

On the history and identification of two of the Thirteen Later Translations of the Dzogchen Mind Series

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The *Eighteen Major Scriptural Transmissions* of the Mind Series, in Tibetan *Sems sde lung chen po bco brgyad*, constitute probably the earliest extant group of texts from the Tibetan Great Perfection (*rDzogs chen*) tradition. As such, they have been held in reverence from the earliest period of the emergence of the *rNying ma* school right up to the present day. Modern scholarship, however, has barely begun to devote the attention to them which their historical importance deserves.

As the subject of my doctoral studies I have chosen to examine the sub-group of the Eighteen Major Scriptural Transmissions known to the tradition as the *Thirteen Later Translations*, in Tibetan *Phyi 'gyur bcu gsum*. These texts are described as having been translated in the eighth century C.E. by Vimalamitra and others during the exile of Vairocana, who translated the *sNga 'gyur lnga* or *Five Early Translations*.¹

The earliest lists of titles of the *Thirteen Later Translations* are found in the writings of the twelfth century treasure revealer Nyang Ral Nyi ma 'od zer. He gives two lists, one in his *Zangs gling ma* biography of Padmasambhava,² and the other in his religious history, the *Me tog snying po*.³ There are significant differences between the two lists, however, and subsequent lists drawn up by various authors⁴ also show marked variations, symptomatic of continuing fluidity in the composition of this group of texts.

This paper addresses the question of the history and identity of two of the texts whose titles are included in most of the extant lists, including that of the great fourteenth century *rNying ma* scholar and visionary, Klong chen rab 'byams, but whose locations have hitherto been undetermined, namely, the *sGom pa don grub* and the *Yid bzhin nor bu*.

¹ Karmay, 1988, p. 24.

² Found in Jamgon Kongtrul's *Rin chen gter mdzod*, Vol. 1, Paro, 1976, p. 78.4-p. 80.2. The *Zangs gling ma* is available in an English translation by E.P. Kunsang, entitled *The Lotus Born*.

³ *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, pp. 320-321.

⁴ Apart from Nyang Ral, lists of the texts are found in the following sources: Klong chen rab 'byams: *Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa lung gi gter mdzod*, fol. 334/p. 749; *Grub mtha' mdzod*, fol. 284/p. 1169. rGyal sras thugs mchog rtsal: *Chos 'byung rin po che'i gter mdzod bstan pa'i gsal bar byed pa'i nyi 'od*, also known as *Klong chen chos byung*, Vol. 2, p. 51.2. dPa' bo gtsug lag: *Chos 'byung mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, ed. Lokesh Chandra, 1959, Vol. 1, p. 221. *Bairo'i 'dra 'bag chen mo* in the *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum*, Leh 1971, Vol. 8, pp. 405-605; the list begins on p. 519.4; English translation entitled *The Great Image* by Ani Jinba Palmo, where the list is on pp. 117, 118. Sog zlog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan: *bDag po rin po che'i chos 'byung la zhal snga nas blo bzang pas dgag pa mdzad pa*; in *Collected works of Sog zlog pa* Vol. 2, fol. 256.4. *Sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa rig 'dzin ruam kyis rdo rje'i glur bzhengs pa*, in *rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa*, Vol. Tsa, p. 298ff, translated by E.P. Kunsang in *Wellsprings of the Great Perfection*, pp. 53-74. This list of sources is not exhaustive, merely representing those I have consulted for this paper.

1. The *bsGom pa don grub*

The *sGom pa don grub* is listed by Nyang Ral in his *Zangs gling ma* as one of the *Thirteen Later Translations*, where it is described as "teaching the method of meditation".⁵ However, in his second list,⁶ it has vanished, leaving an incomplete complement of only seventeen titles to make up the *Eighteen Major Scriptural Transmissions*. This suggests that the status or identity of this text was to some extent problematic by the twelfth century.

It is clear from a comparison of the various extant title lists that some contain a (*b*)*sGom pa don grub* while others, sometimes in the same place in the list, have a *bsGom pa don drug*. For example, Klong chen rab 'byams has a *bsGom pa don grub* as his text number eighteen,⁷ while rGyal sras thugs mchog rtsal⁸ has a *sGom pa don drug ma* placed very unusually as the fifth of the *sNga 'gyur lnga*. The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*⁹ and *Bairo'i 'dra 'bag chen mo*¹⁰ omit the title from their lists altogether. Even so, the *Bairo dra 'bag chen mo* does mention a *Byang sems don drug* in a list of texts said to have been translated by Vairocana.¹¹ In the same position in a virtually identical list in the *Padma bKa' thang* biography of Padmasambhava by Orgyen Lingpa¹² is a *Byang sems don grub*.

