

Examining the Blo sbyong Component in Thogs med bzang po's Collected Works

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Blo sbyong, or 'mind training,' is a Tibetan Buddhist meditation practice that helps devotees remove destructive emotions and develop compassion towards all sentient beings.¹ To have universal compassion is not only a crucial goal for Blo sbyong practice, but is also a representative characteristic of the career of a bodhisattva in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Best known as rGyal sras Thogs med or dNgul chu'i Thogs med, Thogs med bzang po (1295–1369) is a renowned Blo sbyong master. His *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas* (*rGyal sras lag len so bdun ma*) has attracted the most attention out of his *Collected Works* (*bKa' 'bum* or *gSung 'bum*) from scholars even today.²

In spite of Thogs med bzang po's importance, his texts that discuss Blo sbyong have received little academic attention. These Blo sbyong texts are included in different editions of his *Collected Works*. This article analyzes the most complete edition of Thogs med bzang po's *Collected Works*, printed in the Dergé Printing House (*sDe dge par khang*). First I shall show how this edition provides a more thorough context for Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong philosophy than any other edition. Second, I shall demonstrate how the two editors of Thogs med bzang po's *Collected Works* construct their religious identities by building on the transmission of Blo sbyong teaching that Thogs med bzang po established. In this way, those editors justify their authority and the authenticity of the Blo sbyong tradition.

¹ For an early discussion on the English translation of the Tibetan term *blo sbyong* and its meaning, see Stein 1972: 267; Tucci 1980: 23; Sweet 1996; Sweet and Zwilling 2001; Jinpa 2006, and Troughton 2008.

² Such as Dilgo Khyentse 2007: 43–204; Tegchok and Chodron 2005; Gyatso 2010.

1. *Thogs med bzang po's Collected Works*

There are at least five editions of Thogs med bzang po's *Collected Works* preserved today. For the sake of this discussion and in order to avoid confusion, this article names each edition based on where it comes from. The list of these editions and a brief description of their printing histories are as follows.

1. The Bhutan edition.³
2. The Dergé *Collected Works*.⁴
3. The Labrang (Bla brang) edition.⁵
4. The Drepung ('Bras spungs) manuscript.
5. The Ngülchu (dNgul chu) edition.⁶

Except for the Drepung manuscript, the other editions include the same one hundred and thirteen texts with some minor differences.⁷ Thus I name these texts, as a group, the "113 Texts."

I shall first discuss the Bhutan edition. Thogs med bzang po composed one hundred and thirteen separate texts either at dNgul chu'i chos rdzong or at Bo dong E Monastery before his death in 1369. Then, disciple dPal ldan ye shes wrote Thogs med bzang po's biography, *Drops of Ambrosia*, around the late fourteenth century.⁸ Later, dGe 'dun skyabs's team arranged or transcribed the "113 Texts."⁹ Lord sGrol ma of Chu 'dus sponsored the printing of these texts, most likely in 1446.¹⁰ Last, an unknown team combined *Drops of*

³ Thogs med bzang po 1975 and dPal ldan ye shes 1975.

⁴ TBRC has two digital facsimiles of this work. Their TBRC reference numbers are W1CZ895 and W00EGS1016240. The latter version has much clearer images so it was chosen for this discussion. See the last entry under Thogs med bzang po, n.d. [W00EGS1016240], in the bibliography.

⁵ Thogs med bzang po 2011.

⁶ Thogs med bzang po, n.d. [W1KG12765].

⁷ For example, the seventh text in the Dergé *Collected Works* is complete. However, the Bhutan and the Ngülchu editions omit words in different places; they have markers to indicate missing content. See Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 22.5–25.5; 1975: 65.1–66.2; n.d. [W1KG12765]: 10.5–11.1.

⁸ The text title is *rGyal sras rin po che thogs med pa'i rnam thar bdud rts'i'i thigs*. See dPal ldan ye shes 1975: 1–45.

⁹ Thogs med bzang po 1975: 47–434.

¹⁰ The colophon states that this *Collected Works* was completed in the Year of the Male-Fire Tiger under the sponsorship of Mi dbang Chu 'dus Drung chen srol ma. See Thogs med bzang po 1975: 433.2–6. I suspect that this Drung chen srol ma is the same person mentioned in Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po's (1382–1456) biography. As Jörg Heimbel points out, Ngor chen established a monastery in Chu 'dus and purification rituals for his patron, Drung chen srol ma, also called Chu 'dus sDe pa srol smyon. See Heimbel 2014: 431 and 437–38. The same Tibetan phrase "*drung chen srol ma*" and the place "Chu 'dus" appear both in the

Ambrosia with the “113 Texts” to produce the Bhutan edition, which was published in 1975.

