

# TRANSCENDING DELUSION:

The Third Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje's (1284–1339)

Discourse on the Distinction between Perception (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) and  
Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*)

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## Abstract

“Transcending Delusion: The Third Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s (1284–1339) Discourse on the Distinction between Perception (*rnam shes*: *vijñāna*) and Gnosis (*ye shes*: *jñāna*)” explores a central theme in the *Collected Works* of the Third Karmapa (*Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung ’bum*), supreme head of the Karma bKa’-brgyud lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. This subject, which addresses the distinction between deluded states of mind and states free from delusion, can be traced back to early Indian and Tibetan sources. The Third Karmapa expounded on this subject in one of his most influential treatises (*rNam shes ye shes ’byed pa’i bstan bcos*), as well as in shorter or longer form in several other works, in the context of various genres, in verse as well as in prose.

Despite its tremendous significance for traditional Tibetan scholars, as well as for Western academic research, a systematic and thorough study of the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes* as a separate subject has been lacking up to now. A crucial reason for this was that the Third Karmapa’s *Collected Works* were lost until 2006. Now, after the rediscovery and republishing of these works in Tibet in 2006 and 2013, the central themes of his literary output have to be newly investigated and contextualized. By examining the Third Karmapa’s discourse on the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes*, this thesis is designed to shed new light on his principal doctrines and thus to fill this gap.

Beyond the analysis of this discourse, as dealt with in the Third Karmapa’s own works, this thesis discusses its intellectual impact on later masters, notably the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag (1525–1583) and important *Ris-med* (nonsectarian) masters such as the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha’-yas (1813–1899) and the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje (1871–1922). Furthermore, the critical analysis extends to the concept of the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes* as taught in various Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Based on the historical and philosophical-religious background, the thesis focuses on the text-critical edition of the primary sources, such as the various *rNam shes ye shes* editions, and annotated translations of the relevant works, i.e. the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, and a few others. In this way, this study of several of Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s key treatises and related commentaries, in addition to its contribution to the field of Tibetology, is designed to break new ground for further research in related fields and for other academic disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, cognitive sciences, art, and medicine.

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## CONVENTIONS OF SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

The following conventions of spelling, transliteration and translation apply to this work:

1. The transcription of Tibetan letters in general follows Turrell W. Wylie (WYLIE 1959).
2. Tibetan names will usually be presented in their transliteration.
3. A few commonly occurring names and titles will appear in their transliteration only when first noted. Thereafter, they will be presented in phonetic transcription in all cases where the exact citation of their other names is not relevant, e.g. Rinpoche rather than Rin-po-che, Lama rather than bLa-ma, Karmapa rather than Karma-pa.
4. Tibetan titles and terms have been translated into English wherever possible and meaningful. Many translations are provisional. Often the Sanskrit form is also given. Names in brackets appear first in Tibetan, second in Sanskrit and finally in English, sometimes in Pāli. The titles of canonical works in Sanskrit remain untranslated in most cases.
5. The biographical data of historical persons are given only when they are first mentioned. The historical correctness of these dates could not always be examined.
6. In general, Tibetan names are given including hyphens between the syllables, except for citations, where hyphens are already omitted between the Tibetan syllables.
7. Any phonetic transcription follows the *THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan* by Germano and Tournadre (2003).
8. Capital letters are used to indicate the initial pronounced consonant of Tibetan words (root letter) for clear identification. Otherwise, it would be possible to confuse two entirely different words containing the same letters, where the root letter can be either the first or second letter.
9. In translation, square brackets [ ] include additional words or phrases supplied by the author, which are not in the original Tibetan, but necessary for understanding. Parentheses ( ) denote words or phrases that clarify the meaning but are not necessary additions to the original translation.

10. In translation, “rendered as” always means “rendered by the author.” Otherwise, the translator into English, French or German is always credited.
11. Terms in other languages contained in the *Oxford Dictionary of English (ODE)* are not italicized, e.g. Sanskrit terms such as dharma, sūtra, tantra, saṃsāra, nirvāṇa etc.

# Part I – The Historical and Doctrinal Context

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter begins with a brief presentation of the objectives of this study. The subsequent major part scrutinizes the available primary and secondary sources and the state of research on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. This includes the literature on the historical background, as well as the life and works of the Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje.



Fig.1 Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, Buddhist Center Karma Guen, Malaga, Spain, contemporary wall-painting by Dawa Lhadripa, *karma sgar 'bris* (encampment) style.