Any remaining doubt that we are dealing with a single text with two alternative titles is fortunately dispelled by the Rig 'dzin tshe dbang Nor bu edition of the Collected Tantras of the Ancients (*rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*). In its volume Ka, text twenty has as its cover title *Sems bsgom don drug pa*, but its title at the beginning of the actual text reads *Byang chub kyi sems sgom pa don grub pa*.¹³ At the end of this short text, the colophon gives the form once again as *don drug pa*. I set out below my translation and transliteration of this text from the volume now held in the Bodleian library, Oxford. It nicely matches Nyang Ral's description as "teaching the method of meditation". To my current knowledge, it appears to be the only extant "free-standing" version of the *sgom pa don grub/don drug*.¹⁴

(Folio 185a, 1.4) In the language of India: *bo dhi tsi ta sa ma ti a mo gha tsa na ma*. In Tibetan: *Accomplishing the aim of meditation on the Mind of Enlightenment*. Homage to glorious Samantabhadra, the great bliss! The sea of compas-

⁵ *sGom pa'i thabs bstan pa'i phyir*; *Zangs gling ma*, vol. 1, fol. 40 / p. 79 l. 1.

⁶ That is, the *Me tog snying po* list. Although the question of which of these two works is earlier is not yet settled by modern scholarship, Dan Martin dates the latter text to the late 1100's; see Martin D., *Tibetan Histories*, p. 30.

⁷ *Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa lung gi gter mdzod*, fol. 334/ p. 749.5; Norbu & Clemente, 1999, p. 244.

⁸ *Klong chen chos byung*, Vol. 2, p. 51.4; Norbu & Clemente, 1999, p. 247.

⁹ *Chos 'byung mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, Vol. 1, p. 221.

¹⁰ *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum*, Vol. 8, p. 519.4 ff.

¹¹ Norbu & Clemente, 1999, p. 248.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 249.

¹³ Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang Norbu, Vol. Ka, fol. 185a. 3.

¹⁴ See below regarding its incorporation, under the chapter title *Zab mo don drug gi le'u*, into the *Khor ba rtsad nas gcod pa nyi zla dang mnyam pa dri ma med pa'i rgyud*.

sionate energy pervades all sentient beings, but the gods and nāgas, although they attend to the authentic teachings, will never venerate the Three Jewels. Once great beings have seen this realization for themselves, the realization of the true nature of things accomplished through great bliss, the mind of fortunate ones will understand it.

Phenomena and mind are, from the beginning, without duality. Since, despite searching for it, one does not find the mind's nature, there is nothing to show to another, saying "it's like this". Because mind and phenomena are not anything at all, when one meditates, one will not meditate on anything. Whatever characteristics of conceptual thought may arise, if one knows that very thought to be the true nature of things, there is no need to meditate on the realm of reality as anywhere else. In that, there is nothing to correct through antidotes or to suppress. In this way, non-distraction from this real state, through the three times and in all situations, is the Dharmakāya.

When this becomes powerful, the world has no self-nature. Compassionate energy's manifestation pervades everything, and pours a great rain of love upon sentient beings. When meditation and that which is experienced in meditation are without duality, blissfully being present in the state of the absolute is also what is called "meditation on the mind of enlightenment". Meditation on the immaculate mind of enlightenment signifies non-distraction [by] the great current of conceptual thought.

This concludes *Six points on Meditation on the Mind of Enlightenment*.¹⁵

The ambiguity over the title would seem to have its origin even earlier than Nyang Ral's twelfth-century lists. In fact, the ninth-to-tenth century *bSam gtan mig sgron* by Nub Sangs rgyas Ye shes quotes from a text entitled *Don drug pa* twice in its chapter seven.¹⁶ These citations exactly match the *sGom pa don grub* text found in the Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang Nor bu edition.