The first part of the Dergé *Collected Works* contains the same “113 Texts.” Its second part is text 114, titled *Great Hearing Transmission of Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong snyan brgyud chen mo*, hereafter called *Hearing Transmission*). The colophon shows that bSod nams mgon po sponsored the printing of the “113 Texts” in order to make his father’s lifespan long.¹¹ bSod nams mgon po’s father was the sDe dge ruler bsTan pa tshe ring (1678–1738). Thus this printing project must have been completed by 1738. The colophon of *Hearing Transmission* states that Kun dga’ phrin las rgya mtsho (1714–1751) was the patron of this printing project.¹² Apparently, Kun dga’ phrin las rgya mtsho’s team published the “113 Texts” and *Hearing Transmission* as a

colophon of the “113 Texts” and in Ngor chen’s biography. Based on Ngor chen’s lifespan, the Year of the Male-Fire Tiger recorded in the colophon of “113 Texts” could be the year of 1446. Moreover, textual information shows that a manuscript (or even a block-print) of Thogs med bzang po’s *Collected Works* had been accessible to scholars before 1446. In his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen gave one hundred and seven titles for Thogs med bzang po’s *Fragmentary Collected Works* (*bKa’ ’bum thor bu*). Hereafter, I call Ngor chen’s list “107 Titles.” Ngor chen received the reading transmission (*lung*) of this *bKa’ ’bum thor bu* from his teacher Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420) who received this reading transmission from Lo chen Byang chub rtshe mo (1303–1380). Lo chen was Thogs med bzang po’s disciple and inherited the reading transmission from him. See Heimbel 2014: 201–02, and 217; Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po 1993: 303.4–5; dPal gyi rin chen 2008: 119, 139, 190, 203, and 207. This line of transmission implies that a version of Thogs med bzang po’s *Collected Works* at Ngor chen’s disposal was completed by Thogs med bzang po’s death in 1369. After comparing Ngor chen’s “107 Titles” with the “113 Texts,” I suspect that the content of “107 Titles” is similar to that in the “113 Texts.” For example, the last eleven text titles in “107 Titles” correspond to texts 103 to 113 in the “113 Texts.” See Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po 1993: 303.1–3; Thogs med bzang po 1975: 411.1–31.4. While some texts from the “113 Texts,” such as texts 39 to 41, are not listed in “107 Titles,” most of the texts recorded in the “113 Texts” have corresponding titles in “107 Titles” and are in a similar order. Sometimes a text title listed in “107 Titles” contains two or three texts in the “113 Texts” if they are related to a similar subject. For example, text title “*slob dpon chos mchog la gnyis*,” in “107 Titles” combines texts 92 and 93, which are about offerings to Slob dpon Chos mchog in the “113 Texts.” See Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po 1993: 302.6; Thogs med bzang po 1975: 401.4–406.2. Another piece of textual evidence shows that Ngor chen’s teacher, Sa bzang ’Phags pa (1346–1412), studied under Thogs med bzang po after he turned twenty-one in 1366. Before his death in 1369, Thogs med bzang po bestowed the reading transmission of his *Collected Works* upon Sa bzang. See Heimbel 2014: 233–34. Both Lo chen and Sa bzang received the reading transmission from Thogs med bzang po. Ngor chen’s “107 Titles” can be traced back to Lo chen. Thus, it is certain that a manuscript of Thogs med bzang po’s *Collected Works*, which resembles the “113 Texts,” was circulated among scholars before Drung chen sgröl ma sponsored printing the “113 Texts” hypothetically in 1446.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: 593.5–6.

¹² *Ibid.*: 593.5–6.

whole work, the *Dergé Collected Works*, by the middle of the eighteenth century. In terms of the editors who combined the “113 Texts” and *Hearing Transmission* into a single document in the first place, this could have been the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho; 1617–1682). I shall explore this possibility in more detail below.

As for the Labrang edition, its content and colophons are the same as those of the *Dergé Collected Works*, with two missing words.¹³ A copy of the *Dergé Collected Works* could have been brought to Labrang Monastery as early as the late eighteenth century.¹⁴ Later that copy became the source of today’s Labrang edition published in 2011.

As for the Drepung manuscript, it only has a partial set of “113 Texts” and does not have a colophon. According to its cataloguing markers, this manuscript could have been brought to Drepung Monastery from a library not belonging to the dGe lugs pa school during the Fifth Dalai Lama’s lifetime.¹⁵

The Ngülchu edition does not have a colophon, but states that it is a copy of an older Ngülchu print. This edition could have been printed during or after the nineteenth century.¹⁶

I have chosen the *Dergé Collected Works* to base our discussion upon because it has the complete “113 Texts” and includes *Hearing Transmission*. I shall next analyze the textual organisation in the

¹³ In the fifty-eighth text, the Labrang edition has two words missing: *gzhan don*. See Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 344.6; 2011: 208.

¹⁴ The second ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, dKon mchog ‘jigs med dbang po (1728–1791), initiated the printing operation at Labrang Monastery in 1761. Labrang Monastery received printing advice and sources from the Dergé Printing House during the late eighteenth century. See Nourse 2014: 204–05. The *Dergé Collected Works* was published by Kun dga’ phrin las rgya mtsho, who passed away in 1751, as mentioned above. Thus I assume that, as early as the late eighteenth century, a copy of the *Dergé Collected Works* was travelling from Dergé to Labrang Monastery.

¹⁵ For the cataloguing markers, see Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W1CZ1084]: 151a, 165a, and 205a. The markers were used, but not necessarily created, by the editing team who published the *Drepung Catalogue*, ‘Bras spungs dgon du bzhugs su gsol ba’i dpe rnying dkar chag, in 2004. The preface of the *Drepung Catalogue* indicates that the Drepung manuscript could have been brought to Drepung Monastery from a library not belonging to the dGe lugs pa school during the Fifth Dalai Lama’s lifetime. See Thub bstan nyi ma 2004: vol. 1, 7.