In this context, the number of works collected in the two editions of the *gSung 'bum* by Rang-byung-rdo-rje, published in 2006 and 2013, has to be enlarged by those works newly identified as extant by the author. They are of major importance to the analysis of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. The discussion of these works is followed by a survey of the available sources on Rang-byung-rdo-rje's doctrinal affiliations, as well as the *rNam shes ye shes* reception by later bKa'-brgyud masters and in other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. The final section of this chapter presents a detailed outline of the dissertation.

## 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The *Treatise on Distinguishing Perception from Gnosis (rnam par shes pa dang ye shes 'byed pa'i bstan bcos)* examines the difference between deluded and undeluded states of mind. The thesis argues that the Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, hierarch of the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, treated this subject as one of the key topics in his *Collected Works (Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum)*.<sup>1</sup> After the rediscovery and republishing of his *gSung 'bum* in Tibet, in 2006 and 2013, it is now possible to thoroughly investigate and contextualize this fundamental theme within his literary output.

The Third Karmapa has been designated a great scholar and meditation master in many historical records.<sup>2</sup> He was born in Ding-ri Lang-khor in Central Tibet in the year 1284. Early in his life he was known for reporting an unbroken awareness from one life to the next. He became a lineage holder and teacher of all major original Tibetan practice lineages. The fusion of essential rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud doctrines particularly made him the founder of the Karma-sNying-Tig tradition. He systematized the training of the practitioners in the bKa'-brgyud lineage by means of his most important treatises. His *Compendium on Astrological Calculations (rTsis kun las bsdus pa)* became the theoretical background of the mTshur-phu Calendar in Tibet up to the present (Fig.1 see small Karmapa in meditation having the corresponding vision). His closest student was the First Zhwa-dmar Grags-pa-seng-ge (1283–1349); he passed on his lineage to g.Yung-ston-rdo-rje-dpal (1284–1365).

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth abbreviated to *gSung 'bum*. For the exact bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Deb ther sngon po*, A, pp. 412.4–413.2, translated in ROERICH 1949, pp. 473–474; for further details, see section 1.2.2. in this thesis and SEEGER 2009: 15–19.

Karmapa's discourse on the distinction between *rnam shes*, *vijñāna* and *ye shes*, *jñāna*, can be traced back to early Indian sources such as the Yogācāra, Madhyamaka, Tathāgatagarbha, Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, as well as tantric literature.<sup>3</sup> He has extensively commented on this topic for the benefit of his direct students as well as his later followers. Thus, by examining this specific discourse, this study is designed to shed light on one of the principal doctrines formulated by the Third Karmapa, which became applied, pivotal teachings over many centuries in the bKa'-brgyud tradition as well as in other lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.

As this discourse appears in the context of various genres, in verse as well as in prose, the focus of this thesis addresses the following major research questions:

- What is the origin and meaning of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in connection with Buddhist teachings?
- What is the function of the *rnam shes-ye shes* or *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction in the textual corpus of the Third Karmapa? Is it just an often repeated profound advice directed towards his close students or is it directly or indirectly connected to his role as head of the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage, or even to the essential spiritual instructions of other major transmission lineages?
- What is the specific interpretation of this theme by the Third Karmapa and why is it so crucial for him?
- How influential were these teachings on later masters in the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage and other lineages throughout the centuries until today?
- Do similar or different interpretations of the same subject exist in other Tibetan Buddhist traditions?

As an answer to these research questions, besides investigating the historical, doxographical-religious, as well as hermeneutical background of this theme in early Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, this thesis focuses on the varied appearances and functions of the *rNam she ye shes* discourse in the context of the life and works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, as well as the doctrine of several transmission lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. Central to this study is the detailed analysis of the primary sources connected to this topic.

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<sup>3</sup> The literature review later in this chapter will present the related classical Indian sources. The Indian and early Tibetan background of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse will be discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Therefore, it includes the identification of the Indian sources of the *rNam she ye shes* and related works, text-critical editions and annotated translations of the *rNam she ye shes* treatise and other relevant passages, including their later commentaries.

## 1.2 Literature Review on Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

Two categories of primary and secondary sources exist with respect to the available literature on this topic:

1. The first category are works related to the research background, such as those focused on the historical context of the life and works of the Third Karmapa, his writings, as well as his doctrinal affiliations.
2. The second category more specifically explores the works directly related to the *rNam she ye shes* discourse contained in his literary oeuvre and the later commentaries on this subject.

In terms of the first category, the previous research conducted by the author<sup>4</sup> already provided a wealth of general information on the life and works of the Third Karmapa within a broader spectrum of the relevant historical and religious developments in Tibet. Even though the present study builds on the author's previous research, the background here refers directly to the historical and doctrinal context for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. The second category comprises the sources closely connected to the principal theme.

