, gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary remains the most extensive and arguably the most authoritative in the mTshur phu tradition of astrology. Karma phrin las pa's commentary on the Third Karmapa's treatise is reported to have been extensive. However, it is not extant.

#### 4.3.5 Refutation of Other Interpretations

The prominent scholars who authored astrological writings in Tibet were Chos rgyal 'phags pa (in the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and Bu ston (in the 14<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>631</sup> However, on many occasions, gTsong lag phreng ba, refutes Bu ston, although they both follow *dkar tsis* of the Kālacakra system.

gTsong lag phreng ba engaged in disputation with many scholars on various astrological points. For instance, he argues that the Buddha taught Kālacakra not long before his passing, not a year after his enlightenment, as many scholars argued. In refuting this idea, gTsong lag phreng ba writes:

In this regard, although many scholars state that [the Buddha] taught Kālacakra on the full day of the third month, twelve months after Buddha [attained enlightenment] in

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<sup>629</sup> See gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 86–87.

<sup>630</sup> The Sanskrit title of the sūtra in the Delhi edition of the *mDo sde'i stag rna sogs* reads as *Dāśalocaṇasūtra*. This appears to be an error since *dāśa* means ten. The table of contents of this edition notes that the Tohoku catalogue provides the Sanskrit title *Dvādaśalocaṇa*, which appears to be correct according to the Tibetan title. This edition is titled the *Three Canonical Texts on Divination from a Lahouli Library*. The title indicates the *Dvādaśalocaṇa* and *Vyāghrakarṇavadana* are the sūtras related to divination and astrology.

<sup>631</sup> Berzin (1987:23).

the fourth month, [it is] appropriate to [posit] that Kālacakra was taught close to the time of [Buddha's] passing. The *Root Tantra* [states]:

On the great mountain of Vulture Peak,  
[Buddha] taught the bodhisattvas  
The unsurpassable Mahāyāna  
In the manner of perfect wisdom.  
The Conqueror taught the teachings of  
The perfection of wisdom  
At the Vulture Peak and in Glorious Dhānyakaṭaka<sup>632</sup>

[In this chronological order] Kālacakra was taught after the perfection of wisdom (Tib. *sher phyin*, Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*). Furthermore, it is said that, on the night when the Tathāgata attained enlightenment, Rāhula [was born], and during his festivity of birth, it is said that Ānanda was born. However, when the perfection of wisdom was taught, Ānanda was an attendant [to the Buddha].<sup>633</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba argues that Ānanda was serving as an attendant to Buddha during the teaching of perfection of wisdom, and this indicates that the perfection of wisdom was taught much later after the enlightenment. Kālacakra was taught even later than the perfection of wisdom. gTsong lag phreng ba contends that the Kālacakra was taught when the Buddha was eighty years old at Dhānyakaṭaka.<sup>634</sup> Bu ston also maintains the position held by gTsong lag phreng ba that the Buddha taught Kālacakra in 879 BCE, one year before his passing.<sup>635</sup> The mTshur phu tradition, according to Henning, is more accurate than other traditions in calculating the dates.<sup>636</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba's analysis regarding the time when the Buddha taught the Kālacakra aligns with the Third Karmapa's root verse from his astrological treatise.

The Conqueror (Buddha), having taught teachings  
To the sentient beings till the age of eighty,

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<sup>632</sup> This place is believed to be the place where Kālacakra was taught. The Tibetan name 'Bras spungs' appears to be its equivalent translated from its Sanskrit counterpart. gTsong lag phreng ba also uses these terms interchangeably. It is located in present-day Andhra Pradesh, India (Hammar 2005:17).

<sup>633</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 30: 'dir mkhas pa mang pos thub pa sa ga'i zla ba la sangs rgyas nas zla ba bcu gnyis nag pa'i nya la dus 'khor gsungs par 'chad kyang / dus 'khor mya ngan las 'da' khar gsungs pa 'di 'thad de/ rtsa rgyud las/ bya rgod phung po'i ri chen por/ /theg pa chen po bla na med/ /shes rab pha rol phyin pa'i tshul/ /byang chub sems dpa' rnam la bstan/ /rgyal bas bya rgod phung ri ru/ /shes rab pha rol phyin tshul gyi/ /chos bstan dpal ldan 'bras spungs su/ /zhes sher phyin gsungs pa'i rjes su dus 'khor gsungs shing / de bzhin gshegs pa sangs rgyas pa'i nub mor dgra gcan 'jin dang de'i btsas ston gyi tshe kun dga' bo btsas par gsungs la sher phyin gsungs pa'i tshe kun dga' bo zham ring ba yin pa'i phyir.

<sup>634</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 31: *des na thub dbang dguung lo bryad cu pa shing spre lo dpyid 'bring nag pa zla ba dkar po'i bco lnga la 'bras spungs kyi mchod rten chen po'i steng du...*

<sup>635</sup> Henning (2007: 151).

<sup>636</sup> Henning (2007: 152).

Taught the glorious tantra of the sublime first Buddha (Ādibuddha)<sup>637</sup>  
On the full moon day in the month of Caitra (*dpyid zla 'bring po*).<sup>638</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba disputes Bu ston's understanding of lunar day (*tshes zhag*) and solar day (*nyin zhag*). Bu ston, according to gTsug lag phreng ba, calculates that there are 365 solar days since there are 30 and a half solar days in 30 solar days, thereby establishing parallel calculations between lunar and solar days. gTsug lag phreng ba condemns the approach of Bu ston, saying that this kind of effort to develop a parallel nature between solar and lunar days will bear no fruit since their calculations are different.<sup>639</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba criticises Bu ston for making deviant explanations (*'khyog bshad*) on certain points.<sup>640</sup> Although Bu ston, one of the earliest commentators on astrology in Tibet, was the main target of gTsug lag phreng ba's refutations, gTsug lag phreng ba also refutes some non-Buddhist viewpoints on astrology.

#### 4.3.6 Reception of *The Treasury of Jewels Astrological Commentary*

Since Karma phrin las pa's commentary is no longer extant, the one by gTsug lag phreng ba is probably the main commentary on the astrological system of the mTshur phu tradition. Henning notes that the mTshur phu tradition stems from the commentary of gTsug lag phreng ba.<sup>641</sup> In his commentary, the *rTsis kyi bstan bcos nyer mkho bum bzang las skar rtsis kyi lag len 'jug bder bsdebs pa legs bshad kun 'dus'*, Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899) paid homage to the Third Karmapa and gTsug lag phreng ba as predecessors in the mTshur phu tradition of astrology.<sup>642</sup> This recognition of gTsug lag phreng ba indicates his eminence as a significant commentator on the mTshur phu astrological tradition and that his work was still highly regarded three centuries after his passing. The astrological commentary by gTsug lag phreng ba furnishes the Karma bKa' brgyud school with its text of astrology according to the Kālacakra tradition.

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<sup>637</sup> The term 'Ādibuddha' appears polysemous and has various referents according to the contexts such as the historical Buddha, the *svābhāvīkāya* (*ngo bo nyid kyi sku*), emptiness (*sūnyatā*) and so on. On the analysis of the term Ādibuddha, see Hammer (2005: 88–94). In the context of Kālacakra, at times the term is referred to the deity Kālacakra (ibid. p. 96).

<sup>638</sup> Rang byung rdo rje, Karmapa III. *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i rtog pa*. p. 509: *rgyal bas brgyad cu'i bar dag tu/ /sems can rnams la chos bstan te/ /dam pa dang po'i dpal ldan rgyud/ /dpyid zla 'bring po'i nya la gsungs.*

<sup>639</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 76: *tshes sum cu la gza' phyed dang sum cu lhag cig yod pas lo gcig na gza' sum brgya drug cu rtsa lnga 'byung ngo zhes nyin zhag gi gza' dang tshes grangs gung bsgrigs pa'i grangs 'grig tsam mdzad pa ni ngal ba 'bras bu med do.*

<sup>640</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod*, p. 71: *kun mkhyen bus kyang skabs 'di 'khyod bshad du mdzad de.*

<sup>641</sup> Henning (2007: 3).

<sup>642</sup> 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas. *rTsis kyi bstan bcos nyer mkho bum bzang las skar rtsis kyi lag len 'jug bder bsdebs pa legs bshad kun 'dus*. p. 201: *ji bzhin gzigs pa rang byung kun mkhyen ches/ /dgag sgrub blo las 'das pa'i rdo rje'i tshig /rgyud las rgyud kyi tshul du rtsis kun btus/ /'jam dbyangs don 'od gtsug lag phreng ba 'dzin.*

#### 4.4 Vajrayoginī Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba's *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed* (*A Commentary on the Secret Sādhana of the Glorious Lord Vajrayoginī that Opens the Profundity*) is among his most significant commentaries. This section explores its context, content, and reception.

Academic research on Vajrayoginī appears to be limited. gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on Vajrayoginī remains largely untouched by modern scholars. The most thorough academic writing on Vajrayoginī is probably by Elizabeth English, titled *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, and Forms: A Study of the Cult of Vajrayoginī in India* (2002). While this monograph deals principally with the Indian tradition of Vajrayoginī practice, one can also find much valuable information regarding the Tibetan traditions.

There are also some publications in English, although they cannot be counted as academic writing in a strict sense. For instance, David Gonzalez has translated Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's *The Extremely Secret Dakini of Naropa: Vajrayoginī Practice and Commentary* (2011). The translator explains that Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo interpreted Vajrayoginī's practice from the perspective of the dGe lugs tradition.<sup>643</sup> The *Vajrayoginī Sadhana and Commentary*, translated by B. Allan Wallace (1992) based on the teachings on Vajrayoginī by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, also belongs within the dGe lugs tradition.

##### 4.4.1 Vajrayoginī Practice and Its Background

Vajrayoginī practice is traced back to Indian sources. Its Indian tradition is believed to have its roots in Śaivism, a non-Buddhist religious system.<sup>644</sup>

Vajrayoginī was practised with utmost secrecy even in the Indian tradition, being kept exclusively oral and passed on to only a few trusted students.<sup>645</sup> This was also the case in the Tibetan tradition. gTsug lag phreng ba remarks that this practice was passed down as an aural lineage (*snyan brgyud*) and kept secret by teaching only to selected students, traditionally called fortunate ones.<sup>646</sup> This transmission later culminated in *Ras chung snyan rgyud*, *Ngam rdzong snyan rgyud* and *Dwags po snyan rgyud*.<sup>647</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that Tilopa brought heart-like Vajrayoginī *sādhana* amongst the ocean of other Vajrayoginī practices from Oḍḍiyāna and transmitted it to Nāropa in a manner analogous to, according to Tibetan tradition, pouring liquid into one vase from another vase.<sup>648</sup> Nāropa is believed to have also received teachings directly from Vajrayoginī and composed the *sādhana* text of both the aural transmission and the direct vision of Vajrayoginī.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>643</sup> Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo (trans. Gonzalez, David 2011) p. ix.

<sup>644</sup> English (2002: 37). See also Sanderson (1994: 92–96).

<sup>645</sup> English (2002: 28).

<sup>646</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 8: *skal ldan la man ngag gi snying po snyan brgyud du bstan pas grub pa thob pa mang du byon yang gzhung zhal gdams sogs shin tu sba bar mdzad pas*.

<sup>647</sup> Ducher (2017: 37).

<sup>648</sup> gTsug lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 4–5: *mdor na rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs rgya mtsho lta bu las snying po'i snying por gyur pa 'di ni rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug tai lo zhabs kyi mkha' 'gro'i srog snying mtha' dag nub phyogs o rgyan nas blangs te dpal Nā ro zhabs la bum pa gcig nas gcig tu byo ba bstar bstsal*.

<sup>649</sup> gTsug lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad*

gTsong lag phreng ba's *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed* is the commentary on Nāropa's *dPal rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs zhes bya ba* (*The Secret Sādhana of the Glorious Vajrayoginī*). gTsong lag phreng ba notes that Nāropa's text contains twelve instructions of secret *sādhana*.<sup>650</sup> He comments extensively on Nāropa's concise *dPal rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs zhes bya ba*, which extends only to six folios written in verse.

According to gTsong lag phreng ba's praise to Śāntideva at the beginning of his commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Śāntideva was accepted (*rjes su bzung*) by Vajrayoginī. This would indicate Śāntideva's involvement in Vajrayoginī practice.<sup>651</sup>

Vajrayoginī is considered an extraordinary deity in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition.<sup>652</sup> In his auto-hagiography, the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, gTsong lag phreng ba emphasised that the Eighth Karmapa urged him to practise Vajrayoginī. The Eighth Karmapa informed him that Vajrayoginī practice was the only swift source of supreme attainment (*mchog gi dngos sgrub*). According to the *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, the Eighth Karmapa's ambrosia (*bdud rtsi*) had turned into camphor (*ga bur*) upon the arrival (*phyin*) of gTsong lag phreng ba, and the Eighth Karmapa took this as an auspicious omen for Vajrayoginī practice.<sup>653</sup> These circumstances suggest that Vajrayoginī was at the centre of tantric practices in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition at that time. gTsong lag phreng ba has many writings based on Vajrayoginī, including the fire ritual titled *sByin sreg cho ga las thams cad sgrub par byed pa* (*The Ritual of Fire that Accomplishes all Activities*), which provides a step-by-step guide to the performance of the ritual.

Regarding the composition and the translation of the Vajrayoginī treatise by Nāropa, gTsong lag phreng ba remarks:

This oral instruction (*zhal gdams*) was taken as notes of the exact words of Nāropa in an Indian language (*rgya skad du*)<sup>654</sup> [by Marpa] and later translated into Tibetan by Marpa at the Srang steng<sup>655</sup> in Gro bo lung, the place of meditation prophesied as "a

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*pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 5: *rje nā ro zhabs nyid kyi kyang rdo rje rnal 'byor ma las mngon sum du gsan nas man ngag snyan rgyud dang zhal gzigs lhan cig pa'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs 'di mdzad de.*

<sup>650</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 509: *bcom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang sgrub zhal gdams bcu gnyis dang bcas pa dpal ldan nā ro pa chen po'i zhal snga las brgyud pa.* BDRC also notes that gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary is 'A detailed explanation of the 12 esoteric instructions on the *Guhyasādhana* of the Vajrayoginī transmitted by Nāropa.'

<sup>651</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 2: *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma yis rjes su bzung.*

<sup>652</sup> Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *Kaṁ tshang gi yi dam rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang bka' srung chos skyong rnams kyi rnam thar*. p. 1: *'dir sgrub brgyud rin po che karma kaṁ tshang gi thugs dam thun mong min pa bcom ldan 'das sa rdo rje rnal 'byor ma.*

<sup>653</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *'Khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, p. 32: *mchog gi dngos sgrub snang ba'i nye rgyu ni/ rnal 'byor ma yi sgrub pa las gzhan med/ /khyod nyid phyin tshe kho bo'i bdud rtsi ni/ /ga bur gyur pa'i rten 'brel yang 'grig pas/ /rnal 'byor ma yi sgrub pa gyis shig gsungs/ /phag mo'i sgrub thabs man ngag bcas pa gnang.*

<sup>654</sup> Roesler (2018: 364) suggests that *rgya skad du* could be translated as 'Indian language' since many Tibetan texts were written originally in Indian languages other than Sanskrit.

<sup>655</sup> *srang steng* probably appears to be the name of his chamber since it does not make sense even after combining those two words. One cannot find the word in Tibetan dictionaries. It could be a typographical error. The dictionary of Das (DAS) defines *srang* as *khyams* which is a courtyard. *steng* means, among others, 'above' or 'on the top.' Therefore, it could also mean 'in the courtyard.'

place of gathering *dākinīs*, on the hillside growing one thousand and eight medicinal herbs, and a place ornamented by various incense plants.<sup>656</sup>

Here, gTsug lag phreng ba assumes that Nāropa's *dPal rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs zhes bya ba* was written down by Marpa verbatim from Nāropa's words. He also maintains that Marpa translated it into Tibetan in Gro bo lung.

Vajrayoginī tantras are said to fall under the Yoginītantra category in India; in Tibet, this division of tantras does not appear to have been made explicit.<sup>657</sup> In India, Yoginītantras were broadly considered Yogatantras in the sense that they both explain yoga.<sup>658</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba classifies the Highest Yoga Tantra (*annuttarayoga*), for the sake of beings on the conventional level, into yogatantra and yoginītantra for male and female, respectively, by citing the *Hevarja Tantra*.<sup>659</sup>

To subjugate the males,  
Yogatantra is excellently taught.  
To gather females,  
Yoginītantra is excellently taught.<sup>660</sup>

The Vajrayoginī system is reported to have incorporated material from Cakrasaṃvara treatises.<sup>661</sup> The Cakrasaṃvara tantra arrived in Tibet around the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>662</sup> Vajrayoginī practice is followed in all major religious traditions of Tibet, including the bKa' brgyud, rNying ma, Sa skya and dGe lugs. The *Blue Annals* of 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392-1481) notes that most Tibetan tantric practitioners engaged in the practice of Vajravārāhī.<sup>663</sup> Vajrayoginī was meditated upon as a main deity by the luminaries of Tibetan Buddhism, including rJe Tsong kha pa.<sup>664</sup> It appears to be even more significant in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition since gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that all of his root gurus and gurus of

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<sup>656</sup> gTsug lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 509: *zhal gdams 'di ni rje dmar pas dpal Nā ro zhabs kyi gsung ji lta ba nyid rgya skad du zin bris mdzad de phyis lho dro bo lung zhes grags pa/ /ma dang mkha' 'gro bsdu ba'i sa/ /sman stong dang rtsa brgyad skye ba'i mgul/ /spos kyi shing snas brgyan pa'i sa/ /zhes lung bstan pa'i grub pa'i gnas de'i gzims khang srang steng du bod skad du bsgyur ba yin te.*

<sup>657</sup> English (2002: 5). It is also reported that tantra in India was categorised into four divisions: kriyā, cārya, yoga, and yoginītantras (ibid. p. 4). The Indian tantras in Tibet are believed to have spread between the 7th and 9th centuries CE (Orofino 2023: 131).

<sup>658</sup> Isaacson and Sferra (2015: 308). See also (ibid. p. 307–310) for various categorisations of tantras.

<sup>659</sup> Isaacson and Sferra (2015: 308) maintain that by the 10<sup>th</sup> century Yoginītantras were considered superior to Yogatantras. The difference between the two kinds of tantras is suggested to be “the *yogatantras* or *upāyatantras*—the latter word is used here, but probably as a synonym of the former - are those in which (i.e. in the practice of which), in the ritual context of communal worship involving sexual union in a tantric feast (*gaṇacakra*), a male moves from one unmoving female to another, while the yoginītantras are those in which in the same ritual context the females move and the male is stationary” (ibid. p. 309).

<sup>660</sup> gTsug lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 2: *rnal 'byor bla med de nyid kyang gnas skabs su gdul bya'i dbang gis pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis su gnas te/ dgyes rdor las/ skyes bu rnams ni gdul don du// rnal 'byor rgyud ni rab tu bstan// btsun mo rnams ni bsdu ba'i phyir// rnal 'byor ma yi rgyud rab bshad*. This division is also maintained similarly in the dGe lugs tradition (Ngawang Dhargay 1982, p.5).

<sup>661</sup> English (2002: 7).

<sup>662</sup> Sobisch (2008: 87).

<sup>663</sup> Roerich (1996: 390). It is important to note here that Varjarayoginī and Vajravārāhī are used interchangeably.

<sup>664</sup> Dhargyey, Geshe Ngawang; Wallace, Allan, trans. (1992: 9).

the lineage (*rtsa brgyud kyi bla ma*) obtained accomplishment (*dgnos grub*) through the practice of Vajrayoginī.<sup>665</sup>

Vajrayoginī is a significant figure in the rNying ma school as well. The rNying ma tradition traces its practice back to the 8th-century figure of Padmasambhava.<sup>666</sup> Apart from being an important figure in the guruyoga practice, she is also reported to have been visualised as a principal deity in the rNying ma tradition.<sup>667</sup>

Vajrayoginī practice in the bKa' brgyud school is considered to have originated with Tilopa (c. 928-1009).<sup>668</sup> An orally transmitted practice emerged in the dKa' brgyud tradition in Tibet in the eleventh century through various masters, principally Marpa and Ras chung pa, while it was written down as a *sādhana* by the Third Karmapa.<sup>669</sup> However, according to Elizabeth English, the *sādhana* composed by the Sixth Karmapa mThong ba don ldan (1416–53), is considered a principal text for this practice.<sup>670</sup> English also appears to allude to gTsong lag phreng ba's Vajrayoginī commentary as the main instructional text on its practice in the Karma bKa' brgyud school.<sup>671</sup>

English reports that Vajrayoginī practice in the Sa skya school started in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Vajrayoginī practice is also prevalent in the Bon tradition.<sup>672</sup>

#### 4.4.1.1 Who is Vajrayoginī?

Elizabeth English provides the following characteristics of Vajrayoginī:

Who is Vajrayoginī? The texts refer to her reverentially as a "blessed one" (*bhagavatī*), as a "deity" (*devatā*) or "goddess" (*devī*). She is divine in the sense that she embodies enlightenment; and as she is worshipped at the center of a maṇḍala of other enlightened beings, the supreme focus of devotion, she has the status of a buddha. In the opening verse to the *Vajravārāhī Sādhana*, the author salutes her as a *vajradevī*, that is, as a Vajrayāna or tantric Buddhist (*vajra*) goddess, and in the final verse prays that all beings may become enlightened like her, that is, that they may attain "the state of the glorious vajra goddess" (*śrivajradevīpadavī*).<sup>673</sup>

The characterisation of Vajrayoginī provided by Elizabeth English refers principally to Vajrayoginī in the representational (*brda*) sense, appearing as a chief figure of the *maṇḍala*, equivalent to the buddhas. English also recognises the fact that the practitioner can attain the

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<sup>665</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 10–11: *de ltar bdag gi rtsa brgyud kyi bla ma de thams cad kyang beom ldan 'das ma'i sgo nas dngos grub brnyes pa sha stag ste de'i ngo mtshar ba'i gnam rnam ni rang rang gi rnam par thar pa las shes so.*

<sup>666</sup> English (2002: xxv).

<sup>667</sup> English (2002: xxvi).

<sup>668</sup> English (2002: xxii). Tilopa is believed to be the emanation of Cakrasaṃvara (Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros; Torricelli, Fabrizio, trans. 1995: 57). On the other hand, Vajrayoginī is considered his consort.

<sup>669</sup> English (2002: xxiii).

<sup>670</sup> English (2002: xxiii).

<sup>671</sup> English (2002: xxiii). This appears valid since it is the most extensive commentary on it with instructions for performing the *sādhana*.

<sup>672</sup> English (2002: xxvii)

<sup>673</sup> English (2002: 1).

state of Vajrayoginī, that is, the apotheosis of her practitioners into the divine state of Vajrayoginī as a result of the *sādhana*.

gTsug lag phreng ba provides three conceptions of Vajrayoginī in the relative and ultimate sense relating to the three *kāyas* (Tib. *sku*).

That (Vajrayoginī), if categorised, is also three: Body of reality (*chos sku*) with the pacification of all proliferation (Tib. *spros pa*, Skt. *prapañca*) [that is] place of clear light Mahāmudrā is the ultimate Vajrayoginī (*don gyi rnal 'byor ma*) and *caṇḍālī* (*gtum mo*) who abides at the navel as the nature of burning the three realms is the symbolic Vajrayoginī, the meaning of [citations] such as ‘Yoginī [who] abides at the centre of navel’ and so on. These two [Vajrayoginīs] are attained by unborn non-duality of wind and mind (*skye med rlung sems gnyis med*)<sup>674</sup> in the former, and the latter by non-duality of wind and mind of great bliss (*bde chen rlung sems gnyis med*),<sup>675</sup> mainly by the stage of completion (Tib. *rdzogs rim*, Skt. *sampannakrama*). Manifesting as the aspects of face and hands (*zhal phyag gi rnam pa*) is representational Vajrayoginī. This too is [categorised into] representational Vajrayoginī of *Dharmakāya* [who] displays the form of Cakrasamvara’s consort in one nature with all buddhas, representational Vajrayoginī of *Sambhogakāya* abiding by the name of Ferocious Lady and so on as a chief deity of the self-arisen *maṇḍala* such as twenty-four sacred places (*yul nyer bzhi*), and [ones who] act for the sentient beings through innumerable emanations such as thirty-seven Vajrayoginīs in all the dwellings of beings such as subterranean (*sa 'og*) terrestrial (*sa steng*), and celestial (*sa bla*)<sup>676</sup> dwellings, starting from the peak of cyclic existence (Tib. *srid rtse*, Skt. *bhavāgra*) till the most torturous hell (Tib. *mnar med*, Skt. *avīci*), are known as representational Vajrayoginī of *Nirmanakāya*. These Vajrayoginīs are chiefly attained by the generation phase (Tib. *bskyed rim*, Skt. *utpannakrama*) of Vajrayoginī alone.<sup>677</sup>

In this way, gTsug lag phreng ba classifies Vajrayoginī into symbolic, ultimate and representational (*bda don rtags*) Vajrayoginīs, which are the *Sambhogakāya*, *Dharmakāya*

<sup>674</sup> *skye med rlung sems gnyis med* is considered to be the nature of Mahāmudrā. Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 63: *lta ba stong nyid ston pa phyag rgya chen po rang bzhin yin gsungs*.

<sup>675</sup> *bde chen rlung sems gnyis med* is considered to be part of the six teachings of Nāropa (*nā ro chos drug*) in the practices of channels, energies and essences (*rtsa thig rlung*). Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 63: *ngo bo ni thabs sgom pa rtsa thig rlung gsum gyi byed bcings ston pa'i thabs lam nā ro'i chos drug yin la*.

<sup>676</sup> They are also known as *sa gsum*, the dwelling of nāgas, humans, and gods.

<sup>677</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 16: *de nyid kyang dbye na gsum ste/ chos nyid kyi sku spros pa nyer zhi phyag rgya chen po 'od gsal ba'i gnas ni don gyi rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang / lte ba'i dbus na rnal 'byor ma/ zhes sogs kyi brjod bya lte bar tsan da li khams gsum skad cig gis sreg pa'i ngo bos gnas pa ni/ brda'i rnal 'byor ma ste/ 'di gnyis ni snga ma skye med rlung sems gnyis med dang phyi ma bde chen rlung sems gnyis med de gtso bor rdzogs rim gyi sgrub bo/ /zhal phyag gi rnam par bzhengs pa ni rtags kyi rdo rje rnal 'byor ma ste/ de la yang sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rang bzhin gcig pa'i ngo bos dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i yum gyi rnam par ston pa ni chos sku rtags kyi rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang / yul nyer bzhi sogs rang bzhin gyis grub pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi gtso mor rab gtum ma la sogs pa'i mtshan gyis bzhugs pa ni longs sku rtags kyi rnal 'byor ma dang / sa 'og sa steng sa bla sogs mdor na srid rtse nas mnar med kyi 'gro ba'i gnas thams cad du'ang rnal 'byor ma so bdun la sogs pa'i 'gyur ba mthas yas pas 'gro ba'i don mdzad pa ni sprul sku rtags kyi rnal 'byor ma zhes bya ste/ 'di rnamsgtso bor bskyed rim lhan cig skyes ma nyid kyi sgrub par byed do*.

and *Nirmāṇakāya* forms of Vajrayoginī, respectively. Symbolic and ultimate Vajrayoginīs are attained through the paths of non-dual wind and mind (*skye med rlung sems gnyis med*) and of non-dual wind and mind of great bliss (*bde chen rlung sems gnyis med*), respectively, following the stage of completion (Tib. *rdzogs rim*, Skt. *sampannakrama*). Representational Vajrayoginī, on the other hand, is attained through the stage of generation (*bskyed rim*).

#### 4.4.2 Textual Context of gTsug lag phreng ba's Vajrayoginī Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba composed this commentary in Tsā ri. However, the colophon does not contain the date of composition. He asserts that the commentary on the *sādhana* of Vajrayoginī by Nāropa has been ornamented with pith instructions he received from his lamas.<sup>678</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that he wrote this commentary having found that the followers of the bKa' brgyud meditative tradition had abandoned the profound instructions of their tradition and were relying on the voluminous texts of other traditions that teach eternalistic and nihilistic views.<sup>679</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba observed the adherents of the bKa' brgyud tradition taking an interest in unfounded intellectual discourse and deviating from their own bKa' brgyud meditative tradition. He indicated that he intended to provide bKa' brgyud pa intellectuals with a Vajrayoginī commentary of their own system.

The commentary was printed at dPal spungs as part of the funeral rites for a lama called Karma rab bzang.<sup>680</sup> The printing was also aimed at fulfilling the aspirations of many teachers who saw it as a cherished jewel (*gces nor*). However, the exact date of its publication cannot be established.

#### 4.4.3 Characteristics of the Vajrayoginī Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba remarks on the characteristics of his commentary:

The text and oral instructions are clearly distinguished, moderately ornamenting [them] with clear and distinct analysis of the unmistakable profound points of this transmission by distinguishing [them] separately from other texts. This [commentary] also fully elucidates all presentations of the generation and perfection phases.<sup>681</sup>

Thus, gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that this commentary contains the final analysis of profound points. He states that the commentary is explained independently of the texts of

<sup>678</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 512: *dpal lhan cig skyes ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs zhal gdams dang man ngag gis brgyan te gsal bar phye ba 'di ni rdo rje'i slob ma'i don du rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug gtsug lag phreng bas grub pa'i pho brang tsā ri tra ye shes kyi 'khor lor sbyar ba bde legs su grub bo.*

<sup>679</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 510: *sgrub brgyud pa rnams kyang rang lugs kyi man ngag gi gnad zab mo rnams la ji mi snyam par bsnyas thabs kyis dor nas/ tsham tshom med par gzhan gzhung gi glegs bam chen po 'jig lta dang mthar lta'i snying po can rnams la skyabs su 'dzin par nye bar snang bas.*

<sup>680</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 513: *dgongs pa bskang dang ra ri bla ma ni/ /sku gshegs karma rab bzang dge rtsa'i phyir/ /mtshams sbyar gcig las du ma 'char ba'i bzo/ /spar gyi 'du byed dpal spungs gdan sar brtsams.*

<sup>681</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 510: *brgyud pa 'di'i zab mo'i gnad phyin ci ma log pa rnams gzhan gzhung dang legs par phye zhing ma 'dres par mtha' dpyad kyis brgyan te/ gzhung dang zhal gdams cung zad gsal bar rnam par phye ba yin la/ 'dis ni bskyed rdzogs kyi rnam gzhag mtha' dag kyang shin tu gsal bar 'gyur zhing.*

other traditions and indicates that it is in accord with the bKa' brgyud school. This assertion is, by and large, valid in that the commentary defends bKa' brgyud positions and repudiates the questioning and suspicions raised by scholars of other schools, as discussed below.

The colophon states that this commentary provides an in-depth explanation of the generation and perfection phases. Accordingly, gTsug lag phreng ba deals extensively with the generation phase (*b skyed rim*) of Vajrayoginī in 199 pages. The section on the generation phase describes the various stages of the Vajrayoginī *sādhana*, including arranging the *maṇḍala*, visualising the body of Vajrayoginī, reciting the mantra, and so on.

In the section on the completion phase (*rdzogs rim*), gTsug lag phreng ba explains the unborn non-duality of wind and mind (*skye med rlung sems gnyis med*) as the method aspect (*thabs*), and the non-duality of wind and mind of great bliss (*bde chen rlung sems gnyis med*) as the wisdom aspect (*shes rab*).

gTsug lag phreng ba versifies the content and qualities of the commentary in this way:

This commentary does not amass the points of sophistry  
And is not disturbed by [quotes from] various other difficult texts.  
Yet the sublime path of wish-fulfilling essence is clear here  
Established fully by authentic tantras and pith instructions.<sup>682</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that he did not engage in sophistry but in rational argument. According to the verse above, he did not adulterate his commentary with the Vajrayoginī texts of other traditions.