¹⁶ The Ngülchu edition is from gTsang bzhad dngul chu chos rdzong gi par khang, which was founded in the nineteenth century. See TBRC 2011. Gene Smith states that the regent sTag brag (1874–1952) probably ordered a survey done of printing houses of Central Tibet. This survey shows that Thogs med bzang po’s *Fragmentary Collected Works* (*bKa’ ’bum thor bu*) was printed at gTsang bzhad dngul chu chos rdzong. See Ngag dbang dge legs de mo 1970: Introduction, 233.4–5.

Dergé *Collected Works*, with each text numbered for the sake of clarity. By doing so, I shall locate Blo sbyong texts while making clear the structure of the “113 Texts” in all other editions. Similarly, I shall discover the structure of the Blo sbyong text, *Hearing Transmission*, in the Labrang edition.

2. Blo sbyong Texts in the Dergé Collected Works

In the Dergé *Collected Works*, the first part, “113 Texts,” consists of 213 folios and the second part, *Hearing Transmission*, of 82 folios. Based on the folio count, *Hearing Transmission* makes up almost one-third of this work. In most cases within the “113 Texts,” texts with similar topics are physically situated together. This fact shows that the editors had some rationale for their arrangement. Even though they might have had certain categories in mind, they did not specify what they were. After analyzing commonalities within its content, I have categorised the Dergé *Collected Works* into ten types of writings. I used existing genre terms when possible. These categories are as follows:

1. Praise/eulogy (*bstod pa*) to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and masters.
2. Supplication (*gsol 'debs*) to masters.
3. Homage and prostration (*phyag 'tshal ba*) to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and masters.
4. The *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*.¹⁷
5. Preaching.¹⁸
6. Ritual (*cho ga*).
7. Instruction on dharma practices.
8. Replying with advice to questioners.
9. Aspirational prayer (*smon lam*) for someone.
10. Commentary on 'Chad ka ba's (1102–1176) *Seven-Point Mind Training (Blo sbyong don bdun ma)*.

Some of these titles are taken from typical Tibetan genres and some of them are my inventions.¹⁹ In the Dergé *Collected Works*, seven texts

¹⁷ Due to its popularity and importance, I made text 29, *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*, its own category.

¹⁸ I created the term “preaching” for category 5 because there is no existing genre term. Texts in this category are related to Thogs med bzang po's teachings.

¹⁹ I created these titles based on TBRC's genre denominations. For example, category 1, “praise” (*bstod pa*), category 2, “supplication” (*gsol 'debs*), category 6, “ritual” (*cho ga*), and category 9, “aspirational prayer” (*smon lam*). Category 7,

contain the term Blo sbyong. Text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*, represents Thogs med bzang po's establishment of Blo sbyong transmission and its relation with the bKa' gdams pa school.²⁰ Text 9 is located in the second category, "supplication (*gsol 'debs*) to masters." In texts 42,²¹ *Atiśa's Way of Ritual for Generating the Aspiration Awakening Mind and the Engagement Awakening Mind*, and 44, *Great Master Śāntideva's Way of Ritual for Generating the Aspiration Awakening Mind and the Engagement Awakening Mind*,²² Blo sbyong is mentioned in ritual contexts. Both texts 42 and 44 are in the sixth category, "ritual" (*cho ga*).

In text 59, *Advice on the Stages of Blo sbyong to Spiritual Friend, Raptśé*,²³ Thogs med bzang po refers to Blo sbyong as the contemplation practice of awakening mind. Text 59 is located within category 7, "instruction on dharma practices."

In the eighth category, "replying with advice to someone," texts 63 and 113 are related to Blo sbyong. In text 63, *Advice to Shākya Tendzin Zangpo on The Complete Preparation, Main Practice, and Conclusion of Blo sbyong*,²⁴ Thogs med bzang po tells Śākya bsTan 'dzin bzang po about Blo sbyong practices in three steps. In text 113, *Reply to Questions in the Last Will of Virtuous Friend, Gyeltsen, Who Wore One Piece of Silk Cloth*, Blo sbyong is mentioned along with the practice of inner heat (*gtum mo*).²⁵

While the term Blo sbyong has different applications in the texts mentioned above, texts 45 and 114 included in category 10 are particularly related to the tradition of commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven-Point Mind Training*.²⁶ Text 45, *Writings in Oral Transmission of Seven-Point Mind Training, Explained in Fewer Words*,²⁷ and the second

"instruction on dharma practices," can be regarded as a subtype of the genre of instruction (*zhal gdams*). Category 8, "replying with advice to someone," contains two Tibetan genre types. One is questions and responses (*dris lan*), and the other is letters (*spring yig*). The precise definitions of different Tibetan genres are contested and developing. For example, category 10, "Commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven-Point Mind Training*" can be regarded as either a subtype of the genre of commentary (*'grel pa*) or a subtype of "literature on the paths." To better fit within our study of Blo sbyong context, I created category 10 without using existing genre terms. For more discussion on genres in Tibetan literature, see Sopa, Cabezón, and Jackson 1996.

²⁰ Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 27.2–31.5.

²¹ *Ibid.*: 101.2–41.1.

²² *Ibid.*: 149.6–86.6.

²³ *Ibid.*: 346.4–48.5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 351.6–53.5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*: 423.6–25.5.

²⁶ For discussion on 'Chad ka ba's text and Thogs med bzang po, see Sweet 1996: 249.