### 1.2.1 The Historical Context for This Discourse

The general literature connected to the research background is actually very broad and can be surveyed only in summarized form. The introductory chapter of the author's M.Phil. thesis<sup>5</sup> provides a review of classical and modern sources concerning the research

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<sup>4</sup> The research background for this topic has been discussed in detail in the M.Phil. thesis SEEGERs 2009: 35–182. In terms of secondary literature, Andrei Ivanovich Vostrikov (1904–1937) provided a detailed introduction into Tibetan historical literature in VOSTRIKOV 1970; Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) presented the historical literature of Tibet in TUCCI 1980, vol. 1, pp. 1–170.

<sup>5</sup> See SEEGERs 2009: 19–34.

on the Third Karmapa until 2009. The special focus of the previous review lies on the historical and doxographical background of his life and works as well as his connection to other important masters in his lifetime, such as Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer (1308–1363) and Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan (1292–1361).

The primary sources on Tibetan history relevant to the time before, during, and partly after the Third Karmapa's lifetime (thirteenth–fourteenth century) in chronological order consist of the *Deb ther sngon po* by 'Gos-lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal (1392–1481),<sup>6</sup> most probably composed in 1476, the Second dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba's (1503–1566) *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, started in 1545 and completed around 1564, the '*Brug pa'i chos 'byung*, composed by Padma-dkar-po (1527–1592) in the year 1575, as well as the most extensive compilation, the *Kam tshang gser phreng*, written by Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas (1700–1774) and 'Be-lo Tshe-dbang-kun-khyab (b. 1718), published in 1775. It was later completed by the *gSer phreng kha skong*, composed in 1993 by Grags-pa-yong-'dus, alias Stob-dga'-g.yul-rgyal (1942–1997).<sup>7</sup> In terms of the Third Karmapa these works refer for the most part back to his autobiographies; they will be discussed at the beginning of the next section.

Another important historical record is the *Re'u-mig* or *dPag-bsam-ljon-bzang* by 'Jam-dbyangs-bshad-pa Ngag-dbang-brtson-'grus (1648–1721) and Sum-pa-mkhan-po Ye-shes-dpal-'byor (1704–1787).<sup>8</sup> Besides relevant background information on the Third Karmapa, the Tibetan historical work *Bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags* by the contemporary author bKra-shis-dbang-'dus presents an edict granted to him by Thoq-the-mur (r. 1328–1332) entitled: *Yon gong ma thog the mur gyis karma pa'i chos rje sku phreng gsum pa rang byung rdo rje la bstsal ba'i 'ja' sa*.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the major transmission lineages held and passed on by the Third Karmapa have been extensively discussed in the First 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul's (1813–1899) *Shes bya mdzod* under the title *rDor rje theg pa'i sgom rim man ngag gtso bor byed pa bye brag tu bstan pa'i skabs*,<sup>10</sup> as well as in the context of Kong-sprul's instructions

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<sup>6</sup> For an English translation of this work, generally known as the *Blue Annals*, refer to ROERICH 1949.

<sup>7</sup> For further details concerning these works, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> For an English translation, see CHATTOPADHYAYA 1993.

<sup>9</sup> See *Bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags*, pp. 237–238.

<sup>10</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod*, A., pp. 275–464; for an English translation of this section, refer to HARDING 2007: 49–344.

on the program for practitioners during their meditation retreat.<sup>11</sup> The First Kong-sprul also compiled selected works containing practice instructions of each of the “eight original practice lineages” in the *gDams ngag mdzod*, one of his famous *mDzod chen lnga* (*Five Great Treasuries*).

Hugh Edward Richardson, Tsepon Shakabpa, Dieter Schuh, Luciano Petech, David Seyfort Ruegg, Matthew Kapstein, and Ronald Mark Davidson, among others, have provided important secondary sources on the historical background for Karmapa’s life and works in chronological order.<sup>12</sup> The author’s analysis of the background further extends to two sections on the concept of a “spiritual lineage” and the origin and development of “the bKa’-brgyud lineages,” including their “essential teachings.”<sup>13</sup> Matthew Kapstein provided a valuable discussion of the “eight original practice lineages” in his article “gDams ngag: Tibetan Technologies of the Self.”<sup>14</sup> The same goes for Ringu Tulku in *The Ri-me Philosophy of Jamgön Kongtrul the Great*,<sup>15</sup> selected lineages also are treated in several other books authored by Matthew Kapstein and Cyrus R. Stearns.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.2.2 The Literature on Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s Life