#### 4.4.4 bKa' brgyud pa Interpretation

This commentary concentrates on interpretations of Vajrayoginī practice and intellectual discourse from the perspective of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. In particular, gTsug lag phreng ba makes frequent references to the Third Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje.

gTsug lag phreng ba elucidates Karma bKa' brgyud positions on many points. For example, he explains empowerment (Tib. *dbang*, Skt. *abhiṣeka*) in accordance with the tradition. In line with Karma bKa' brgyud thought, he argues that empowerment is not necessarily required to engage in tantric practices, nor do the four empowerments have to be received progressively.

Therefore, as stated, ‘the great medicine of simultaneists (*cig car ba*) is the great poison of the gradualists (*rim gyis pa*),’ and so on, [a teacher] should guide [them] according to students' aptitude. [Empowerments] that ripen [students] also exist that [lead to the] occurrence of ripening and liberation (*smin grol*) simultaneously in [individuals] of the highest calibre by merely seeing the face of a vajra master or [receiving] blessing. Furthermore, since wisdom arises in the minds of [individuals] with sharp faculties through the mere blessing of *samadhi* (*ting nge 'dzin gyi byin*

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<sup>682</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 511: *rtog ge zer ma'i thigs pa ma bsags shing / /gzhan gzhung sna tshogs ngal bas ma dkrugs mod / rgyud dang man ngag tshad mas rab grub pa'i / yid bzhin snying po'i lam bzang 'di na gsal.*

*brlabs*), doubts do not arise, and [they] possess faith in the path. Therefore, this is called the ripening of the mind (*rgyud smin pa*).<sup>683</sup>

Although gTsong lag phreng ba does not explicitly mention an opponent, he may have had in mind scholars such as Sa paṅ who contend that tantric practices must be preceded by empowerment. Kragh observes:

Further, Sa Paṅ and Go rams pa also included an extended discussion of a Bka' brgyud custom at the time, where students were permitted to practice Inner Heat (*gtum mo*, \**cāṇ-ḍālī*) and other advanced Tantric yogas after merely having received a short blessing ritual (*rjes gnang*, \**anujñapti*) on the Tantric goddess Vajravārāhī without having been transmitted the full Tantric empowerment (*dbang*, \**abhiṣeka*) for the practice.<sup>684</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba notes that the four empowerments are not necessarily required for tantric practices nor for soteriological purposes more generally:

In general, the Vajra master does not always need the gradual engagement of four empowerments in the simultaneous taming of the [disciples of] supreme fortune. Glorious Saraha emptied the southern land of *Be ta*,<sup>685</sup> Indrabhuti the northern [land of] Oḍḍiyāna, and Tailopa the twelve great lands. [The account of] them having placed [all beings] starting from birds and wild animals in [the state of] supreme accomplishment of Mahāmudrā appears in the introductory part (*gleng gzhi*) of their songs. At that time, spreading *kuśa*<sup>686</sup> [under] the pillow and cushion, examining dreams, tying an eye scarf (*mig dar*) and so on, in the case of birds and wild animals, were not heard of. These amazing conversations of accomplishments would not be appropriate in your minds. However, we believe in the conduct of these noble beings and revere [them] in all circumstances.<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> gTsong lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 22: *des na/ cig car ba yi sman chen de/ /rim gyis pa yi dug chen yin/ /zhes sogs bshad pa ltar slob ma'i rgyud tshod ji lta bas dkri dgos te smin byed kyang dbang po yang rab rdo rje slob dpon zhal mthong ba'am byin gyis brlabs pa tsam gyis smin grol cig car du 'byung ba yang yod la/ dbang po rnon po rnams ni ting nge 'dzin gyi byin gyis brlabs pa tsam gyis rgyud la ye shes skye bas lam la the tshom mi za zhing yid ches par 'gyur bas de la rgyud smin pa zhes zer ro.*

<sup>684</sup> Kragh (2015: 52).

<sup>685</sup> Jäschke identifies *Be ta* as a name of a certain place in the Himalayas. However, Zhang Yisun defines it as *shing sman zhig ste/ rtag tu sngo ba'i shing sdong zhig shing tog za rung* (One [kind of] medicinal tree, a tree that is evergreen of whose fruit is edible). DAS identifies *be ta* as coconut. Therefore, although its exact location cannot be determined, in this context, the place is probably in southern India where coconuts are grown in abundance.

<sup>686</sup> MAC defines it as 'grass, esp. sacrificial grass.' Jäschke recognises it as a grass used for 'sacred ceremonies.' It is placed under the pillow and cushion to examine dreams during many empowerments' preparatory phase (*sta gon*).

<sup>687</sup> gTsong lag 'phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 29: *spyir yang rdo rje slob dpon mchog gis skal mchog cig car du 'dul ba la dbang bzhi rim 'jug kyang mtha' gcig tu dgos pa ma yin te/ dpal sa ra has lho phyogs be ta'i yul dang indra bo dhis nub phyogs o rgyan dang tai lo pas yul khams chen po bcu gnyis stongs par mdzad de/ de rnams kyi bya dang ri dwags yan chad phyag rgya chen po mchog gi dngos grub la bkod par grub pa de dag gi glu'i gleng gzhir byung la/ de'i tshe bya dang ri dwags sogs la ku sha'i sngas stan 'grems pa dang rmi lam brtag pa dang mig dar 'ching ba sogs mdzad par ma thos la grub pa'i ngo mtshar gyi gleng slong ba 'di dag kyang khyed dag gi thugs la mi*

gTsug lag phreng ba relates that there are accounts of Indian masters, such as Saraha, liberating even wild animals, and he observes that there is no historical record of Indian masters conferring empowerment on such beings before they attained the state of Mahāmudrā.

The positions maintained by gTsug lag phreng ba in this commentary can, in the main, be identified as Karma bKa' brgyud pa interpretations. gTsug lag phreng ba makes frequent references to the Third Karmapa. For example, referring to the Third Karmapa, gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that all tantras are non-dual in the ultimate sense. However, he notes that most Tibetan scholars consider only Kālacakra to be a non-dual tantra. Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451), a teacher of the First Dalai Lama, considered the Hevajra Tantra to be a profound non-dual tantra (*zab pa'i gnyis med kyi rgyud*) and Kālacakra a vast non-dual tantra (*rgya che ba'i gnyis med kyi rgyud*).<sup>688</sup>

#### 4.4.5 Structure and the Content of Vajrayoginī Commentary

gTsug lag phreng ba's Vajrayoginī commentary provides step-by-step instructions on the performance of the Vajrayoginī *sādhana*. It starts by providing some context to the text by briefly narrating its historical origin. It then deals with initiation before discussing the main practice, the *samayas* to be observed after practising, and the final resultant state.

gTsug lag phreng ba comments on the main instruction in four divisions: the methods of practising the Vajrayoginī *sādhana* (*ji ltar sgrub tshul*), the methods of displaying conduct after practising her *sādhana* (*grub nas spyod pa bya tshul*), the *samayas* to be observed (*srung bya'i dam tshig*), and the final resultant state (*mthar thug gi 'bras bu*).

The first section on the methods of practising Vajrayoginī mainly deals with *bskyed rim* (generation phase) and *rdzogs rim* (completion phase). gTsug lag phreng ba devotes the largest portion of the commentary to this section.

In the *bskyed rim* section, gTsug lag phreng ba deals with the methods of practising Vajrayoginī according to the *bskyed rim* in four parts: the place of practice (*gang du sgrub pa'i gnas*), the timing of the practice (*nam sgrub pa'i dus*), displaying the arrangement of the practice (*sgrub pa'i bkod pa bsham pa*), and the main practice (*sgrub pa dngos*).

gTsug lag phreng ba comments on the place where Vajrayoginī is to be practised, as written in verse by Nāropa. An appropriate place for practice is reported to have been prescribed in Indian texts, thus indicating the practice to be of Indian origin.<sup>689</sup> The timing of the *sādhana* is specified by gTsug lag phreng ba as the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month.<sup>690</sup> Displaying

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*'tsham mod kyi/ kho bo cag ni skyes bu dam pa de dag gi mdzad pa la yid ches shing rnam pa kun tu phyag bgyid do.*

<sup>688</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 2: *nges don du rgyud thams cad thabs shes gnyis med kyi rgyud yin par dus 'khor las bshad pa ltar dpal rang byung zhabs kyis ches gsal bar bzhed do/ /bod phal cher ni bla med la pha ma gnyis med gsum du phye ba'i dus 'khor kho na gnyis med du 'chad pa dang / bo dong chos kyi rgyal pos dgyes rdor zab pa'i gnyis med kyi rgyud dang dus 'khor rgya che ba'i gnyis med kyi rgyud do zhes rang stobs kyis 'chad par mdzad do.*

<sup>689</sup> English (2002: 17) states the Vajrayoginī *sādhana* was practised mainly in secluded places and that the Indian *sādhana*s on Vajrayoginī do not contain information on practising it in monastic settings.

<sup>690</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 49–50: *zhal gdams su zla ba gang yang rung ba'i yar gyi tshes bcu la zhes pas mkha' 'gro'i dus khyad par ba yin pa'i phyir tshes bcu nas sgrub pa la 'jug go.*

the arrangement of the practice (*sgrub pa'i bkod pa bsham pa*) includes rituals for taking hold of the site (*sa chog*) in order to perform the *sādhana*.

The second section explains the conduct that practitioners need to follow after practising the *sādhana* of Vajrayoginī. gTsong lag phreng ba devotes a considerable number of pages to this section. The description of the conduct to be maintained by practitioners includes the appearance practitioners need to adopt, the places where they should dwell, and the companions they should associate with.

The third section on *samayās* to be observed treats them in depth and contains the definition of *samaya*, their classification, and the various systems of root downfalls (*rtsa ltung*). This section also presents an elaborate discourse on the nature of tantric vows and their classifications and the repair of their transgression (*phyir bcos*).

The final section, 'The final resultant state (*mthar thug gi 'bras bu*)', discusses the enlightenment the practitioners attain through realising the four bodies (*sku bzhi*). It also briefly deals with the nature (*ngo bo*) of the resultant state.

#### 4.4.6 Reception of the Text

gTsong lag phreng ba's Vajrayoginī commentary was transmitted without interruption in the generations following him. For instance, Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde,<sup>691</sup> in the *Kam tshang gi yi dam rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang bka' srung chos skyong rnams kyi rnam thar* (*The Hagiography of Vajrayoginī, the Tutelary Deity of Kamtsang and Dharmpālas*), mentions that he received transmission of gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary from the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho (1568–1630).<sup>692</sup>

In the colophon to the *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang* (*A Historical Account of Bhagavatī Vajrayoginī, the Sublime Vase that Fulfills all the Desires of Secret Vajrayāna*), Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde also states that he mainly based his work on the commentary of gTsong lag phreng ba along with compilations of Indian texts and *sādhanas* on Vajrayoginī by the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag (1525–1583) while composing this text.<sup>693</sup> One can gather from Karma

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<sup>691</sup> BDRC identifies him as the reincarnation of the Second Karma 'phrin las pa, also known as dPal khang Lo tsā ba. This indicates him to be the Third Karma 'phrin las pa. This identification by BDRC remains doubtful since Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde received many instructions and transmissions from the Sixth Zhwa dmar Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630), as mentioned in his *Kam tshang gi yi dam rdo rje rnal 'byor ma dang bka' srung chos skyong rnams kyi rnam thar* (p. 169). The Third Karma 'phrin las pa was likely born in 1631 (iron-sheep). See Rheingans (2021: 29. Footnote 115). If he was born in 1631, it is unlikely that he was the Third Karma 'phrin las pa since he received oral transmissions from the Third dPa' bo gTsong lag rgya mtsho (1568–1630) in which case the Third Karma 'phrin las pa was not yet born. However, it is noteworthy that the Karma 'phrin las pa is a title conferred upon individuals of the bKa' brgyud tradition with scholarly and spiritual achievements by Karmapas, not a line of *sprul sku* (see Rheingans 2021: 32–33). Nevertheless, Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde appears to have been one of the main disciples of the Ninth Karmapa and the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag, as evidenced by the colophon of the text he composed, which states that he had been accepted as a student by them. In *Thar gling gtsug lag khang steng shod kyi rten bshad mdor bsduṣ tsam*, p. 466, he states 'di yang zhwa nag cod pon 'dzin pa dgu pa dang zhwa dmar cod dpon 'dzin pa lnga pa la sogs pa rgyal ba yab sras thams cad dang yongs 'dzin dam pa 'di nyid kyi rjes su bzung ba.

<sup>692</sup> Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 70: *rje dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba mdzad pa'i lha khrid dang gsang sgrub nā ro'i rgya gzhung gi rnam bshad chen mo'i ljags lung sprul sku gtsug lag rgya mtsho'i zhal las thob.*

<sup>693</sup> Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 71: *gtso bor 'di nyid kyi rgya gzhung sogs sgrub thabs rnams phyogs gcig tu*

gzhan phan dbang po'i sde's reliance on gTsug lag phreng ba's detailed commentary that it was the most reliable source on Vajrayoginī in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. This is in contrast to dKon mchog yan lag's compilation, which was comprised simply of the translations of Indian texts and was not a commentary in itself.

gTsug lag phreng ba's view on the Vajrayoginī practice is cited in later works on Vajrayoginī. For instance, Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century) presents the standpoint of gTsug lag phreng ba, along with that of other scholars such as the Seventh Karmapa, on the generation phase of Vajrayoginī. He cites gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary, where he says that Vajrayoginī is a secret practice.<sup>694</sup>

In the supplicatory notes of the printing (*par byang smon tshig*) to this commentary, gTsug lag phreng ba is lauded as both a scholar who delineated the words and meanings of Vajrayoginī *sādhana* and as a Yogi who acquired mastery over its practice.<sup>695</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba is featured in some lineages of Vajrayoginī practices along with other Karma bKa' brgyud masters such as the Eighth Karmapa.<sup>696</sup>

## Conclusion

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary is probably the first and the most extensive text on Vajrayoginī in the Karma bKa' bryud school. It remains the most significant source on Vajrayoginī in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, as evidenced by the fact that some scholars entirely based their own Vajrayoginī commentaries on it.

gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary on Vajrayoginī is both intellectual and liturgical since it contains discussions on doctrinal issues and a step-by-step guide on performing Vajrayoginī *sādhana*.

### 4.5 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston (Feast for the Wise)*

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is one of gTsug lag phreng ba's most significant works. Being among the authoritative sources on Tibetan history, it certainly deserves some attention. This section will explore its context, characteristics, significance, and reception. It does not cover the content and structure of the text that Dominik Dell (2021) has dealt with.

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*thams cad mkhyen pa dkon mchog yan lag gis glegs bam du sgrig gnang ba dang / dpal gtsug lag phreng bas mdzad pa'i rnam bshad chen mo gnyis gtso bor byas shing.*

<sup>694</sup> Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 60: *dpal gtsug lag phreng bas ni 'di nang sgrub tu grags na'ang / 'di'i rgya gzhung nā ro pas mdzad pa'i dbur/ rgya gar skad du/ śrī vajra yo gi nī gu hya sā dha nā ma bod skad du rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs zhes bya ba/ zhes pa dang / mjug tu'ang dpal rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang sgrub slob dpon chen po nā ro pas mdzad pa rdzogs so/ zhes 'byung bas na/ gsang sgrub ste.*

<sup>695</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*, p. 513: *ye shes dngos su grub pa'i dgongs zab kyis/ /bskrun pa'i sgrub thabs zab mo'i tshig dang don/ /rnam 'byed mkhas dang grub par dbang 'byor ba/ /gtsug lag phreng bar grags pa'i skyes bu byung.*

<sup>696</sup> Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde. *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang*, p. 70.

#### 4.5.1 A Brief Background of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*

The *Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba'i legs par bshad pa* (*An Eloquent Description of the Accounts of Ones who Turned the Wheel of the Sublime Dharma called the Feast for the Wise*), widely known simply as *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (*Feast for the Wise*), is a Tibetan history, extensive in both its size and its content.<sup>697</sup> The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is accepted as an authoritative source on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, along with other extant religious histories of Tibet, such as Bu ston's *Chos 'byung*<sup>698</sup> and 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal's (1392-1481) *Blue Annals*. Earlier religious histories, such as that of the bKa' gdams pa master Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169), are not available. The religious history by Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge's student, gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge, is not elaborate.<sup>699</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba's text has been heavily used but has been only partially translated into modern languages in academic studies. Only Dell (2021) has studied the textual context and analysed the title, structure, and content in detail. As Dell points out, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* largely focuses on Tibet, which accounts for 84 per cent of the text.<sup>700</sup> It is also important to note that, at 32.4 per cent of part three, most of his discussion on Tibet centres on the religious history of the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition rather than political accounts.<sup>701</sup> Aside from the material on Tibet, the text briefly discusses the history of China and Mongolia.

#### 4.5.2 Characteristics of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*

The most prominent features of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* are the extensive references to and employment of earlier sources, including imperial documents and the wider coverage of historical periods and topics.

gTsong lag phreng ba asserts that he has been impartial in his writing and has conformed to the truth by basing it on these sources. He enumerates the characteristics of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* at the beginning of the text:

Nevertheless, [this text] elaborates the meaning, determines the meaning in fewer words (*tshig nyung mtha' rgya chod*).<sup>702</sup>

[I have been] impartial to all [parties] and associated [writings] with definitive sources.

[It] engages in reality [and] is not expressed [in terms of ordinary] characteristics (*mtshan mar mi smra ba*).<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> For the analysis of the title, and particularly the referent of the term *mkhas pa*, see Dell (2021: 141–116).

<sup>698</sup> Bu ston's *Chos 'byung* was completed before 1326 (van der Kuijp 2016: 235).

<sup>699</sup> van der Kuijp (1996b: 46). However, gTsang nag pa's writing is suggested to be extant in 21 folios (van der Kuijp 2016: 250–251).

<sup>700</sup> Dell (2021: 121).

<sup>701</sup> Dell (2021: 123).

<sup>702</sup> *mtha' rgya chod* is likely to be an extended form of *mtha' chod*. Zhang Yisun defines *mtha' chod* as the *tshom mam dogs pa sogs kyi rtsa ba chod pa* which roughly translates to cutting off the root of doubts.

<sup>703</sup> Zhang Yisun describes *mtshan ma* as *rtags dang ltas* which generally means physical signs. Therefore, the phrase *mtshan mar mi smra ba* can be understood as not speaking of physical characteristics, but engaging with the ontological truth.

This is the quality of this eloquent exposition (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston*).<sup>704</sup>

Here, gTsug lag phreng ba states some qualities of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*: elaboration of meaning, conciseness, impartiality, employment of sources, engagement with the truth, and avoidance of conceptual discourse based on outer superficial characteristics as opposed to reality.

gTsug lag phreng ba's claim to elaboration can be validated since the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* covers many subjects from historical narratives with sources ranging from India to Mongolia. The history of religion also covers most of the major religious traditions of Tibet. gTsug lag phreng ba appears to have referred to this when referring to 'elaboration of meaning' in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

gTsug lag phreng ba wrote the first, second, and some other parts of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, in verse. Probably, gTsug lag phreng ba was referring to these versified parts when he described his writing as concise.

The claim of impartiality refers to the fact that gTsug lag phreng ba presented the history of most of Tibet's major religious traditions. His employment of the imperial documentary sources cannot be disputed. It is also likely that because of his use of definitive sources, gTsug lag phreng ba can claim that the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* engages with the truth, in contrast to speculative writings. As Dell noted, the sources gTsug lag phreng ba employed also include hagiographies that contain information regarding visions and miracles.<sup>705</sup> Thus, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is not a historical document in the strict sense as understood in Western historiography since it does not confine itself to human actions. It does, however, provide a wide range of information regarding Tibetan history based on historical sources.

gTsug lag phreng ba was also inspired to write this religious history due to his faith in religious figures. He also aspired to instil faith in the spiritual masters towards whom he felt devotion. The element of devotion can be taken to potentially negatively impact his critical analysis of biographical information and its sources. The elements of faith and devotion, which stand beyond human reason, can be found in his writings:

When marvellous stories of supreme principals are heard,  
If the hair of the body stands on end and tears well up from within  
And fail to restrain the strong force of devotion  
For an ordinary person like me,  
Why would the strength of the faculty of devotion not increase  
In fortunate, wise, and analytical people?  
If merely hearing [their] names possesses great meaning [for me],  
It is needless to speak for those [beings] with devotion and respect.  
Therefore, to perfectly guide [one's] mind through complete devotion  
To the good qualities of sublime beings,  
And to benefit others of equal fortune to mine,

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<sup>704</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Vol. I, p. 2: 'on kyang don rgyas tshig nyung mtha' rgya chod/ /kun la gzur gnas nges pa'i khungs dang 'brel/ /chos nyid la 'jug mtshan mar mi smra ba/ /de ni legs bshad 'di yi khyad chos te.

<sup>705</sup> Dell (2021: 116).

[I] write about the excellent manner of the activity of Dharma kings.<sup>706</sup>

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* can be called the history of the bKa' brgyud in general, and, in particular, of the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition. Dell notes that the historical accounts of the bKa' brgyud tradition (apart from Karma bKa' brgyud) account for 7.8 per cent of the text.<sup>707</sup> Writings on the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition are the most extensive, covering over 32 per cent of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.<sup>708</sup> The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* does also have a section on the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud.

#### 4.5.3 Context Surrounding the Composition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*

This section will discuss the conditions under which gTsong lag phreng ba composed *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. The religious context in which gTsong lag phreng ba was born and lived was characterised by division and conflict, and, as a result, was not conducive to the unhindered development of all the Tibetan religious traditions. As discussed in the second chapter, gTsong lag phreng ba witnessed religious disharmony that involved physical assault on the religious leaders of some traditions.

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is predominantly a historical writing on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. gTsong lag phreng ba gives a detailed overview of its contents in the colophon as follows:

*An Eloquent Description of the Accounts of Ones Who Turned the Wheel of the Sublime Dharma called the Feast for the Wise* is thoroughly completed in five extensive parts and subsections of seventeen chapters: the first part on the description of the general world realm; the second part on the context of India in four chapters as subsections on the description of Buddha's activities, description of the councils of teachings in particular, the manner of the emerging of the support of Triple Jewel, and the manner of the advent of the king. The third part in ten sections on the context of the land of Tibet: the first [section] on the taking ownership [of Tibet] by Avalokiteśvara, the second on the royal annals, the third [on] the religious history of Vinaya, the fourth [on] the manner of coming of *lo pan*<sup>709</sup> [to Tibet], the fifth [on] the religious history of the earlier translation of esoteric teaching (rNying ma), the sixth on the religious history of bKa' gdams, the seventh [on] the general religious history of bKa' brgyud, the eighth [on] the religious history of Karma Kaṁ tshang, the ninth [on] the religious history of 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud, the tenth [on] the religious history of various religious lineages. The fourth part [on] the manner of the arrival of religion

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<sup>706</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 2: *rab mchog gtso bo rnams kyi ngo mtshar gtam/ /thos tshe bdag 'dra gyi na'i skye bo yang / /lus kyi spu ldang mchi ma khong nas 'khrug /dad pa'i shugs drag zlog par dka' gyur na/ /skal bzang blo gsal dpyod ldan skye bo rnams/ /ci phyir dad pa'i dbang stobs rgyas mi 'gyur/ /mtshan thos tsam yang don chen ldan gyur na/ /mos shing gus par gyur rnams lta ci smos/ /de phyir dam pa rnams kyi yon tan la/ /gcig tu dad pas yid rab drang ba dang / /bdag dang skal mnyam gzhan la'ang phan bya'i phyir/ /chos rgyal rnams kyi mdzad pa'i tshul bzang 'bri.*

<sup>707</sup> Dell (2021: 153).

<sup>708</sup> Dell (2021: 124).

<sup>709</sup> This is the copulative compound of the two words *lo tsa ba* (translators) and *paṇḍita* formed by taking the first syllable of each word.

in [places] such as China, and the fifth part [on] the manner of the emergence of general fields of science (*rig gnas*). [I], a monk of Śākya [muni] Mi pham chos kyi rgyal po don yongs su grub pa alias Holder of the Garland of gTsong lag<sup>710</sup> (*gtsug lag gi phreng ba 'dzin pa*) [who] alternated [between meditating and] preaching owing to [evolving] time, wrote the first three parts at the age of forty-two and wrote whatever remaining chapters later at the age of sixty, and auspiciously completed [at the age of] sixty-one on the first day of the second lunar month in the male wood mouse year at the great temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyi grub pa on account of faith in my own mind and at the request from the great king bSod nams rab brtan.<sup>711</sup>

As is evident from this passage, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is comprehensive. It covers vast historical topics and periods from the historical Buddha's activities, to the arrival of the Buddha's teachings in Tibet, and up until gTsong lag phreng ba's own time. The third part, about the land of Tibet, at around 84 per cent of the total, accounts for the largest portion of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.<sup>712</sup>

The first three parts of the work, an overall coverage of the world, India, and Tibet, were completed by gTsong lag phreng ba at the age of forty-two. Since these three parts account for around 90 per cent of the text, he had completed most of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* by this age.<sup>713</sup>

The fourth part (on the arrival of religion in China and elsewhere), and the fifth part (on how general fields of science (*rig gnas*) emerged) were written from the age of sixty, resulting in the completion of the text at the great temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyi grub pa<sup>714</sup> in Gro bo lung when gTsong lag phreng ba was sixty-one years old. Thus, there was a gap of over two decades between the writing of the first three parts of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and the last two.

<sup>710</sup> *gtsug lag*, as discussed in the second chapter, refers to scriptures and sciences. Thus *gtsug lag gi phreng ba 'dzin pa* means holder or the knower of various fields of scriptures and sciences.

<sup>711</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. IV, p. 208–209: *dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor los bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba'i legs par bshad pa las yan lag dang po'i 'jig rten gyi khams spyir bstan pa'i skabs/ yan lag gnyis pa rgya gar gyi skabs la ston pa'i mdzad pa bshad pa bka' bsdu ba khyad par du bshad pa dkon mchog gsum gyi rten ji ltar byung tshul rgyal po byon tshul ste nang tshan du le'u bzhi/ yan lag gsum pa bod yul gyi skabs la dang por spyan ras gzigs kyis bod bdag gir mdzad tshul gnyis pa chos rgyal gyi rgyal rabs/ gsum pa 'dul ba'i chos 'byung / bzhi pa lo pan ji ltar byon pa/ lnga pa gsang sngags snga 'gyur gyi chos byung / drug pa bka' gdams kyi chos byung / bdun pa bka' rgyud spyi'i chos byung / brgyad pa kam tshang gyi chos byung / dgu pa 'bri khung bka' rgyud kyi chos byung / bcu pa chos rgyud sna tshogs pa'i chos byung te nang tshan le'u bcu/ yan lag bzhi pa rgya nag sogs su chos byung tshul/ yan lag lnga pa spyir rig gnas ji ltar byung tshul ste skabs chen po lnga/ nang tshan le'u bcu bdun gyis legs par grub pa ste/ rang gi dad pa'i blo dang / sa skyong ba chen po bsod nams rab brtan gyis bskul bar mdzad pa'i rkyen las/ śākya'i dge slong dus kyi dbang gis chos smra ba'i re mos su son pa ma (sic!) pham chos kyi rgyal po don yongs su grub pa ming gzhan gtsug lag gi phreng ba 'dzin pas rang lo zhe gnyis pa la skabs dang po gsum brtsams shing phyis rang lo drug bcu pa'i skabs ci rigs par bris shing re gcig pa shing pho byi ba'i lo hor zla gnyis pa'i tshes gcig la dpal sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang chen por grub par bgvis pa dge bar mthar phyin to.*

<sup>712</sup> Dell (2021: 123).

<sup>713</sup> Dell (2021: 121).

<sup>714</sup> This is a different place to bSam yas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang in Lhasa, which is understood to have been built by Khri srong lde'u btsan.

#### 4.5.4 Factors Behind the Composition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*

This section will explore factors that led gTsong lag phreng ba to write the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. At various places throughout the text, gTsong lag phreng ba cites reasons for composing the work. While his fundamental motive or intention is difficult to ascertain, this section will discuss the reasons cited and consider some other factors that could have influenced him to write the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

##### 4.5.4.1 Non-Sectarian Outlook

One of the forces behind the composition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* appears to have been gTsong lag phreng ba's non-sectarian outlook. gTsong lag phreng ba probably wanted to explore and show the origin of various religious traditions to authenticate them in a bid to encourage religious harmony.<sup>715</sup> As has been seen in the second chapter of the thesis, gTsong lag phreng ba's non-sectarianism was shaped by his educational upbringing under teachers of different traditions. Furthermore, studying for many years under Karma 'phrin la pa seems to have reinforced his tolerance towards other traditions.

In the introductory remarks in verse to the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, gTsong lag phreng ba states:

Therefore, I explain this classification of religious traditions  
In the manner of bees extracting honey from flowers  
By not getting attached, or biased [toward them], [and by] not abiding in [them], or  
abandoning  
All classifications of religious systems.<sup>716</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba dedicates separate chapters to discussing the religious history of other religious traditions, such as the rNying ma and bKa' gdams. The chapter on the rNying ma tradition is not merely about the historical figures of the rNying ma school, but is also apologetic. gTsong lag phreng ba defends the authenticity of the rNying ma tradition, rejecting the accusation that some rNying ma tantras are apocryphal. gTsong lag phreng ba devotes 13 pages to his defence of the authenticity of the rNying ma tantras. Authentication was seen as necessary because only a handful of rNying ma tantric texts contained in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* were traceable to the Indian sources.<sup>717</sup> van der Kuijp also points out:

Although the reasons are still far from transparent, it is possible that with the proliferation of various doctrinal cycles a need was felt to place these in historical perspective and thereby legitimate them.<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>715</sup> Sernesi (2021: 3) also states: 'Indeed, narratives about the past, its legacy, and the Buddhist "conversion" of Tibet were compiled into compositions with longlasting effects on the self-understanding of the Tibetans, such as the *Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies* (*rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*), and an increasing attention was devoted to the genealogical description of religious traditions, as part of the Tibetan concern with history.'

<sup>716</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 3: *de phyir chos kyi rnam grangs thams cad la'ang // ma chags mi zhen mi gnas mi dor ba// bung bas me tog rtsi bcud len tshul gyis// bdag gis chos kyi rnam grangs 'di bshad bya.*

<sup>717</sup> Orofino (2023: 143).

<sup>718</sup> van der kuijp (1996b: 46).

gTsong lag phreng ba observes that the categorisation of Buddhist religious traditions into new and old schools (*gsar rnying*) is not of Indic origin, but Tibetan, and relates to the earlier and later periods of translations.<sup>719</sup> His outlook indicates his non-partisan position towards the religious traditions in Tibet.

#### 4.5.4.2 Political and Religious Causes

In the colophon of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* gTsong lag phreng ba reveals two factors that led to the composition: his faith (*dad pa*)<sup>720</sup> towards the religious traditions, and the request to compose it by the great King bSod nams rab brtan.<sup>721</sup> The request by King bSod nams rab brtan to write the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* raises the question of whether the king had some political agenda in requesting gTsong lag phreng ba to write it. Studying the biography of King bSod nams rab brtan could shed some light on this. However, there is scant information on this figure. In a historical text written by lHa rNam rgyal rgya mtsho (1927–?),<sup>722</sup> King bSod nams rab brtan is reported to have ruled the kingdom according to the dharma (*rgyal srid chos bzhin du bskyangs*) and established a monastic seat.<sup>723</sup> lHa rNam rgyal rgya mtsho further reports that the king strove in dharmic activities and engaged in tantric practices.<sup>724</sup>

Although one needs to be cautious about taking his words at face value, gTsong lag phreng ba maintains faith as one of the causes for the composition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. His devotion appears to have been directed towards all the religious traditions and figures in general. It is certain that his faith, as connoted by the word '*dad pa*', influenced the subject matter of the text.