²⁷ Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 187.1–217.6.

part of text 114, *Hearing Transmission*, are Thogs med bzang po's explanations of 'Chad ka ba's work.²⁸ Furthermore, the author of the first section of text 114, *Hearing Transmission*, is Thogs med bzang po's disciple, dPal ldan ye shes (ca. fourteenth century). dPal ldan ye shes describes Atiśa's life story, the Blo sbyong transmission of seven-point mind training from Atiśa to Thogs med bzang po, as well as the history of the bKa' gdams pa school.²⁹

If we simply divide the Dergé *Collected Works* into two parts, one is related to Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong teachings, and the other is not. The quantity of texts that have Blo sbyong in the content comprise around half of the Dergé *Collected Works*. According to their content and the categories in the Dergé *Collected Works*, Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong teachings can be displayed in five forms: supplication, ritual, replying with advice to questioners, history of Blo sbyong transmission, and commentaries on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven-Point Mind Training*. The high percentage of texts related to Blo sbyong teachings in the Dergé *Collected Works* means that this work functions as a central source for Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong philosophy. Such a focus could have been one of the editors' purposes, since the editors could have emphasised other topics in the Dergé *Collected Works*. We can assume that for some reason it was important for the editors to portray Thogs med bzang po as an essential Blo sbyong master. Who were these editors? Most likely they were dPal ldan ye shes and the Fifth Dalai Lama. The textual evidence for their identities as editors of the Dergé *Collected Works* is present in the fact that they established their own Blo sbyong transmission based on Thogs med bzang po's text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*. I shall discuss these two editors after investigating how Thogs med bzang po constructed his own Blo sbyong lineage.

3. *Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong Lineage*

In text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*, Thogs med bzang po praises the good qualities of twenty-five revered figures who transmitted the teachings of the Mahāyāna Blo sbyong practice. They

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 454.5–589.6. Based on my comparison of these three texts, Se sPyil bu Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's commentary is the main reference for Thogs med bzang po's explanations of 'Chad ka ba's *Seven-Point Mind Training* recorded in texts 45 and 114. The examination of their differences remains the subject for another research topic.

²⁹ Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 430.1–54.5.

are listed as follows, with their original Sanskrit names in parentheses:³⁰

1. Shākya'i tog (the Buddha).
2. Mi pham mgon (Maitreya).
3. 'Phags pa Thogs med (Aśaṅga).
4. dByig gi gnyen (Vasubandhu).
5. rNam grol ste (Ārya Vimuktisena).
6. bTsun pa rNam grol sde (Bhadanta Vimuktisena).
7. Gu ṅa mi tra.
8. Seng ge bzang (Haribhadra).
9. Gang ba spel (Pūrṇavardhana).
10. Ku su lu.
11. Ku su lu gNyi pa.
12. gSer gling pa.
13. Mar me mdzad (Atiśa).
14. rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas sTon pa.
15. Pu to ba.
16. Sha ra ba.
17. 'Chad ka ba.
18. rGyal ba Se.
19. sKyes mchog lha.
20. lHa sdings pa.
21. lHa sdings dbon.
22. Yon tan dpal.
23. bDe ba dpal.
24. bKa' bzhi ba.
25. bSod nams grags pa.

Certainly Thogs med bzang po did not create such a lineage out of thin air, as many masters in his list were recorded in other Blo sbyong texts. Also, his lineage presentation is associated with the textual tradition of 'Chad ka ba's *Seven-Point Mind Training* (hereafter called *Seven Point*). This aspect can be particularly demonstrated by his inclusion of masters 18 and 25, rGyal ba Se (1121–1189) and bSod nams grags pa (1273–1345). rGyal ba Se, whose full name is Se sPyil bu Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, composed the first commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*.³¹ In terms of bSod nams grags pa, Thogs med bzang po addressed him as "Dharma Lord" (*chos kyi rje*), and he wrote ten verses (forty sentences) to revere this Dharma Lord. For the other masters, Thogs med bzang po only writes one or two sentences

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 27.2–28.5.

³¹ Jinpa 2006: 12.

to praise them. Moreover, all three of the earliest Thogs med bzang po biographies mention that bSod nams grags pa taught Thogs med bzang po *Seven Point*.³² bSod nams grags pa studied Atiśa's works, *Seven Point, Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, etc.³³ Thus, it is possibly due to bSod nams grags pa's influence that Thogs med bzang po presented this particular Blo sbyong transmission in his text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*.

An anonymous text contains a similar Blo sbyong transmission lineage to that which Thogs med bzang po presents. This text is *Mahāyāna Mind Training (Theg pa chen po'i blo sbyong; hereafter called Mahāyāna Mind)*, which could have been composed by the twelfth century.³⁴ Thogs med bzang po orders masters number 12 to 17, gSer gling pa to 'Chad ka ba, in the same way as masters 3 to 8 are ordered in *Mahāyāna Mind*.³⁵ While acknowledging 'Chad ka ba, *Mahāyāna Mind* treats Blo sbyong differently from 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*.³⁶ In other words, even though the orders of masters in the lineages overlap somewhat, Thogs med bzang po and *Mahāyāna Mind* offer two different Blo sbyong lineage traditions. This textual information reflects the development of Atiśa's Blo sbyong teaching into various branches with alternative, equally valid lineages. Therefore, overlapping records of transmission appear in texts that have different approaches to Blo sbyong.