The major primary sources for the spiritual biography of the Third Karmapa that are known so far have been presented and critically analyzed in chapter 2 of the author’s M.Phil. thesis, including a chronological overview.<sup>17</sup> The principal early sources are two newly-published autobiographies of the Third Karmapa: *Dpal chen rang byung rdo rje’i rnam thar bzhugs pa lags so* (*This is the Life of Liberation of the Glorious Great Rang-byung-rdo-rje*) and *Thams cad mkhyen pa rin po che rang byung rdo rje rnam par thar pa tshigs su bcad pa bzhugs pa’i dbu chogs lags so* (*This is to be Placed on Top of the*

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<sup>11</sup> This topic has been presented and commented on in *Dpal spungs kun spyod*, pp. 266.2–282.3; for an English translation, refer to ZANGPO 1994: 74–121.

<sup>12</sup> For further bibliographical details concerning these sources, refer to RICHARDSON 1958/1959; SHAKABPA 1967; SCHUH 1977; PETECH 1990; SEYFORT RUEGG 1997; KAPSTEIN 2000; DAVIDSON 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Both sections appear in SEEGER 2009: 64–78.

<sup>14</sup> See KAPSTEIN 1995: 276–284.

<sup>15</sup> Ringu Tulku, as a major part of RINGU 2006: 55–191, in terms of the various practice lineages mostly translated the relevant sections from Kong-sprul’s *Shes bya mdzod*, A., pp. 275–464.

<sup>16</sup> Kapstein in several chapters of KAPSTEIN 2000 highlighted aspects of the rNying-ma, bKa’-brgyud, Jo-nang, and Sa-skye lineages; Stearns especially presented the Jo-nang and Sa-skye schools in selected chapters of STEARNS 1999; 2001.

<sup>17</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 35–48, summarizing chart on pp. 47–48.

*Head as the Verse Composition of the Life of Liberation of the All-knowing Precious Rang-byung-rdo-rje*).<sup>18</sup>

Further early sources, which are not so well-known, are the *Deb ther dmar po* by Tshal-pa Kun-dga'-rdo-rje (1309–1364),<sup>19</sup> composed from 1346 to 1363, and the *Mig 'byed 'od stong* by bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzang-po (1386–1434),<sup>20</sup> completed in 1418. There also exist a few modern Tibetan compilations, such as the *rTsom yig gser gyi sbram bu*, the *Karma-pa sku phreng rim byon*, the *Karma-pa rnam thar*, the *Bod kyi rig gnas*, as well as mKhas-brtsun-gsang-po's *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*.<sup>21</sup> They present more or less the same materials as the afore-mentioned collections, sometimes even exact copies. They also constitute the background for all major Western presentations of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's life.

Additionally, there exist several concise hagiographies of the Third Karmapa written from the perspective of the rNying-ma lineage, such as those contained in Kong-sprul's *gTer ston brgya rtsa*, and in the *Rnying ma chos 'byung* by bDud-'joms Rinpoche 'Jigs-bral-ye-shes-rdo-rje (1904–1987).<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that among the biographical sources, Tibetan scroll paintings (*thang ka*) and statues (*sku 'dra*) have been produced depicting Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, often surrounded by his teachers and students. Occasionally, they reveal interesting details related to the hierarchical systems within the various lineages. Examples and references have been provided in the context of the previous study by the author.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 353–373.4, short: *Dpal chen rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar*, and pp. 374–414.4, short: *Rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar tshigs bcad ma*. The second autobiography, composed in verses, also appears in almost identical form under the title *Chos rje thams cad mkhyen pa rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar tshigs bcad ma* in *mKha'-spyod-dbang-po'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 123–163.

<sup>19</sup> See *Deb ther dmar po*, pp. 94–107.

<sup>20</sup> This work, in the context of the Karma Kam-tshang bKa'-brgyud lineage, presents a concise biography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje: *Mig 'byed 'od stong*: 56b.6–58a.6; the Tibetan text has also been published in SØRENSEN 2007: 87–88.

<sup>21</sup> *rTsom yig gser gyi sbram bu*, vol. 1, pp. 219–222; *Karma-pa sku phreng rim byon*, pp. 97–111; *Karma-pa rnam thar*, the biography of the Third Karmapa entitled *Karma-pa sku phreng gsum pa rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar*, pp. 81–95; *Bod kyi rig gnas*, pp. 276–278, the biography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje entitled *Karma rang byung rdo rje dang khong gi gsung 'bum*. *mKhas btsun bzang po*, vol. 7: *The bKa'-brgyud-pa Tradition*. The biography of the Third Karmapa is entitled *rJe karma pa rang byung rdo rje ni*, pp. 110–115. It is identical to the one contained in the *Deb ther sngon po*.