At the end of the second part of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, gTsong lag phreng ba notes three reasons for writing the text: 1) to speak highly of Buddha Dharma, 2) to recollect the kindness of sublime beings (*dam pa*), 3) and to instruct the Kings of Tibet.<sup>725</sup> Here, gTsong lag phreng ba appears to have intended to inform the kings about religious history, including the history of royal succession and about the earlier diffusion (*snga dar*). These are the subject matter of the second part of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

While King bSod nams rab brtan did entreat gTsong lag phreng ba to write the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, one cannot establish any political motive behind this. On the other hand,

<sup>719</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. II, p. 90: *des na rgya gar na gsar rnying tha dad pa med kyang bod du 'gyur snga phyi'i dbang gis ming tha dad thogs shing tha snyad mi 'dra ba cung zad 'byung ba*.

<sup>720</sup> Zhang Yisun defines *dad pa* as *dang bas yid ches pa* (trust through purity). Therefore, gTsong lag phreng ba could have meant trust in religious traditions and figures.

<sup>721</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. IV, p. 209: *rang gi dad pa'i blo dang / sa skyong pa chen po bsod nams rab brtan gyis bskul bar mdzad pa'i rkyen las*.

<sup>722</sup> At the end of his text *Bod lha rje rgyal gyi gdung rgyud sde dpon lha rgya ri'i gdung rabs rin chen phreng ba*, he provides his autobiographical information about many political positions he held in the Tibetan government in exile in India.

<sup>723</sup> lHa rNam rgyal rgya mtsho. *Bod lha rje rgyal gyi gdung rgyud sde dpon lha rgya ri'i gdung rabs rin chen phreng ba*, p. 22: *lha bsod nams rab brtan khri thog tu phebs/ chad dkar rdzong gi nye 'dabs su dge 'dun gyi sde 'jugs pa sogs rgyal srid chos bzhin du bskyangs*. Given the information that he established a monastic seat, one might assume that he was a religious figure, not a layperson. lHa rNam rgyal rgya mtsho counts bSod nams rab brtan as the fifty-fifth in the line of Tibetan Kings, the first being gNya' khri btsan po.

<sup>724</sup> lHa rNam rgyal rgya mtsho. *Bod lha rje rgyal gyi gdung rgyud sde dpon lha rgya ri'i gdung rabs rin chen phreng ba*, p. 23: *khri chen de nyid ni rnam dkar dge ba'i las la mchog tu brtson zhing / khyad par gsang sngags zab mo'i rnal 'byor lhur bzhes mdzad*.

<sup>725</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Vol. I, p. 462: *sangs rgyas bstan pa'i che ba brjod pa dang // dam pa'i bka' drin mi brjed dran phyir dang / rgyal po rnams la gdams par bya ba'i ched/ /legs bshad kun las btus pa 'di brtsams so*.

religious motives are apparent, since he makes them explicit as reasons for composing the text. As discussed earlier, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is generally about the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, so gTsong lag phreng ba's likely motive was to provide Karma bKa' brgyud adherents with a complete religious history of their own tradition. While the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* focuses mainly on the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition, gTsong la phren ba's expression of appreciation for other religious traditions is evident.

#### 4.5.5 Sources of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*

gTsong lag phreng ba's employment of imperial sources is recognised by academics.<sup>726</sup> It can be safely maintained that he was one of the earliest historians to employ Tibetan imperial documents extensively in a historical work. In addition to the imperial documents, gTsong lag phreng ba also used the earlier religious histories, including the *Bu ston Chos 'byung* and 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal's (1392-1481) *Blue Annals*. This is evident from the reservations gTsong lag phreng ba expressed over their historical understanding.

The imperial sources gTsong lag phreng ba employed include, among others, the *bKa' chems ka khol ma*, *Gab pa mngon phyung*,<sup>727</sup> *Mya ngan 'das chung*,<sup>728</sup> *rBa bzhed*, *rBa bzhed che ba*, *bSam yas kyi rdo ring*, and *bKa'i thang yig chen mo*.

According to Uray, Scholars, notably R.A. Stein, have observed that the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and the *Royal Annals* resemble each other in themes and language used to describe the Tibetan state and its legal systems.<sup>729</sup> The similarity in themes and language correlates with gTsong lag phreng ba's admission of employing earlier works.

gTsong lag phreng ba also accessed works of the post-imperial period, such as the *Lo rgyus chen mo* (*Grand Annals*) by Khu ston brTson 'grus g.yung drung (1011–1075) and the *Red Annals* by Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1309–1364). gTsong lag phreng ba also refers to a religious history by a Sa skya master.<sup>730</sup> He also lists the *Yar lung jo bo'i rgyal rabs*<sup>731</sup> and *lDe ston chos 'byung*<sup>732</sup> as sources. van der Kuijp suggests that gTsong lag phreng ba may also have referred to the *rGyal po rabs phreng* by U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309).<sup>733</sup>

<sup>726</sup> For instance, Hoffmann (1970: 174) notes that the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* “quotes in full considerable portions of an old Tibetan chronicle written in verse which most probably dates back to the Imperial period.”

<sup>727</sup> Zhang Yisun notes under s.v *Mya ngan 'das chung* that *Gab pa mngon phyung* is the instruction of Srong btsan sgam po (*Srong btsan sgam po'i zhal gdams gab pa mngon phyung*).

<sup>728</sup> Zhang Yisun identifies *Mya ngan 'das chung* as *Srong btsan sgam po'i zhal gdams gab pa mngon phyung dang bka' chems ka bkol ma'i ming grags dang mtshungs pa'i bod kyi lo rgyus rnying pa zhig*. Therefore, it can be identified as an old Tibetan annal (*lo rgyus*) similar in popularity to the *bKa' chems ka bkol ma*.

<sup>729</sup> Uray (1972: 11).

<sup>730</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 331: *sa skya bla ma dam pa'i chos byung las kyang de 'dra bar bshad do*. However, gTsong lag phreng ba neither mentions the author nor the title of the text. The twelfth-century religious history includes Sa skya master bSod nams rtse mo's (1142-1182) *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* (van der Kuijp 2016: 46).

<sup>731</sup> BDRC has an entry as *Yar lung chos 'byung* written by Śākya rin chen sdes, not *Yar lung rgyal rabs*. *Yar lung chos 'byung* was written in 1376 (van der Kuijp 1996b: 50, footnote 6).

<sup>732</sup> BRDC has an entry of *lDe ston dKon mchog grags pa* as a Sa skya master in the twelfth century and a student of rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216). Apart from this piece of information, not much is known about him. The title, if there is any, of his *chos 'byung*, and the text could not be located.

<sup>733</sup> van der Kuijp (1996b: 43).

gTsong lag phreng ba also referred to some treasure texts in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. For instance, he cites a long passage from the *Kho thing gi gter ma*.<sup>734</sup> This treasure text was rediscovered by Myang ral Nyi ma od zer.<sup>735</sup>

Western scholars on Tibetan Buddhist studies bolster the claim that gTsong lag phreng ba accessed ancient materials. For instance, van der Kuijp states that gTsong lag phreng ba accessed the *Lo rgyus chen mo* (*Grand Annals*) by Khu ston brTson 'grus g.yung drung (1011–1075).

dPa' bo also often availed himself of this work in his study of Tibet's imperial period, and it functioned, for example, as one of his fundamental sources for information about the decades after Emperor Glang dar ma's assassination in 842 (or 846, the year which he assigns to this event), specifically about the insurrection of 869 against his two sons, 'Od srung and Yum brtan, which spread from central to eastern and northeastern Tibet.<sup>736</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba employed extensive sources, sometimes not found in other historical writings, such as the *Deb dmar*. van der Kuijp notes:

Of interest is that dPa' bo contains a translation from a Chinese work on the spread of Buddhism in China which, he takes special pains to specify, is not met with in the so-called *Deb dmar* (see DPA'2: 567-572; DPA': 1391-1396). In his remarks that preface the reproduction of this work, he writes that it was first translated from Chinese into Uighur by a Uighur monk called Og zo at the order of Emperor Buyantu (r.1311 to 1320); subsequently it was rendered into Tibetan in Sa skya Monastery by a Punyasribhadra (= bSod nams dpal bzang po), who was probably a Uighur as well.<sup>737</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba also referred to the *Blue Annals* written by 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal. For example, he remarks that it is not appropriate to consider that there was no royal succession in India as mentioned in the *Blue Annals*.<sup>738</sup> van der Kuijp notes that gTsong lag phreng ba does not directly criticise 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal since they enjoyed good relations.<sup>739</sup> Notably, the *Blue Annals*, like the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, has, as its largest portion, writing on the bKa' brgyud pa school.<sup>740</sup> However, gTsong lag phreng ba principally deals with the Karma bKa' brgyud in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.<sup>741</sup>

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<sup>734</sup> Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 460) also note that this treasure text was cited by gTsong lag phreng ba and the Fifth Dalai Lama.

<sup>735</sup> Sorensen and Hazod (2007: 460).

<sup>736</sup> van der Kuijp (1996b: 43).

<sup>737</sup> van der Kuijp (1996b: 45).

<sup>738</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. Vol. I, p. 110: *deb sngon na rgya gar gyi rgyal rabs gcig nas gcig tu brgyud pa ni su la'ang yod par thos la zhes snang ba ni mdzes pa ma yin no*.

<sup>739</sup> van der Kuijp (1996: 14).

<sup>740</sup> van der Kuijp (2016: 9).

<sup>741</sup> Hoffmann (1970: 174) also notes: “He was the monk of the Karmapa-school who because of his personal creed devotes a considerable part of his work to the history of that special form of Buddhism.”

gTsug lag phreng ba also references Bu ston by expressing qualms about his historical positions. Bu ston states, in his *Bu ston chos 'byung*, that the Tibetan people generally originated from King Rupati.<sup>742</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba disputes this position.<sup>743</sup> He argues that if Rupati is identified with the first Tibetan King gNya' khri btsan po, then it would contradict the fact that there had been many human beings before gNya' khri btsan po. If Rupati is not identified with gNya' khri btsan po, then it follows that there had been another royal lineage of *Śākya* in Tibet. He contends that Rupati might have been the origin of humans in some dark land (*mon yul*) neighbouring Tibet, nominally called Tibet, but not Tibet proper.<sup>744</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that the origin of the Tibetan people is the *Śākya* clan.<sup>745</sup>

However, on occasions, gTsug lag phreng ba relies heavily on Bu ston. For instance, he admits that he relied on the *Bu ston chos byung* for the historical accounts of translators and *paṇḍitas* and made minimal additions to them.<sup>746</sup>

#### 4.5.6 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* as a Source to Retrieve Imperial Documents

gTsug lag phreng ba is generally considered, by both traditional and modern scholars, to be a historian who accessed and conserved imperial documents of Tibet. van der Kuijp notes: 'A sample of the kinds of documents that may now lie buried somewhere in the vast collections of the Potala would be a series of "edicts" issued by Khri srong lde btsan (r. 742?-797?), which were preserved in the chronicle by the great sixteenth-century historian dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1504-1566)'.<sup>747</sup>

Since gTsug lag phreng ba's *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* contains citations and long paragraphs on occasion from the imperial materials, it serves as a means to retrieve and reconstruct some of the texts missing in the extant prints. gTsug lag phreng ba notes that he transferred the complete citations from the sources pertinent to the topics under discussion because they would later become difficult to obtain.<sup>748</sup>

Some modern editions of the *bKa' chems ka khol ma* (believed to have been written by Srong btsan sgam po and later revealed as treasure texts by Añīsa) employed the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* to retrieve some of the missing texts in the original texts (*ma phyi*). The *bKa' chems ka khol ma* published by Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang in 1991 notes that some textual material in the original texts makes sense when it is read as found in the *mKhas pa'i*

<sup>742</sup> Bu ston rin chen grub. *Bu ston chos byung*. p. 180: *dang po la spyir bod kyi yul du mi'i 'gro ba dang po byung tshul ni/ lha las phul du byung ba'i bstod pa'i 'grel par (slob dpon shes rab go chas byas pa'i)/ skya seng bu lnga dang (śākya'i rigs so) dgra ngan dpung tshogs bcu gnyis 'thab pa'i dus su rgyal po ru pa ti zhes pa dmag stong phrag gcig dang bcas pa bud med kyi chas su zhugs te gangs can gyi gseb tu bros pa las 'phel ba yin par bshad cing.*

<sup>743</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 165: *kun mkhyen bus stod 'grel gyi lung gis bod spyi mi rnams ru pa ti las 'chad pa dang.*

<sup>744</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 166: *bod mi mtha' dag gi khungs ni ma yin te ru pa ti gnya' khri btsan por byed na de'i gong du mi mang du yod par grags pa dang 'gal ba'i phyir dang / min na yang bod yul na śākya'i rgyal brgyud gzhan yod par thal ba'i phyir ro/ des na de dag ni bod dang nye ba mon yul kha cig la bod kyi sgrar byas pa snang ba'i de lta bu zhig zad do.*

<sup>745</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 165: *snga mchog go tam śākya'i brgyud par gsal.*

<sup>746</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. II, p. 75: *snga ma rnams phal cher bu'i chos byung ltar yin zhing cung zad kha bkang ba yin yang.*

<sup>747</sup> van der Kuijp (1996b: 41).

<sup>748</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. I, p. 463: *phyis yig cha re re'ang rnyed dka' bar mthong nas yig tshogs la ma bsams par rang skabs kyi lung de tshang bar bris pa yin no.*

*dga' ston*.<sup>749</sup> Citing a long passage from the 1986 edition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* published by Pe cin mi rigs dpe skrun khang, publishers of the *bKa' chems ka khol ma* of Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang note that the scattered and missing texts certainly are to be understood as quoted in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.<sup>750</sup> The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* thus serves as a source to retrieve the words and contents of some imperial documents.

The fact that some publishers reconstruct imperial documents that have now been lost or damaged and interpret their intent based on the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* makes it a significant source of ancient knowledge.

#### 4.5.7 Reception by Later Scholars

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* was well received by later scholars and historians, both traditional and Western, including bDud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje (1904–1987), who used it while composing the religious history of the rNying ma tradition *bDud 'joms chos 'byung*.<sup>751</sup> He also lauds the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* along with other sources as valid documents (*tshad mar gyur pa'i yig cha*).<sup>752</sup>

Samten Karmay also remarks:

[The history] known as the *lHo brag chos 'byung* or *The Feast of the Wise* written in 1564 by Pawo Tsuglak Threngwa, the king of scholars in historical accounts, is recognised as the standard document on Tibet, in one voice, by all the present historians in the world. Its reason is that the author has precisely reported having seen firsthand stone pillars about ancient historical accounts without making much repetition of oral accounts and historical accounts written in a mixed manner in the earlier history of religions. And it is because of reporting [accounts] after visiting bSam yas and having directly seen royal edicts amongst the old library present there.<sup>753</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba's work was well-received by traditional scholars of other religious traditions even more than a century after his passing. The 17th-century rNying ma scholar

<sup>749</sup> This edition of *bKa' chems ka khol ma* is suggested to be of the finest revision (van der Kuijp 1996b: 47).

<sup>750</sup> Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po. *bKa' chems ka khol ma*, p. 3: *zhes sogs bris 'dug na tshig kha yar chad pa ni smras ma thag pa'i don 'di yin nges so*.

<sup>751</sup> bDud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje. *bDud 'joms chos 'byung*, p. 650: *dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston gyi rnying ma'i skabs*.

<sup>752</sup> bDud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje. *bDud 'joms chos 'byung*, p. 651: *tshad mar gyur pa'i yig cha rnam las legs par btus shing*.

<sup>753</sup> mKhar rme'u bsam gtan. *bTsan po lha sras dar ma dang de'i rjes su byung ba'i rgyal rabs mdor bsdu* p. 3: *lo rgyus la mkhas pa'i dbang po dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng bas (1504–1566) spyi lo 1564 lor bris pa'i lho brag chos 'byung ngam mkhas pa'i dga' ston zhes grags pa ni deng sang 'dzam gling thog bod kyi lo rgyus mkhan tshang mas mgrin gcig tu tshad gzhir 'jog pa'i yig cha yin par ngos 'dzin byed gi yod 'dug /de'i rgyu mtshan ni ntson pa pos sngon yod chos 'byung rnam su bris pa'i gtam rgyud dang lo rgyus 'dres mar yod pa rnam ha cang skyar zlos ma byas par gna' rabs lo rgyus skor rdo ring dngos su mthong nas ji ma ji bzhin zhush pa dang /bsam yas su phyin nas der yod dpe mdzod rnying pa'i gras nas byung ba'i bka' btsigs rnam dngos su mthong nas zhush pa'i gtan tshigs kyis yin*.

Kaḥthog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698–1755), among others, quotes from the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and praises gTsong lag phreng ba as a supreme scholar (*mkhas mchog*).<sup>754</sup>

The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* appears to have been a significant source for Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas and 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab when composing *Kaṁ Biographies*. For example, at the beginning of the hagiography of the First Karmapa Dus gsum mkhyen pa, the words and phrases of the *Kaṁ tshang Biographies* and the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* bear resemblance.

*mKhas pa'i dga' ston* states:

***rngog lo tsā ba gshegs pa'i phyi lo yin/ mtshan dge 'phel du btags/ mes po sgom pa bgres po dang yab la lha mo rang byung rgyal mo zhus te bsgrubs pas dgung lo bdun brgyad nas lha mo'i sgrub rtags thon brag la zhabs rjes byung***<sup>755</sup>

*Kaṁ tshang Biographies* states:

***rngog lo tsā ba gshegs pa'i phyi lo lcags pho stag la sku bltams/ mtshan dge 'phel du btags/ mes po sgom pa bgres po stong dpon shes rab mgon po dang yab la lha mo'i sgrub thabs zhus nas/ dgung lo bcu gcig pa la bsgrub pas zhal gzigs brag la zhabs rjes kyang byung***<sup>756</sup>

## Conclusion

One can safely conclude that the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* is the historiographical work on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism with extensive references to, and citations from, earlier historical materials, including imperial writings.<sup>757</sup> For this reason, it has been used by some modern editions to reconstruct the wording, contents, and some ambiguous or missing parts of the imperial material.

As discussed earlier, while there may not be a single identifiable motive behind the composition of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, this chapter has investigated some factors and contexts in which gTsong lag phreng ba wrote. Factors include a non-sectarian outlook, religious faith in the past masters, and the lack of a Karma bKa' brgyud history before this work, which necessitated the codification of the tradition through a coherent narrative.

The reception of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* as a historical document based on reliable sources is undisputed among both traditional and modern scholars. This reception demonstrates the significance of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* for understanding Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in relation to earlier religious histories of Tibet that are either missing or are not as extensive as the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

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<sup>754</sup> Kaḥthog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu. *Bu ston kha chas mdzad pa'i chos 'byung rin po che'i mdzod las/ rig pa 'dzin pa tshe dbang nor bus nye bar btus pa*. p. 202: *zhes pa ni mkhas mchog dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' byed las ji ltar gsungs bzhin btus pa'o*.

<sup>755</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*. vol. III, p. 2. Similar words found in the *Kaṁ tshang Biographies* are added in bold to recognise them easily.

<sup>756</sup> *Kaṁ tshang Biographies*. vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>757</sup> Although historical documents may contain mythic narratives, such sources can afford new details (Schwieger 2013: 65).

## 4.6 Commentaries on Language

gTsong lag phreng ba wrote extensively on language, including a manual for reading Sanskrit and commentaries on grammatical treatises. This section will discuss some of these writings in order to better appreciate his contribution to scholarship in the field of language.

### 4.6.1 Composition of the Manual for Reading Sanskrit

gTsong lag phreng ba wrote on Tibetan grammar and provided a guide to the pronunciation of Sanskrit. He studied *sandhi* rules with 'Chi med dpal bzang. Additional information regarding this teacher and the period in which gTsong lag phreng ba learnt Sanskrit remains obscure.

Written in verse, his nine-page manual on pronouncing Sanskrit, the *Legs sbyar bklag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar* (*A Root Text of the Methods of Reading Sanskrit: the Door of Entrance for the Intelligent Ones*) was composed by gTsong lag phreng ba at the age of twenty-three. Both lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med's catalogue and gTsong lag phreng ba's self-written catalogue mention its commentary, *bDud rtsi'i 'od phreng* (*The Garland of the Light of Ambrosia*). However, the commentary is missing, and not included in the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works*.

gTsong lag phreng ba's manual provides instructions for reading Sanskrit, including instructions on short and long vowels, *anusvāra* and *visargaḥ*. It is divided into seven parts: a general introduction to Sanskrit consonants and vowels, points of articulation (Tib. *skye gnas*, Skt. *sthāna*) such as throat (Tib. *mgrin pa*, Skt. *kaṅṭha*), the articulation of letters (Tib. *byed pa*, Skt. *kaṇa*), the mantra of recitation (*bzla bya'i gsang sngags*),<sup>758</sup> a general technique of reading (*yi ge spyir bklag pa*) that is based mainly on short, long and protracted vowels,<sup>759</sup> the methods of reading specific letters, and the reading of some aspects of consonants when preceded by *anusvāra*. In the last part, gTsong lag phreng ba describes, for instance, that *anusvāra* followed by vowels should be pronounced as *m*, and when the consonants of *ka-varga* follow it, *anusvāra* has to be read as the fifth letter *ṅ* (*nga*). Similarly, *anusvāra* followed by consonants in the *ca*, *ṭa* and *ta-vargas* has to be pronounced as the corresponding fifth nasal letter (*ṅ*, *ṇ*, *n*).<sup>760</sup>

While gTsong lag phreng ba appears to have explained the pronunciation system of Sanskrit, he has also, on occasions, deviated from the Sanskrit system. For instance, he explains that the subscript *va* should be read as a vowel *o* in Tibetan.<sup>761</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> This section discusses whether a mantra is compatible or incompatible (*dgra grogs*) with the name of a person reciting it.

<sup>759</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that shorter vowels are the duration of one blink of an eye, while the longer and protracted vowels should have two and three blinks, respectively. gTsong lag phreng ba. *Legs sbyar bklag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar*, vol iv, p. 569: *thung ngu'i yi ge ma lus pa/ /mig 'dzum gcig gi yun du bklag /ring cha can dang 'g्रेng bu dang / /na ro can rnam gnyis kyi yun/ /rgyang nas bod dang ngu ba dang / /glu len sogs kyi pa lu ta/ /'khyog pa'i rtags can ma lus pa/ /gsum yun phan du nges par bklag*. Pāṇini is said to have compared them to the call of a rooster (Egenes 2015: 2).

<sup>760</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Legs sbyar bklag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar*, p. 572: *rjes su ro'am klad skor ni/ /dbyangs yig mthong na ru bklag / ka sde mthong na rang sde yi/ /lnga pa nga ru bklag par bya/ /tsa sde ṭa sde ta sde la/ /rang sde'i lnga pa na ru bklag*.

<sup>761</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Legs sbyar bklag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar*, p. 571: *wa btags kun kyang na ro ni/ /gcig yun can du bklag par bya*. This is how generally pronounced by Tibetans.

Here, one can glimpse gTsug lag phreng ba delving into the nuances of Sanskrit. However, some influence of Tibetan pronunciation appears to have been retained on occasion in his explanation.

#### 4.6.2 Commentaries on the Grammatical Treatises *Sum cu pa* and *rTags 'jug*

gTsug lag phreng ba has commented on the two grammatical treatises, *Sum cu pa* (*The Thirty Verses*) and *rTags 'jug* (*The Guide to Signs*), two early grammatical works traditionally attributed to Thon-mi Sambhota. The grammatical texts were written with interlinear explanations on these works as commanded by the Fifth Zhwa dmar dKon mchog yan lag.<sup>762</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba's interlinear commentary is brief, and it does not engage in a detailed exegesis of the treatises.

gTsug lag phreng ba cites and accepts long passages from the works of one of his teachers of ordination, Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po.<sup>763</sup> However, at times, gTsug lag phreng ba deviates from Zha lu. For instance, he maintains that the object of veneration (*phyag yul*) must be the Triple Jewel (*dkon mchog gsum*) since the *Sum cu pa* is a Buddhist commentary.<sup>764</sup>

Here, Zha lu lo tsā ba says [the object of veneration is] Śiva, the god of language. However, there is no contradiction since the great *piṭakas* state that even the non-Buddhists who first pioneered the sciences were appropriate emanations of the conqueror (Buddha). Nevertheless, this is a unique Buddhist commentary. Therefore, the object of veneration comprises the Triple Jewel.<sup>765</sup>

The renowned 18th-century scholar, Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), voices an understanding similar to that of gTsug lag phreng ba in his *Yul gangs can pa'i brda yang dag par sbyor ba'i bstan bcos kyi bye brag sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i gzhung gi rnam par bshad pa mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan mu tig phreng mdzes*, one of the well-known Tibetan commentaries on the two grammatical treatises.<sup>766</sup> Situ also argues that, although it is

<sup>762</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Lung bstan pa rtags kyi 'jug pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos kyi 'grel pa snang bar byed pa'i sgron me*, p. 612: *sum rtags gnyis kyi bstan bcos snang bar byed pa'i sgron med 'di ni rgyal ba gar gyi dbang po'i ngo bo zhwa dmar cod dpon 'dzin pa lnga pa mchog gi sprul pa'i dkon mchog yan lag zhabs kyis bka' lung gi me tog spyi bor nod de/ bdag gtsug lag phreng bas mchan bur btob pa las/ slar yi ge mi nyams pa'i phyir tu mchan gzhung bsres pa yin no*. It is important to note here that the Fifth Zhwa dmar was the student of gTsug lag phreng ba. Nevertheless, gTsug lag phreng ba respects the Fifth Zhwa dmar who appears to have been as significant figure in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition as the Karmapa.

<sup>763</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Lung bstan pa rtags kyi 'jug pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos kyi 'grel pa snang bar byed pa'i sgron me*, p. 599: *ces sogs dus gsum gyi sgra 'di dngos stan rje zha lu lo tsā'i zhabs gyis (sic!) 'grel pa bzhin bkod pa ste*.

<sup>764</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba takes treatises on grammar to be religious. However, modern academics subsume these under secular literature (Cabezón and Jackson 1996: 26).

<sup>765</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Chos rje dpa' bos mdzad pa'i sum cu pa dang rtags 'jug gi 'grel pa*, p. 575: *'dir zha lu lo tsā ba zhabs kyis/ sgra'i lha rtags zhi ba la gsungs kyang / spyir phyi rol pa la rig gnas kyi shing rta'i srol dang por 'byed pa po dag kyang rgyal ba nyid kyi gang 'dul gyi sprul par sde snod chen po rnam las gsungs pas/ mi 'gal kyang / 'dir ni thun mong ma yin pa'i nang pa'i bstan bcos yin pas phyag yul dkon mchog gsum du bsdu pa'o*. The title *Chos rje dpa' bos mdzad pa'i sum cu pa dang rtags 'jug gi 'grel pa* is given at the beginning of this commentary by the publishers of this edition. However, gTsug lag phreng ba simply says *Sum cu pa lung du ston pa'i 'grel pa* in the catalogue of his works.

<sup>766</sup> However, it is difficult to indicate whether Si tu referred gTsug lag phreng ba's commentary while composing his commentary on the *Sum cu pa*.

not appropriate to venerate worldly gods after taking refuge in the Triple Jewel, Śiva is regarded as an emanation of Avalokiteśvara in sūtras such as *Basket of Books Sūtra* (*Karaṇḍavyūha*), and, therefore, his veneration here is free of wrongdoing since he is not being honoured as an ordinary being or as the creator of the world.<sup>767</sup>

Although gTsug lag phreng ba appears to have referred to Zha lu's commentary on the *Sum cu pa*, he maintains some different positions. Zha lu contends that the Tibetan scripts were invented by Thon-mi Sambhoṭa and modelled after the *lañca* script.<sup>768</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba maintains that the Tibetan letters were modelled after Kashmiri and *nāgarī* scripts.<sup>769</sup> While Bu ston suggests Kashmiri script as a source of Tibetan script, gTsug lag phreng ba's proposition of *nāgarī* script as a source is unique.<sup>770</sup> The source of Tibetan script is generally accepted as the Gupta script, which evolved into *siddhamātrkā* in the seventh century and *nāgarī* in the eleventh century.<sup>771</sup> Thus, one can say that gTsug lag phreng ba at least came a step closer than other scholars by maintaining the source of Tibetan script as *nāgarī* (the adapted form of Gupta script).

#### 4.7 Some Major Philosophical Stances of gTsug lag phreng ba

gTsug lag phreng ba is probably the most prolific Karma bKa' brgyud scholar apart from the Eighth Karmapa. He defended and enunciated the philosophical approaches of their own system (*rang lugs*). This section will explore his understanding of doctrinal points on emptiness, tathāgatagarbha and the distinction between the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra traditions. A brief discussion of these vast topics is provided in this section, along with some background and comparison with other Karma bKa' brgyud scholars, including the Third Karmapa, the Eighth Karmapa and Karma phrin las pa.

##### 4.7.1 Rang stong and gzhan stong Theories of Emptiness

gTsug lag phreng ba provides some insightful perspectives in unison with the Eighth Karmapa on the debate concerning the *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* theories of emptiness. Martina Draszczyk and David Higgins present the Eighth Karmapa's position on the *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* dichotomy:

<sup>767</sup> Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas. *Karma si tu 'i sum rtags 'grel chen mkhas pa 'i mgul rgyan mu tig 'phreng mdzes*, p. 18: *mchog gsum la skyabs su song nas 'jig rten pa 'i lhar phyag byed pa spyir mi 'os kyang 'di dgos pa dang bcas shing lha chen po de 'jig rten dbang phyug gi rnam rol du'ang za ma tog la sogs pa 'i mdo sde rnams su bstan pa 'i tshul ji lta bar thugs su chud nas phyag mdzad kyi/ 'jig rten rang rgyud par bzung ba'am/ 'jig rten gyi byed po sogs su zhen pas phyag ma mdzad pa 'i phyir skyon med do.*

<sup>768</sup> Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po. *sLob dpon a nus mdzad pa 'i bod kyi skad kyi gsung rab la 'jug tshul sum cu pa 'i rnam 'grel*, p. 1: *rje btsun 'jam dpal dbyangs kyi rnam 'phrul thon mi sambho ta zhes grags pa de nyid kyis sngar bod la yi ge med pa la/ lañca 'i yi ge la dpe mdzad nas bod kyi yi ge dang skad kyi gsung rab la 'jug pa 'i tshul sngon med pa phul du byung ba mdzad do.* It is reported that accounts suggest that both *lañca* and *vartu* were used as a basis for Tibetan Script (van Schaik 2011: 58). The 19th-century scholar Jäschke also believed *lañca* to be the source of Tibetan script (Jäschke 1929: 1). Although the inventor of the Tibetan alphabet is traditionally attributed to Sambhoṭa, even his historicity is questioned. (van Schaik 2011: 45).

<sup>769</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Chos rje dpa' bos mdzad pa 'i sum cu pa dang rtags 'jug gi 'grel pa*, p. 576: *yang bod yig gi gzugs ni/ thon mis/ kha che'am/ na ga ra 'i yi ge la dpe blangs.* van Schaik (2011: 45) reports that there has been considerable disagreement among Western scholars regarding the origin of Tibetan scripts.

<sup>770</sup> van Schaik (2011: 64).

<sup>771</sup> van Schaik (2011: 69, 75).

The Karma pa ends a lengthy criticism of opposing Gzhan stong and Rang stong positions by saying “as for me, I don’t subscribe to these extreme positions and [therefore] don’t proclaim either *rang tong* or *gzhan stong*.” He concludes with an aspiration to follow the advice of his root teacher Bkra shis dpal ’byor (1457–1525) “to relinquish views and destroy all tenets in the spirit of the illustrious Dwags po Bka’ brgyud lineage.”<sup>772</sup>

In a response to a monk called bKras rgyam, who asked him about the Eighth Karmapa’s view on emptiness, gTsug lag phreng ba argues that emptiness is beyond the dichotomy of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*:

All phenomena are unborn since [they are born] not from self, other, both or neither. Therefore, there is no cessation. Since there is no cessation, there is no abiding. Thus, nothing has intrinsically existed. Since there is no existence, the absence of its opposite counterpart (*’gal zla med pa*)<sup>773</sup> is even more inappropriate. Therefore, all [phenomena] are taught to be empty since [they are] empty of existence, non-existence and both. That emptiness, too, is not merely grasping by the mind as empty. Grasping as empty and non-empty too is identical to grasping to the extreme. Grasping to the extreme is the venom of the view. Therefore, there is no falling into the partial [sides] called self-empty and other-empty. Self and other are not known from the very beginning, while proliferations of empty and non-empty are quelled from the beginning, to which the terminology of emptiness is given. In these ways, the pacification of apprehensions is merely designated “the view of Madhyamaka.”<sup>774</sup>

It is important to note here that, as presented in the second chapter, gTsug lag phreng ba received teachings on the *Uttaratantra* from the Eighth Karmapa on the tradition of the other-empty (*gzhan stong*) of Sa bzang ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1294–1380) and the self-empty (*rang stong*) tradition of Red mda’ ba (1349–1412), thus establishing some authority to comment on the Eighth Karmapa’s stance.