This situation is even more obvious when comparing Thogs med bzang po's lineage with that in *Eight Sessions Mind Training (Blo sbyong thun brgyad ma; hereafter called Eight Sessions)*. The order of the first six masters in Thogs med bzang po's text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*, is the same with that in *Eight Sessions*.³⁷ *Eight Sessions* could have been completed either late in Thogs med bzang po's life or after his death.³⁸ *Eight Sessions* belongs to another Blo sbyong tradition different from either 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point* or *Mahāyāna Mind*.³⁹

It is not conclusively proved whether or not Thogs med bzang po read *Mahāyāna Mind* or *Eight Sessions*. Because overlapping

³² gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 18 and 28; dPal gyi rin chen 2008: 125 and 161; dPal ldan ye shes 1975: 18.7 and 29.2.

³³ Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan 2003: 585–91.

³⁴ Jinpa 2006: 299–312 and 617, n. 472.

³⁵ dKon mchog rgyal mtshan and gZhon nu rgyal mchog 2004: 194.

³⁶ Jinpa 2006: 617, n. 472.

³⁷ dKon mchog rgyal mtshan and gZhon nu rgyal mchog 2004: 136.

³⁸ I make this assumption because *Eight Session* lists gZhon nu rgyal mchog as the last lineage holder. He compiled the first Blo sbyong anthology, *Great Collection (Theg pa chen po blo sbyong brgya rtsa)*, in the late fourteenth or in the early fifteenth century.

³⁹ Jinpa 2006: 225–37 and 606, n. 348.

transmissions in various Blo sbyong traditions exist, Thogs med bzang po could have inherited such transmission from his master bSod nam grags pa or from somewhere else.

Thogs med bzang po's educational background influenced the way he incorporated different Blo sbyong transmissions into his text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*. Master number 1 in Thogs med bzang po's list is the Buddha Śākyamuni. It was probably essential to trace back his Blo sbyong lineage to the founder of the Buddhist teachings. As for masters number 2 to 9, I suggest that Thogs med bzang po incorporated them into the Blo sbyong lineage not just because he was following the perspective of his master bSod nam grags pa or that of the existing tradition. The reason for this inclusion could also be that Thogs med bzang po engaged extensively with Asaṅga's (master 3) and Vasubandhu's (master 4) textual traditions. These two brothers are renowned for their connection with Master 2, Maitreya. As his biographers point out, Thogs med bzang po studied the majority of Asaṅga's texts, including the *Compendium of Abhidharma (mNgon pa kun las btus pa)*, as well as the five treatises that were believed to have been transmitted from the future Buddha Maitreya to Asaṅga (*byams chos lnga*).⁴⁰ Thogs med bzang po composed a commentary for one of these five treatises, the *Sublime Continuum (rGyud bla ma)*.⁴¹ Moreover, Thogs med bzang po was admired as the "new Asaṅga," and he was even called "Thogs med" (Asaṅga in Tibetan) himself.⁴²

Thogs med bzang po's choice of masters 5 to 9 further connects him to Asaṅga's and Vasubandhu's textual traditions. Masters 5 to 8 are related to the commentarial tradition of *Ornament for Clear Realization (Abhisamayālaṅkāra, mNgon rtogs rgyan; hereafter called Clear Realization)*, which is believed to have been revealed to Asaṅga by Maitreya.⁴³ Master number 8 is Haribhadra (Seng ge bzang po, ca. late eighth century). He is the most well-known Indian commentator on *Clear Realization*.⁴⁴ Master number 7, Gu ṅa mi tra, is Haribhadra's teacher. Before Haribhadra, master number 5, Ārya Vimuktisena ('Phags pa rnam grol sde; ca. sixth century), also composed his commentary on *Clear Realization*.⁴⁵ Ārya Vimuktisena's follower was

⁴⁰ gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 6, 9–10, 16, 20, 41; dPal gyi Rin chen, 2008: 82, 85, 89, 91, 97–99, and 105; dPal ldan ye shes 1975: 11.1, 12.3, and 13.3.

⁴¹ Thogs med bzang po [= tbrc.org W1KG12063]; Wangchuk 2009: 171–5.

⁴² gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 8–9.

⁴³ For the information about Thogs med bzang po's studies of *Ornament for Clear Realization*, see gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 10.

⁴⁴ Haribhadra 1991: 169–306. For a translation, see Sparham 2006: 165–319.

⁴⁵ For a translation, see Sparham 2006: 3–161.

master number 6, Bhadanta Vimuktisena (bTsun pa rNam grol sde), who also wrote a commentary on *Clear Realization*.

Master 4, Vasubandhu, is also related to Thogs med bzang po's studies. Thogs med bzang po's biographies say that he studied Vasubandhu's works: *The Twenty Verses [on Mind Only]* (*nyi shu pa*), *The Thirty Verses of Root Text and Commentary [on Mind Only]* (*sum cu pa'i rtsa 'grel*), *Reasoning for Explanations* (*rnam bshad rigs pa*), and the *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmakośa*).⁴⁶ Master 9, Gang ba spel, was renowned for his commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmakośa*).⁴⁷ It is worth noting that Gang ba spel is not mentioned in any other of Blo sbyong texts included in the first Blo sbyong anthology, *Great Collection* (*Theg pa chen po blo sbyong brgya rtsa*).

In Thogs med bzang po's list, masters number 13 to number 25 are affiliated with the bKa' gdams pa school. Master 13 is Atiśa, who inspired his followers to establish the bKa' gdams pa tradition. Masters 10 to 12 were related to Atiśa's learning on the generation of awakening mind.⁴⁸ Masters number 15, Pu to ba (1027–1105), number 16, Sha ra ba (1070–1141), and number 17, 'Chad ka ba (1101–1175), established the "bKa' gdams pa lineage of treatises" (*gzhung pa*).⁴⁹ As described in his biographies, Thogs med bzang po studied and taught five of the six main treatises of this tradition.⁵⁰ Masters 17 to 25 are connected to 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*, as discussed above.