How did a text that was presumably originally entitled *sGom pa don grub* — *Accomplishing the aim of meditation*, or more succinctly, *Success in meditation*¹⁷ —

¹⁵ Folio 185a, l.4: *rgya gar skad du/ bo dhi tsi ta sa ma ti a mo gha tsa na ma/ bod skad du/ byang chub kyi sems sgom pa don grub pa zhes bya ba/ dpal kun tu bzang po bde ba chen po la phyag 'tshal [lol/ thug rje rgya mtsho (l. 5) sems can kun la khyab/ lha dang klu yang bden pa'i bka' nyan te/ dkon mchog gsum ni nam yang bskur mi bya/ chos nyid rtogs [pa?] bde ba chen por grub/ skyes bu chen po rang gis rig nas rtogs pa 'di/ skal (l. 6) ldan rnam kyi blo la go bar gyis/ chos dang sems ni ye nas gnyis su med/ sems kyi rang bzhin btsal yang ma rnyed na/ gzhan la 'di 'dra zhes ni bstan du med/ sems dang chos ni ci yang ma yin pas/ sgom (l. 7) pa'i tshe na ci yang mi bsgom mo/ rnam par rtog pa'i mtshan ma ci byung yang/ rtog pa de nyid chos nyid yin shes na/ chos kyi dbyings ni gzhan du bsgom mi dgos/ de la gnyen pos bcos shing dgag tu med/ 'di (Fol. 185 b) ltar dus gsum rnam pa thams cad du/ nyid las ma yengs pa ni chos kyi sku/ stobs su gyur na 'jig rten rang bzhin med/ thugs rje sprul pas kun la khyab mdzad cing/ sems can rnam la byam pa'i char chen (l. 2) 'bebs/ bsgom dang bsgom par bya ba gnyis med na/ don dam ngang la bde bar gnas pa ni/ byang chub sems sgom zhes kyang de la bya/ rtog pa'i rlung chen ma yengs don ston pa/ rnam dag byang chub sems (l. 3) kyi bsgom pa yin/ byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa don drug pa rdzogs so.*

¹⁶ *bSam gtan mig sgron* 441.3-4: *rnam par rtog pa'i mtshan ma ci byung yang/ rtog pa de nyid chos nyid yin zhe na/ chos kyi dbyings nyid zhan du bsgom mi dgos; 474.6: 'di ltar dus gsum rnam pa thams cad du/ nyid las ma yengs pa ni chos kyi sku/ stobs su gyur na 'jig rten rang bzhin med/ .*

¹⁷ *Bo dhi tsi ta sa ma ti a mo gha tsa*, the version of the title supposedly transliterated from Sanskrit, seems closer to the *don drug* Tibetan title, since *tsa* is likely to represent Sanskrit adjectival

come to be known as *sGom pa don drug*, *The six points of meditation?*¹⁸ The answer may not be as simple as someone deciding that the text contained six points, and renaming it accordingly. In fact, there does not seem to be any clearly-discernible structure of six points in the text.¹⁹

In the various editions of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* there is a group of texts whose title contains the phrase "cutting Saṃsāra from the root", *khor ba rtsad nas gcod pa* in Tibetan. One of the group, Tb.40 in the *mTshams brag* edition,²⁰ entitled '*Khör ba rtsad nas gcod pa nyi zla dang mnyam pa dri ma med pa'i rgyud*', consists of five *rDzogs chen* texts spread out over its chapters two to eleven. The titles given to these are as follows: *rDo rje tshig drug* (Chapter two, folios 696.7-697.2); *Zab mo don drug* (Chapter three, folios 697.2-698.1); *rTsol bral rtsal drug* (Chapter four, folios 698.1-699.1); *Yangs pa che ba drug* (Chapter five, folios 699.1-700.7); and chapters six to eleven, five of whose titles include the word *thig le*. The first chapter consists of an introduction in which Sattvavajra (*Sems dpa' rdo rje*), requests Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po*) to explain various points by means of what he calls on fol. 696.5 *drug tshan lnga yi bshad pa*, that is, "the explanation of five sets of six".²¹

The *drug tshan lnga* are in fact the *Rig pa'i khu byug*, the *bsGom pa don drug/grub*, the *rTsal chen sprugs pa*, roughly the last two-thirds of the *Khyung chen lding ba*,²² and finally, what appears from its short title and its contents to be a version of the *thig le drug pa*.²³ These texts have been grouped together according

number *ṣaṭ*, six. *Don grub*, on the other hand, would be Amoghasiddhi or Siddhartha, (both also Buddha names), in Sanskrit. However, the Sanskrit can not simply be accepted without reservation as being the text's original title. Moreover, the absence of *sandhi* between the words *samādhi* and *amogha* (which would give *samādhyamogha*), as well as the divergence between the apparent meaning of the Sanskrit title and that of the Tibetan, in immediate juxtaposition here, strongly suggests that the text passed at some stage through the hands of one or more redactors or copyists unfamiliar with Sanskrit.