The similarity of gTsug lag phreng ba’s explanation to that of the Eighth Karmapa indicates that gTsug lag phreng ba followed the latter’s interpretation.

<sup>772</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 263–264). Also see Rheingans (2021: 163) where Karma phrin las pa confirms the Eighth Karmapa’s stance on this.

<sup>773</sup> Reading as an absence of its opposite counterpart (*’gal zla med pa*) of non-existence is inappropriate and sounds rationally incoherent since it would then mean there should be existence. Therefore, typographical error is probable. It appears to be *’gal zla yod pa* (presence of opposite counterpart), rather than *’gal zla med pa* (absence of its opposite counterpart). Then it would give logical coherence and mean that since there is no existence, the presence of its opposite counterpart (*’gal zla yod pa*) is even more inappropriate.

<sup>774</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *nGes gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod ’byed pa’i lde mig zhes bya ba dris lan gyi tshogs*, p. 435–436: *chos thams cad bdag dang gzhan dang gnyis ka dang gnyis min pas mi skye bas na skye ba med/ de’i phyir ’gag pa med/ skye ’gag med pas na gnas pa’ang med pas gang yang rang bzhin gyis yod ma myong ba dang / yod pa min pas de’i ’gal zla med pa ni de bas kyang mi ’thad pa’i phyir/ yod med gnyis kas stong pas thams cad stong nyid du gsungs shing / stong pa de yang stong par blos bzung ba tsam la mi zer te/ stong par ’dzin pa dang mi stong par ’dzin pa yang mthar ’dzin du mtshungs shing / mthar ’dzin pa na lta ba’i dug yin pa’i phyir/ des na rang stong gzhan stong zhes bya ba’i phyogs su lhung ba med de/ rang gzhan gdod nas ma dmigs shing stong mi stong gi spros pa gzod ma nas zhi ba la stong pa nyid kyi tha snyad du mdzad la/ de lta ba byed kyi dmigs pa zhi ba la dbu ma’i lta ba zhes ming tsam du btags so.*

As he explains, the basis, i.e., the true nature of phenomena (*dharmatā*), is in reality neither *gzhan stong* nor *rang stong* because it has the nature of utter peace, freedom from all discursive elaborations of emptiness and non-emptiness. This is why in terms of this freedom from discursive elaborations, neither self-emptiness nor other-emptiness apply, even if they can be distinguished within the framework of discursive elaborations.<sup>775</sup>

The Third Karmapa also advocated the non-contradictory nature of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*.<sup>776</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba's teacher Karma 'phrin las pa also espoused the non-contradiction between *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*.<sup>777</sup> Karma 'phrin las pa follows the Third Karmapa and the Seventh Karmapa in an approach that is identified as involving an ecumenical outlook.<sup>778</sup> He understands *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* as non-contradictory in nature in the sense that the nature of mind is luminous and empty, yet emptiness is the quintessence of dependent origination.<sup>779</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins sum up Karma 'phrin las pa's stance:

This inseparability between natural purity or emptiness and dependent arising provides a valuable key to understanding Karma phrin las pa's views on the compatibility of Rang stong and Gzhan stong.<sup>780</sup>

Like the Eighth Karmapa, gTsong lag phreng ba does not appear to suggest the non-contradictory nature of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* but understands them to be beyond any dichotomy. The Eighth Karmapa rarely mentions such non-contradictoriness while advocating relinquishment of the *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* dichotomy altogether.<sup>781</sup> In taking this position, gTsong lag phreng ba aligns himself more with the Eighth Karmapa than with Karma phrin las pa.

Karma phrin las pa does not understand *rang stong* in the sense of a non-affirming negation (*med dgag*), thus not empty in itself but empty of some other entity.<sup>782</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins observe that "From Karma 'phrin las pa's perspective, the correct understanding of *rang stong* is that while everything conventional, i.e., the dualistic appearances of the apprehended and the apprehender, is empty of an own self-essence, wisdom which is free of this duality exists."<sup>783</sup> However, the Eighth Karmapa and gTsong lag phreng ba apparently maintain that ultimate reality transcends the duality of non-affirming and affirming negation.<sup>784</sup>

Furthermore, gTsong lag phreng ba follows in the footsteps of the Eighth Karmapa regarding the division of affirming and non-affirming negation. He classifies the dichotomy of affirming and non-affirming negations as representational ultimate (*rnam grangs pa'i don*

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<sup>775</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 259).

<sup>776</sup> Rheingans (2021: 66).

<sup>777</sup> See Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 162–181).

<sup>778</sup> Rheingans (2021: 128).

<sup>779</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 177).

<sup>780</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 177).

<sup>781</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 263–264).

<sup>782</sup> See Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 151).

<sup>783</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 169).

<sup>784</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 260).

dam) while maintaining the ineffable reality, which is an object of meditative equipoise (*mnyam bzhag*) of noble beings, as the non-representational ultimate.<sup>785</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba further espouses the inseparability of the two truths by asserting the absence of a separate ultimate truth other than the conventional truth while maintaining the absence of the conventional truth other than the ultimate truth, thus advocating them to be beyond the concepts of a single or separate entity.<sup>786</sup> The Eighth Karmapa also adopted the indivisibility of the two truths.<sup>787</sup> Following the Eighth Karmapa, this position is espoused by the Ninth Karmapa as well.<sup>788</sup>

#### 4.7.2 Tathāgatagarbha

gTsong lag phreng ba provides some significant discourse on the topic of tathāgatagarbha. While the views of the bKa' brgyud pa scholars, such as the Eighth Karmapa and Karma 'phrin las pa, on the tathāgatagarbha are found in academic studies, consideration of gTsong lag phreng ba's views and arguments on it is largely missing.<sup>789</sup> The discovery of his interlinear commentary on the *Uttaratantra* (*rGyud bla ma'i mchan 'grel*) could shed more light on the topic. gTsong lag phreng ba also likely wrote an interlinear commentary (*mchan 'grel*) on the Third Karmapa's *De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa*. lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med's catalogue of gTsong lag phreng ba's works lists this commentary.<sup>790</sup>

Although gTsong lag phreng ba, in the main, conforms to the understanding of the Eighth Karmapa, he provides some explanations that differ from those of the Eighth Karmapa in scattered writings in his *Collected Works*. For instance, both the Eighth Karmapa and Karma 'phrin las pa maintain that Buddhahood is simply a manifestation of the latent qualities of buddhas, not a new creation.<sup>791</sup> In a similar vein, gTsong lag phreng ba argues that sentient beings are a buddha but obscured by adventitious stains, and Buddhahood is revealed upon their removal.<sup>792</sup>

gTsong lag phreng ba does deviate from the Eighth Karmapa on certain points. For example, the Eighth Karmapa maintains that the tantric and sūtric tathāgatagarbha must be hierarchical.<sup>793</sup>

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<sup>785</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 257: *med dgag ma yin dgag pa dang / sgrub pa sogs su gang ston pa / rnam grangs pa yi don dam ste / smra bsam brjod bral 'phags rnams kyis / mnyam bzhag dag pa'i spyod yul gang / rnam grangs min pa'i don dam dngos*.

<sup>786</sup> gTsong lag 'phreng ba. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po zhes bya ba*, vol. V, p. 257: *kun rdzob las gzhan don dam med / don dam las gzhan kun rdzob min / yod med gcig dang tha dad sogs / sgro btags nyid phyir de mi gnas*.

<sup>787</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2019: 13). Brunnhölzl (2004: 562).

<sup>788</sup> Wangchuk Dorje, Karmapa IX; trans. Dewar (2008: 34).

<sup>789</sup> See Draszczyk and Higgins (2016) for the Eighth Karmapa and Karma 'phrin las pa's positions on tathāgatagarbha. The absence of reference to gTsong lag phreng ba's views on it can probably be attributed to the fact that his writings were only made readily available in 2019 with the publication of his *Collected Works*.

<sup>790</sup> The list is provided in the appendix.

<sup>791</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 199–200).

<sup>792</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Nges gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris len* (sic!) *gyi tshogs*, p. 480: *sems can sangs rgyas yin yang glo bur gyi / dri mas bsgribs gyur de nyid bsal ba na / sangs rgyas nyid ces dgyes pa'i rdo rjer gsungs*.

<sup>793</sup> Tantric buddha nature is referred to as 'causal continuum' (*rgyu rgyud*) (Draszczyk and Higgins 2019: 295).

The Eighth Karmapa held that the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (the sūtric treatise that deals with buddha nature) is not as extensive as the tantras in the treatment of buddha nature.

As he explains, the exoteric Mahāyāna doctrine of the RGV provides only a partial account of what is defined (*mtshon bya*) by the term “buddha nature”—i.e., some uncontaminated cognitive factor—but does not fully reveal the defining conditions (*mtshan nyid*) or specify the illustrative instances (*mtshan gzhi*) of buddha nature as it operates in the life of an individual.<sup>794</sup>

Furthermore, the Eighth Karmapa in the *Explanation of the Direct Introduction to the Three Embodiments*<sup>795</sup> (*sKu gsum ngo sprod rnam bshad*) asserts the distinction:

Amongst sūtras of the final wheel, [buddha nature] is described as a distinctive factor of cognition called the “substratum cognition” (*kun gzhi'i shes pa*). In this regard, the master Candrakīrti and others declared that there is no substratum cognition consensually verifiable as an empirical experience, even conventionally. Hence, it turns out that [213] \*sugatagarbha according to the Sūtra system does not exist, even conventionally.<sup>796</sup>

However, gTsong lag phreng ba provides an alternative interpretation on the empty (*stong pa*) aspect of buddha nature, where he states that tantric and sūtric buddha nature is the same:

If the buddha nature of the final (wheel of dharma) is superior to the two kinds (of buddha nature) of the second wheel (of dharma turned by Buddha), and if the buddha nature not taught in the sūtras is considered to have been taught in the tantras, there can be such [instances] in some methods of teaching. However, in the definitive sense, it is the same entity known by different names. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* [states] that, similar to potters making various receptacles from one [kind of] mud, the Tathāgata also taught innumerable terms for the same emptiness, such as nirvāṇa, pāramitā, tathāgatarbha and so on.<sup>797</sup>

Here, gTsong lag phreng ba maintains that emptiness was taught with different names in the second and third *dharmacakras*, while also conceding that the hierarchical difference between sūtric and tantric buddha nature could be possible as a result of the difference in methods of teaching.

While gTsong lag phreng ba's position appears contrary to the Eighth Karmapa's position, gTsong lag phreng ba seems to deny the hierarchical difference between sūtric and tantric buddha nature only in the aspect of emptiness (*stong pa nyid*). On the single nature of emptiness, gTsong lag phreng ba further states:

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<sup>794</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2019: 295).

<sup>795</sup> This title translation is as it appears in Draszczyk and Higgins (2019: 295).

<sup>796</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2019: 298).

<sup>797</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *nGes gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris lan gyi tshogs*, p. 459: *gal te 'khor lo bar pa'i rigs gnyis las tha ma'i bde snying mchog yin zhing / mdor ma bstan pa'i bde snying gsang sngags su bstan no snyam na ming dang ston tshul kha cig la de ltar yod mod kyang nges don du ngo bo gcig la ming tha dad par brjod par zad de/ lang gshegs las/ rdza mkhan gyis 'jim pa gcig las snod sna tshogs pa byed pa bzhin de bzhin gshegs pas kyang stong nyid kho na la mya ngan las 'das pa dang sher phyin dang de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po sogs ming gi rnam grangs mtha' yas par ston par bshad cing.*

Although many categories of emptiness are taught, emptiness does not exist separately. For instance, although space is described [in terms of] the space of *kuśa* grass, the space inside the vase, the space of different regions, the space of a three-thousandfold world system, the different spaces, and so on, it is analogous [to the fact that] these spaces are not known as one or a different [entity].<sup>798</sup>

On the other hand, gTsug lag phreng ba appears to make a concession when it comes to the difference between the sūtric and tantric buddha nature in terms of the appearing aspect (*snang ba*). He provides an analogy comparing the aspect of characteristics (*yon tan gyi cha*) of buddha nature to the difference between a king during his embryonic state and his state of assuming kingship.<sup>799</sup> Here, gTsug lag phreng ba points out the differences in the characteristics between the king in the mother's womb and his adulthood as a king, although he is essentially one person in both states.

Draszcyk and Higgins provide the translation of the Eighth Karmapa's *dBu ma gzhan stong smra ba'i srol legs par phye ba'i sgron me* where the Eighth Karmapa makes his point that buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha / sugatagarbha*) should not be understood only in regard to emptiness:

In this regard, some who pride themselves on being Mahāyāna Mādhyamikas, not comprehending the teaching of the irreversible Dharma wheel, cling to the point that ultimate truth is utterly ineffable due to having analyzed *tathāgata* only in terms of emptiness.<sup>800</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also, in response to a question posed by one of his students, clarifies that a person who possesses buddha nature is simply an entity attributed to the collection of aggregates, devoid of true existence. He also maintains that buddha nature is also intrinsically empty.

The sixth [question] ‘When it is said that buddha nature is present in the mindstream of beings, is it said that buddha nature is present in their mindstream, finding a [sentient being] to be established after analysing whether a sentient being is established or not established? Or is it said that buddha nature is present in the mindstream of a sentient being designated merely as a sentient being based on

<sup>798</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *nGes gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris lan gyi tshogs*, p. 458: *stong nyid la rnam grangs du mar gsungs kyang stong nyid tha dad du med de/ dper na nam mkha' la rtswa mchog gi nam mkha' dang bum nang gi nam mkha' dang lung pa tha dad kyi nam mkha' stong gsum gyi nam mkha' dang nam mkha' tha dad pa sogs brjod kyang nam mkha' de rnams la gcig dang tha dad mi dmigs pa bzhin no.*

<sup>799</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *nGes gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris lan gyi tshogs*, p. 458: *rnam pa yon tan gyi cha la zer na khyad par yod pa yang mi 'gal te snga ma 'byung rung du yod pa tsam du zad la/ phyis rkyen tshogs pas 'bras bu yongs su rdzogs pa'i phyir te/ dper na nur nur po skabs kyi rgyal po dang rgyal sar phyung pa'i rgyal po bzhin no.*

<sup>800</sup> Draszcyk and Higgins (2019: 21).

aggregates (Tib. *phung po*, Skt. *skandha*) when unexamined and unanalysed? In general, the intention of the Middle Wheel taught entirely about the ontological reality (Tib. *chos dbyings*, Skt. *dharmādhatu*). The intention of the Final Wheel [of dharma] taught that no dharma other than *dharmādhatu* is found. If [one] knows the respective context of wheels [of dharma], what is there to show that buddha nature is existent, non-existent and so on. However, for the sake of those who do not know this way slightly, the division of dharma [categorises] into two: 1) innately attached to self and person and sentient being and 2) attached to [self] as eternal, singular and autonomous and so on, designated by bad tenet systems (Tib. *grub mtha'*, Skt. *siddhānta*). [They] are mere designations, for the sake of sentient beings, in various aspects to self, person, sentient being and so on, as a person performing [action] and merely a false designation similar to perceiving as water to the mirage. [They are] always shown to be non-existent, thus preventing the view of self [as existent].<sup>801</sup>

Here, gTsong lag phreng ba clarifies that buddha nature is said to be present in an entity called a person, attributed to the collection of aggregates, thus rejecting a truly established non-empty person. gTsong lag phreng ba also maintains that the final dharma wheel taught all phenomena as empty, including buddha nature. Despite the positive appraisal of buddha nature, the Eighth Karmapa also advocates not taking it as a truly established entity.<sup>802</sup>

#### 4.7.3 Difference Between the Buddhahood of Sūtra and Mantra

gTsong lag phreng ba, and probably the Eighth Karmapa as well, maintain that there should be a difference between the Buddhahood attained through Vajrayāna and that attained through Mantrayāna.<sup>803</sup> However, some traditions, including the dGe lugs pa, largely accept them as equal.<sup>804</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba identifies this difference in his *Single Intention* commentary, the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*. However, this hierarchical distinction, wherein the buddha of the Mantra tradition is superior to the buddha of the Sūtra tradition, does not appear in the Vajra statements of 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon's *Single Intention*. Therefore, it seems that gTsong lag phreng ba added his own view on the difference in this commentary.<sup>805</sup>

<sup>801</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba. *Nges gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris len* (sic!) gyi *tshogs*, p. 473: *drug pa bde gshegs snying po sems can gyi rgyud la yod zer ba 'di thog mar sems can grub ma grub brtag dpyad byas mthar grub rgyu zhig byung nas de'i rgyud la bde gshegs snying po yod zer ba lags sam/ ma brtag ma dpyad pa'i dus kyi phung po la brten nas btags pa tsam sems can du byas pa'i sems can gyi rgyud la bde gshegs snying po yod zer ba gang lags/ zhes pa/ spyir 'khor lo bar ba'i dgongs pas chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin gnas tshul chos dbyings kho nar gsungs/ 'khor lo tha ma'i dgongs pas chos kyi dbyings ma yin pa'i/ chos mi dmigs par bstan pa'i 'khor lo so so'i skabs don shes na sems can la bde gshegs snying po yod med sogs bstan du ci yod kyang de ltar cung zad ma shes pa'i gdul bya'i dbang du mdzad nas chos kyi rnam grangs gnyis su 'gyur te/bdag dang / gang zag dang / sems can du lhan skyes kyis zhen pa dang / grub mtha' ngan pas kun nas btags pa'i rtag gcig rang dbang can sogs zhen pa'i gdul bya'i ngor rnam pa du ma'i sgo nas bdag dang / gang zag dang / sems can sogs byed pa'i skyes bur btags pa tsam de ni smig rgyu la chur 'dzin pa lta bu phyin ci log tu btags pa 'ba' zhig las nam du yang mi srid par bstan pas bdag lta zlog la.*

<sup>802</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2019: 13).

<sup>803</sup> This position is according to the *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, a text probably developed from the notes taken while receiving teachings on *dgongs gcig* from the Eighth Karmapa.

<sup>804</sup> Samuel (1993: 430).

<sup>805</sup> Jan-Ulrich Sobisch also believes that, according to *Single Intention*, there should not be a hierarchy between the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra traditions. (Email correspondence on 27/01/2025).

gTsug lag phreng ba, not only maintains the difference between the buddhas of the Mantra and Sūtra traditions, but also distinguishes among the buddhas of the tantra divisions. According to gTsug lag phreng ba, Sa skya pa scholars and many famed lamas of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud tradition did not accept a separate buddha of the mantric tradition different from that of the sūtric buddha.<sup>806</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba explains numerous ways to demonstrate the hierarchical distinction between the buddhas of sūtric and mantric traditions.

There is another manner of distinction between the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra [traditions]. If [one] thinks that there is no three [*kāyas*] attained through the mantric path superior to the Buddhahood attained through the sūtric path by transforming impure body, speech, and mind into the three *kāyas*, [that is] not [the case]. Although the three *kāyas* attained through the sūtric tradition are ordinary three *kāyas* purified of impure body, speech and mind, [they have] not attained Buddhahood as the three *kāyas* of the [mantric] tradition that purifies pure and subtle body, speech and mind since the body has not attained enlightenment as the channels of *Nirmāṇakāya*, speech [as the] winds of Saṃbhogakāya, and mind [as the] essences of *Dharmakāya*.<sup>807</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba asserts that the difference between the buddhas of sūtric and mantric traditions can also be predicated upon the difference in their causes (*rgyu*):

Therefore, if one doubts the [reason behind] the hierarchical difference between the buddha of the Sūtra and Mantra [traditions], that is due to the hierarchical difference between the causes of Buddhahood. That is, there are two [causes]: 1) innate and stain-free subtle body and mind of the pure primordial buddha nature in the causal continuum (tantric Buddha-nature) of the ground state (*gzhi dus*) and 2) innate, impure with adventitious stains, and grosser body and mind. Out of [two], most [buddhas], from buddhas of sūtric tradition to the buddhas of Yogatantra, attain enlightenment into the pure dharma body by transforming the impure, adventitious, and grosser body and mind. [That] is the buddha of the Sūtra [tradition]. Attaining enlightenment of the primordial, subtle and pure body and mind of the causal state (*rgyu dus*) into the resultant state (*'bras dus*) of the body of dharma through the actions and restrictions (*byed bcing*) of the body and mind of the path state (*lam dus*) is the buddha of tantra.<sup>808</sup>

<sup>806</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 3–4: *des na phra gsang kyi gnad 'di lta bu la thugs kyis ma dpyad par/ sa skya pa'i rje btsun gong ma rnams dang / dwags po bka' brgyud kyi bla ma grags ldan mang pos glo bur gyi dri ma sbyang gzhi rmdzad nas de las gzhan pa'i sbyang gzhi khyad par du sbyang ba'i sngags lugs kyi sangs rgyas mi bzhed la.*

<sup>807</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 23: *mdo sngags kyi sangs rgyas la khyad par yod pa'i tshul gzhan yang yod de/ mdo lugs kyis bsgrubs pa'i sangs rgyas de ma dag pa'i lus ngag yid gsum gnas gyur pa'i sku gsum po thob pa de las lhag pa'i gsum po ni sngags lam gyis thob pa med do snyam na/ ma yin te mdo lugs kyis thob pa'i sku gsum po de ni/ ma dag pa'i lus ngag yid sbyangs pa'i sangs rgyas la khyad par ba yin kyang / rnam par dag pa phra ba'i lus ngag yid sbyangs pa'i lugs kyi sku gsum du sangs ma rgyas pa'i phyir te/ lus rtsa sprul pa'i sku dang / ngag rlung longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku dang / sems thig le chos kyi skur 'tshang rgya bar ma byas pa'i phyir.*

<sup>808</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 2–3: *de nas mdo sngags kyi sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu la mchog dman gyi khyad par yod pa de ci la thug ces*

gTsug lag phreng ba distinguishes the two causes of sūtric and mantric buddhas. His argument can be understood as the causal difference between the two buddhas, as subtle body and mind in the case of the mantric buddha and the grosser nature in the case of the sūtric buddha that transforms into the dharma body upon gaining enlightenment.

In addition to the difference between the buddhas of sūtric and mantric traditions, gTsug lag phreng ba also maintains hierarchical distinctions in the state of Buddhahood attained by different classes of tantras.

Respective buddhas of the lower tantra classes, attained this way, also need to attain Buddhahood of the higher tantra classes. When buddhas of lower [tantra classes] are compared with [buddhas of] higher [tantra classes], [they] become [buddhas of] worldly and father or mother [tantra], but cannot posit [them as the buddhas of] the otherworldly and non-dual tantra. The detailed commentary of Kālacakra states, ‘the worldly tantra is the Krīya tantra and Yoga tantra. Otherworldly tantra is the father and mother tantra of [Anuttara] yoga’.<sup>809</sup>

gTsug lag phreng ba also asserts that there is a difference in the view (*lta ba*) between the Sūtra and Mantra traditions. He claims that there is a distinction between the views of Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna since the latter espouses the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.<sup>810</sup> He asserts that the tantric perception of emptiness is a direct yogic cognition (*rnal 'byor mngon sum*) while the sūtric way of seeing reality is by an inferential cognition (*rjes dpag*).<sup>811</sup> Therefore, gTsug lag phreng ba argues for a difference in the epistemological nature of *spros bral* (freedom from conceptual elaboration) between the two traditions.

The Eighth Karmapa’s *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhal lung dwags brgyud grub pa'i shing rta* maintains that a difference in *spros bral* does not exist between the sūtric and tantric traditions.<sup>812</sup> Some other scholars, such as Bo dong

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*dogs na de ni sangs rgyas kyi rgyu la mchog dman gyi khyad par yod pa la thug pa yin te/ de yang gzhi dus kyi rgyu rgyud la g.ya' bral gnyug ma bde gshegs snying po lhan cig skyes pa dri bral phra ba'i lus sems dang / g.ya' bcas glo bur gyi dri ma lhan cig skyes pa rags pa'i lus sems gnyis yod pa las/ mdo lugs kyi sangs rgyas nas bzung rnal 'byor rgyud kyi sangs rgyas phal che ba phyin chad/ glo bur rags pa g.ya' bcas kyi lus sems dri bcas de nyid gnas gyur te/ dri med kyi chos gzugs kyi skur 'tshang rgya ba ni/ mdo'i sangs rgyas yin la/ gnyug ma phra ba g.ya' bral gyi rgyu dus kyi lus sems de nyid lam dus kyi lus sems kyi byed bcing gis 'bras dus kyi chos gzugs kyi skur 'tshang rgya ba ni sngags kyi sangs rgyas yin la.*

<sup>809</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba*, p. 80: *de ltar thob pa'i rgyud sde 'og ma'i rang rang gi sangs rgyas des kyang / rgyud sde gong ma'i sangs rgyas thob par bya dgos te/ 'og ma 'og ma'i sangs rgyas des gong ma la ltos na 'jig rten pa dang pha ma'i rgyud du 'gyur ba las 'jig rten las 'das pa dang gnyis med kyi rgyud du mi 'jog ste/ dus 'khor 'grel chen las/ 'jig rten pa'i rgyud ni bya ba'i rgyud dang rnal 'byor gyi rgyud do/ 'jig rten las 'das pa'i rgyud ni rnal 'byor pha dang ma'i rgyud do/ zhes 'byung ngo.*

<sup>810</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *rNam par 'thag pa bsdu pa'i bstan bcos log rtog rnam sbyong*, p. 199: *phar phyin dang ni gsang sngags la'ang / lta ba'i khyad par 'dod dgos te/ sngags la 'khor 'das dbyer med kyi/ lta ba rang nyid khas len phyir.*

<sup>811</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *rNam par 'thag pa bsdu pa'i bstan bcos log rtog rnam sbyong*, p. 199: *zas kyi ming du gcig na yang / re re'i khyad par mang ba ltar/ sprot bral zhes bya'i ming gcig kyang / ji ltar spros dang bral mthong ba'i/ mthong tshul rim pa gzhal du med/ thal rang dbu ma rigs pa yis/ dpyad nas spros pa lhag med bkag /lhag mar ci yang ma lus pa/ rang rgyud pa yi spros bral dang / lhag med du yang mi 'dzin pa/ thal gyur pa yi spros bral yin/ gnyis ka rang blos dpyad pa ste/ rjes dpag yin gyi mngon sum min/ rdo rje theg pa'i lta ba mchog /so so rang rig ye shes kyi/ rnal 'byor mngon sum nyid rtogs kyi.*

<sup>812</sup> Mi bskyod rdo rje, Karmapa VIII, *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhal lung dwags brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, p. 20: *'o na slob dpon chen klu grub yab sras rjes 'brangs dang bcas pa'i dbu*

Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451), according to the Eighth Karmapa, also advocated no difference in the understanding of the ontological meaning of *spros bral* between the two traditions.<sup>813</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins report that Karma phrin las pa did not see a major distinction in terms of view between the sūtric and tantric paths.<sup>814</sup>

#### 4.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed some of gTsong lag phreng ba's significant writings and their characteristics, context, and reception. It has also demonstrated that his major commentaries are the most extensive in the Karma bKa' brgyud school and that he held some unique positions on philosophical issues.

gTsong lag phreng ba lived in a vibrant intellectual environment in which prominent scholars such as the Eighth Karmapa and Śākya mchog ldan wrote extensively, and scholars of different traditions engaged in debates over their philosophical positions. Furthermore, it was a period of religious systematisation when writings of philosophical texts gained momentum in the Karma bKa' brgyud school, especially with the Eighth Karmapa. gTsong lag phreng ba wrote on subjects not written on by the Eighth Karmapa. For instance, there is no record of the Eighth Karmapa writing on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. Therefore, gTsong lag phreng ba's works are complementary to the Eighth Karmapa's textual materials, rather than a mere duplication.

gTsong lag phreng ba's commentaries, particularly those on astrology, Vajrayoginī and the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, are based on extensive canonical and Indian sources considered authoritative in the Tibetan tradition. The extent of his employment of Indian sources in some of his commentaries (for example, in the commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*) even exceeded that of prominent scholars such as Bu ston. The use of authoritative sources has contributed to the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary achieving a quasi-canonical status, reflected in its study in Karma bKa' brgyud institutes today. The regard in which this commentary is held is reflected in the fact that Khra 'gu Rinpoche, a leading Karma bKa' brgyud scholar of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, produced an abridged version of the commentary, transferring materials verbatim from gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the root verses of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

These compositions fill a gap in the tradition, since he comments on the treatises not commented on by earlier scholars of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. Furthermore, gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary on the astrological treatise of the Third Karmapa is arguably the only significant extant source that is in accord with the astrological system of the mTshur phu tradition. While composing the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, gTsong lag phreng ba relied on historical sources and approached them with the critical acumen of a historian. His scholarship extends to other fields of knowledge, such as language. As seen in this chapter, gTsong lag phreng ba had a sound knowledge of language, including Sanskrit.

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*ma'i chos tshul las khyad par du gyur pa'i sngags kyi theg pa'i dbu ma'i chos tshul yod dam zhe na/ mthar 'dzin dang spros 'dzin gyi dgag bya bkag nas bsgrub bya mi sgrub pa'i spros bral gyi cha nas khyad par med kyang.*

<sup>813</sup> Mi bskyod rdo rje, Karmapa VIII, *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhal lung dwags brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, p. 23: *bo dong pa chen po ni shin tu dpyad pa na mdo sngags kyi lta ba sprol bral la khyad par cung zad kyang med de/ 'khor 'das kyi chos thams cad la dpyad bzod du grub pa 'ga' yang med pa'i phyir.*

<sup>814</sup> Draszczyk and Higgins (2016: 153).

This chapter also considered some of the philosophical points gTsug lag phreng ba made. While many of his doctrinal positions conformed with the Karma bKa' brgyud hierarchs, such as the Third and Eighth Karmapa, gTsug lag phreng ba deviated from some positions of Karma phrin las pa.

gTsug lag phreng ba also engaged in polemical arguments with the views of renowned scholars of different traditions, including rJe Tsong kha pa and Sa skya paṇḍita, refuting their standpoints and defending the Karma bKa' brgyud position. This polemical engagement with the scholars of other traditions is partially explained by the fact that he lived in a formative period of philosophical systematisation in the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

### 5.1 Main Findings of the Research

The preceding chapters have presented a historical study on the life and works of gTsong lag phreng ba. The research about his life was based mainly on his auto-hagiographies and some other available sources, while his writings in the *Collected Works* were analysed to understand his scholarly contributions. This chapter will recapitulate the findings of the research.

This thesis has demonstrated that gTsong lag phreng ba was not only an accomplished practitioner who was associated with the meditative tradition of the Karma bKa' brgyud, but also a versatile polymath. This is clear from the number of compositions he wrote and the expertise he demonstrated in almost all textual genres known to Tibet, both religious and secular. His expertise extended even to the field of medicine, for which he was recognised by mKhas dbang Byams pa 'phrin las (b. 1928) in the *Bod gyi sman pa rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs (A Compilation of the Spiritual Biographies of Successive Tibetan Physicians)*. The composition of gTsong lag phreng ba's manual of reading Sanskrit and his discussion of the Sanskrit grammar in many of his commentaries, such as on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, also suggests that gTsong lag phreng ba, like Bu ston and many other notable Tibetan scholars, possessed some knowledge of Sanskrit.

gTsong lag phreng ba lived in a politically difficult time that was also a golden age of Tibetan scholasticism, where writings and debates, especially on Madhyamaka and other philosophical topics, thrived. Having been born in the era of prominent figures such as the Eighth Karmapa and Śākya mchog ldan and less than a century after rJe Tsong kha pa and Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge's (1429–89), gTsong lag phreng ba lived in a fertile milieu of scholarly activities. For this reason, his writings are significant for understanding the philosophical landscape of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Tibet.