Ultimately we find that Thogs med bzang po puts together his Blo sbyong lineage by connecting two major Mind Only (*sems tsam*) philosophers, Vasubandhu and Asaṅga, with the commentators of *Clear Realization*, the Blo sbyong transmissions created by some bKa' gdams pa masters, and masters related to 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*. Based on the textual evidence, it seems that Thogs med bzang po's educational background and his engagement with these textual traditions played an important role in establishing his Blo sbyong lineage.

⁴⁶ gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 16–17; dPal gyi rin chen 2008: 97–98.

⁴⁷ Gang ba spel 2001: 1587–728.

⁴⁸ For Atiśa's three masters of the awakening mind, see Jinpa 2006: 8–9.

⁴⁹ Kaizhu 2013: 46.

⁵⁰ These texts are 1. *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sutras* (*mdo sde rgyan*), 2. *Levels of the Bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa'i sa*), 3. *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (*spyod 'jug*), 4. *A Garland of Birth Stories* (*skyes rabs*), 5. *Compendium of Trainings* (*bslab pa kun btus*). See gZhon nu rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 2008: 10, 18, 22–23, and 38; dPal gyi rin chen, 2008: 86, 89, 91, and 163; dPal ldan ye shes 1975: 11.2, and 13.2. For Thogs med bzang po's commentary on *mdo sde rgyan* and *spyod 'jug*, see Thogs med bzang po 1979 and 2005 respectively.

4. *Molding Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong Lineage*

Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong lineage was inherited by his disciple, dPal ldan ye shes, as well as by the Fifth Dalai Lama. dPal ldan ye shes wrote the first section of text 114, *Hearing Transmission*. This section narrates how Blo sbyong teaching was passed down to Thogs med bzang po.⁵¹ At the beginning, dPal ldan ye shes praises Blo sbyong transmission from the Buddha to gSer gling pa.⁵² It has the same order from masters 1 to 12 as stated in Thogs med bzang po's text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*.

After offering this transmission list, dPal ldan ye shes narrates the birth of gSer gling pa and how gSer gling pa became an outstanding master who knew well the practice of generating the awakening mind. Then dPal ldan ye shes goes on to talk about the birth of Atiśa and how Atiśa learned Blo sbyong practice from Dharmarakṣita (*dharma rakṣi ta*), Maitrīyogi (who is also Ku su lu gNyi pa), and gSer gling pa. After Atiśa's arrival in Tibet, dPal ldan ye shes describes how the Blo sbyong teachings were transmitted to different masters. This part of the transmission corresponds to masters 14 to 25 as stated in Thogs med bzang po's list recorded in text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*. Finally, dPal ldan ye shes addresses Thogs med bzang po as rGyal sras Thogs med. He asserts that this Blo sbyong practice was transmitted to rGyal sras Thogs med, who became well known as the second Avalokiteśvara.⁵³ Then he employs poetic verses to summarise Thogs med bzang po's life. At the end dPal ldan ye shes refers to his work as a partial history of the transmission (*brgyud pa'i lo rgyus zur tsam*) of Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong lineage.⁵⁴

dPal ldan ye shes's narration includes a brief biography of gSer gling pa and Atiśa, the spread of Blo sbyong teachings to Tibet, and a brief introduction of the bKa' gdams pa masters who received teachings before Thogs med bzang po. This history of transmission is situated before Thogs med bzang po's commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*. Apparently, dPal ldan ye shes's purpose was to bolster Thogs med bzang po's connection with the masters praised in text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*. By so doing, dPal ldan ye shes emphasises the authority and authenticity of Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong transmission and interpretation. While dPal ldan ye shes does not directly state that Thogs med bzang po transmitted Blo sbyong teachings to him, the Fifth Dalai Lama includes dPal ldan ye

⁵¹ dPal ldan ye shes in Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 430.1–54.5.

⁵² *Ibid.*: 430.3–31.1.

⁵³ dPal ldan ye shes in Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 451.2–3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 451.4–6.

shes as one of the authoritative masters in Thogs med bzang po's lineage. I shall now compare the different Blo sbyong transmissions.

The second section of text 114, *Hearing Transmission*, is Thogs med bzang po's commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*. In the colophon of this second section, dPal ldan ye shes points out that he recorded Thogs med bzang po's commentary. Thogs med bzang po also proofread dPal ldan ye shes's record.⁵⁵ After dPal ldan ye shes's colophon, the Za hor monk (*za hor bande*), which is how the Fifth Dalai Lama refers to himself,⁵⁶ states that he received the five alternative and valid lineages of Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong transmission from his teacher, the abbot of Zhwa lu Monastery, bSod nams mchog grub (1602–1681). Before discussing these lineages, it is worth pointing out that the Fifth Dalai Lama provides text titles in the table of contents of his own edition of Thogs med bzang po's *Collected Works*. After presenting this title list, the Fifth Dalai Lama lists from whom he received Thogs med bzang po's *Collected Works*. It is worth noting that except for a missing text, the order of the Fifth Dalai Lama's text titles is the same as that of the "113 Texts" in the Dergé *Collected Works*.⁵⁷ Apparently, versions of the "113 Texts" and *Hearing Transmission* were at the Fifth Dalai Lama's disposal. We may further suppose that the Fifth Dalai Lama may have combined the "113 Texts" and *Hearing Transmission* into a single document. This single document could have become the reference for the creation of the Dergé *Collected Works*.