¹⁸ The two titles are not as far apart as the two English translations would suggest, as *don* is a multivalent term that can mean aim, purpose, meaning, aspect or point. The only real point of difference is between *grub* (achieve) and *drug* (six), two words which are pronounced similarly in Tibetan.

¹⁹ However, a tentative division into six points might be as follows: 1) *chos dang sems ni ye nas gnyis su med* 2) *sems kyi rang bzhin btsal yang ma rnyed na/ gzhan la 'di 'dra zhes ni bstan du med* 3) *sems dang chos ni ci yang ma yin pas/ sgom* (l. 7) *pa'i tshes na ci yang mi bsgom mo/ 4) rnam par rtog pa'i mtshan ma ci byung yang/ rtog pa de nyid chos nyid yin shes na/ chos kyi dbyings ni gzhan du bsgom mi dgos/ 5) de la gnyen pos bcos shing dgag tu med/ 6) di* (Fol. 185 b) *ltar dus gsum rnam pa thams cad du/ nyid las ma yengs pa ni chos kyi sku/* (the last point perhaps also including the subsequent lines concerning the fruition of the practice).

²⁰ This text is also found in *sDe dge* vol. Cha (Dg. 121); Taiwan edition Tb1. 4499; Kaneko catalogue Tk. 1.6; *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum* vol. Kha (Bg. 25).

²¹ Line 3 of the same folio gives their condensed titles as: *tshig drug don drug rtsal drug ste/ che ba drug dang thig le drug/ 'gro drug 'khör ba'i dra ba gcad /*.

²² Tb40/Tk. 18's chapter five opens with four lines that are not part of the *khyung chen lding ba*: [*de nas bcom ldan bka' stsal pa/ mi gnas dmigs med chos kyi sku/ spros med byang chub snying po'i don/ bde chen sprul pa gnyis su med/ gzhan nas mi btsal rang las byung/*. Chapter five then follows the *khyung chen lding ba*, from that text's *zin dang chags dang bral dang zhi* up to its end.

²³ The *Thig le drug pa* is another of the text titles included in lists of the *Thirteen Later Translations* whose identity is somewhat problematic. None of the quotations from it in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* are found in these chapters of Tb. 40.

to an overarching numerical principle of "sets of six", which certainly is relevant to the *Rig pa'i khu byug*, consisting as it does of six lines, and sometimes referred to by its alternative title of *Six vajra lines* (*rDo rje tshig drug*) to this day.²⁴ It also seems apposite to include the *Thig le drug pa* in such a group. However, its relevance to the other texts, and to the *sGom pa don grub* in particular, appears less obvious.

Regarding its dating and authorship, Tb. 40 has echoes of the *Kun byed rgyal po* in some of its language.²⁵ Unlike the *Kun byed rgyal po*, however, it incorporates not just texts from the *sNga 'gyur lnga*, but also two of the *Thirteen Later Translations*. Tb. 40 is likely to postdate the composition of the *Kun byed rgyal po*, but this is of limited usefulness for dating, as the *Kun byed rgyal po* itself, although considered as "the fundamental tantra of the rDzogs chen Mind Series",²⁶ has not been firmly dated.

Both Tb. 40 and the closely-related text that follows it, Tb. 41,²⁷ are said in their colophons to have been translated into Tibetan by the eighth century Indian paṇḍit Śrī Siṃha and the Tibetan translator Vairocana. Tb. 41 adds a rather odd redactor's colophon, however, which appears to say that "the Novice monk of gNyi ba, Nyi ma rdo rje, made the *Five Earlier Translations* and the *Thirteen Later Translations* as [?] Tantras".²⁸ Now, while Tb. 40 incorporates actual texts of the Five Earlier Translations, the texts included in Tb. 41 although bearing the titles of the Thirteen Later Translations, appear (with the possible exception of chapter ten, the *Yid bzhin nor bu'i le'u*, which I discuss in more detail below) to be paraphrases or elaborations of the original texts.