The study of gTsong lag phreng ba's life has shown further evidence that the political and religious climate in 16th-century Central Tibet and Tsang was particularly unstable, but interspersed with strife and tension. This was due to the fighting between the Phag mo gru pas and the ascending Rin spungs pa, as well as numerous local lords and the religious leaders connected to them. As seen in the second chapter, gTsong lag phreng ba expressed his disillusionment with the Tibetan religious and political environment of his time.

Reading his auto-hagiographies, one can glimpse a time fraught with many claimants to the status of *sprul sku* of past masters. This prevalence of individuals who claimed to be *sprul sku* likely led gTsong lag phreng ba to establish himself as a genuine rebirth of the First dPa' bo through narratives of recognition through public endorsement, the vision of a local deity, conduct of numerous tests on him, and possession of special abilities as a child. This narrative of public endorsement of gTsong lag phreng ba as *sprul sku* also appears fairly unusual. The recognition of gTsong lag phreng ba as a reincarnation of the First dPa' bo marked the beginning of the line of dPa' bo *sprul sku*. Understanding this will help to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the rise of the *sprul sku* to leadership roles during that period.

gTsong lag phreng ba portrayed himself as both a yogi and a scholar, although he asserts that he did not aspire to obtain the status of a scholar. His auto-hagiographies show

that he divided his time between meditative and scholarly endeavours. Some religious figures of his time considered him to be a yogi similar to Mi la ras pa. For instance, a certain figure, sTon sgom Kirtī śva ra, insisted that he write an auto-hagiography based on the nine points of Mi la ras pa's auto-hagiography. Thus, gTsong lag phreng ba wrote *Don tshan dgu pa*.

While gTsong lag phreng ba had close connections with the political leaders, as evident from the letters he sent to them, his political involvements, such as mediating between political factions, cannot be established. Even the letters sent to political leaders were written with a religious orientation, advising them to practise dharma. In his auto-hagiographies and other materials, such as letters, he portrays himself as a religious figure steeped in study and meditation. But this is a rather typical demand of this genre. Since administrative documents for this period are not accessible to date, we are left with a critical analysis of the available sources and careful speculation.

During the period of the systematisation of religious schools, gTsong lag phreng ba afforded the Karma bKa' brgyud school with textual materials, both philosophical and meditative, that were not written by other scholars, such as the Eighth Karmapa. Beyond these considerable contributions of his own, as a student and the keeper of the Eighth Karmapa's scholarly legacy, gTsong lag phreng ba also became a celebrated figure in the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

While the dPal brtsegs edition published his *Collected Works* in fourteen volumes in 2019 provided the first comprehensive publication of his writings, a substantial amount of gTsong lag phreng ba's writings are yet to be discovered. This research has provided an overview of gTsong lag phreng ba's significant yet neglected commentaries on astrology and Vajrayoginī by studying their structure, content, context and their significance and contributions. The study of his scholarly writings, such as the commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, also analysed some historical and doctrinal contexts and provided information that had not been available earlier. For instance, gTsong lag phreng ba makes explicit his religious sentiments, such as devotion, rather than political interest as the motivation to compose *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

His *Single Intention* commentary provides his own arguments to substantiate his position of the hierarchical nature of the buddhas between the Sūtra and Mantra traditions, which appear to go beyond the intent of its originator, 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon. He was also one of the early commentators to defend the *Single Intention* doctrine against the criticism of scholars such as Sa skya paṇḍita.

gTsong lag phreng ba's work, particularly his commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, is a vital source for understanding bKa' brgyud pa's philosophical positions, starting from the bodhisattva vow to the Madhyamaka view. It is used as a standard reference in Karma bKa' brgyud institutes. His *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary appears to have retained a virtual canonical status in the Karma bKa' brgyud school to this day. The 21st-century Karma bKa' brgyud scholar, Khra 'gu Rinpoche, entirely based his commentary on gTsong lag phreng ba's commentary. gTsong lag phreng ba stands as one of the key scholars in the Karma bKa' brgyud school until the 16th century, after the Eighth and the Third Karmapas, the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa and Karma 'phrin las pa.

His contribution to the intellectual outlook of the Karma bKa' brgyud is remarkable. All his commentaries, including on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, on an astrological treatise of

the Third Karmapa, and on the Vajrayoginī treatise of Nāropa, remain the most extensive in the school and a source of Karma bKa' brgyud pa doctrinal positions. The Vajrayoginī commentary was written as he found bKa' brgyud pa adherents relying on texts written by scholars of other traditions. Even gTsong lag phreng ba's historical work, the *mKha pa'i dga' ston*, besides containing a range of old documents and vast information, is quintessentially about bKa' brgyud. gTsong lag phreng ba likely intended to codify the bKa' brgyud school and provide bKa' brgyud pa followers with the works of their own religious history.

gTsong lag phreng ba was one of the earliest Tibetan scholars who extensively employed authoritative sources. The extensive use of reliable Indian sources is a noteworthy feature of his commentaries. His historical writings, such as the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, are recognised by both traditional and modern scholars of Tibetan Buddhist studies as unique in their use of imperial sources. His commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and astrology, and on Vajrayoginī, extensively employed Indian sources, sūtras, and tantras. His commentary on astrology exceeds other commentaries, such as Bu ston's, in the number and frequency of citations from sūtras and tantras. While these extensive citations from sūtras and tantras do not necessarily demonstrate gTsong lag phreng ba's writings as superior compared to the others, they show his effort to ground them in reliable sources.

gTsong lag phreng ba's writings also served as a source for later compositions by others. For instance, there is evidence that Belo and Situ relied heavily on the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* while composing the *Kam tshang Biographies*. Karma gzhan phan dbang po'i sde primarily followed gTsong lag phreng ba's Vajrayoginī commentary while composing *bCom ldan 'das ma rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lo rgyus rdo rje theg pa'i zab gsang 'dod dgu'i bum bzang* (*A Historical Account of Bhagavatī Vajrayoginī, the Sublime Vase that Fulfils all the Desires of Secret Vajrayāna*).

gTsong lag phreng ba took issue with the views held by some prominent scholars of different schools, Bu ston being the main target for his polemics in many of his writings, including in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, and commentaries on astrology and the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. His disputations with other scholars, including Sa skya paṇḍita whose *mahāmudrā* critique was for all bKa' brgyud pas, help elucidate the bKa' brgyud pa interpretation of many topics.

gTsong lag phreng ba lived at a time of school solidification and was essentially a bKa' brgyud pa scholar, as far as this school-identity had developed at that point. But he also depicted himself as non-sectarian, as discussed in the second chapter, where he acknowledges having engaged in practices of various traditions, including rDzogs chen. Like Karma phrin las pa, his most prominent teacher apart from the Eighth Karmapa, gTsong lag phreng ba adopted non-sectarian views regarding a number of topics.<sup>815</sup> Furthermore, he studied under teachers from different traditions, including the small Tibetan Buddhist Bo dong tradition. gTsong lag phreng ba promoted tolerance for religious traditions outside the Karma bKa' brgyud. He defended the rNying ma tantras as genuine dharma and expressed tolerance for other traditions, including Bon po. He also presented the history of some other religious schools in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, thereby showing some form of acceptance of them.

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<sup>815</sup> Karma 'phrin las pa held, for example, a non-sectarian view towards *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* by seeing it as non-contradictory (Rheingans 2021:128).

While some within Tibetan Buddhist traditions might suggest that this ecumenical approach was an outcome of his pure perception arising from tantric practice, the divisive political and religious milieu in which he lived could have led gTsug lag phreng ba to promote non-sectarianism.

gTsug lag phreng ba's works, by and large, were composed in response to the need of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa's 15th–17th century rise of scholasticism. He commented on the treatises without earlier commentaries in the Karma bKa' brgyud. For instance, a *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* commentary does not appear to have been written by earlier scholars in the school. He also notes that he wrote his astrological commentary since the commentaries on astrology of the mTshur phu system were inadequate. Furthermore, he did not comment on the treatises already commented on by the Eighth Karmapa, such as the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Prajñāpāramitā* (*phar phyin*).

gTsug lag phreng ba's work includes a considerable amount of liturgical writing. One can assume that liturgical writings were not fully developed in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition during his time. As indicated in the third chapter, the systematisation of liturgical practice in the Karma bKa' brgyud school started only with the Sixth Karmapa mThong ba don ldan (1416–1453). Against this backdrop, gTsug lag phreng ba likely felt the need to write on the genre, including his commentary on *Vajrayoginī*.

Some of gTsug lag phreng ba's works, such as the commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, were printed during his lifetime, soon after completion. At one point, gTsug lag phreng ba's *Collected Works* were written in gold and silver, indicating his status as a scholar and the significance of his works, as well as sufficient patronage for such an expensive undertaking. This also demonstrates the reception of his works as standard texts in the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

gTsug lag phreng ba's contribution extends also to the transmission of realisation (*sgrub brgyud*) aspect so cherished in his tradition. He features in many lineages on various tantric transmissions and practices. Furthermore, there are instances where he composed meditative materials to elucidate previously existing materials. For instance, he composed *Dus 'khor lus dkyil du sgom thabs* (*A Method of Meditating Kālacakra on the Body Maṇḍala*) at the request of some students to make the Third Karmapa's writings easier to understand and meditate on.<sup>816</sup>

This research has discussed some of his doctrinal positions, such as on tathāgatagarbha, *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* theories of emptiness, and the hierarchical distinction between the buddhas of sūtra and mantra traditions.

gTsug lag phreng ba deviates from some of his positions and those of other bKa' brgyud pa masters. For instance, he advocates the hierarchical difference between the buddhas of the Sūtra and Mantra traditions, which many bKa' brgyud pa scholars do not appear to propose. As discussed in the fourth chapter, gTsug lag phreng ba mentioned that many famed lamas of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud tradition did not accept buddhas of the Mantra tradition as being different from buddhas of the Sūtra tradition. gTsug lag phreng ba

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<sup>816</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba. *Dus 'khor lus dkyil du sgom thabs*. Vol. IX, p. 226: *zhes pa 'di ni mdo stod lho rong rdzong sar nas kon dring go shri karma grags pa rgyal mshan dpal bzang pos rje rang byung zhabs kiyis mdzad pa'i dus 'khor lus dkyil 'di sgom bde ba zhig dgos zhes bskul ba dang*.

even advocated the hierarchical distinction among the buddhas of the classes of tantra, the view that does not appear to have been upheld by 'Bri gung pa teachers.

In what can be a hallmark of a tantric practitioner, gTsug lag phreng ba held Mantrayāna superior to Sūtrayāna. He advocated that the resultant state of Buddhahood and the view of Mantrayāna are superior to the Buddhahood and view of the Sūtrayāna.

gTsug lag phreng ba's views on emptiness as understood in terms of the epistemological nature of *spros bral* between the sūtra and tantra also appear unusual for his time. gTsug lag phreng regards the tantric understanding of *spros bral* as higher than the sūtric one.

gTsug lag phreng ba also advocates that tathāgatagarbha taught in the sūtra and tantra traditions have to be essentially the same. This position, to some level, deviates from the Eighth Karmapa's viewpoint of tathāgatagarbha of the sūtra and tantra as hierarchical. In this sense, gTsug lag phreng ba can also be called an independent and innovative thinker.

Regarding philosophical positions, gTsug lag phreng ba aligned more with the Eighth Karmapa than Karma 'phrin las pa regarding the dichotomy of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* theory of emptiness. Karma 'phrin las pa advocated the non-contradictory nature of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*, while the Eighth Karmapa and gTsug lag phreng ba advocated that they should transcend the duality of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*. This is understandable since he studied most of the philosophical treatises with the Eighth Karmapa. Notably, the Eighth Karmapa was the teacher from whom he studied doctrinal texts such as the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Prajñāpāramitā*. His non-contradictory views on the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika traditions, and his position that transcended the binary division of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* theory conform with the Eighth Karmapa's views (and also Karma 'phrin las pa's). Although it cannot be established beyond doubt, gTsug lag phreng ba's reconciliatory approach could have been triggered by a non-sectarian outlook he nurtured, as discussed in the first chapter. His reconciliatory effort extended even to synthesising two kinds of bodhicitta generated through rituals (Tib. *cho ga*, Skt. *vidhi*) of the two traditions (Madhyamaka tradition of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* and the Cittamātra tradition of *Bodhisattvabhūmi*) where, according to gTsug lag phreng ba, Sa skya paṇḍita maintained them to be different and hierarchical as a result of the difference in the ritual involved while generating them.

## 5.2 Direction for Future Study

This study has provided an overview of gTsug lag phreng ba's life and work, with emphasis on his scholarly contributions. As many of his works remain undiscovered and the available writings have not been studied in all detail, his scholarship cannot be fully appreciated to date. The discovery of missing writings, such as his interlinear commentary on the *Uttaratantra* (*rGyud bla ma'i mchan 'grel*), and their study would further uncover his contribution to Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>817</sup>

While this project briefly examined some of his doctrinal positions on significant philosophical issues and debates, such as emptiness, the available works deserve closer

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<sup>817</sup> It is likely that some of gTsug lag phreng ba's works are at 'Bras spungs Monastery as one can find his texts listed in *'Bras spungs dgon du bzugs so gsol ba'i dpe rnying dkar chag*.

investigation to elucidate the doctrinal systems of the Karma bKa' brgyud school. gTsug lag phreng ba's position on other significant topics, such as Mahāmudra and the viewpoints of Buddhist tenet systems, also deserves further study.

Furthermore, a comparative study of his positions with those of his teachers, such as the Eighth Karmapa and Karma phrin las pa, could also widen the intellectual discourse of the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

The study of gTsug lag phreng ba's biography in this research has been based mainly on his auto-hagiographies, although these have been approached with critical analysis. Biographies by other authors, if any exist, would shed further light on his life, as would access to administrative documents. The discovery of such texts would provide scholars with the opportunity to gain a fuller picture of the life of gTsug lag phreng ba with comparative and analytical dimensions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Descriptive Catalogue of gTsong lag phreng ba's Works According to the Collected Works of dPal brtsegs Edition

This descriptive catalogue is arranged according to the titles and order of the dPal brtsegs edition. It is important to note here that some titles provided by the publishers of this edition are slightly different from those supplied by gTsong lag phreng ba himself in the catalogue of his works. A brief description of the content and other bibliographical information, such as the date and place of composition, is also provided, where available in the texts.

#### Vol I-IV

1. Title: *Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba'i legs par bshad pa (An Eloquent Description of the Accounts of Ones who Turned the Wheel of the Sublime Dharma called the Feast for the Wise)*

Content: Religious History<sup>818</sup>

#### Vol IV

2. Title: *Glegs bam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba (A List of these Volumes that were Written by Myself)*

Vol. IV, p. 210–226

Content: The catalogue of his writings.

Date: Not available.<sup>819</sup>

Place: Not available

3. *sTon pa'i mdzad pa bcu gnyis la bstod pa (A Praise to the Twelve Activities of Buddha)*

Vol. IV, p. 227–228

Content: A praise to the historical Buddha in verse.

Date: Not Available

Place: Not available

4. *bsKal bzang gi sangs rgyas stong gi mtshan gyi phreng ba la bstod pa dad pa'i me tog kun nas kha bye ba'i myu gu (A Praise to the Garland of the Names of the Thousand Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon: The Sprout that Fully Blooms the Flower of Devotion)*

Vol. IV, p. 229–241

Content: Enumeration of one thousand and five Buddhas and homage to them in verse

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<sup>818</sup> See Dell (2021) Regarding content, structure and date of composition regarding this religious history.

<sup>819</sup> This catalogue might have been written towards the end of his life since it contains the title of the commentary on *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* which gTsong lag phreng ba completed in 1556, ten years before his death. Furthermore, he wrote the biography of Marpa *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar lam bzang gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* in 1563 three years before his death. This biography is also included in his catalogue.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

5. *Tsā ri ye shes kyi 'khor lo'i thugs kyi phro brang la bstod pa zab gsang gi 'jug ngogs (A Praise to the Mind Palace of Tsā ri's Wheel of Wisdom: The Entrance to the Proundity and Secrecy)*

Vol. IV, p. 242–249

Content: Praise of the sacred place of Tsā ri in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Khyung rdzong

6. *rJe btsun mar pa'i rnam par thar pa grub pa'i ngo mtshar brjod pa (A Biography of the Lord Marpa: The Statement of the Marvels of Accomplishments)*

Vol. IX, p. 250–393

Content: The hagiography of Marpa

Date: Female water pig year at the age of sixty

Place: Gro bo lung

7. *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar lam bzang gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me (A Biography of Marpa: The Lamp that Illuminates the Excellent Path)*

Volume IV, p. 394–564

Content: The hagiography of Marpa.

Date: Started in Female Water Sheep Year in 1523 (does not contain the completion date)

Place: Gro bo lung

8. *Legs sbyar klag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar (A Root Text of the Methods of Reading Sanskrit: the Door of Entrance for the Intelligent Ones)*

Vol. IV, p. 565–573

Content: A guide to reading Sanskrit, mainly a manual on the pronunciation of Sanskrit letters and words.

Date: Female fire pig year in 1527 at the age of 23

Place: Gro bo lung

9. *Chos rje dpa' bo'i mdzad pa'i sum cu pa'i 'grel pa (A Commentary on the Thirty Verses Composed by Dharmap Lord dPa' bo)*

Vol. IV, p. 574–591

Content: A concise commentary on the grammatical treatise *Thirty Verses*.

Date: Not available

Place: not available

10. *Lung bstan pa rtags kyi 'jug pa zhes bya ba (The Grammar [Text] Known as The Guide to Signs)*

Vol. IV, p. 592–612

Content: A concise commentary on the grammatical treatise *Guide to Signs*.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

### **Volume V and VI**

11. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas pa'i snying po (A Commentary on the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra: the Ocean of Mahāyānic Dharma and the Essence of Infinite Depth and Vastness)*

Content: A commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

Date: Twelfth day of the ninth month, male fire dragon year in 1556

Place: Gro bo lung

### **Vol VII**

12. *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed (A Commentary on the Secret Sādhana of the Glorious Lord Vajrayoginī that Opens the Profundity)*

Vol. VII, p. 1–513

Content: As a commentary to Nāropa's treatise on Vajrayoginī, it deals in detail with the *Sādhana* of Vajrayoginī

Date: Not available

Place: Tsā ri ta

13. *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma lhan cig skyes ma'i bskyed rim lha khrid kyi rnam bshad zab mo rnam 'byed kyi snying po bsdu pa (A Condensation of the Essence that Opens the Profundity, the Commentary on the Deity-Explanation [that is] Generation Phase of the Co-emergent Mother Vajrayoginī)*

Vol. VII, p. 514–556

Content: A condensed version of *dPal rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed*

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

## Vol VIII

14. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod (A Detailed Commentary of the Great Concise Treatise of Astrology, the Pith Instructions of Kālacakra: The Treasury of Jewels)*

Vol. VIII, p. 1–507

Content: A detailed commentary on the treatise on astrology by the Third Karmapa according to the Kālacakra system.

Date: At the age of thirty-three in the seventh month of the fire monkey year.

Place: Chos 'khor bsam yas

15. *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i 'das lo'i re'u mig gsal bar byed pa bklags pas grub pa (A [Text] that Illuminates the Chronological Table of [Buddha's] Passing Established through Reading of the Commentary of the Great Concise Treatise of Astrology, the Pith Instructions of Kālacakra)*

Vol. VIII, p. 459–508

Content: This text analyses the length of the Buddha's teaching and the date of Buddha's death according to the Kālacakra tradition.

Date: Male Water Dog Year in 1562

Place: Not available

## Vol IX

16. *dGongs gcig tshoms bdun pa'i zin bris rgyal ba'i dbang po'i gsung ngag las byung ba (Notes on the Seventh Section of the Single Intention that Emerged from the Lord of Victors)*

Vol. IX, p. 1–81

Content: The text deals with the teachings of the *Single Intention*, emphasising the state of Buddhahood.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

17. *rNam rtog chos sku'i don yang dag par brjod pa rgyal ba thams cad kyi zhal lung (A Perfect Exposition of the Meaning of Conceptualisations as Dharmakāya: The Oral Instruction of all the Victors)*

Vol. IX, p. 82–104

**Content:** Written in verse, this writing demonstrates conceptualisation as *dharmakāya*.

Date: Not available

Place: Tsā ri tra

18. *Thugs rje chen po rgyal ba rgya mtsho'i bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams len gnas spyi gtsug ma'i gsol 'debs snang srid byin rlabs kyi dmigs thun zin bris (A Supplication of the Crown of the Head Regarding the Practice of Generation and Completion Phases of Avalokiteśvara, the Oceans of Victors: The Note on the Meditation Session of the Blessing of Appearance and Existence)*

Vol. IX, p. 105–108

Content: Meditation instructions on Avalokiteśvara. The text mainly provides methodical instruction on reciting the Avalokiteśvara mantra through the generation and completion phases (*bskyed rdzogs*).

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

19. *rDo rje slob dpon bsten tshul mdor bstan pa ślo ka nyi shu rtsa bzhi (A Brief Teaching on the Manners of Relying on a Vajra Master in Twenty-Four Ślokas)*

Vol. IX, p. 109–111

Content: Instruction on the manner of relying on the Guru, written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

20. *gSang sngags bzla tshul phreng bshad (An Exposition on the Manner of Recting Secret Mantras and Rosary)*

Vol. IX, p. 112–127

Content: Explanations with definitions and classification of mantra and rosary (*phreng ba*). The text also explains the manner of reciting mantras.

Date: The eleventh month of the male iron tiger year in 1530 at the age of twenty-six.

Place: Not available (but from the meditation seat)

21. *rTen 'brel gyi brtags dpyod (An Analysis on the Interdependent Arising)*

Vol. IX, p. 128–167.

Content: Explanations on dealing with various circumstances such as sickness in solitary places. This text describes various methods of conduct for yogis in different circumstances.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

22. *sNgags kyi rten 'brel gyi char pa (The Rain of Mantric Interdependent Arising)*

Vol IX, p. 168–181

Content: Provides various kinds of mantras and the manner of their recitation to fulfil different purposes.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

23. *dBang gi rnam gzhag mdor bsdus pa (A Brief Presentation on the Empowerments)*  
Vol IX, p. 182 –191

Content: A general discussion about empowerment such as its classifications and the criteria for receiving empowerment.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

24. *'Od gsal gyi ngos 'dzin (The Identification of Clear Light)*  
Vol IX, p. 192 –193

Content: Explains different classifications of Clear Light along with their definitions.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

25. *Thugs rje chen po'i sgom bzlas kyi rim pa (The Stages of Meditation and Recitation of the Great Compassionate One)*  
Vol IX, p. 194 –197

Content: Explains the step-by-step visualisation of Avalokiteśvara while reciting its mantra.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

26. *Thugs rje chen po'i sgom bzlas bsdus pa (A Brief Meditation and Recitation of the Great Compassionate One)*  
Vol IX, p. 197 –198

Content: A brief explanation of the meditation and recitation of Avalokiteśvara.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

27. *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyi tshig don gyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs (A Supplication to the Lineages of Words and Meaning of The Jewel Ornament of Liberation)*  
Vol IX, p. 199 –200

Content: A supplication to the lineage holders of the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Rab brten lhung po sgang

28. *Phyag chen brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs (A Supplication to the Lineages of Mahamudra)*  
Vol IX, p. 200–201

Content: A supplication to the lineage holders of Mahāmudrā written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

29. *Ro snyoms sgang dril rje rgod tshang ba'i gsung (Ro snyoms sgang dril: The Words of the Lord rGod tshang ba)*

Vol IX, p. 202–203

Content: A supplication to the *Ro snyoms sgang dril* lineages that lead to the actualisation of the ultimate meaning (*don brgyud*)

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

30. *sKyid sdug lam khyer gyi gsol 'debs (A Supplication of Carrying Joy and Sorrow on the Path)*

Vol IX, p. 204–205

Content: A supplication to the masters of the past, including gTsug lag phreng ba's root guru, seeking blessing from them to carry joy and sorrow on the path of dharmic practices, written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

31. *Thugs brgyud bka' gter gyi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba gdab pa (A Supplication to the Lamas of the Mind Lineages of Scriptures and Treasures)*

Vol IX, p. 206–207

Content: A supplication to the lineages of Scriptures and Treasures (*bka' gter*).

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

32. *Sems khrid yid bzhin nor bu'i brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs (A Supplication to the Jewel Lineages of Mind Instructions)*

Vol IX, p. 208

Content: A supplicatory prayer to the lineages of mind instructions traced back to Vajrapāṇi, written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

33. *bSre 'pho'i zhal gdams kyi rgyud 'debs (A Supplication to the Lineages of Oral Instructions on Mixing and Transference)*

Vol IX, p. 209

Content: A supplicatory prayer to the lineages from which gTsug lag phreng ba received mixing and transference (*bsre 'pho*).

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

34. *sNyung gnas kyi bla ma ring brgyud la phyag 'tshal lam gsol 'debs (A Homage or Supplication to the Lamas of the Long Lineages of Fasting )*

Vol IX, p. 210–211

Content: A supplicatory prayer to the lineages of fasting practice starting from Avalokiteśvara up to gTsug lag phreng ba's root guru, the Eighth Karmapa, in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

35. *Thugs rje chen po'i smar khrid kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs (A Supplication to the Lineages of the Direct Instruction of the Great Compassionate One)*

Vol IX, p. 212–214

Content: A Supplication to the lineages of the direct instruction of Avalokiteśvara.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

36. *Dus 'khor gsol 'debs nyung ngu (A Brief Supplication of Kālacakra)*

Content: A supplication to the lineages of the teaching and practice (*bshad sgrub*) of Kālacakra.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

37. *Theg pa chen po'i blo sbyong skyid sdug lam khyer zhes bya ba byang chub sems kyi ljon pa (The Mind Training of Mahayana to Carry Joy and Sorrow on the Path Called the Tree of Bodhicitta)*

Vol IX, p. 216–218

Content: Explanation on the mind training of taking joy and sorrow on the path of dharma as taught to Khro phu lo tsā ba by Śākya Śri.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

38. *Dus 'khor lus dkyil du sgom thabs (A Method of Meditating Kalacakra on the Body Maṇḍala)*

Vol IX, p. 219–226

Content: A step-by-step method of meditating on Kālacakra in the body of a practitioner.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

39. *Thugs dam lnga tshan lnga'i mngon dkyil (Five Sets of Five on Visualising Maṇḍala)*  
Vol IX, p. 227–263

Content: This text deals with the visualisation methods of five deities: Heruka, Hevajra, Vajrayoginī, Tārā, and Hayagriva. Five sets appear to mean the five methods of visualising the five deities.<sup>820</sup>

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

40. *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lha lnga'i sgrub thabs dang dbang gi rim pa (Sādhana on the Five-Deity of the Glorious Cakrasaṃvara and the Stages of Empowerment)*  
Vol IX, p. 264–279

Content: Instructions on the generation and completion phases (*b skyed rdzogs*) on the five-deity Cakrasaṃvara practice.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

41. *sByin sreg cho ga las thams cad sgrub par byed pa (The Ritual of Fire that Accomplishes all Activities)*  
Vol IX, p. 280–290

Content: Instruction and a step-by-step guide on performing the ritual of fire of the four activities: pacification (*zhi*), enrichment (*rgyas*), subjugation (*dbang*) and wrath (*drag*) based on Vajrayoginī.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

42. *bCom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ngan 'gro thams cad yongs su sbyong bar byed pa (The Ritual of the Maṇḍala of Bhagavān that Fully Purifies all the Bad Realms).*  
Vol IX, p. 291–443

Content: A step-by-step guide to the death ritual based on the Buddha Vairocana.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

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<sup>820</sup> Rheingans (2021: 158, footnote 709) notes: 'They are common among contemporary bKa' bgyud pa lamas today for empowerments (communication Lama Shes rab rGyal mtshan Rin po che, summer 2007).'

**Vol X**

43. *'Phags ma yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs 'dod 'jo'i bum bzang (The Sādhana of the Noble Wishgranting Wheel, The Sublime Vase of Fulfilling Wishes)*

Vol X, p. 1–51

Content: A step-by-step guide to the *sādhana* ritual of White Tārā.

Date: Not available

Place: Ri bo gnya' gnya'

44. *Thugs rje chen po zhal bcu gcig pa'i sgrub thabs gzhung dang sbyar ba (The Sādhana of Eleven-faced Compassionate One in Connection to the Text [of dGe slong Ma dpal mo])*

Vol X, p. 52–80

Content: A step-by-step guide to the *sādhana* ritual of White Tārā.

Date: Not available

Place: Pho brang sna dkar rtse

45. *Shangs lugs rta mgrin gsang sgrub (The Secret Sādhana of Hayagriva of the Shang pa Tradition)*

Vol X, p. 81–82

Content: The text provides a guide to the visualisation of Hayagriva while reciting the mantra according to the Shang pa bKa' brgyud tradition.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

46. *Rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bde legs mchog gi bang mdzod (A Consecration Ritual: The Treasurehouse of the Supreme Bliss and Auspiciousness)*

Vol X, p. 83–121

Content: A step-by-step guide to the ritual of consecration.

Date: Not available

Place: Sras mkhar, Gro bo lung

47. *'Phags ma seng gdong gi rjes gnang (A Permission Empowerment of a Lion-faced deity)*

Vol X, p. 122–124

Content: The presentation of visualisation steps for the permission empowerment of the lion-faced deity.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

48. *rTsa gsum rdo rje'i chos skyong rnams la gtor 'bul gyi cho ga dngos grub dpal 'bar phrin las 'grub (A Torma Offering Ritual to Vajra Dharmapāla of Three Roots that Blazes the Glory of Accomplishment and Swiftly Accomplishes Activities )*

Vol X, p. 125–129

Content: A step-by-step guide to the Torma Offering Ritual to Vajra Dharmapāla of Three Roots. The final parts of this text are missing.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

49. *dPal rta mgrin dang ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i bstod tshogs kyi phreng ba bdud 'joms pa'i nga ro (A Garland of the Collection of Hymns to the Glorious Hayagriva and the Six-armed Mahākāla: the Sound that Conquers Demons).*

Vol X, p. 130–140

Content: Hymns to Hayagriva and the Six-armed Mahākāla written in verse, praising their qualities.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

50. *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i gtor chog 'bring po dngos grub kyi 'byung gnas (A Medium Torma Liturgy of the Six-armed Mahākāla: the Source of Accomplishments)*

Vol X, p. 141–197

Content: Instructions on visualisations and a step-by-step guide to perform the *torma* ritual of the Six-armed Mahākāla.

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month

Place: Not available

51. *dPal ye shes mgon po la spyang gzigs 'bul ba'i tshigs su bcad pa mchod spron rgya mtsho rmad du byung ba (The Verses of Making of Offering to Mahākāla: The Marvelous Ocean of the Clouds of Offering)*

Vol X, p. 198–200

Content: Verses of offering to Mahākāla.

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> Day of the Ninth Month

Place: Not available

52. *dPal ye shes mgon po phyag drug pa'i gser skyems (A Libation of the Six-armed Mahākāla)*

Vol X, p. 201–208

Content: A guide to offering libation to Mahākāla.

Date: 29th Day of the Ninth Month

Place: Not available

53. *Myur mdzad ye shes kyi mgon po'i rjes chog (A Concluding Liturgy of Mahākāla)*  
Vol X, p. 209–213

Content: Instructions to perform the concluding parts of the Mahākāla ritual.

Date: At the age of twenty-four in 1526

Place: U rgyan bde chen rte in Gro bo lung.