The five Blo sbyong lineages presented at the end of the Dergé *Collected Works* are the Fifth Dalai Lama's "records of teaching received" (*gsan yig* or *thob yig*). Thus, for the Fifth Dalai Lama, each lineage is a valid transmission. There are thirty-eight Blo sbyong

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: 589.6–90.3.

⁵⁶ Van der Kuijp explains that the mysterious place, Za hor, is mentioned in texts connected to the royal families that transmitted Buddhist tantra and other tantric traditions. For example, the text *Zangs gling ma* narrates that Padmasambhava converted the entire kingdom of Za hor to the Buddha's teaching (see van der Kuijp 2013: 114–142). On how the Fifth Dalai Lama constructed a genealogical web that relates his patrilinear line to the Za hor royal family, see *ibid.*: 143–60. There, van der Kuijp asserts that such mythologies made Za hor tales count as historical facts for most Tibetan people. One of these "facts" was the established genealogy that most probably the Fifth Dalai Lama believed. The construction of genealogy correlates with our discussion on the Blo sbyong lineage. Both genealogy and lineage bridge biological and spiritual ancestors to their reputed origins.

⁵⁷ Text 32 in the "113 Texts" is missing in the Fifth Dalai Lama's list. Thus, text titles 1 to 31, and 32 to 112, recorded in the Fifth Dalai Lama's list correspond to texts 1 to 31, and 33 to 113 in the "113 Texts." See Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2009: vol. 2, 110–15.

masters listed in the first lineage.⁵⁸ Thogs med bzang po is master 26 and is addressed as rGyal sras Thogs med pa. The order of the first twenty-five masters is the same as the Blo sbyong transmission that Thogs med bzang po records in his text 9, *Lineage of Mahāyāna Blo sbyong Masters*.

The Fifth Dalai Lama mentions that the authors of the five lineages are unclear. However, he is certain that Thogs med bzang po transmitted his Blo sbyong teachings to his immediate disciples: rGya ma pa yon tan 'od in the first lineage, Mang mkhar ba Tshul khriims dpal in the second lineage,⁵⁹ and dPal ldan ye shes in the fifth lineage.⁶⁰ Mang mkhar ba Tshul khriims dpal and dPal ldan ye shes transmitted Blo sbyong practice to gZhon nu rgyal mchog and dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469), who were the editors of the first Blo sbyong anthology, the *Great Collection (Theg pa chen po blo sbyong brgya rtsa)*.

It is important to point out that parts of the first and second lineages also appear in *The Assemblage of Good Explanations of Mind Training (Blo sbyong legs bshad kun 'dus; hereafter Assemblage)*. *Assemblage* is related to the Fifth Dalai Lama's commentary on 'Chad ka ba's *Seven Point*. Based on the use of direct phrases and quotations in *Assemblage*, it is certain that the Fifth Dalai Lama employed Thogs med bzang po's *Hearing Transmission* and Se sPyil bu's (1121–1189) commentaries on 'Chad ka ba's text for his reference.⁶¹ In the colophon of *Assemblage*, the Fifth Dalai Lama records the transmission of thirty-five masters from whom he received this assemblage of good explanations of mind training.⁶² The order of the first twenty-six masters is the same with that in the first lineage. Then masters 27 and 28 listed in *Assemblage* are the same as masters 2 and 3

⁵⁸ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho in Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 592.2–6.

⁵⁹ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho in Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 592.6–93.1. The second lineage starts with Thogs med bzang po and he is addressed as rGyal sras rin po che.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: 593.3–6. The fifth lineage starts with Thogs med bzang po and he is addressed as rGyal sras rin po che. The fourth and fifth lineages overlap after master dKon mchog rgyal mtshan.

⁶¹ For example, for the usage of Thogs med bzang po's phrase not found in Se sPyil bu's commentary, "gnyis pa skye dka' ba la bsgom pa ni/ bdag gis...gnod pa chen po byed pa lta bu la bsgoms te/," see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1996: 87.1, and Thogs med bzang po n.d. [W00EGS1016240]: 525.3–4. For the usage in Se sPyil bu's quotation from sPyod 'jug "sems can rnam don bs.../ yid bzhin gyis ni lus su bsgyu," see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1996: 84.4 and 104.6. See also Se sPyil bu in dKon mchog rgyal mtshan and gZhon nu rgyal mchog 2004: 47. These quotations are not found in *Hearing Transmission*.

⁶² Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1996: 247.3–6.

in the second lineage.⁶³ The remaining masters 29 to 35 in *Assemblage* are not mentioned in the five lineages in the *Dergé Collected Works*. Obviously *Assemblage* offers another valid lineage of Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong transmission.