According to the *Blue Annals*, written in the fifteenth century, there was a disciple of Zhiḡ pa of dBus (who died in 1195) called sNye²⁹ ston Nyi ma rdo rje.³⁰ If he is the redactor in question, this would indicate a compilation date in the late twelfth or first half of the thirteenth century for Tb. 41 as well as, most probably, for Tb. 40, since Tb. 41's colophon appears to refer to both texts.

However, if we attribute the invention of the *drug mtshan lnga* scheme to Nyi ma rDo rje, how to account for the fact, as I mention above, that the much earlier *bSam gtan mig sgron* already cites from the *Don drug* rather than *Don grub*? It seems that the six-fold scheme itself must either predate or be roughly contemporary with the *bSam gtan mig sgron*. Tb. 40 surely cannot, however - while its core texts might be attributable to an eighth or early ninth century date, the framework which introduces and elaborates on them is certainly later. Tb.

²⁴ See Norbu, N., 2000, pp. 15, 16.

²⁵ The most obvious example is its frequent exhortation "listen, great being!" (eg. Tb. 40, p. 696.1-2) with which the *Kun byed rgyal po* introduces most of its teachings.

²⁶ Norbu & Clemente, 1999, p. 64.

²⁷ *mTshams brag* Tb. 41, p. 709.6-727.2; Taiwan edition Tb1. 4500; *sDe dge* edition Dg. 123; Kaneko catalogue, Tk. 1.7; also *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum*, Vol. 2 (Kha) Bg. 2.

²⁸ *mTshams brag* Tb. 41, 727.2 : *snga 'gyur lnga dang phyi 'gyur bcu gsum gyi rgyud la gnyi ba'i ban chung nyi ma rdo rje byas pa*.

²⁹ F.W. Thomas tentatively equates gNyi ba with the tribal division sNyi ba ; Thomas F.W., 1950-63, (Index of Tibetan proper names, p. 52).

³⁰ Roerich, 1988, p. 85.

41, with its paraphrase versions of the *Thirteen Later Translations*, is even more obviously later.

To sum up, it is my contention that the title of the *sGom pa don grub* was changed, perhaps as early as the ninth century, in order to fit it into the text group arranged according to the numerical scheme of sixes that we see in Tb. 40. This led to some uncertainty about the correct title and identity of the text, its omission from such early collections as the *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum*, and its eventual disappearance from view.

2. *The Yid bzhin nor bu*

This title, *The Wish-fulfilling Jewel*, is included in all of the lists of the *Thirteen Later Translations* that I have examined, yet even so a search for any extant text so-titled proves fruitless. It is described by Nyang Ral as teaching that "all desirable qualities arise from the nature of the mind",³¹ and by dPa' bo gtsug lag in his *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* as "condensing all philosophical tenets".³² It is classified in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum* as one of the four "minor" texts, which may or may not be an indication of its length.

If we turn to the indexes to the various *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* editions, we find, situated in the midst of the *Thirteen Later Translations*, several recurring titles that nevertheless do not appear in any of the lists. One of these unlisted texts, the *Khams gsum sgron ma*, is found among the *Thirteen Later Translations* in the *mTshams brag*, *gTing skyes*, and *Rig 'dzin tshe bdang nor bu* editions.³³

This short text, *The Lamp of the Three Realms* (Tb. 36), contains just after its opening homage to Samantabhadra the phrase "the precious *wish-fulfilling jewel* [my italics] that transcends the three realms", a possible alternative title³⁴ that would exactly match that of our missing text.

In the *Rin chen dru bo*, his commentary on the *Kun byed rgyal po*, Klong chen rab 'byams mentions a text by Vairocana named *The Jewel Lamp*, on which he says he has based his explanation.³⁵ This *Jewel Lamp* has remained unidentified up to now³⁶, but its title perhaps represents an amalgam of the *Khams gsum sgron ma* and the *Yid bzhin nor bu*, in which case it could tentatively be identified with Tb. 36.³⁷

³¹ *Sems nyid las 'dod pa'i yon tan thams cad 'byung bar bstan pa'i phyir* (*Zangs gling ma*, p. 79.3).