54. *dPal ye shes mgon po'i nang mchod kha skong dang gzhan zur pa kha shas bcas (A Supplementary Inner Offering to Glorious Mahākāla and Some Other Additions)*  
Vol X, p. 214–217

Content: Making inner offerings such as flesh and blood to Mahākāla and some other additions such as praise to Hayagriva.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

55. *mGon po'i mnga' gsol (The Protector's [Mahākāla] Enthronement)*  
Vol X, p. 218–221

Content: Liturgical materials in which Mahākāla is enthroned and given titles such as Cakravartin of Wrath.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

56. *dPal ldan lha mo dud sol ma'i gtor chog don grub kun 'byung (A Torma Ritual of Glorious Goddess Dhumvati: The Source of All Accomplishments)*  
Vol X, p. 222–240

Content: Instruction and a guide to performing the *torma* ritual of Goddess Dhumvati

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

57. *gNod sbyin spyi sgrub (A General Sādhana of Yakṣa)*  
Vol X, p. 241–245

Content: Instructions on the *sādhana* of Yakṣa

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

58. *gNod sbyin yab yum gyi sgos sgrub (A Specific Sādhana of Male-Female Yakṣa in Union)*

Vol X, p. 246–252

Content: A *sādhana* of male-female yakṣa in union

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

59. *rNam shes 'phrog pa dang snying chu bsre ba sogs man ngag bka' rgya ma rnams*  
(*Sealed Commands of the Pith Instructions Such as Snatching of a Consciousness and*  
*Mixing of the Heart Water*)

Vol X, p. 253–274

Content: A liturgical text on subjugating Dharmapālas.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

60. *mGon po'i thugs bskyed tshul* (*Mahākāla's Arousal of Bodhicitta*)

Vol X, p. 254–277

Content: Description of how Avalokiteśvara emanates as Mahākāla to benefit sentient beings.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

61. *Grib sel lugs gcig* (*A Tradition of the Removal of Defilement*)

Vol X, p. 278–279

Content: Guide on the practice of removing defilement

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

62. *Nang sgrub dang mchog sgrub kyi dbang bka'* (*Empowerment of Inner and Supreme*  
*Sādhana*)

Vol X, p. 280–286

Content: Instructions on the empowerment of Mahākāla of inner and supreme *sādhana*.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

63. *mGon po'i ting nge 'dzin gyi dbang* (*A Sāmadhi Empowerment of the Protector*)

Vol X, p. 287–298

Content: Instruction on the *sāmadhi* empowerment of Mahākāla

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

64. *Srung zlog bsad gsum gyi chig dril dang gtor chung gi man ngag rnams (A Condensing of Protection, Averting and Killing into One and Pith Instructions on the Small Torma)*

Vol X, p. 299–303

Content: Instructions on the Protection, Averting and Killing based on Mahākāla.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

65. *gNan bsad chig dril dang gtor chen gyi zhal gdams (Condensing Suppression and Killing into One and the Oral Instruction of a Larger Torma)*

Vol X, p. 304–309

Content: Instructions on the suppression and killing based on Mahākāla

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

66. *mGon po'i rten bzhi gnad gsum gyi man ngag (Pith Instructions of the Four Supports and Three Points of the Protector)*

Vol X, p. 310–313

Content: Explains the four seats of Mahākāla such as the outer seat of tiger skin and three points such as summoning *dākiṅīs*.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

67. *dPal ye shes mgon pa'i phyag drug pai sgrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba (The Sādhana of the Six-armed Mahākāla [Explained] in Connect to Pith Instructions)*

Vol X, p. 314–345

Content: Instructions on the *sādhana* of the Six-armed Mahākāla.

Date: Made a draft at the age of thirty-seven and completed it at the age of sixty in 1564.

Place: Not available

68. *mGon po'i rgyud kyi zin bris (Notes on the Tantra of the Protector)*

Vol X, p. 363–272

Content: Provides some notes on one of the tantras of Mahākāla.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

69. *Mai tri lugs kyi lha mo'i sgrub thabs (The Sādhana of the Goddess [Mahākali] According to Maitripa)*

Vol. X, p. 373–375

Content: Instructions on performing the *sādhana* of Mahākālī.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

70. *'Khor bzhi'i sgos sgrub (The Specific Sādhana of Four Retinues)*

Vol. X, p. 376–378

Content: Instruction on performing the *sādhana* of the four retinues of probably Mahākāla

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

71. *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi chad pa (A Process of Performing Dharmic Activities in a Single Day: The Uninterrupted Flow of the River of Virtues)*

Vol. X, p. 379–398

Content: An instruction on how to perform dharmic activities in a single day.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

72. *Zab mo lta ba'i gzhung spyod 'jug gi sems bskyed blang chog (The Ritual of Arousing Bodhicitta According to the Profound View Tradition of Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra)*

Vol. X, p. 399–409

Content: Instructions on the procedure of arousing bodhicitta according to the tradition of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

73. *rGya chen spyod pa'i gzhung byang sa'i lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi cho ga (The Ritual of Arousing Bodhicitta According to the Vast Conduct Tradition of Bodhisattvabhūmi)*

Vol. X, p. 410–419

Content: Instructions on the procedure of arousing bodhicitta according to the tradition of *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.

Date: Not available

Place: Sras mkhar, Gro bo lung

74. *Don dam pa'i sems bskyed blang chog 'phags pa klu sgrub kyi mdzad pa (The Ritual on Arousing Absolute Bodhicitta Composed by Ārya Nāgārjuna)*<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>821</sup> This title is given by the editors of dPal brtsegs edition. The catalogue by gTsong lag phreng ba simple titles it *Sems bskyed cho ga gsum (Three Rituals of Arousing Bodhicitta)*.

Vol. X, p. 420–428

Content: Contains the guide on the ritual to arouse absolute bodhicitta composed by Ārya Nāgārjuna and inner seven-limbed prayers by Khro phu lo tsā ba and 'Brom ston pa.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

75. *rJe rang byung ba'i gsung las byung ba ri chos bdud rtsi'i snying khu (The Essence of Ambrosia of Mountain Dharma that Emerged from the Lord Rang byung [rdo rje])*

Vol. X, p. 429–446

Content: Provides instructions on remaining in solitude and practising dharma. In the colophon, gTsug lag phreng ba notes that he wrote it based on many instructions on samādhi by the Third Karmapa, Rang byung rdo rje.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

76. *Ri chos gnad kyī lde mig ces bya ba thun mong ma yin pa'i gdams pa (A Unique Instructions Known as the Key to the Vital Points of Mountain Dharma)*

Vol. X, p. 451–499

Content: Instructions to practice mountain dharma.

Date: Not available

Place: Mountain gNya' gnya'

## **Vol XI**

77. *dGe slong gtsug lag phreng ba rang nyid kyī rtogs pa brjod pa 'khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long (The Monk gTsug lag phreng ba's Own Narration of Realisation, The Mirror that Reflects the Illusory Countenance)*

Vol. XI, p. 1–43

Content: Autobiography written in verse

Date: Third month of the female iron ox year at the age of 39

Place: Tsā ri ta

78. *bDag gi tshul yang dag pa'i yi ge mchis (A True Account of My Nature)*

Vol. XI, p. 44–48

Content: Expresses gTsug lag phreng ba's nature in verse. One can also find his expression of dissatisfaction and repugnance over religious practitioners of his time.

Date: Not available

Place: Ya 'brog

79. *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod las brtsams pa mig 'khrul rang bzhin gsal byed (Composed from One's Biography that Clarifies the Nature of Miracles)*

Vol. X, p. 49–54

Content: Narrates the hagiography of the First dPa' bo as a response to a request to narrate his past lives. In this writing, he also denies his supernormal qualities of remembering past lives.

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the horse year

Place: mTshur phu

80. *dPal gTsug lag phreng ba'i rang tshul mdor bsdus pa don tshan dgu pa'o (The Nine Points: A Short Description of One's Own Nature of the Glorious gTsug lag phreng ba)*

Vol. XI, p. 55–74

Content: Autobiography written in verse

Date: Not available

Place: Sras mkhar, Gro bo lung

81. *Ched du brjod pa rdo rje'i glu snying po'i gdam gyi phreng ba mi zad pa'i bang mdzod (The Vajra Songs of Purposeful Expressions: the Inexhaustible Treasury of the Quintessential Garland of Accounts)*

Vol. XI, p. 72–133

Content: There are 41 sub-sections of writing under this section which deal with various topics such as impermanence and supplication to gurus written in verse in the form of songs. They were written at different times and places, while many of them do not have a colophon.

82. *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i yang dag pa'i do ha (The Perfect Dohā of Glorious gTsug lag phreng ba)*

Vol. XI, p. 134–136.

Content: Written in verse, it contains the message on the reality of nature.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

83. *sKal ldan byang chub tu bskul ba'i pho nya snying po'i skyes kyi dam pa 'phrin yig tshigs bcad kyi tshogs (The Collection of Letters in Verse and the Supreme Gift of Essence: The Messenger that Encourages Fortunate Ones to the Enlightenment)*

Vol. XI, p. 137–217

Content: It contains 56 letters sent to various religious and political figures in the form of religious teachings or advice.

84. *Ched du brjod pa rdo rje glu'i bang mdzod gsang ba'i gdam gyi phreng ba (The Treasury of the Vajra Songs of Purposeful Expressions: the Garland of Accounts)*

Vol. XI, p. 218–275

Content: Twenty-four instructions in the form of songs to gTsug lag phreng ba's students and political leaders.

85. *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs (The Collections of the Treasury of Songs Uttered at the Exhortation of Others)*

Vol. XI, p. 276–412

Content: 125 pieces of songs in the form of instructions to students and political leaders.

86. *bKa' srung gzhi bdag sogs la gdams pa'i chab shog (Letters of Instructions to the Protectors and Local Deities and Others)*

Vol. XI, p. 413–414

Content: A letter instructing protectors of Gro bo lung and so on to protect monks, patrons, animals, and so on.

Date: Eleventh day of the second lunar month, fire dragon year

Place: Sras mkhar, Gro lo lung.

87. *bKa' srung gzhi bdag rnams gnad nas bskul ba drag po'i chab shog bstan dgra tshar gcod (The Invocation of Protectors and Local Deities: A Wrathful Letter that Destroys the Foe of Buddha's Teaching)*

Vol. XI, p. 415–419

Content: Instructing dharma protectors and local deities to pacify and tame foes.

Date: The tenth day of the eighth lunar month, earth sheep year

Place: Sras mkar, Gro bo lung

88. *Nges gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig zhes bya ba dris len (sic!) gyi tshogs (The Collection of Question and Answers Known as the Key that Opens the Treasury of the Vital Points of Definitive Secret)*

Vol. XI, p. 420–543

Content: Twenty-two pieces subsumed under this section on question and answer. gTsug lag phreng ba responds to questions on various topics posed by different students, including the political figure mTsho skyes rdo rje.

89. *dGe bskul gyi yi ge tshogs gnyis kyi ljon pa (A Writing on the Encouragement of Virtues: The Tree of Two Accumulations)*

Vol. XI, p. 544–548

Content: Exhorting patrons to sponsor copper and metals for the upper storey of Sras mkhar.

Date: Third day of the eleventh month of the earth female bird year

Place: Gro bo lung

90. *mGon po phyag bzhi pa'i sgrub skor gyi thob yig (List of Teachings Received on the Sādhana Cycle of the Four-armed Mahākalā)*

Vol. XI, p. 549–554

Content: Provides the list of teachings gTsug lag phreng ba received on the *sādhana* cycle of the four-armed Mahākalā

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

91. *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyis (sic!) gtam rgyud rnams (Stories of the Jewel Ornament of Liberation)*

Vol. XI, p. 555–571

Content: The text contains stories that are referred to, but not provided in full, in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by sGam po pa.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

92. *sGrol dkar gyi 'khor lo'i dogs dpyod (An Analysis on the Circling of the [mantra] of White Tārā)*

Vol. XI, p. 572

Content: Analysis of whether the mantras of Tārā should be written clockwise or anticlockwise

Date: Waning phase of the moon, fourth month, Male Wood Year

Place: Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang, Gro bo lung

## **Vol XII**

93. *Phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan gyi gdams pa dgos 'dod stsol ba mchog gi nor bu'i gter (The Instructions on the Fivefold Mahāmūdra: The Treasury of Supreme Jewels that Bestow Wishes)*

Vol. XII, p. 1–44

Content: Instruction on the practice of five-fold Mahāmūdra to a political leader Sa skyong Don yod bstan 'dzin rdo rje.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

94. *Lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi nyams len gnad bsduḡ gsal ba'i sgron me (The Summary of the Vital Points of the Practice of Coemergent Union: The Illuminating Lamp)*

Vol. XII, p. 45–62

Content: Instructions on the practice of Vajrayāna teaching of coemergent union (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*) written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Tsā ri ta

95. *Phyag chen yi ge bzhi pa'i snying po zab mo'i 'jug ngogs (The Entrance to the  
Profound Essence of the Four-letter Mahāmudra)*

Vol. XII, p. 63–70

Content: Instruction on the meditation of Mahāmudrā. However, it does not explain that each syllable contained the term 'Mahāmudrā.'

Date: Not available

Place: Tsā ri ta

96. *sGyu ma gsum brgyud kyī man ngag smar khrid (A Direct Instruction of the  
Transmission of Three Illusions)*

Vol. XII, p. 142–156

Content: Instruction on practising the three illusions: training to perceive the world, dream, and intermediate state as an illusion.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

97. *rNam par 'thag pa bsdus pa'i bstan bcos log rtog rnam sbyong (A Commentary of  
Gathering Fragments that Completely Purifies the Perverted Views)*

Vol. XII, p. 157–230

Content: Writing in an attempt to clear various perverted views held by other scholars such as holding tantra as apocryphal.

Date: Middle month of the three months of summer, female fire snake year

Place: Sras mkhar

98. *dPal karma pa brgyad pa'i zhabs kyī mtshan rab brjod pa'i 'grel pa (A commentary on  
the Perfect Expression of the Eighth Karmapa's Names)*

Vol. XII, p. 238–265

Content: Commenting on the various names of the Eighth Karmapa

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

99. *lTa sgom spyod pa'i rnam gzhas gi snying po gsal ba'i sgron me (A Lamp that  
Elucidates the Essence of the System of View, Meditation and Conduct)*

Vol. XII, p. 266–271

Content: Instructions to a certain retreatant on the view, meditation and conduct.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

100. *Thugs rje chen po'i bskyed rdzogs smar khrid du nyams su blang ba'i rim pa (The Stages of Practising the Generating and Completion Phases of the Compassionate One as Direct Instructions)*

Vol. XII, p. 272–284

Content: Instructions on the practice of generating and completing phases of Avalokiteśvara according to the tradition of Siddha Tshem bu pa.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

101. *gTsug lag phreng bas mdzad pa'i bar do ngo sprod (An Introduction to Intermediate State by gTsug lag phreng ba)*

Vol. XIII, p. 285–287

Content: Introduction to the intermediate state written in verse.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

102. *Bar do'i ngo sprod mdor bsdus (A Brief Introduction to Intermediate State)*

Vol. XII, 288–292

Content: Introduction to the intermediate state.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

103. *Bar do'i chos bshad*

Vol. XII, p. 293–295

Content: Teachings on the intermediate state for the deceased ones.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

104. *bDe mchog gi mchod pa bsham tshul (The Manners of Arranging Offerings of Cakrasaṃvara)*

Vol. XII, p. 295–297

Content: The ways of arranging offerings to Cakrasaṃvara.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

105. *Sātstsha gdab pa'i cho ga (The Ritual of Casting Sātstsha)*<sup>822</sup>

Vol. XII, p. 298

Content: A short procedure and mantra to be recited while casting *sātstsha*.

106. *bsNgo ba'i cho ga (A Ritual of Dedication)*

Vol. XII, p. 299–302

Content: A ritual of dedication for the deceased.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

107. *dGe slong gTsug lag phreng bas rgyal ba'i dbang po'i drung du smon lam phul ba byin gyis rlabs pa'i dkor mdzod (The Treasury of Prayers to Grant Blessing Offered Before the Lord Conqueror by Monk gTsug lag phreng ba)*

Vol. XII, p. 304–308

Content: Making prayers before the Eighth Karmapa seeking blessings from him.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

108. *Mi la'i bla sgrub (Guru Sādhana of Mi la)*

Vol. XII, p. 430

Content: A *sādhana* of Mi la ras pa

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

### **Vol XIII**

108. *Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun grub gtsug khang chen po'i byung ba (A Historical Account of a Great Temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun grub)*

Vol. XIII, p. 1–14

Content: A historical account of the temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhan grub gtsug khang chen.

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the second lunar month, wood male mouse year at the age of sixty-one.

Place: Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhan grub gtsug khang, Gro bo lung

108. *'Og min sras mkhar gyi gnas sprul pa'i pho brang chen por gser thog ji ltar sgrub pa las brtsam pa'i dkar chag gi yig tshangs brjod pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho rmad du byung ba'i gtam (A Statement of Gift of Catalogue on how Gold Roof Ornament on the Emanated Palace of Surpassed Sras mkar is Installed: The Marvellous Account of the Ocean of Wonder)*

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<sup>822</sup> This title cannot be counted separately since it is extracted from another larger unit *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi chad pa*.

Vol. XIII, p. 15–75

Content: This text described how gTsug lag phreng ba renovated Sras mkhar and installed a golden roof ornament on it.

Date: The tenth day of the fourth month, female water ox year

Place: Sras mkhar

109. *sKu mkhar rin po che la gser thog ji ltar sgrub pa'i tshul mdor bsdus pa (A Brief [account] of how gold roofing was completed to sKu mkhar)*

Vol. XIII, p. 76–85

Content: A brief account and description of the gold roof on Sras mkhar.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

110. *Sras mkhar sprul pa'i pho brang 'og min rtse yi rgya phubs gnam rgyan gyi dkyil 'khor bkod yig (A Catalogue of Maṇḍala in the 'Og min rtse (Top Floor) of the Emanated Palace of Sras mkhar)*

Vol. XII, p. 86–120

Content: Contains the description of each *maṇḍala* in the 'Og min rtse [Top Floor] of the nine-storeyed Sras mkhar temple built by Milarepa)

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

111. *Dril phreng gi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Garland of Bells)*

Vol. XIII, p. 121–122

Content: A catalogue of bells present in the Sras mkar

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

112. *sKu mkhar gyi 'og min rtse'i logs bris nang gi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Wall Paints in the 'og min rtse (top floor) of Sku mkhar)*

Vol. XII, p. 123–125

Content: A catalogue with some descriptions of wall paintings on the top floor of Sras mkhar.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

113. *'Og min rtse yi bad chen steng phyi 'khor gyi bris sku rnam kyi mtshan yig (The Names of the Figures in the Paintings at the Outer Circle of 'Og min rtse')*

Vol. XIII, p. 126–128

Content: A catalogue of the figures depicted in the wall paintings on the top floor of Sras mkhar.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

114. *sKu mkhar gyi sgo 'khyams kyi bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum las bya rgyud kyi gtso bo rnams kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Chief Figures of Kriyā Tantra Among Kriyā, Cārya and Yoga Tantras of Doors of sKu mkhar)*

Vol. XIII, p. 129–132

Content: a catalogue and description of chief deities of Kriyā tantra in the Sras mkhar temple

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

115. *Ma mgon gyi thang sku'i bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Paintings of Principal Protectors)*

Vol. XIII, p. 133–146

Content: Instruction on preparing paintings of principal protectors Mahākāla and Mahākālī

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

116. *mChod rdzas phul ba'i zhal yig phyi mo rnyed pa rnams (An Original Words of Offering Materials)*

Vol. XIII, p. 147–167

Content: Words of making offerings of various objects such as cloth.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

117. *Bar sgo nub kyi ngos gcig la rta mgrin gsang sgrub kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Secret Sādhana of Hayagrīva at Western Side of the Middle Door)*

Vol. XIII, p. 167–168

Content: Description of the painting of Hayagrīva along with the retinue.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

118. *mThu stobs gling gi bkod yig (A Catalogue of mThu stob gling)*

Vol. XIII, p. 169–183

Content: A catalogue of protectors in the temple of protectors at mThu stob gling

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

119. *mThu stobs yang rtse sogs kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of [paintings of deities at places] Such as mThu stobs )*

Vol. XIII, p. 184–196

Content: A catalogue of paintings of deities in various places, such as storerooms.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

120. *Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang chen po'i dri gtsang khang du bzhugs pa'i sangs rgyas rnam kyi mtshan yig rags pa (A Catalogue of the Names of Buddhas in the Innermost Chapel of the Great Temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa )*

Vol. XIII, p. 197–213

Content: Names of Buddhas painted and carved of Buddhas in the innermost chapel of Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

121. *Bla ma lha khang du bka' brgyud kyi bla ma dang gnyis med kyi rgyud kyi lha tshogs bzhugs pa'i bkod yig (A Catalogue of bka' brgyud Masters and the Deities of Non-dual Tantra in the bLa ma lha khang)*

Vol. XIII, 214–243

Content: A catalogue of bKa' brgyud masters such as Marpa and deities of non-dual tantra in the bLa ma lha khang

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

121. *'Od ldan gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of 'Od ldan)*

Vol. XIII, p. 244–245

Content: A Catalogue of deities in the 'Od ldan

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

122. *bKod pa bsam yas su bla med pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis bzhugs pa las nub gung bde mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho sogs kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of [Deities] such as dDe mchog*

*mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho in the Mid-west of bSam yas Amongts [Deities of] Unsurpassed Father and Mother Tantra)*

Vol. XIII, p. 246–267

Content: A catalogue and descriptions of deities such as dDe mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho in the bSam yas

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

123. *bKod pa bSam yas su bde dgyes sogs kyi rgyud ris bsdu pa'i bkod yig (A Brief Catalogue of the Paintings of Lineages [of Tantra] such as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra in bSam yas)*

Vol. XIII, p. 316–317

Content: A catalogue of the paintings of lineages of tantras such as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra in bSam yas.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

124. *dGyes rdor gur dang phyag chen thig le/ ye shes snying po/ ye shes thig le/ sambu ṭa rnams kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of [Deities of] Hevajra, Vajrapañjara, Phyag chen thig le, Ye shes snying po and Sambuṭa)*

Vol. XIII, p. 318–352

Content: A catalogue and a description of the paintings of deities in the various tantras in bSam yas.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

125. *Pha rgyud las gsang 'dus sogs kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Father Tantras such as Guyhasamāja)*

Vol. XIII, p. 353–381

Content: A description of the *maṇḍala* according to various father tantras such as *Guyhasamāja*, probably in the bSam yas temple.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

126. *bKod pa bSam su bla med pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis las pha rgyud gshed skor gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Father Tantra of Yamantaka Cycle amongs Father and Mother Tantra [deities] in bSam yas)*

Vol. XIII, p. 382–402

Content: A catalogue and description of the deities of the Father Tantra Yamantaka Cycle in bSam yas

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

127. *Theg mchog sngags kyi pho brang du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum las rnal 'byor rgyud kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Yogatantra amongst Krīya, Cārya and Yoga in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang)*

Vol. XIII, p. 403–438

Content: A catalogue and descriptions of the deities of Yogatantra in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang.<sup>823</sup>

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

128. *Theg mchog sngags kyi pho brang chen por bya spyod rnam 'byor gsum las spyod rgyud rig gsum gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Three Families of Caryā Tantra Amongst Krīya, Caryā and Yogatantra in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang)*

Vol. XIII, p. 439–455

Content: A catalogue and descriptions of the deities of Cārya Tantra in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

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129. *Theg mchog pho brang du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum las bya rgyud rigs drug gi skabs kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Three Families of Krīya Tantra Amongst Krīya, Caryā and Yogatantra in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang)*

Vol. XIV, p. 1–75

Content: A catalogue and descriptions of the deities of Krīya Tantra in the Theg chog sngags kyi pho drang

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

130. *Theg mchog pho brang gi lho shar sgrol ma brgya rtsa'i lha tshogs kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Deities of Tārā on the Southeast of Theg mchog pho brang)*

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<sup>823</sup> This appears to be a part of a temple Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang.

Vol. XIV, p. 76–90

Content: A catalogue and description of the deities of Tārā on the Southeast of Theg mchog pho brang.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

131. *Zhing khams 'di la gza' yum dang tshogs bdag gzungs ma mgon gyi rgyud ris gzungs ris 'ga'* ([*The Paintings*] According to the *Dhāraṇī* of *Grahamātrkā* and *Gaṇeśa* and the *Paintings of the [Deities according to the] Tantra and Dharani of Principal Protectors in this Abode (Theg mchog pho brang?)*)

Vol. XIV, p. 91–93

Content: Description of the paintings of the deities according to the *dhāraṇī* of deities such as *Grahamātrkā* and *Gaṇeśa*.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

132. *gTsang khang du zhal yig sangs rgyas kyi mtshan lnga stong bzhi rgya nga gsum* (*The Names of Five Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Three Buddhas in the Shrine*)

Vol. XIV, p. 94–104

Content: Names of Buddhas in the shrine.<sup>824</sup>

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

133. *bsKal bzang gi sangs rgyas byang sems kyi mtshan yig* (*The Names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Fortunea Aeon*)

Vol. XIV, p. 105–188

Content: Names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas present in the shrine.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

134. *mDo khyams g.yon phyogs kyi byams pa sogs gtso bo bdun gyi mtshan yig* (*The Names of the Seven Chief [Figures] such as Maitriya on the Left of the Courtyard*)

Vol. XIV, 119–120

Content: The names of the seven chief figures, such as Maitreya, located to the left of the shrine courtyard.

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<sup>824</sup> Probably Theg mchog pho brang.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

135. *Zab mo lta ba'i sgo srung dam can 'khor bcas kyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Oath-bound Protector along with Retinues, the Guardians of the Gate of Profound View)*

Vol. XIV, p. 121–122

Content: A catalogue and description of the paintings of oath-bound protectors and their retinues.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

136. *rGyal sras rgya mtsho'i pho brang gi mdo ris bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Paintings [Depicting] Sūtras in the rGyal sras rgya mtsho'i pho brang)*

Vol. XIV, p. 123–414

Content: A catalogue and description of the paintings that depict various sūtras in the in rGyal sras rgya mtsho'i pho brang.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

137. *sGo g.yabs steng gi bkod yig (A Catalogue [of Paintings] Above the Door)*

Vol. XVI, p. 414–424

Content: A catalogue and description of paintings of translators and Indian Paṇḍitas above the door.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

138. *Seng khri rdo rje gdan gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Seng khri rdo rje gdan)*

Vol. XIV, p. 425–528

Content: A catalogue of paintings in Seng khri rdo rje gdan in the rGyal sras rgya mtsho'i pho brang. It contains the lineages of Abhidharma, Madhyamaka and so on up to the Eighth Karmapa.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

139. *rGya gar rdo rje gdan gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of Vajrāsana in India)*

Vol. XIV, p. 429–431

Content: A brief account of Vajrāsana and Buddha's statue in it.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

140. *sNang ba rab gsal bkod yig (A Catalogue of sNang ba rab gsal bkod)*

Vol. XIV, p. 432–439

Content: A catalogue of paintings of the masters upper and lower lineage of vinaya and masters of the major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism in the sNang ba rab gsal.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

141. *Thar 'khor gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Cycle of Liberation)*

Vol XIV, p. 440–445

Content: A description of the painting of the cycle of liberation.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

142. *Srid 'khor dang thar 'khor gyi bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Cycle Existence and Liberation)*

Vol. XIV, p. 446–452

Content: A catalogue and description of the cycle of existence and liberation.

143. *'Dul ba'i cho 'phrul bkod yig (A Catalogue of the Miracles of Vinaya)*

Vol. XIV, p. 453–454

Content: Miracles displayed by Buddha according to the Vinaya tradition.

Date: Not available

Place: Not available

### **Writings of Uncertain Authorship.**

1. A two-page writing on emptiness without a title.

Vol. IX. P. 205–206

Content: On emptiness

2. *Ri chos kyi sa bcad (The Topical Outline of Mountain Dharma)*

Vol X, p. 447–450

Content: A topical outline of a certain text on mountain dharma.

3. *Grub chen mar pa'i lugs kyi phyag chen khrid kyi man ngag gnad kyi lde mig (The Key to the Vital Points of Instruction on Mahāmudrā According to the Tradition of the Great Siddha Marpa)*

Vol. XII, p. 71–141

Content: Instruction on the Mahāmudrā

4. *bKa' dge'i lta skyong gnad gcig gi dgongs gsal (Clarifying on the Intention of the Single Point of Maintaining the View of the bKa' dge [Schools])*

Vol. XII, p. 231–237

Content:

5. *Dus sol ma'i gser skyems (A Libation of Dus sol ma)*

Vol. XII, p. 439–440

Content: An offering of libation to the protectress Śrīdevī.

6. *Sras mkhar dgu thog gtsug lag khang / gro bo lung / zangs phug ltag gnya' bcas kyi gnas yig rna ba'i bdud rtsi dad pa'i shing rta (A Guidebook of Nine-storeyed Temple Sras mkhar, Gro bo lung and zangs phug ltag gnya': An Ambrosia of Ear and Chariot of Devotion)*

Vol. XII, p. 472–499

Content: A guide to sacred places such as Sras mkhar.

### Materials of Other Authors

Vol. VIII,

1. *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i rtogs pa*<sup>825</sup>

Vol. VIII, p. 509–571

Author: The Third Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje

Content: Astrological treatise according to the Kālacakra tradition

2. *mGon po'i sgrub thabs sha wa ri'i rgya gzhung klu byang gi bla ma mgon po dbyer med grib sel gnad dbab gsum ste rgya gzhung tshan pa brgyad (The Eight Sections of Indian Treatises [such as] the Indian Treatise on Sādhana of Mahākāla by Śavari, [practice of meditating] on the Inseparability with Lama, Eliminating Defilements, and Striking to the Points)*<sup>826</sup>

Vol X, p. 346–358

Author: Svāri and other Indian masters

Content: The *sādhana* of Mahākāla

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<sup>825</sup> This is the title mentioned at the beginning of the treatise in the *Collected Works*. However, the table of contents at the beginning of volume VIII lists it as *rTsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i rtog pa'i mchan 'grel*. It is not an interlinear commentary (*mchan 'grel*), but the treatise of the Third Karmapa.

<sup>826</sup> Catalogue by gTsong lag phreng ba simply says *rgya gzhung brgyad (The Eighth Indian Treatises)*.

3. *Nang sgrub rgya gzhung (The Indian Treatise of Inner Sādhanā of Mahākāla)*  
Vol. X, p. 359 – 362

Author: Khyung po rnal 'byor

Content: The *sādhana* of Mahākāla

4. *Lam rim rgyud don rnam nges (A Definitive Treatment of the Tantric Meaning of the Stages of Path)*

Vol. XII, p. 309–407

Author: The Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho

Content: Discourse on the path of the four tantra classes.

5. *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lha khrid kyi nyams len 'don bsgom dang sbyar du rung ba nyung 'dus su bkod pa (An Arrangement in Brief of the Practice of Deity Explanation of Vajrayoginī Applicable for Recitation and Meditation)*

Vol. XII, p. 408–429

Author: The Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho

Content: An explanation of the Vajrayoginī deity.

6. *Ja mchod O rgyan yul du sku 'khrungs pa (Tea Offering [to one who was] Born in the Land O rgyan)*

Vol. XII, p. 431

Author: The Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho

Content: Verses on making tea offering to Guru Padmasambhava

7. *dPal rgyal dbang Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje'i zhabs brtan (A Long-life Prayer of the Victorious Lord Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje)*

Vol. XII, p. 432

Author: The Third dPa' bo gTsug lag rgya mtsho

Content: A prayer of longevity to the Tenth Karmapa Chos dbyings rdo rje

8. *Phung po'i mchod sbyin rgyun khyer shin tu bsdu pa (An Extremely Condensed Daily Practice of the Sacrifice of Form)*

Vol. XII, p. 433

Author: The Seventh dPa' bo gTsug lag dga' ba

Content: A liturgical material on making sacrifices of one's body.

9. *dGongs gter zab pa'i skor las tshe yi gsang sgrub (A Secret Sādhanā of Life from the Cycle of Profound Mind Treasure )*

Vol. XII, p. 434–436

Author: The Eighth dPa' bo gTsug lag chos kyi rgyal po

Content: Instructions on the performance of the *sādhana* of life

10. *Dus sol ma'i bstod pa (A Praise to Dus sol ma)*

Vol. XII, p. 437–438

Author: The Eighth dPa' bo gTsug lag chos kyi rgyal po

Content: A praise to the protectress Śridevi

11. *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sbyin sreg (The Fire Offering Rite of Vajrayoginī)*

Vol. XII, p. 441–457

Author: Buddha Mati

Content: A liturgical text on making fire offerings according to the Vajrayoginī tradition.