<sup>22</sup> The first compilation is contained in the First Kong-sprul's *Rin chen gter mdzod*. B., vol. 1, complete text pp. 291–759, Third Karmapa biography, pp. 413.6–414.3, translated in SEEGER 2009: 123; the second compilation appears in the *rNying ma'i chos 'byung*, pp. 191–193; English translation in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991, pp. 572–574.

<sup>23</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 47.

In terms of the secondary literature, Tulku Thondup offered some helpful information for research on the Third Karmapa, such as the transmissions he passed on to Klong-chen-rab-'jam-pa, as well as an exposition of Klong-chen-rab-'jam's writings on the "View (Basis)," the "Attainment of the Result, the Buddha-Bodies and Primordial Wisdoms in *Mahāyāna Sūtras* and *Tantras*," as well as in "*Dzogpa Chenpo*."<sup>24</sup> He characterized the Third Karmapa in concise terms as follows: "The 3rd Karmapa, Rangchung Dorje (Rang 'byung rdo rje, 1284–1339), was a great siddha and scholar."<sup>25</sup> In another well-known monograph he presented his writings in the context of important "bKa'-brgyud works for study."<sup>26</sup>

When analyzing the Yuan-Sa-skye period of Tibetan history, Luciano Petech referred extensively to the Third Karmapa. He provided ample evidence of the Third Karmapa's travels to China, his activities at the Imperial (Mongol) court, and his role in Tibetan society.<sup>27</sup> Ringu Tulku elucidated the philosophy of the First 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul and the *Ris-med* movement and provided a detailed account of the historical development and contents of the teaching lineages that came to Tibet, referring repeatedly to the Third Karmapa.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2.3 Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Works

In terms of the primary sources related to the works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, naturally the main one is his *Collected Works*, the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, which in the version published in 2006 comprises 16 volumes including five volumes of commentaries to the *Zab mo nang don* (*The Profound Inner Meaning or Reality*). So far, academic research on this newly published *gSung 'bum* has been conducted exclusively in the context of the M.Phil. thesis of the author.<sup>29</sup> The fifth chapter of this dissertation offers a brief summary of the *gSung 'bum* as background for the investigation of the *rNam she ye shes* discourse in these *Collected Works*. Kurtis R. Schaeffer has listed and analyzed those

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<sup>24</sup> Contained in THONDUP 1989: 148, 191, 200–202.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> See THONDUP 1987: 84.

<sup>27</sup> The two principal sources for this topic are SCHUH 1977: 131–142; PETECH 1990: 85–98, especially fn. 7.

<sup>28</sup> See RINGU 2006.

<sup>29</sup> The analysis of the *gSung 'bum*, including a group of additional works newly identified by the author up to 2009, has been presented in SEEGER 2009: 145–182.

works in the textual corpus of Rang-byung-rdo-rje that were available until 1995.<sup>30</sup> This includes an overview of the Tibetan commentaries on his writings extant at that time.<sup>31</sup>

The *gSung 'bum* of Rang-byung-rdo-rje published in 2006 comprises the following three major categories:

Part 1: The extant works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje (*gSung 'bum*, volumes 1–11).

The total number of pages in the first 11 volumes is 3485 in 179 works.

Part 2: The various commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* (*gSung 'bum*, vols. 12–16).

The total number of pages in the later five volumes is 1475 in 10 works.

Part 3: The nonextant and disputable works of the Third Karmapa.<sup>32</sup>

The total number of nonextant works, the titles of which have been collected in the *dkar chag* (Table of Contents) under this category, is 103. A few works are disputable, e.g. the *rGya mtsho mtha' yas*, composed by the Second Karmapa, has been attributed to the Third Karmapa, because the Second Karmapa sometimes also signed his works by his secret name of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. This concerns also the *rLung sems gnad kyi lde mig* and the *sKu gsum ngo sprod*.<sup>33</sup>

According to this *dkar chag*, the total number of pages in all 16 volumes, in 133 sections of teachings, is 4959 in 189 works. The total number of works authored by Rang-byung-rdo-rje according to the list of titles given in the *gSung 'bum* published in 2006 (extant and nonextant works together) is  $179 + 103 = 282$ . From among the 30 works newly identified by the author (31 minus one extant but not counted) in the previous and the recent research ( $14 + 17 = 31 - 1 = 30$ ) eight are mentioned in the title list of nonextant

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<sup>30</sup> Kurtis R. Schaeffer in SCHAEFFER 1995: 14–24 was able to collect only 24 extant and 7 nonextant works of the Third Karmapa, for a total of 31. In the context of his Ph.D. research (2000) he identified two more extant works = 33 works altogether.