The records of Thogs med bzang po, dPal ldan ye shes, and the Fifth Dalai Lama concerning the Blo sbyong transmission demonstrate an unbroken continuity of a certain authoritative teaching. This effort invites a discussion of the formation of religious lineage after the Buddha's death and various lineage claims in Chinese Buddhism. As Elizabeth Morrison points out, as early as the first century CE, the Pāli and Sanskrit records found in Sri Lanka and Northern India offer different lists of monks who transmitted the *Vinaya*, *Abhidhamma*, and teachings from the time of the Buddha. These lines of transmission affirm the authenticity of their tradition.⁶⁴ The establishment of a lineage to legitimise its Buddhist tradition is even more emphasised in the Chinese context, in which genealogy was deeply connected with issues of imperial succession. The issue of Buddhist lineage became more complicated when it was concerned with monastic leadership, ownership of monastic property, competing for superiority over rivals, etc., among the development of the Tiantai, Sanlun, and Chan schools in China. Eventually, after reflection amongst Chan school masters, the insistence on only one heir permitted per generation changed to an acceptance of multiple transmissions as correct.⁶⁵

Like their Chinese and Indian counterparts, Tibetan scholars needed to trace their teachings to an authentic origin after the loss of the Buddha. In particular, the development of Blo sbyong was situated during the "later dissemination" (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet.

The Blo sbyong lineage construction discussed in this article does not involve the aspect of competing for the sole authority of a school or downplaying other transmissions. For example, in another Blo

⁶³ They are Mang mkhar ba Tshul khriims dpal and gZhon nu rgyal mchog.

⁶⁴ The Pāli texts in the Sri Lanka tradition, such as the *Parivāra*, offer lists of the first six chiefs who transmitted the *Vinaya*, beginning with Upāli who recited the *Vinaya* at the first council. As Morrison points out, T.H. Barrett noticed that Buddhist literature, and the *Vinaya* in particular, has stressed unbroken continuity ever since the Buddha's lifetime. The Sri Lanka tradition also gives the lists of monks who transmitted the *Abhidhamma*, beginning with Śāriputra. As for the Sanskrit texts, such as *Aśokāvadāna* found in the northwest of India, they provide accounts related to the tradition of the five masters of the dharma. Morrison states that it is most likely that the Sri Lanka tradition wanted to attest that its Buddhism was received from India. Regarding the tradition of the five masters of the dharma, it links its validity to a particular place, in this case the northwest of India. See Morrison 2010: 19–23.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 51–85.

sbyong lineage, “Parting from the Four Clingings,” the Sa skya pa scholar Go rams pa bSod nams sengge (1429–1489) also incorporated Thogs med bzang po into the transmission.⁶⁶ Blo sbyong lineages presented by the Fifth Dalai Lama are in the form of “records of teaching received” (*gsan yig*). This is a type of Tibetan writing that traces the transmission of a recipient’s scholarly authority through a sequence of masters to its alleged root.⁶⁷ While this is open to discussion, I would suggest that the device of the *gSan yig* helps to establish the Fifth Dalai Lama as a spiritual heir of Thogs med bzang po’s Blo sbyong tradition. Instead, by narrating the transmission history and by editing *Hearing Transmission* rather than by means of *gSan yig*, dPal ldan ye shes is included in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s fifth lineage. In this way, he is regarded as one of Thogs med bzang po’s authoritative Blo sbyong successors. At the same time, both dPal ldan ye shes and the Fifth Dalai Lama consolidate Thogs med bzang po’s Blo sbyong legacy.

Conclusion

This article is a pioneering examination of the textual organisation of Thogs med bzang po’s *Dergé Collected Works*. As presented above, this work can be divided into ten different categories. In particular, the first part, the “113 Texts,” shows that the editors analyzed each text to some degree in order to group texts with similar topics or writing forms. To briefly describe what the *Dergé Collected Works* is about, it shows which Buddhist masters, deities, rituals, practices, religious lineages, and institutions were related to Thogs med bzang po’s life experience. The *Dergé Collected Works* also functions as a record of a group of people’s inquiries into Buddhist doctrines, devotions, and spiritual pursuits. The completion of the *Dergé Collected Works* exemplifies the success of preserving Thogs med bzang po’s works and his interactions with his fellows after his death in 1369.

In terms of Blo sbyong, I have demonstrated that there is a high percentage of texts related to Blo sbyong teachings in the *Dergé Collected Works*. Hence, I argue that this work is an essential source of Thogs med bzang po’s Blo sbyong philosophy. The Blo sbyong lineages recorded in the *Dergé Collected Works* demonstrate scholars’ engagement with Blo sbyong transmission over space and time. Constructing Blo sbyong lineage is a device that assures Tibetan

⁶⁶ Go rams pa bSod nams sengge refers Thogs med bzang po as “rGyal sras Chos rdzong.” See dKon mchog rgyal mtshan and gZhon nu rgyal mchog 2004: 377.

⁶⁷ My statement is shaped by Lusthaus’s idea of lineage. See Morrison 2010: 49–50.

Buddhist practitioners of the authority and the authenticity of the Blo sbyong tradition. While Thogs med bzang po does not have a reincarnation, his identity as a Blo sbyong master is remembered even today. By engaging with an unbroken transmission line and compiling commentaries, later scholars have included Thogs med bzang po as part of the legacy of Blo sbyong transmission. Thogs med bzang po's image as a lineage holder is emphasised by the inclusion of text 114, *Hearing Transmission*, in the *Dergé Collected Works*, and by the Fifth Dalai Lama's lineage lists at the end of text 114 and *Assemblage*. By editing or arranging Thogs med bzang po's writings, dPal ldan ye shes and the Fifth Dalai Lama associated themselves with Thogs med bzang po's Blo sbyong transmission. They created their spiritual identities, and at the same time magnified Thogs med bzang po's identity, by molding the texts in such strategic ways.

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