12. *Lho gnas mchog gro bo lung 'og min sras mkhar kyi (sic!) gtsug lag khang chen po'i rten bshad mdor bsdus (A Brief Explanation of the Objects in the Unsurpassed Sras mkhar in the Southern Supreme Sacred Place Gro bo lung)*

Vol. XII, p. 458–469

Author: Bya bral Ye shes grub pa

13. *lTag gnya'i gnas yig mdor bsdus (A Guidebook of the Sacred Place lTag gnya)*

Vol. XII, p. 469–471

Author: Rig 'dzin chen po tshe dbang nā ro pa'i rnam 'phrul

Content: A brief history and description of lTag gnya'.

## Appendix B: Catalogue by gTsong lag phreng ba of His Writings

This is the list of gTsong lag phreng ba's writing according to the self-written catalogue of his works, the *Glegs bam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba*, which is included in the dPal brtsegs edition of his *Collected Works*. Notes on whether they are missing or available are provided in parentheses as per the dPal brtsegs edition of the *Collected Works*.

### I. *Dang po mchod brjod bstod tshogs kyi skor* (Eulogy and Collection of Hymns of Praise)

- 1) *rJe btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po karma pa'i zhabs la bstod pa rin pe che'i phreng ba sogs bstod pa gnyis* (missing)
- 2) *bCom ldan 'das rdo rje 'chang chen po la bstod pa chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin bstan pa* (missing)
- 3) *Tai lo pa bstod pa byin rlabs 'gugs byed* (missing)
- 4) *Nā ro pa la bstod pa phrin las bskul ba* (missing)
- 5) *Byang chub sems dpa' blo gros rin chen la bstod pa dad pa'i rnga sgra* (missing)
- 6) *dPal sa ra ha chen po la bstod pa grub pa'i ngo mtshar gyi gleng slong* (missing)
- 7) *sTon pa gnyis pa klu sgrub zhabs la bstod pa bka' drin mi brjed pa'i sa bon* (missing)
- 8) *sLob dpon Ārya de wa la bstod pa* (missing)
- 9) *'Jigs bral zla ba'i zhabs la bstod pa bden pa'i tshig* (missing)
- 10) *Sha wa ra dbang phyug la bstod pa de kho na nyid kyi glu* (missing)
- 11) *mNga' bdag Mai tri pa la bstod pa yon tan gsal ba* (missing)
- 12) *rJe la bstod pa yon tan ji lta bar brjod pa* (missing)
- 13) *rJe mi la la bstod pa bka' drin dran pa dang* (missing)
- 14) *rJe sgam po pa la bstod pa bla ma'i yon tan dran pa rnams* (missing)
- 15) *sLob dpon chen po rta dbyangs la bstod pa thub bstan snang byed* (missing)
- 16) *bDag nyid chen po zhi ba'i lha la bstod pa ngo mtshar snang ba* (missing)
- 17) *sTon pa gnyis pa dpal ldan mar me mdzad bzang po la bstod pa dad pa'i myu gu yongs su smin pa'i snye ma* (missing)
- 18) *mKhas shing grub pa brnyes pa'i byang chub sems dpa' chen po ma hā lo tsā ba byams pa'i dpal la bstod pa yon tan yongs su dran pa* (missing)
- 19) *rJe btsun mkhan chen lo tsā ba chen po don gyi slad tu mtshan nas smos te rje chos skyong bzang po la bstod pa yon tan mi zad pa'i 'byung gnas* (missing)
- 20) *mKhas grub chen po chos rgyal bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la bstod pa bla ma'i yon tan dran byed de rtsa brgyud kyi bla ma'i bstod pa* (missing)
- 21) *bCom ldan 'das thub pa'i dbang po'i skyes rabs rmad du byung ba brgya rtsa brgyad la phyag 'tshal ba'i tshigs su bcad pa* (missing)
- 22) *sKyes pa'i rabs mchog tu dpag bsam gyi 'khri shing chen po'i yal 'dab brgya rtsa brgyad la phyag 'tshal ba'i tshigs su bcad pa sdom tshig dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 23) *De bzhin gshegs pa'i mdzad pa bcu gnyis kyi bstod pa gnyis*<sup>827</sup> (Extant)
- 24) *bSam gyis mi khyab par bstod pa* (missing)
- 25) *bDud thams cad las rnam par rgyal bar bstod pa* (missing)
- 26) *Blo las 'das par bstod pa* (missing)
- 27) *sTon pa'i bstod pa yid kyi gdung ba rnam par sel ba* (missing)

<sup>827</sup> One extant listed as *sTon pa'i mdzad pa bcu gnyis la bstod pa* in the *Collected Works*.

- 28) *sTon pa la bstod pa thugs rje rnam par bskul ba* (missing)
- 29) *sTon pa de bzhin gshegs pa la bstod pa yid kyi gdung ba sel ba* (missing)
- 30) *sTon pa la bstod pa bdud bzhi rab tu bcom pa rnams dpe tshan gcig* (missing)
- 31) *bsKal bzang gi sangs rgyas stong gi mtshan gyi phreng ba la bstod pa dad pa'i me tog kun sa kha bye ba'i myu gu* (extant)
- 32) *Dam pa'i chos la bstod pa* (missing)
- 33) *bCom ldan 'das mgon po tshe dpag med la bstod pa gsum* (missing)
- 34) *bCom ldan 'das rin chen 'byung ldan la bstod pa rab tu brtag pa'i rdo rje* (missing)
- 35) *rDo rje sems dpa' la bstod pa dad pa'i rna rgyan rnams* (missing)
- 36) *'Jam dpal dbyangs la bstod pa rin po che'i phreng ba* (missing)
- 37) *Ku mu da'i phreng ba* (missing)
- 38) *bsTod pa yig drug dang sbyar ba ste* (missing)
- 39) *'Phags mchog 'jig rten gsum gyi dbang phyug padma dkar po'i dpal la bstod pa snying rje'i ku mud mdzes par bzhad pa'i zla 'od sogs bstod pa bzhi* (missing)
- 40) *bCom ldan 'das gsang ba'i bdag po phyag na rdo rje la rgyud bzhin du bstod pa* (missing)
- 41) *bCom ldan 'das gtum po dkar po la bstod pa dad pa'i snye ma* (missing)
- 42) *Sher phyin dkar mo bstod pa gnyis* (missing)
- 43) *'Phags ma yid bzhin 'khor lo'i thugs rje la bskul ma gdab pa dad pa'i 'khri shing sogs sgrol ma'i bstod pa bdun* (missing)
- 44) *dByangs can lha mo'i bstod pa dri za'i glu dbyangs sogs bstod pa gsum* (missing)
- 45) *Chos skyong la bstod pa bzhi* (missing)
- 46) *gSol 'debs kyi tshogs la chos tshan nyer bdun*<sup>828</sup>
- 47) *brTan zhugs kyi tshogs la tshan pa dgu* (missing)
- 48) *Nye ba'i 'thung spyod dpa' (sic!) tsā ri tra'i gnas la bstod pa gnyis*<sup>829</sup> (extant)

## II. gNyas pa rnam thar chos 'byung gi skor (Biography and the History of Religion)

- 1) *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu bzang po'i rtogs pa brjod pa dad pa'i 'khri shing* (missing)
- 2) *rJe btsun mar pa'i rnam par thar pa grub pa'i ngo mtshar brjod pa* (extant)
- 3) *bKa' rgyud kyi bla ma'i rnam thar zin bris chung ngu* (missing)
- 4) *rJe dpa' bo sku skye na rim gyi ngo mtshar snying po* (missing)
- 5) *Dam pa'i chos 'khor los bsgyur rgyal rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba'i legs par bshad pa* (extant)

## III. gSum pa sgra dang sman bcos kyi skor (Language and Medicine)

- 1) *Legs sbyar klag thabs kyi rtsa ba blo gsal 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar* (extant)
- 2) *De'i 'grel pa bdud rtsi'i 'od phreng* (missing)
- 3) *Ka lā pa'i bsdu don* (missing)
- 4) *mTshams sbyor mdo'i 'grel pa* (missing)
- 5) *Slob phan lugs kyi mtshams sbyor drug pa'i mchan 'grel* (missing)

<sup>828</sup> Some of the *gsol 'debs* could be extant as listed in the appendix 'Extant Works not listed by gTsug lag phreng ba in His Catalogue'. gTsug lag phreng ba might have grouped 27 supplicatory writings (*gsol 'debs*) under this heading.

<sup>829</sup> One extant listed as *Tsā ri ye shes kyi 'khor lo'i thugs kyi phro brang la bstod pa zab gsang gi 'jug ngogs* in the *Collected Works*.

- 6) *Ming le dang po'i 'grel pa* (missing)
- 7) *Sum cu pa lung du ston pa'i 'grel pa* (extant)
- 8) *rTags 'jug gi 'grel pa tshig don gsal byed* (extant)
- 9) *Sum rtags lugs kyi tshig phrad* (missing)
- 10) *sNyan ngag me long gi mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 11) *sDeb sbyor rin chen 'byung gnas kyi mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 12) *Zur mkhar ba'i bye ba ring bsrel grangs can grangs med kyi snying po bsdus nas bkod pa* (missing)<sup>830</sup>

#### IV. *bZhi pa mdo rgyud lung bsdus* (Collection of Sūtric and Tantric Scriptures)

- 1) *mDo sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus* (missing)
- 2) *mDo sde las brgya pa dang gang po la sogs pa'i rtogs brjod kyi sdom tshig* (missing)
- 3) *mDo mdzangs blun gyi don bsdus* (missing)
- 4) *mDzangs blun gyi sdom tshig* (missing)
- 5) *rGyud sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus* (missing)
- 6) *rDo rje khro bo'i rgyud* (missing)
- 7) *gDan bzhi'i rgyud* (missing)
- 8) *mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i rgyud rnams las gsungs pa dbyangs bcu gnyis khyim bcu gnyis dus sbyor bcu gnyis rten 'brel bcu gnyis rnams kyi thun mong gi mdo yig go sla bar bstan pa* (missing)
- 9) *rGyud kyi gzungs dang man ngag sna tshogs pa bstan pa* (missing)

#### V. *INga pa rnam bshad zin bris kyi skor* (Original Manuscripts of Commentaries)

##### *mDo phyogs* (Sūtra Section)

- 1) *Dam pa'i chos 'dul ba'i bka' dang bstan bcos thams cad gcig tu 'dus pa ũka chen nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor 'char ba 'gyur ba'i skya rengs kyi snang ba zhes bya ba spyi don dang bsdus don rnam par gzhas pa* (missing)
- 2) *dByar gnas dang dgag dbye'i gzhi'i cho ga* (missing)
- 3) *gSo sbyong gi cho ga* (missing)
- 4) *Dus 'das 'byung ji ltar brjod pa* (missing)
- 5) *dGe slong gi sdom pa sbyin pa'i tshe dus brjod pa* (missing)
- 6) *sPyod 'jug sher le'i mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 7) *rGyud bla'i mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 8) *Yan lag gi ltung ba brgyad cu'i bsdoms kyi mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 9) *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i bshad pa theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho* (extant)

##### *mDo sngags thun mong* (Common to Sūtra and Tantra)

- 10) *rDzogs pa'i sangs rgyas karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje'i zhabs kyis skyob pa 'jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i dbon mkhyen rab kyi dbang phyug rin chen rnam rgyal chos kyi grags pa la dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i bshad pa dgyes par gnang ba* (Extant)<sup>831</sup>

<sup>830</sup> gTsug lag phreng ba lists many subsections under this heading. They appear to be simply sections under one title.

<sup>831</sup> Here gTsug lag phreng ba lists writings on all the sections of *dgongs gcig* except the sixth section on view, practice and conduct (*lta spyod sgom pa'i tshoms*). However, gTsug lag phreng ba mentions the first section

### **Thun mong ma yin pa sngags kyi rnam bshad (Unique Tantric Commentaries)**

- 11) *rJe btsun rdo rje rnam 'byor ma'i gsang ba'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa zab mo rnam 'byed* (extant)
- 12) *rNam rtog chos sku'i grub pa las brtsams pa dang de kho na nyid kyi snying po* (missing)
- 13) *rNam rtog chos sku'i don yang dag par brjod pa rgyal ba thams cad zhal lung* (extant)
- 14) *bDe bar bshegs pa'i gzhung rnam par 'byed pa'i 'grel bshad gsal brjod don bshad*<sup>832</sup>
- 15) *Mos gus bdun pa'i 'grel pa* (missing)
- 16) *rDo rje'i slob dpon bsten tshul mdor bsdus pa* (extant)
- 17) *Bla ma lnga bcu pa'i rnam par bshad pa thar pa'i 'jug sgo* (missing)
- 18) *dBang gi rnam gzhag mdor bsdus* (extant)
- 19) *rDo rje dril bu'i rnam gzhag zung 'jug gsang ba'i de kho na nyid* (missing)
- 20) *bZlas pa'i rnam dag gsal bar byed pa dngos grub kyi gter mdzod*<sup>833</sup>
- 21) *mChod rten gyi thig rtsa* (missing)
- 22) *dKyil 'khor spyi'i thig gi rnam par gzhag pa* (missing)
- 23) *dKyil 'khor rnam dag bu lugs kyi zin bris* (missing)
- 24) *Zab mo nang don gyi zin bris* (missing)
- 25) *sPrul sku rin po ches mdzad pa mthong bas khong du chud pa*<sup>834</sup> (missing)
- 26) *gSang sngags zab mo nang don gyi snying po rnam par bshad pa* (missing)
- 27) *rNam shes ye shes brtag pa* (missing)
- 28) *Zla med pa'i mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 29) *Phyag rgya chen po lta ba nam mkha' rdo rje mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 30) *Phyag chen ganggā ma'i mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 31) *Sha wa ra'i do ha'i brda glu* (missing)
- 32) *Tai lo pa'i do ha mdzod* (missing)
- 33) *Nā ro pa'i lta ba mdor bsdus rnams kyi mchan 'grel* (missing)
- 34) *dPa' (sic!) dus kyi 'khor lo'i man ngag rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las pa chen po'i rgyas 'grel rin po che'i gter mdzod* (extant)
- 35) *dPa' (sic!) dus kyi 'khor lo'i bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i 'das lo'i re'u mig gsal bar byed pa bklags pas grub pa chen po* (extant)
- 36) *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rtsis kyi bstan bcos kun las btus pa'i 'das lo'i re'u mig dngos* (missing)

### **VI. Drug pa mngon dkyil sgrub thabs (Sādhanas of Visualising Maṇḍala)**

- 1) *dPa' (sic!) dus kyi 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs yan lag dang bcas pa rgyal ba rang byung rdo rje'i dgongs pa snang bar byed pa rgyud 'grel gyi snying po las mngon par rtogs pa'i skabs* (missing)

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(*tshoms dang po*) and the section on the dharma wheel (*chos kyi 'khor lo'i tshoms*) separately although they are the same. Only the seventh section of *dgongs gcig* is available.

<sup>832</sup> The interlinear note, which is probably by gTsong lag phreng ba, mentions that a certain person named 'Jam dbyangs took the notes of this text.

<sup>833</sup> *gSang sngags bzla tshul phreng bshad* is included in the *Collected Works*. However, it cannot be ascertained if it refers to this writing.

<sup>834</sup> gTsong lag phreng ba has interlinear notes in the title stating that the text looks like he wrote it, although the notes were taken by a certain sPrul sku rin po che (*'di yang zhabs drung nas zin bris mdzad pa ma gtogs bdag rang gis brtsams pa dang 'dra ba yod*).

- 2) *Dus kyi 'khor lo lus dkyil du sgom pa*<sup>835</sup> (extant)
- 3) *Thugs dam lnga tshan lnga'i mngon dkyil* (extant)
- 4) *bDe mchog lha lnga'i sgrub thabs dang dbang gi rim pa*<sup>836</sup> (extant)
- 5) *rJe dus mkhyen gyi thugs tham dgyes rdor lha lnga'i ting nge 'dzin gyi dbang blang tshul* (missing)
- 6) *rGyal ba rgya mtsho lha lnga dgu'i cho ga'i zin bris dngos grub kyi bang mdzod* (missing)
- 7) *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i las bzhi'i sbyin sreg gi ngag 'don* (missing)
- 8) *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga las thams cad sgrub byed* (missing)
- 9) *rGyal ba rgya mtsho'i lha lnga'i sgo nas ngan 'gro rnam par sbyong ba'i cho ga thar pa mchog gi 'jug ngogs* (missing)
- 10) *rGyal tshab rin po che'i de'i rtsom bskul gyi bka' shog* (missing)
- 11) *sByong dkyil bcu gnyis kyi mngon dkyil mdor bsdus* (missing)
- 12) *gSang ba'i bdag po phyag na rdo rje 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil 'khor chen pos rang bzhin gyi don ji ltar bya bar don kun sgrub byed* (missing)
- 13) *Drung mdzad kun rig chen mo'i cho ga 'bring po zur du phye ba ngan 'gro yangs sbyong*<sup>837</sup> (extant)
- 14) *'Phags ma yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgrub thabs 'dod 'jo'i bum bzang* (extant)
- 15) *De'i tshe khrid* (missing)
- 16) *Yang de'i tshe sgrub pañ chen ngag dbang grags pa'i gsung gi snying po* (missing)
- 17) *gTsug tor rnam rgyal ma'i sgrub thab (sic!) don kun sgrub byed* (missing)
- 18) *Phyag na rdo rje'i sgrub thabs dngos grub 'byung ba* (missing)
- 19) *Phyag rdor 'byung po 'dul byed kyi sgrub thabs rjes gnang dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 20) *Phyag rdor gtum mo'i sgrub thabs dbang chog gi zin bris bsdus pa* (missing)
- 21) *Thugs rje chen po zhal bcu gcig pa'i sgrub thabs rgya gzhung dang sbyar ba* (extant)
- 22) *De'i lag len blo grogs (sic!) gsar bu'i nyer mkho* (missing)
- 23) *Tshe dpag med grub rgyal ma'i bskyed rjogs tshe dbang dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 24) *Grub rgyal tshe sgrub kyi snying po* (missing)
- 25) *Tshe sgrub rin chen nyi 'od kyi cho ga'i rim pa 'chi med rdo rje'i bang mdzod* (missing)
- 26) *bKa' gter gnyis ka dang mi 'gal ba'i gu ru drag po'i las byang dbang chog* (missing)
- 27) *'Phags pa 'jam dpal dkar po shes rab blo 'phel gyi sgrub thabs gzhan phan snang ba* (missing)
- 28) *Rab gnas kyi cho ga bde legs mchog gi bang mdzod* (extant)
- 29) *rTa mgrin lcags ral can gyi sgrub thabs bsdus pa* (missing)
- 30) *mKha' 'gro seng gdong ma'i rjes gnang* (extant)
- 31) *dPal rdo rje nag po chen po sgrub cing mchod bstod kyi bya ba'i rim pa gnam lcags rdo rje'i me char zhes bya snga phyi gnyis* (missing)
- 32) *De'i gtor chog 'bring po dngos grub kyi 'byung gnas*<sup>838</sup>
- 33) *sPyan gzigs 'bul ba'i tshigs bcad* (extant)
- 34) *dPal ldan lha mo dud sol ma'i gtor chog dngos grub kun 'byung* (extant)

<sup>835</sup> Listed as *Dus 'khor lus dkyil du sgom thabs* in the *Collected Works*

<sup>836</sup> Listed as *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lha lnga'i sgrub thabs dang dbang gi rim pa*

<sup>837</sup> Listed as *bCom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ngan 'gro thams cad yongs su sbyong bar byed pa* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>838</sup> Probably as *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i gtor chog 'bring po dngos grub kyi 'byung gnas* in the *Collected Works*.

- 35) *Ma mgon 'khor bcos kyi drag bskul* (missing)
- 36) *Phud gtor gyi cho ga mchod sprin gyi rol mtsho* (missing)
- 37) *bZhed 'bod log 'dren dgra bo bsgral ba'i drag bskul* (missing)
- 38) *bSangs yig 'gal rkyen kun sel* (missing)
- 39) *dPal mgon ber nag can gyi gtor 'bul bsdus pa* (missing)
- 40) *Zhing skyong gi gtor chog*<sup>839</sup>
- 41) *Dam can gyi gtor chog* (missing)
- 42) *dPal mgon phyag bzhi pa gtso bo gyur pa'i rang gi 'dod lha'i tshogs la spyi gtor bsngo ba'i rim pa* (missing)
- 43) *Dam can spyi'i gtor chog rgyun du nyams su len pa* (missing)
- 44) *dPal g.ya' bzang gi ma mgon rnams kyi gtor chog dngos grub 'byung zhing dgra gegs tshar bcod* (missing)
- 45) *Kha 'bar ma'i gtor chen* (missing)
- 46) *Klu gtor rgyas pa* (missing)

### VII. *bDun pa bya spyod kyi skor* (Writings on Daily Conducts of Dharma)

- 1) *Grwa tshang dpal karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sde'i dge 'dun gyi bca' yig 'phros don dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 2) *Sems bskyed kyi cho ga gsum*<sup>840</sup> (extant)
- 3) *Yan lag nyi shu pa'i kha skong yan lag bzhi pa* (missing)
- 4) *Byang sems las dang po ltung ba las slong ba'i bya ba* (missing)
- 5) *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig la chos spyod ji ltar bya ba'i rim pa dge ba'i chu bo rgyun mi 'chad ces bya ba* (extant)
- 6) *gTor ma brgya rtsa mdor bsdus pa* (missing)
- 7) *rJe rang byung pa'i gsung las phyung ba ri chos bdud rtsi'i nying khu* (extant)
- 8) *Ri chos gnas kyi lde mig ces bya ba thun mong ma yin pa'i gdams pa* (extant)
- 9) *bCud len sna tshogs pa'i zin bris* (missing)

### VIII. *brGyad pa rang gi rtogs brjod la sogs pa'i skor* (Unique Works such as Auto-hagiography)

#### *Thob yig gi skor* (Title lists of teachings received)

- 1) *Chos kyi rje thams cad mkhyen pa rdo rje 'chang chen po Mi bskyod rdo rje'i zhabs drung du gsung gi bdud rtsi'i thob pa'i yi ge padma dkar po'i phreng ba* (missing)
- 2) *Thams cad mkhyen pa zhwa dmar cod pan 'dzin pa bzhi pa'i drung du rab byung gi bka' drin nod pa'i brgyud yig me tog gi snye ma* (missing)
- 3) *rJe zha lu lo tsā'i drung du bsnyen par rdzogs pa'i bka' drin nod pa'i rgyud (sic!) yig me tog gi phreng ba* (missing)
- 4) *rJe btsun dam pa phrin las zhabs kyi bka' drin las gsung gi bdud rtsi'i nod pa'i rnam grangs bkod ma ku mu (sic!) ta'i chon bu* (missing)
- 5) *rJe mkhas grub chen po dwags po'i pañdi ta chos rgyal bstan pa'i gsung gi bdud rtsi'i rnyed pa'i rnam grangs brjod pa gser gyi bang mdzod* (missing)

<sup>839</sup> Probably *rTsa gsum rdo rje'i chos skyong rnams la gtor 'bul gyi cho ga dngos grub dpal 'bar phrin las 'grub* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>840</sup> Three rituals for arousing Bodhicitta: according to the Profound View Tradition of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, the Vast Conduct Tradition of *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, and arousing Absolute Bodhicitta according to Ārya Nāgārjuna.

- 6) *sMyug la rin po che pañ chen ngag dbang grags pa'i drung du chos thob pa'i rnam grangs brjod pa padma dkar po'i chun po* (missing)
- 7) *Grub thob dbus smyon he ru ka'i drung du dam pa'i chos rnyed pa'i thob yig bdud rtsi'i dog pa* (missing)
- 8) *rJe 'chi med zhabs kyi drung du chos thob pa'i rnam grangs kyi yi gu utpa la'i chun po* (missing)
- 9) *Slob dpon rin po che byang chub sems dpa' gsung blo gros dbang phyug gi gsung gi thigs pa 'thungs pa'i rnam grangs brjod pa yongs 'du'i me tog gi phreng ba* (missing)
- 10) *rJe buddha ma ti las dam pa'i chos nod pa'i thob yig bdud rtsi'i zegs ma* (missing)
- 11) *Rab 'byam chos kyi rje tshul khrims dbang phyug gi drung du bka' 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi thob yig thub bstan rin yongs su rdzogs pa'i bang mdzod chen po 'dod gu'i 'byung gnas kha bye ba las rdo rje theg pa'i rgyud sde rin po che rgya mtsho lta bu bod yul du 'gyur ba phal mo che'i thob yig bde ba chen po grub pa ster ba* (missing)
- 12) *bKa' 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi thob yig thub bstan yongs su rdzogs pa'i bang mdzod chen po kha bye ba las mdo sde rin po che'i ji snyed pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs dang brgyud rim brjod pa yid bzhin nor bu rin po che'i za ma tog chen po* (missing)
- 13) *bKa' 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi thob yig thub bstan yongs su rdzogs pa'i bang mdzod rab tu bye ba las sher phyogs rnams kyi thob yig zab mo'i lam la 'jug pa'i sgo 'phar* (missing)
- 14) *Rab 'byams chos kyi rje tshul khrims dbang phyug gi drung du rgya bod kyi bstan bcos rnams thob pa'i thob yig nye bar mkho ba'i snying po zhes bya ba* (missing)

**gNyis pa rtogs brjod kyi skor (Hagiography)**

- 15) *dGe slong gtsug lag phreng ba rang nyid kyi rtogs pa brjod pa 'khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long zhes bya ba* (extant)
- 16) *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba rang tshul mdor bsdu pa don tshan dgu pa* (extant)
- 17) *Rang gi rtogs brjod las brtsams pa'i mig 'phrul gyi rang bzhin gsal byed* (extant)
- 18) *bDag gi tshul yang dag pa'i yi ge* (extant)
- 19) *Bla ma bar le ba'i dris lan* (missing)
- 20) *Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug khang chen po'i byung ba* (extant)

**gSum pa glu'i skor (Songs)**

- 21) *Ched tu brjod pa rdo rje'i glu snying po'i gdam gyi phreng ba mi zad pa'i bang mdzod* (extant)
- 22) *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i yang dag pa'i do ha* (extant)
- 23) *gZhan bskul gyi ngor brjod pa'i glu'i bang mdzod kyi tshogs* (extant)

**bZhi pa zhu yig 'phrin yig gi skor (Letters)**

- 24) *rJe yab sras kyi zhabs drung du phul ba'i zhu yig las khag cig* (missing)
- 25) *rJe thams cad mkhyen pa'i bka' shog ngos bshus 'phros don dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 26) *sKal ldan byang chub tu bskul ba'i pho nya snying po'i skyes kyi dam pa 'phrin yig tshigs bcad kyi tshogs* (extant)
- 27) *Lhub pa la bka' srung gzhi bdag sogs la gdams pa'i 'phrin yig zhi drag gnyis*<sup>841</sup> (extant)
- 28) *dGe bskul gyi yi ge tshogs gnyis kyi ljon pa* (extant)

**INga pa dris lan gyi skor (Question and Answer)**

<sup>841</sup> As *bKa' srung gzhi bdag sogs la gdams pa'i chab shog* and *bKa' srung gzhi bdag rnams gnad nas bskul ba drag po'i chab shog bstan dgra tshar gcod* in the *Collected Works*.

- 29) *nGes gsang gnad kyi bang mdzod 'byed pa'i lde mig ces bya ba dris lan gyi tshogs la chos tshan bco brgyad*<sup>842</sup> (extant)  
 30) *Thar rgyan gyi gtam rgyud*<sup>843</sup> (extant)

### IX. *dGu pa nyams len khrid yig gi skor* (Explanatory Texts of Spiritual Practice)

#### *sPyi* (General)

- 1) *Zab lam bla ma'i rnam 'byor gyi tshogs zung 'jug rdo rje'i nye lam* (missing)
- 2) *Bla ma'i rnal 'byor mdor bsdus* (missing)
- 3) *Bla ma sku gsum du sgrub thabs* (missing)
- 4) *sNying po don gsum gyi khrid yig* (missing)
- 5) *Thugs rje chen po'i smar khrid yig drug gi phan yon dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 6) *Tshem bu smar khrid kyi nyams len mdor bsdus* (missing)
- 7) *sMar khrid byang sems zla ba rgyal mtshan gyi gsung gi bdud rtsi* (missing)
- 8) *De'i bskyed rjogs snying por dril ba* (missing)
- 9) *Thugs rje chen po'i bskyed rdzogs smar khrid du nyams su blang ba'i rim par* (extant)
- 10) *Lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi snying po mdo sngags mtha' dag gi zab gnad kyi chu bo gcig tu bstan pa* (missing)
- 11) *Phyag chen yig bzhi'i snying po zab mo'i 'jug ngogs* (extant)
- 12) *Lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi nyams len gnad bsdus gsal ba'i sgron me* (extant)
- 13) *Phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan gyi man ngag dgos 'dod stsol ba mchog gi nor bu'i gter* (extant)
- 14) *lNga ldan gyi khrid yig bsdus pa **gsum*** (missing)
- 15) *sPyan ras gzigs rgyal ba rgya mtsho'i lha khrid zin bris*<sup>844</sup>
- 16) *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma lhan cig skyes ma'i bskyed rim gyi lha khrid rnam bshad zab mo rnam 'byed kyi snying po bsdus pa* (extant)
- 17) *dPal ldan lhan cig skyes pa'i sgrub thabs padma ma'i ge sar snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud mchog gam lha khrid kyi zin bris nyung ngu* (missing)
- 18) *rLung sems gnyis kyi (sic!) med kyi zin bris* (missing)
- 19) *Chos drug gi spyi'i chings dang bsre 'pho'i dmigs rim* (missing)
- 20) *sGyu ma sum rgyud kyi man ngag smar khrid* (extant)
- 21) *gCod khrid mdor bsdus* (missing)
- 22) *Ro snyoms yang snying* (missing)
- 23) *sByor ba yan lag drug gi snying po* (missing)

#### *Bye brag* (Particular)

- 24) *'Khor lo sdom pa'i rdzogs rim rim pa lnga pa* (missing)
- 25) *rJe'i drung gi chos drug chen po'i zin bris*<sup>845</sup> (missing)
- 26) *U rgyan bsnyen sgrub kyi zin bris* (missing)
- 27) *bsNyen sgrub kyi dbang gong ma'i cho ga* (missing)
- 28) *bsNyen sgrub las lus 'dul bcu bdun pa* (missing)

<sup>842</sup> However, there are nineteen listed in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>843</sup> Listed as *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyis (sic!) gtam rgyud rnam* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>844</sup> Probably *Thugs rje chen po rgyal ba rgya mtsho'i bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams len gnas spyi gtsug ma'i gsol 'debs snang srid byin rlabs kyi dmigs thun zin bris* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>845</sup> Six writings are listed under this heading.