<sup>31</sup> Note that the commentary by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag (1525–1583) on the *Zab mo nang gi don*, besides the main (short) title *Zab mo nang don gyi stong thun*, often is cited under its second title: “*Bstan bcos zab mo nang don gyi gtong* (sic!) *thun rab gsal nyi ma'i snying po*: Essential study of Karmapa Rangjung Dorje’s (1284–1339) famed treatise on the Anuttarayoga Tantra” (see also Library of Congress). The work also appears under this second title in *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 15, pp. 213–441.

<sup>32</sup> A list of more than 100 titles of nonextant works appears in *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 39–43.

<sup>33</sup> Martina Draszczyk has extensively discussed the authorship of these two works attributed to the Third Karmapa contained in the *gSung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 264–268, and vol. 11, pp. 1–19, in DRASZCZYK 2018: 147–155.

works. If the 22 additional works ( $30 - 8 = 22$ ) are added, based on the edition published in 2006, this amounts to a minimum of 304 works authored by the Third Karmapa. Certainly he has composed more works of which we don't even know the titles. A discussion of the *gSung 'bum* published in 2013 and those works newly identified by the author will follow below; a related chart providing an overview appears in Appendix 2.

Three kinds of perspectives on the Third Karmapa's *gSung 'bum* – the distinctions according to the genres, the transmission lineages, and the most important works – serve as parameters for the significance and function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in his oeuvre.<sup>34</sup> They will be applied in the fifth chapter, in the context of the analysis of the various occurrences of this discourse in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *gSung 'bum* and its specific functions. Any kind of analysis of those primary sources consisting of the Third Karmapa's own works directly related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse will also be presented in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

Another source of great informative value has proven to be the *'Bras spungs dkar chag*, an extensive register of old Tibetan works from the libraries of the 'Bras-spungs Monastery, Lhasa.<sup>35</sup> It contains numerous works composed by the Third Karmapa and will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, the *dPe rgyun dkon pa tho yig* by A-khu Rinpoche Shes-rab-rgya-mtsho (1803–1875), preserved at mDzod-dge sGar-gsar Monastery, Amdo, in Eastern Tibet, presents a list of rare books that according to the editor Lokesh Chandra “is of signal importance for the history of Tibetan literature.” An interesting evaluation provided in the introductory section is: “A-khu rin-po-che's rare *Tho-yig* or autochtone bibliography of books which were already rare or of extraordinary value in the Tibetan world.”<sup>36</sup>

The three extant Tibetan commentaries on the *rNam shes ye shes* will be discussed in chapters 2, 5, and 7. Simply to introduce them here as further primary sources: Even if Shes-rab-rin-chen (early 14th c.), a direct student of the Third Karmapa, had composed the earliest commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes*, so far it is not available. Neither the Tibetan work itself nor its translation appeared in any relevant list. The first extant one is the annotated commentary by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag (1525–1583),

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<sup>34</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 150–173.

<sup>35</sup> See *'Bras spungs dkar chag*.

<sup>36</sup> See *dPe rgyun dkon pa tho yig*, vol. 1, p. 62; vol. 3, p. 9.

composed in the second half of the sixteenth century (most probably in the year 1566),<sup>37</sup> followed by the most extensive, full-fledged interlinear commentary by the First Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha'-yas,<sup>38</sup> as well as the annotated commentary by the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje (1871–1922).<sup>39</sup>

Other major sources are the *mDzod chen lnga* (*Five Great Treasuries*), compiled by the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas. Several of the works which are crucial for this research appear in these extensive collections, such as the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, which together with other works of the Third Karmapa has been incorporated into the *gDams ngag mdzod* (*Treasury of Spiritual Instructions*). This treasury is a compilation of the major works of the “eight original practice lineages” (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*). It was composed in the years 1871–1881.<sup>40</sup> Another relevant treatise of Rang-byung-rdo-rje related to this research is contained in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (*Treasury of Precious Rediscovered Treasures*) by the First Kong-sprul: *Nyams len lag khrigs ma*.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, the *Shes bya mdzod* (*Treasury of Knowledge*) contains a concise and detailed presentation of the functions of perception and gnosis in the context of the five *skandhas* (*'phung po lnga*) as part of the higher and lower *Abhidharma* teachings (*mngon pa gong 'og*).<sup>42</sup> Later in the same chapter, this treasury also presents a section on the three natures or three characteristics (*mtshan nyid gsum*, *trisvabhāva* or *trilakṣaṇa*)<sup>43</sup> which constitute the basic structure of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise by the Third Karmapa.