³² *Grub mtha' thams cad 'dus pa yid bzhin nor bu* (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. 1, p. 222).

³³ Perhaps not coincidentally, these are the editions that group the *Eighteen Major Scriptures* together most tightly. The *Khams gsum sgron ma* is found in *mTsham brag* Tb. 36; *gTing skyes* Tk. 32; *Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu* Vol. Ka 33.

³⁴ *Khams gsum las 'das yid bzhin nor bu rin po che* / Tb. 36, p. 636.2.

³⁵ *Lo tsa ba chen po be ro tsa na'i sems lung rin chen sgron me'i lung bzhin bkod pa* (*Rin chen dru bo*, p. 426.3-4). See Lipman and Peterson, 2000, p. 55.

³⁶ See Clemente and Norbu, 1999, p. 66, and p. 274, n. 141.

³⁷ On the other hand, it is not immediately obvious how the *Khams gsum sgron ma* could actually have served as a basis for the exposition of the *Kun byed rgyal po* that we see in Klong chen rab 'byam's *Rin chen dru bo*.

At any rate, the case for identification of Tb. 36, *The Lamp of the Three Realms*, with the *Yid bzhin nor bu* is strongly supported by the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, which provides us with at least one quotation from the *Yid bzhin nor bu*. This reads: “*Rang byung ye nas ma bcos 'od gsal ba/ rtsol bas rtsol du med de snying po'i don*”.³⁸ The same lines, with minor variations, are found in *The Lamp of the Three Realms*.³⁹ While this is not a conclusive proof that the two texts are one and the same, it must add considerable weight to the argument.

Another text, Tb. 41, one of the set of four whose titles contain the phrase *'khor ba rtsad nas gcod pa*, has chapter titles consisting of the titles of the *Thirteen Later Translations*. As mentioned above, the actual contents of these chapters, generally speaking, do not match the extant texts after which they are named. They seem instead to be rough paraphrases. However, chapter ten, significantly entitled *Yid bzhin nor bu'i le'u* rather closely follows the *Khams gsum sgron ma*, line for line, up to *drang srong chen po nyid kyi spyod yul yin*. The main difference between the two texts is that Tb. 41 uses a seven-syllable verse form rather than the nine-syllable form used by the *Khams gsum sgron ma*. It also, interestingly, substitutes *rtag pa* for the term *g.yung drung* found in the *Khams gsum sgron ma*.⁴⁰

The picture is complicated by the fact that Tb. 41's chapter fourteen happens to be entitled “*Khams gsum sgron ma'i le'u*.” In fact, this chapter reads like a paraphrase of its preceding chapter ten. The intertextual relationships here are perplexing. The *Yid bzhin nor bu* citation from the *bSam gtan mig sgron* actually matches Tb. 41 slightly better than the version in Tb. 36, except for the fact that Tb. 36 and the *bSam gtan mig sgron* quotation both have nine syllables in their lines. Another problem lies in the apparent anomaly of including a single source-text in what otherwise would be a work made up instead of paraphrases of source-texts.

At any rate, the fact that this chapter is explicitly titled *Yid bzhin nor bu'i le'u* and is almost identical to the *Khams gsum sgron ma*, must add further support to the case for linking the *Khams gsum sgron ma* with the missing *Yid bzhin nor bu*, even if it eventually turns out that the *Khams gsum sgron ma* itself is merely a paraphrase or abridgement of the “original” *Yid bzhin nor bu*.

I set out below an English translation of the Tibetan text of the *Khams gsum sgron ma*.⁴¹

³⁸ *bSam gtan mig sgron*, p. 348.3.

³⁹ See my transliteration of the text below.

⁴⁰ See below for further discussion of this term.

⁴¹ *bCom ldan 'das dpal kun* (2) *tu bzang po la phyag 'tshal lo/ khams gsum las 'das yid bzhin nor bu rin po che/ bgrod med rnam par grol ba'i lam ston pa/ gzhan nas btsal bar rnyed* (3) *par mi 'gyur te/ thig le chen po kun la khyab par gnas/ rang byung ye shes ma bcos 'od gsal ba/ bde chen btsal du med pas snying po'i don/snang mdzad* (4) *nyid ni rtag par kun tu bzang/ gnyis med bde ba'i ngang ste lhun gyis grub/ g.yung drung chen po'i Klong du shar ba yis/ bde ba chen po'i long spyod rdzogs pa yang/* (5) *rtog dpyod mtshan ma kun las 'das pa'i phyir/ drang srong chen po nyid kyi spyod yul yin/ thams cad sku gsung thugs kyi dkyil 'khor la/ shes te rtog pa'i Klong du* (6) *mnyam gzhas nas/ grub pa'i khyad par mngon du shar ba'i tshel/ khams gsum kun kyang bdag gi zhabs la 'dud/ byang chub kyi sems khams gsum sgron ma rdzogs* (7) *so*. Transliterated from Tb. 36 (*mTshams brag*, Vol 1, p. 636).