- 29) *Byang sems 'gyur med* (missing)
- 30) *gSer snye nor phreng rnams kyi 'phrul 'khor rtsa tshig* (missing)
- 31) *bsNyen sgrub las 'phrul 'khor rgyas pa'i bsdus don* (missing)
- 32) *bsNyen sgrub las 'phrul 'khor rgyas pa lus 'dul ba bcu bdun pa nas 'di'i bar rnams yig cha rnying pa* (missing)
- 33) *Ras chung bsnyen sgrub* (missing)
- 34) *Lam 'bras gnad bsdus* (missing)
- 35) *rJe ko brag pa'i gegs sel gyi gdams pa mthar thug pa ha bdun cu pa dang bcas pa* (missing)
- 36) *rJe'i drung gi zhal gzigs la brten pa'i khrid* (missing)

**X. *bCu pa gnad tu phog par 'doms pa zhal gdams su grags pa'i skor* (Writings Known as Instructions, the Teachings that Strike the Vital Points)**

- 1) *lTa sgom spyod pa'i rnam gzhag gi snying po gsal ba'i sgron me* (extant)
- 2) *sNying gi mun sel* (missing)
- 3) *Byin rlabs kyi snying po* (missing)
- 4) *gSer gyi yang zhun* (missing)
- 5) *De kho na nyid mtshon par byed pa snying po don gyi man ngag* (missing)
- 6) *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag zab mo'i mdzod* (missing)
- 7) *'Pho ba dang bar do'i gdams pa* (missing)
- 8) *Yang bar srid ba la gdams pa* (missing)
- 9) *Bar do'i ngo sprod zab mo mdor bsdus*<sup>846</sup>
- 10) *rNal 'byor bzhi'i don gsal bar byed pa grub pa'i zhal lung* (missing)
- 11) *Theg chen rtogs pa'i bstan pa gsal bar byed pa de kho na nyid kyi sgron me* (missing)

***Thor bu sde tshan du bsdebs pa***

- 12) *Thor bu'i tshogs rin po che'i phreng ba* (missing)
- 13) *Blo sbyong skyid sdug lam 'khyer gyi khrid*<sup>847</sup>
- 14) *Thor bu las snying po tshigs su bcad pa'i tshogs* (missing)
- 15) *Thor bu bskyed rdzogs kyi rim pa*<sup>848</sup> (missing)

**XI. *bCu gcig pa man ngag sna tshogs pa'i skor* (Miscellaneous Pith Instructions)**

*gTso che ba/ Ye shes mgon po'i khrid skor* (The main part about the instruction on Mahākāla)

- 1) *mGon po'i thugs bskyed tshul* (extant)
- 2) *rGya gzhung brgyad*<sup>849</sup> (extant)
- 3) *Nang sgrub dang mchog sgrub kyi dbang bka'* (extant)
- 4) *Srung zlog bsad gsum chig dril gyi man ngag* (extant)
- 5) *mNan bsad chig dril dang gtor chen gyi zhal gdams* (extant)
- 6) *rTen bzhi gnod gsum*<sup>850</sup> (extant)
- 7) *gNad yig* (missing)

<sup>846</sup> Possibly *Bar do'i ngo sprod mdor bsdus* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>847</sup> Possibly *Theg pa chen po'i blo sbyong skyid sdug lam khyer zhes bya ba byang chub sems kyi ljon pa* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>848</sup> There are three listings under this heading.

<sup>849</sup> However, these are not authored by *gTsug lag phreng ba*.

<sup>850</sup> Listed as *mGon po'i rten bzhi gnad gsum gyi man ngag* in the *Collected Works*.

- 8) *rNam shes 'phrog pa dang snying chu bsre ba sogs*<sup>851</sup> (extant)
- 9) *Ting nge 'dzin gyi dbang* (extant)
- 10) *mGon dkar yid bzhin nor bu'i sgrub thabs* (missing)
- 11) *Lha mo'i sgrub thabs*<sup>852</sup>
- 12) *'Khor lo bzhi sgos sgrub* (extant)
- 13) *gNod sbyin yab yum gyi sgos sgrub*<sup>853</sup>
- 14) *De'i spyi sgrub*<sup>854</sup>
- 15) *sGrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba*<sup>855</sup>
- 16) *De'i rgyud kyi zin bris*<sup>856</sup>
- 17) *Grib sel lugs gcig* (extant)

**sNa tshogs pa (Miscellaneous)**

- 18) *rTa mgrin gsang sgrub* (missing)
- 19) *Khyur po'i mgur brgyud* (missing)
- 20) *rGyud sde lnga lus dkyil du sgom pa'i rnal 'byor zab mo* (missing)
- 21) *bKa' gdams thig ge (sic!) bcu drug gi yang snying* (missing)
- 22) *Jo bo'i rnal 'byor srung ba'i skor* (missing)
- 23) *Khro bo bha ma na pa'i srung zlog* (missing)
- 24) *bKa' bsgo bden tshig* (missing)
- 25) *rNam 'joms ber lugs sogs lugs bzhi'i zin bris* (missing)
- 26) *Dzam dmar srog sgrub* (missing)
- 27) *Pañ chen nags rin lugs kyi dzam dmar rnams kyi zin bris* (missing)
- 28) *rNam 'joms ber lugs sogs lugs bzhi'i zin bris* (missing)
- 29) *rNam 'joms lus dkyil* (missing)
- 30) *Jo bo rje'i dzam dkar gyi zin bris* (missing)
- 31) *Dzam dmar gtor ma'i zin bris* (missing)
- 32) *Log tri'i sngags rgod kyi zin bris* (missing)
- 33) *'Jam dpal nā ga rakṣa pa'i sgrubs thabs zin bris rgyas pa* (missing)
- 34) *De'i bsdus pa* (missing)
- 35) *Khro bo sme brtsegs kyi sgrub thabs lam tshogs dang bcas pa'i zin bris* (missing)
- 36) *De'i sgrub thabs* (missing)
- 37) *gTsug tor 'bar ba'i srung zlog* (missing)
- 38) *sTeng gdon zhi byed rigs gsum gyi zin bris* (missing)
- 39) *Dam pa'i rten 'brel brgyad cu mkhyud dpyad dkar nag khra gsum ste man ngag sna tshogs pa* (missing)

<sup>851</sup> Listed as *rNam shes 'phrog pa dang snying chu bsre ba sogs man ngag bka' rgya ma rnams* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>852</sup> Probably listed as *Mai tri lugs kyi lha mo'i sgrub thabs* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>853</sup> Probably *gNod sbyin spyi sgrub* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>854</sup> Probably *gNod sbyin spyi sgrub* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>855</sup> Listed as *dPal ye shes mgon po'i phyag drug pai sgrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>856</sup> Listed as *mGon po'i rgyud kyi zin bris* in the *Collected Works*.

## XII. bCu gnyis pa dkar chag bkod yig gyi skor (Catalogues and Records of Arrangement)

- 1) *'Og min sras mkhar gyi gnas sprul pa'i pho brang chen por gser thog ji ltar bsgrubs pa las brtsams pa'i dkar chag gi yig tshang brjod pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho rmad tu byung ba'i gtam* (extant)
- 2) *sKu mkhar rin po che'i dkar chag bsdus pa* (missing)
- 3) *bKa' 'gyur snga phyi'i dkar chag don legs grub pa* (missing)
- 4) *'Og min rtse'i gnam rgyan*<sup>857</sup> (extant)
- 5) *De'i logs bris phyi nang bar sgo shar khyams rnams kyi bkod yig*<sup>858</sup>
- 6) *Ma mgon gyi thang sku'i bkod yig* (extant)
- 7) *mChod rdzas phul ba'i zhal yig* (extant)

### **gSar ma'i bkod yig chen mo (A Catalogue of the New Schools)**

- 8) *Bla ma lha khang du bka' brgyud kyi bla ma dang gnyis med rgyud kyi lha tshogs bzhugs pa'i bkod yig* (extant)
- 9) *'Od ldan gyi bkod yig* (extant)
- 10) *bKod pa bsam yas su bla med pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis bzhugs pa'i bkod yig*<sup>859</sup> (extant)
- 11) *Theg mchog pho brang du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum gyi bkod yig*<sup>860</sup> (extant)
- 12) *mThu stobs gling du chos skyong rnams kyi bkod yig ste sngags phyogs*<sup>861</sup> (extant)
- 13) *mDo ris la sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i dri gtsang khang gi sangs rgyas rnams kyi mtshan yig rags pa*<sup>862</sup> (extant)
- 14) *Sangs rgyas kyi mtshan lnga stong bzhi brgya nga gsum pa* (extant)
- 15) *rGyal sras rgya mtsho'i pho brang du rgyu'i theg pa'i sde snod gsum gyi ri mo rnams bzhugs pa'i bkod yig* (missing)
- 16) *g.Yam ring la dkon brtsegs dang las brgya pa* (missing)
- 17) *Gang po la sogs pa'i rtogs brjod brgya pa* (missing)
- 18) *Lang gshegs sogs sna tshogs pa'i bkod yig* (missing)
- 19) *Seng khri rdo rje'i gdan gyi bkod yig* (extant)
- 20) *Srid 'khor sogs thar 'khor sogs rung khang phyi'i bkod yig*<sup>863</sup> (extant)
- 21) *sGo srung rnams kyi bkod yig ste 'og skor gyi mdo bris*<sup>864</sup> *dang sgo g.yabs steng du rgya bod kyi lo pañ rnams dang / dpal ldan 'bras spungs kyi lha rnams bzhugs pa'i bkod yig*<sup>865</sup> (extant)

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<sup>857</sup> Probably the abbreviated title of *Sras mkhar sprul pa'i pho brang 'og min rtse yi rgya phubs gnam rgyan gyi dkyil 'khor bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>858</sup> Probably *sKu mkhar gyi 'og min rtse'i logs bris nang gi bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>859</sup> Probably refers to *bKod pa bsam yas su bla med pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis bzhugs pa las nub gung bde mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho sogs kyi bkod yig* and *bKod pa bsam su bla med pha rgyud ma rgyud gnyis las pha rgyud gshed skor gyi bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>860</sup> Extant in all three listed as *Theg mchog sngags kyi pho brang du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum las rnal 'byor rgyud kyi bkod yig*, *Theg mchog sngags kyi pho brang chen por bya spyod rnam 'byor gsum las spyod rgyud rig gsum gyi bkod yig*, and *Theg mchog pho brang du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum las bya rgyud rigs drug gi skabs kyi bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*

<sup>861</sup> Listed as *mThu stobs gling gi bkod yig* is included in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>862</sup> Listed as *Sangs rgyas mi 'gyur lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang chen po'i dri gtsang khang du bzhugs pa'i sangs rgyas rnams kyi mtshan yig rags pa* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>863</sup> Listed as *Srid 'khor dang thar 'khor gyi bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

<sup>864</sup> This part is missing.

<sup>865</sup> Listed as *sGo g.yabs steng gi bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

- 22) *dPal ldan 'bras spungs kyi mchod rten rgya gar rdo rje gdan rnams kyi bkod yig*  
(extant)<sup>866</sup>
- 23) *sNang ba rab gsal du mgron thabs kyi lha rnams bzhugs pa'i bkod yig*<sup>867</sup> (extant)
- 24) *Thams cad kyi gzhung sogs kyi gzungs kyi mtshan yig* (missing)
- 25) *Glegs bam 'di rnams kyi tho yig rang gis sbyar ba* (extant)

### **XIII. gCu gsum pa bsngo ba bkra shis kyi skor (Works on Dedications and Auspicious Wishes)**

*bsNgo ba smon lam bkra shis gsum las* (Dedication, Prayers and Auspicious Wishes)

*Dang po*

- 1) *rNam dkar gyi dge ba mi zad cing 'phel bar byed pa bsngo ba'i tshogs tshan pa gsum*  
(missing)
- 2) *bsNgo ba'i tshul rgyas pa tshogs gnyis spel ba'i gtsug lag* (missing)

*gNyi pa*

- 3) *Don thams cad grub pa smon lam gyi tshogs la chos tshan bco lnga* (missing)
- 4) *gZhan yang smon lam gyi rigs mang ba* (missing)

*gSum pa*

- 5) *Phun sum tshogs par byed pa shis brjod dang bde legs kyi tshogs la chos tshan lnga*  
(missing)
- 6) *bKra shis gong 'phel gyi dga' ston* (missing)

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<sup>866</sup> However, only the catalogue of rDo rje dgan is available.

<sup>867</sup> Listed as *sNang ba rab gsal bkod yig* in the *Collected Works*.

**Appendix C: Title List of the gSan yig of the *Collected Works* of gTsug lag phreng ba by lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597-1653) alias rDzogs chen pa Kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba.<sup>868</sup>**

Title: *rDzogs chen pa kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba'i thob yig las/ rje btsun dam pa gtsug lag 'phreng ba'i bka' 'bum gyi skor thob tshuls*

*Thog mar bstod tshogs kyi skor*

- 1) *rDo rje 'chang*
- 2) *Tilli*
- 3) *Nāro*
- 4) *Mar mi dwags gsum*
- 5) *Byang sems blo gros rin chen*
- 6) *Sa ra ha*
- 7) *Klu sgrub*
- 8) *Arya de wa*
- 9) *Zla grags*
- 10) *Sha wa ra*
- 11) *Mai tri pa*
- 12) *rTa dbyangs*
- 13) *Zhi ba lha*
- 14) *Jo bo rje*
- 15) *Khro phu lo tsa*
- 16) *Zha lu lo chen*
- 17) *Dwags ram pa rnams la bstod pa*
- 18) *rJe mi bskyod zhabs la bstod pa tshan gnyis*
- 19) *sTon pa'i 'khrungs rabs brgya rtsa dang dpag bsam khri shing gi sdom tshig*
- 20) *mDzad pa bcu gnyis par bstod pa*
- 21) *bSam gyis mi khyab par bstod pa*
- 22) *bDud las rgyal bar bstod pa*
- 23) *Blo las 'das par bstod pa*
- 24) *bsTod pa yid kyi gdung sel*
- 25) *Thugs rje rnam par bskul ba*
- 26) *Yid kyi gdung ba sel ba*
- 27) *bDud bzhi rab tu bcom pa*
- 28) *Sangs rgyas kyi mtshan 'phreng la bstod pa*
- 29) *Dam pa'i chos bstod pa*
- 30) *Tshe dpag med*
- 31) *rDor sems*
- 32) *Rin 'byung*
- 33) *'Jam dbyangs rnams la bstod pa*
- 34) *sPyan ras gzigs la bstod pa yig dang sbyar ba tshan gsum*
- 35) *gZhan tshan pa bzhi*
- 36) *Phyag rdor la rgyud bzhin bstod pa*

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<sup>868</sup> Kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba was his ordination name (*bDud 'joms chos 'byung*, p. 488).

- 37) *gTum po dkar po la bstod pa*
- 38) *Shes phyir dkar mo*
- 39) *sGrol dkar*
- 40) *dByangs can ma rnams la bstod pa*
- 41) *Chos skyong gi bstod pa tshan bzhi*
- 42) *gSol 'debs kyi tshogs la chos tshan drug*
- 43) *brTan bzhugs kyi skor*
- 44) *dPal rtswā ri trī gnas bstod gnyis*
- 45) *Byang chub sems nor bzang gi rtogs brjod*
- 46) *rJe btsun mar pa'i rnam thar*
- 47) *rJe dpa' bo'i sku skye rnam rim gyi rnam thar*
- 48) *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston dpe tshan bcu gsum*
- 49) *Legs sbyar bklag thabs 'grel pa dang bcas pa*
- 50) *Ka lā pa'i mtshams sbyor*
- 51) *Ming le dang po*
- 52) *Slob phan gyi mtshams sbyor drug pa rnams kyi mchan 'grel*
- 53) *Sum rtags kyi 'grel pa*
- 54) *sNyan ngag me long*
- 55) *sDeb sbyor rin 'byung gi mchan 'grel*
- 56) *Sum rtags kyi tshig phrad bshad pa*

*gSo dpyad kyi skor*

- 57) *Byi ba ring bsrel las bsdus pa'i rtsa dpyad*
- 58) *Chu dpyad*
- 59) *Rlung nad spyi gso ba*
- 60) *sTod 'tshangs kyi bcos*
- 61) *Srog rlung gi sgos bcos*
- 62) *Tsha ba spyi 'joms tshan gnyis*
- 63) *Tshad sar gyi bcos*
- 64) *mKhris pa'i bcos*
- 65) *gZer bcos*
- 66) *De'i zhal gdams*
- 67) *Gag pa'i bcos*
- 68) *A ru ra'i sman mar*
- 69) *Ma na'u 'phrul 'khor*
- 70) *rTa bong gi bcos*
- 71) *Srang 'byar*
- 72) *Chu bcos*
- 73) *sPyi 'joms*
- 74) *Srin bcos*
- 75) *mGo srin ya ma'i chos tshan bzhi*
- 76) *Grang ba spyi 'joms*
- 77) *dNgul sbyor*
- 78) *mDze bcos med 'byin*
- 79) *gNyan kha med bcos*
- 80) *dKar po gcig thub*

- 81) *'Bras 'dul*
- 82) *Rlung khrig gi gzer khrung*
- 83) *Rlung nad ce sbyang gi bcos*
- 84) *rMen sbyor*
- 85) *sByongs gi man ngag gi skor*
- 86) *rDo zhun gsal sgron*
- 87) *gTer mdzod gnyis*
- 88) *sTobs bskyed*
- 89) *Dug bsrung*
- 90) *sPyi 'joms drag po*
- 91) *Dug gi bsrung ba*
- 92) *sTod 'tshangs sel ba*
- 93) *rKang 'bam gyi bcos*
- 94) *rMa bcos*
- 95) *dNgul chu'i dug phyungs sngags la brten pa rnams gso rig gi skor*
- 96) *mDo sde sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus*
- 97) *bsKal bzang gi mdor phar phyin brgyad khri bzhi stong bshad pa'i zin bris*
- 98) *Las brgya pa dang gang po'i rtogs brjod sogs kyi zin bris*
- 99) *mDzangs blun gyi don bsdus dang sdom tshig*
- 100) *rGyud sde sna tshogs pa'i lung bsdus*
- 101) *rDo rje mkha' 'gro dang*
- 102) *gDan bzhi'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i dbyangs khyim*
- 103) *Dus sbyor rten 'brel bcu gnyis rnams kyi mo yig*
- 104) *rGyud kyi gzungs dang mtshan sna tshogs*
- 105) *'Dul ba tika skya rengs snang ba*
- 106) *dByar gnas dgag dbye gso sbyong gi cho ga*
- 107) *'Dul ba'i dus 'das byung*
- 108) *dGe slong gi sdom sbyin tshe brjod pa*
- 109) *sPyod 'jug gi sher le dang*
- 110) *rGyud bla*
- 111) *Yan lag gi ltung ba brgya dang brgyad bcu'i sdom rnams kyi mchan ma*
- 112) *sPyod 'jug gi 'grel chen*
- 113) *'Bri khung dgongs gcig gi tshoms dang po*
- 114) *So thar gnad bsdus kyi tshoms*
- 115) *Byang sdom dang sngags sdom gyi tshoms*
- 116) *Chos kyi 'khor lo'i tshoms*
- 117) *'Bras bu sangs rgyas pa'i tshoms rnams kyi zin bris*
- 118) *mChod rten brgyad kyi thig rtsa*
- 119) *gZhung rnam 'byed kyi 'brel (sic!) bshad*
- 120) *Mos gus bdun ma'i 'grel pa*
- 121) *rNam rtog chos sku'i bshad pa tshan gnyis*
- 122) *rDo rje slob dpon bsten tshul*
- 123) *Bla ma lnga bcu pa'i rnam bshad*
- 124) *dBang rdor dril*
- 125) *bZlas pa sogs kyi rnam gzhag*
- 126) *dKyil 'khor gyi rnam gzhag lu lugs*
- 127) *dKyil 'khor spyi thig*

- 128) *Phag mo'i gsang sgrub kyi rnam bshad rgyas pa*  
129) *Zab mo nang don gyi zin bris mthong bas khong chod*  
130) *Nang don snying po'i rnam bshad*  
131) *rJe rang byung bas mdzad pa'i de bzhin gshegs snying dang*  
132) *Phung lnga rab 'byed*  
133) *rNam shes ye shes brtags pa rnams kyi mchan 'grel*  
134) *Phyag rgya chen mo lta ba nam mkha' rdo rje*  
135) *Gāngga ma*  
136) *Sha ba ra'i do ha brda'i glu*  
137) *Tili pa'i do ha*  
138) *Nā ro pa'i lta ba mdor bsdus mchan 'grel*  
139) *rTsis kun btus pa'i 'grel chen*  
140) *Lo tshig chos 'byung re'u mig dang bcas pa*  
141) *Dus 'khor dbang chog dang*  
142) *Lus dkyil*  
143) *sGrub thabs dang bcos*  
144) *rJe dus mkhyen gyi thugs dam lnga tshan lngar grags pa'i mngon dkyil*  
145) *bDe mchog lha lnga'i sgrub thabs*  
146) *dGyes rdor lha lnga'i ting 'dzin gyi dbang*  
147) *rGyal ba rgya mtsho lha lnga'i cho ga*  
148) *De nyid kyi sgo nas ngan song gnas sbyong*  
149) *sByin sreg gi cho ga gnyis*  
150) *sByong dkyil bcu gnyis kyi mngon dkyil phyag rdor 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i cho ga*  
151) *Kun rig cho ga 'bring po*  
152) *sGrol dkar gyi sgrub thabs dang cho ga rgyas bsdus gsum*  
153) *gTsug tor rnam rgyal gyi sgrub thabs*  
154) *Phyag rdor gyi sgrub thabs rgyas bsdus gsum*  
155) *Thugs rje chen po zhal bcu gcig pa'i sgrub thabs rjes gnang*  
156) *De'i nyer mkho*  
157) *Tshe dpag grub rgyal ma'i sgrub thabs gnyis*  
158) *Tshe sgrub kyi snying po*  
159) *Tshe sgrub rin chen nyi 'od kyi cho ga*  
160) *'Jam dkar gyi sgrub thabs*  
161) *Rab gnas kyi cho ga gnyis*  
162) *rTa mgrin lcags ral can gyi sgrub thabs*  
163) *mKha' 'gro seng gdong ma'i sgrub thabs dang rjes gnang*  
164) *dPal ldan zhing skyong dbang po'i rjes gnang*  
165) *Ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa'i gtor chog rgyas 'bring dang*  
166) *sPyan gzigs 'bul chog*  
167) *dPal ldan dud sol ma'i gtor chog rgyas 'bring*  
168) *Ma mgon 'khor bcos drag bskul*  
169) *Phud gtor gyi cho ga*  
170) *bZhes 'bod*  
171) *Dam can spyi'i gtor 'bul*  
172) *bSangs yig*  
173) *Ber nag can gyi gtor 'bul*

- 174) *Zhing skyong dang dam can gyi gtor chog*  
 175) *Phyag bzhi pas gtso byas 'dod lha'i spyi gtor*  
 176) *g.Ya' bzang pa'i ma mgon gyi gtor chog*  
 177) *Kha ba'or ma'i gtor chen*  
 178) *Klu gtor*  
 179) *Grwa tshang karma rig 'dzin grub mchog sde'i bca' yig*  
 180) *Thugs bskyed kyi cho ga gsum*  
 181) *Yan lag nyi shu pa'i kha skong yan lag bzhi pa*  
 182) *Byang sems las dang po pa ltung ba las slong ba*  
 183) *Nyin zhag phrugs gcig gi chos spyod*  
 184) *gTor ma brgya rtsa mdor bsdus*  
 185) *Ri chos bdud rtsi nying khu*  
 186) *Ri chos gnad kyi lde mig*  
 187) *sDe'u sogs bcud len gyi rigs sna tshogs*  
 188) *gSan yig gi skor la rje mi bskyod zhabs dang*  
 189) *sPyan snga chos kyi grags pa*  
 190) *rJe 'phrin las pa*  
 191) *Zha lu lo chen*  
 192) *sNyug lha paṅ chen*  
 193) *Dwags ram pa*  
 194) *Grub thob dbus smyon*  
 195) *'Chi med dpal bzang*  
 196) *Blo gros dbang phyug*  
 197) *Rab 'byams tshul khrims dbang phyug*  
 198) *Buddha ma ti sogs la/ bka'/ bstan/ dbang / lung / rjes gnang sogs kyi gsan yig  
 dum bu bcu gnyis*  
 199) *Nyid kyi rnam thar rtogs brjod dang*  
 200) *Don tshan dgu pa*  
 201) *gSang ba'i rnam thar*  
 202) *Rang gi rtogs brjod las brtsams pa*  
 203) *bDag tshul yang dag gi yi ge*  
 204) *Bla ma bar gle ba'i dres [(sic!)]lan*  
 205) *gTsug lag khang gsar ma'i byung ba brjod pa*  
 206) *mGur las ched brjod dang po*  
 207) *gNyi pa/ yang dag pa'i do ha*  
 208) *gZhan bskum [(sic!)]gyi mgur*  
 209) *rJe yab sras rnam kyi drung du zhu yig phul ba'i rigs*  
 210) *rJe mi bskyod zhabs kyi bka' shog ngos bshus*  
 211) *sPrin yig tshigs su bcad pa'i tshogs*  
 212) *bKa' bsrung gzhi bdag la gdams pa'i sprin yig*  
 213) *dGe bskul gyi yi ge/*  
 214) *Drin [(sic!)]lan gyi tshogs rgyas pa/*  
 215) *Thar rgyan gyi gtam rgyud/*  
 216) *Bla ma'i rnam 'byor gyi skor rgyas bsdus rnam dang /*  
 217) *Bla ma sku gsum du bsgrub pa/*  
 218) *sNying po don gsum gyi khrid yig*

- 219) *Thugs rje chen po'i smar khrid tshan pa bzhi/*  
 220) *Phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig gnyis*  
 221) *Phyag chen yig bzhi'i snying po*  
 222) *lNga ldan gyi khrid yig rgyas bsdus lnga*  
 223) *rGyal ba rgya mtsho'i lha khrid*  
 224) *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i lha khrid rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum*  
 225) *Rlung sems gnyis med dang sgyu ma gsum rgyud kyi yig cha*  
 226) *Chos drug gi spyi chings dang / bsre 'pho'i zhal gdams*  
 227) *gCod khrid*  
 228) *Ku sā li'i tshogs gsog dang ngag 'dod dang / gcod kyi maṅdral*  
 229) *Ro snyom [(sic!)]kyi yang snying*  
 230) *sByor drug gi snying po dang / rim pa gnyis kyi rnal 'byor zab mo*  
 231) *bDe mchog dril bu'i lugs kyi rdzogs rim*  
 232) *dGyes rdor gtum mo lam rdzogs kyi dmigs rim*  
 233) *rJe mi bskyod zhabs kyi gsung la zin bris su mdzad pa'i sgyu lus/ rmi lam/ 'od  
 gsal/ 'pho ba rnams kyi gdams pa*  
 234) *O rgyan bsnyen sgrub zin bris dang*  
 235) *De'i dbang gong ma'i cho ga*  
 236) *Lus 'dul bcu bdun pa/ byang sems 'gyur med/ gser snye/ nor phreng rnams kyi  
 'khrul 'khor rtsa tshig*  
 237) *'Khrul 'khor rgyas pa'i don bsdus dang / ras chung snyan rgyud/ lam 'bras  
 gnad bsdus/ ko brag pa'i gegs sel gyi gdams pa ha bdun cu pa dang bcas pa'i zin  
 bris*  
 238) *rJe mi bskyod zhabs kyis zhal gzigs ma'i khrid rim*  
 239) *lTa sgom spyod pa'i rnam gzhag gi snying po*  
 240) *Zhal gdams snying gi mun sel*  
 241) *Byin rlabs snying po*  
 242) *gSer gyi yang zhun*  
 243) *De kho nyid mtshon byed kyi man ngag gi snying po*  
 244) *Phyag chen zab mo'i mdzod*  
 245) *'Pho ba dang bar do'i gdams pa*  
 246) *Bar do'i ngo sprod gnyis*  
 247) *rNal 'byor bzhi'i don gsal byed*  
 248) *Theg chen rtogs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed*  
 249) *Zhal gdams rin po che'i 'phreng ba dang*  
 250) *Thor bu tshig bcad kyi skor*  
 251) *rGyal ba rgya mtsho lha lnga'i bskyed rdzogs*  
 252) *rDor sems sgom bzlas gnyis*  
 253) *Thugs rje chen po'i sgom bzlas rgyas bsdus gnyis*  
 254) *dPal mgon phyag drug pa'i thugs bskyed tshul*  
 255) *rGya gzhung gsang sgrub dang mchog sgrub kyi dbang bka'*  
 256) *bSrung zlog gsad gsum chig gril*  
 257) *mNan gsad chig gril dang gtor chen gyi zhal gdams*  
 258) *rNam shes 'phro dang snying chu bsre por ti [(sic!)] 'dzin gyi dbang*  
 259) *dGon dkar sgrub thabs*  
 260) *Lha mo'i sgrub thabs*

- 261) *'Khor bzhi'i sgos sgrub*
- 262) *gNod sbyin yab yum gyi sgos sgrub*
- 263) *De'i sre sgrub*
- 264) *Ye shes mgon po'i sgrub thabs man ngag dang sbyar ba*
- 265) *rGyud kyi zin bris*
- 266) *Grib sel*
- 267) *rTa mgrin gsang sgrub grub thob khyung po rnal 'byor gyi mgur brgyad kyi zhal dkrol ba*
- 268) *rGyud sde lnga lus dkyil du sgom thabs*
- 269) *bKa' gdams thig le bcu drug gi yang snying*
- 270) *Jo bo'i rna 'byor bsrung ba'i skor*
- 271) *mKha' 'gro bha ya na'i bsrung bzlog*
- 272) *bKa' bsgo bden tshig*
- 273) *Dzam dmar gsang sgrub*
- 274) *Paṅ chen nags rin nas brgyud pa'i dzam dmar dang / jo bo'i dzam dkar/ rnam 'joms bir lugs sogs lugs bzhi'i zin bris*
- 275) *rNam 'joms lus dkyil*
- 276) *Dzam dmar gra pa mngon shes kyi gter ma dang / drang srong loktri/ nā ga rakśa rnams kyi sgrub thabs zin bris rgyas bsdus*
- 277) *rMe brtsegs kyi sgrub thabs las tshogs dang bcas pa gnyis*
- 278) *gTsug tor 'bar ba'i bsrung zlog*
- 279) *sTeng gdon zhi byed rigs gsum gyi zin bris*
- 280) *Pha dam pa'i rten 'brel brgyad cu dang / 'khyur dpyad dkar nag khra gsum dang bcas pa'i zin bris*
- 281) *Sras mkhar sprul ba'i phreng gi gser thog sgrub tshul gyi lo rgyus*
- 282) *sKu mkhar gyi dkar chag*
- 283) *'Og min rtse'i gnam rgyan dang de'i log bris phyi nang sogs kyi bkod yig*
- 284) *bKa' 'gyur gyi phyi'i dkar chag*
- 285) *Ma mgon zhal thang gi bkod yig*
- 286) *mChod rdzas phul ba'i zhal yig*
- 287) *Bla ma lha khang du bka' rgyud kyi bla ma rnams dang gnyis med rgyud kyi lha tshogs bzhugs pa'i bkod yig*
- 288) *'Od ldan bkod pa bsam yas su bla med pha rgyud gnyis las/ bde mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho gur ltag gnyis phyag thig snying po ye shes thig le sambhu ṭa rnams dang*
- 289) *gSang 'dus gshed skor sogs kyi bkod yig*
- 290) *Theg mchog phreng du bya spyod rnal 'byor gsum/ spyod rgyud rigs gsum/ bya rgyud rigs drug sgröl ma brgya rtsa/ gza' yum/ tshogs bdag\_rta mgrin lugs gnyis dang*
- 291) *mThu stobs gling gi bkod yig dang bcas pa'i sngags phyogs dang*
- 292) *mDo ris ni/ dri gtsang khang gi sangs rgyas rnams dang*
- 293) *Sangs rgyas kyi mtshan lnga stong bzhi brgya*
- 294) *mDo khyams chen mor rgyu'i theg pa sde snod gsum gyi lha tshogs*
- 295) *sGo g.yab steng du/ rgya bod kyi lo paṅ rnams dang*
- 296) *rDo rje gdan dang dpal ldan 'bras spung gi mchod rten*
- 297) *sNang ba rab gsal*

- 298) *Srid 'khor dang thar 'khor*  
299) *'Dul ba cho 'phrul seng khri dang rdo rje gdan*  
300) *sGo srung rnams dang bcas pa'i bkod yig dang bcas pa*  
301) *bsNgo ba'i tshogs rgyas pa tshan gnyis*  
302) *sMon lam gyi skor tshan pa bco lnga dang*  
303) *gZhan bskul gyi ngor mdzad pa'i smon lam mang po dang*  
304) *Shis brjod dang bde legs kyi tshogs chos tshan lnga*  
305) *bKra shis gong 'phel gyi dga' ston*