The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC) in New York, nowadays renamed the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), has become an invaluable source of Tibetan literature. It has published several lists of the works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, along with a list of his teachers and students, as collections and as separate works on various

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<sup>37</sup> The discussion on the various editions of the *rNam shes ye shes* will be presented in chapter 7 of this thesis. The short title of this commentary is *rNam shes ye shes brtag pa* (for further details, refer to the bibliography). Translated sections in the form of annotations to the root text will also be provided in chapter 7.

<sup>38</sup> The short title of this commentary is *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*.

<sup>39</sup> The short title of this commentary is *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*. The various editions are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>40</sup> See RINGU 2006: 37–39.

<sup>41</sup> Again, for the bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>42</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod: Thos pa'i rim pa phyed ba* (The Topics for Study): *Theg pa che chung shes bya spyi'i gnas rnam par gzhas pa'i skabs* (The General Topics of Knowledge in the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna), A, pp. 386–397, 405. A further discussion of these sources appears in chapter 6.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 413–420.

topics.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, not all of these lists have remained online. Furthermore, most relevant Tibetan sources connected to later masters of the bKa'-brgyud lineage and other Tibetan Buddhist traditions are available through the BDRC as well as several libraries and bookshops offering access to Tibetan literature. Also the general and the bibliographical notes provided by the BDRC are an important source of information.

As mentioned previously, Dieter Schuh provided the earliest Western academic research into the Third Karmapa's works. At first, he focused on his famous astrological treatise *Compendium of Astrological Calculations*<sup>45</sup> in the context of the History of Tibetan Calendar Calculations, later on major edicts and epistles by Yuan emperors. They describe the appointment of the Third Karmapa by Yuan emperors.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, Schuh included a paraphrased biography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.<sup>47</sup>

In his well-known *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* John Powers described Tibetan religious history at the time of the Third Karmapa, especially the compilation of one of the first Tibetan Buddhist canons,<sup>48</sup> as well as the process of finding a successor in the context of "*How Tülkus are Selected*" through the example of the Karmapas.<sup>49</sup> In an essay Matthew Kapstein discussed the authorship of a work most probably mistakenly attributed to the Third Karmapa. He also co-translated the influential work by bDud-'joms Rinpoche (*rNying ma'i chos 'byung*) including the hagiography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje from the perspective of the rNying-ma transmission lineage.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> A comparative table of the extant collections of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works has been provided as Appendix 2 in SEEGER 2009: 233–237.

<sup>45</sup> Tib. *rTsis kun las bsdu pa* in SCHUH 1973: 34–36, 154–156. The exact connection between this astrological work and the other most important works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje will be discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>46</sup> See several sections in SCHUH 1977: 128–130, 135–141, 142–143, 145–158.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 130–135, 141–142, 143–144.

<sup>48</sup> See POWERS 1995A: 140–142. Christian Wedemeyer from the University of Chicago – in a presentation held at the "Tengyur Translation Conference" at the Central University of Tibetan Studies (CUTS, formerly CIHTS) in Sarnath, India, 8–11 January 2011 – particularly mentioned the Third Karmapa's early contribution for the compilation of a bsTan-'gyur: "Very recently two Tengyur catalogues composed by the 3rd Karmapa have come to light, whose content and whose structure vary significantly from alternative redactions...." (accessed 25 November 2013 through <http://wordpress.tsadra.org/?p=1125>). The titles of these two catalogues are: *Chos rje rang byung rdo rje'i thugs dam bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag ldeb* and *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag ldeb*, in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 415–594; 595–717. For further details, see MARTIN 2009.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>50</sup> See KAPSTEIN 1985; 1991, the latter with the bibliographical entry under DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991. The exact Tibetan and English references for this hagiography have been provided at the end of the previous section.

#### 1.2.4 The Newly Identified Extant Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje

Even a brief analysis of the edition of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, published in the year 2006, shows that it can only document the state of research at the time of finishing the compilation process. So far mainly the extant works of this edition have been discussed. Part III included in the set and listed above contains all 103 titles of nonextant works, which the editors became aware of during their search for the lost compositions of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. They did not examine several important collections carefully enough, for whatever reason, even if they visited the dPal-spungs Monastery and other places holding these collections. Additionally, this edition has been structured, for the most part, according to the genre distinction, not according to the various lineages of spiritual instruction. Obviously the teachings of those lineages different from the Karma bKa'-brgyud, Karmapa's main lineage had not been taken into account seriously enough.