Homage to glorious Samantabhadra, the transcendent victor! The precious wish-fulfilling jewel that transcends the three realms, that shows the path of complete liberation (that does not need to be followed), will not be found if sought from others, since the great sphere dwells in and pervades everything. Self-originated wisdom, the natural clear light, great bliss, that is not to be sought-after, is the essential meaning. That which brings about phenomena is always, Everywhere Good (Samantabhadra). The non-dual state of bliss is spontaneously accomplished. Arising in the expanse of great changelessness, the enjoyment of great bliss is also perfect. Since it transcends all conceptual analysis, it is the experiential domain of great sages. In the all-inclusive mandala of enlightened body, speech and mind, once one rests in equipoise in the expanse of knowledge and realization⁴², when the particular aspects of accomplishment become manifest, all of the Three Realms bow down at one's feet. The mind of enlightenment, the Lamp of the Three Realms, is concluded.

Clearly this matches the classification of the *Yid bzhin nor bu* as a short (minor?) text, at less than a folio side in length. It also fits the description given by Nyang Ral quite well, although dPa' bo gtsug lag's description could only loosely apply.

In its homage to Samantabhadra, its conciseness, and its lack of terminology characterizing *rDzogs chen* traditions other than *sems sde*, the *Khams gsum sgron ma* can be said to meet some provisional criteria for identification as one of the *Thirteen Later Translations*. Its inclusion of the term *g.yung drung*, however, is unusual. Sam van Schaik has observed that this term from pre-Buddhist Tibet, with the rough meaning of "eternal", was "almost written out of Buddhist translations" after its meaning was fixed as equivalent to the Sanskrit *sanātana*, a rare word in Buddhist texts compared to the Sanskrit *nityā*, translated by a different Tibetan term (*rtag pa*).⁴³ The fact that *rtag pa* also occurs shortly before *g.yung drung* in this text could mean that the text is translating the two Sanskrit words differently, as one would expect after the standardization of vocabulary had occurred.

However, from the eleventh century *g.yung drung* became closely associated with the later Bon tradition.⁴⁴ Therefore the fact that the *Yid bzhin nor bu'i le'u* in Tb. 41 substitutes *rtag pa* for the term *g.yung drung* found in the free-standing version of the same text (i.e. the *Khams gsum sgron ma*) could be an indication of a later date for Tb. 41. This would accord with its probable redaction by Nyi ma rdo rje in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, as argued above.

⁴² The text here actually reads *rtog pa'i klong*, "the expanse of concepts" or "expanse of thoughts", but *rtog pa* is frequently found as a misspelling of *rtogs pa*, "realization", which seems to make better sense.

⁴³ Van Schaik, entry on *g.yung drung*, <http://earlytibet.com>.

⁴⁴ It may be significant that followers of the Bon *rDzogs chen* teachings have claimed that Vairocana himself was Bon po as well as Buddhist. See Karmay, 1988, p. 17.

Summary

By relying for corroboration on citations contained in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, it has been possible to identify two of the *Thirteen Later Translations*, as listed by Klong chen pa and others, that have until now been unlocated. The *bsGom pa don grub* seems to be extant in free-standing form only in the Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu edition of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*. I have postulated that the six-fold schema followed by Tb. 40, which incorporated this text under the title *Zab mo don drug*, contributed to this text's obscurity.

Further, I have found the *bSam gtan mig sgron* citation from the missing *Yid bzhin nor bu* in one of the three unlisted texts that are regularly located among the *Thirteen Later Translations* in the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, namely the *Khams gsum sgron ma*. This identification is confirmed by chapter ten of Tb. 41, entitled *Yid bzhin nor bu'i le'u*, which closely follows the text of the *Khams gsum sgron ma*.

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