Following the publication of this edition, a Part IV, therefore, had to be added to the above structure. This part consists of a list of newly identified extant works, not contained in Part I and II, except for four works also not in Part III. In the course of his research on the life and works of the Third Karmapa up to the year 2009, the author was able to identify a total of 14 additional extant works, which have been summarized in the M.Phil. thesis in Appendix 2 for the purpose of gaining a better overview.<sup>51</sup> In the course of the research for the present thesis the author has been able to identify 25 further extant works that have not been included into Part I or II of the edition of the *gSung 'bum* published in 2006. They will be discussed here briefly for the completeness of the *gSung 'bum* as basis for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and also listed in detail in Appendix 1.

A short work entitled *Phyag rgya chen po'i snying gtam tshig gcig ma*, in short *sNying gtam tshig gcig ma*, with regard to contents rendered as “Heart-Advice in a Few Words” (lit. “Heart-Advice in A Single Word”), was printed at Rum-btegs Monastery, Sikkim, and listed in the printing catalogue of the monastery.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it is contained in the second part of the *Nges don sgron me*<sup>53</sup> by the First Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha'-yas. The English translation of Kong-sprul's work, which became well-

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<sup>51</sup> See SEEGERs 2009: 176. The title of Appendix 2 is: “List of Newly Identified Extant Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.”

<sup>52</sup> See *sPar gyi dkar chag*, p. 7, no. 120.

<sup>53</sup> See *Nges don sgron me*: 112.5–114.2. The author would like to thank Almuth Frankfurt for drawing his attention to this short but important work.

known in Tibetan Buddhist circles under the title *The Torch of Certainty*,<sup>54</sup> does not contain this second part of the Tibetan work, including the short treatise of the Third Karmapa, while a new German translation presents the complete work.<sup>55</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje's treatise is listed under No. 251 of the nonextant works in the author's M.Phil. thesis.<sup>56</sup> According to the colophon it was composed at the retreat place of the Yang-dgon Monastery.<sup>57</sup> Karmapa must have been in his early twenties; the exact date is unknown.<sup>58</sup>

Another major source for extant works of the Third Karmapa proved to be the catalogue of the 'Bras-spungs Monastery published in 2004 by the dPal-brtsegs Institute in Lhasa.<sup>59</sup> In two volumes on 2483 pages this catalogue presents inventories of more than twenty-eight thousand Tibetan manuscripts and woodblock prints. The dGa'-ldan Pho-brang, under direction of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho (1617–1682), extracted them from five libraries, in order to seize control of several monastic libraries. At the same time this collection of works shows which works had been regarded as most representative for their respective traditions at that time.

Even if the editors of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* published in 2006 according to the *dpe sgrig gsal bshad* also visited the 'Bras-spungs Monastery, they obviously did not have access to this catalogue. Probably the present edition, published in 2004, was still in preparation for printing. Thus, they were not able to incorporate several works composed by the Third Karmapa into their list of extant works. The analysis of the catalogue yields the result that the works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje contained in this huge

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<sup>54</sup> Bibliographical reference: HANSON 2000 (latest edition).

<sup>55</sup> See BORGHARDT 2013. The German translation of the Third Karmapa's treatise is to be found on pp. 214–216.

<sup>56</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 230.

<sup>57</sup> The Tibetan reads: *ces pa 'di rang byung rdo rje dben gnas yang dgon tu mdzad pa'o*. The Yang-dgon Monastery (also called Tshal-pa) is located about 10 km east of the capital Lhasa. It was founded by Lama Zhang (Zhang-g.yu-brag-pa brTson-'grus-grags-pa, 1123–1193) in 1175. Originally belonging to the bKa'-brgyud tradition, it was later converted into a dGe-lugs monastery. This retreat place is also mentioned in the verse autobiography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje (*Rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar tshigs bcad ma*: 388.3–4) as the place of his pure vision of Vimalamitra, which subsequently made him founder of the Karma-snying-thig tradition. See also *Kam tshang gser phreng A*, p. 199.5–6: *Karma'i yang dgon du bzugs pa'i skabs ...*

<sup>58</sup> Khenchen Trangu Rinpoche (*mKhan-chen Khra-'gu-rin-po-che*) mentions this work as having special significance, in his commentary *Thar pa'i lam ston* (last lines) on the *Short Prayer to Vajradhara* (*rDo rje 'chang thung ma*).

<sup>59</sup> See *'Bras spungs dkar chag*. Ernst Steinkellner has confirmed in STEINKELLNER 2006: 194, especially fn. 6, that this collection of the Fifth Dalai Lama has been opened and a catalogue has been printed. The bibliographer of the publisher Dpal-brtsegs Institute, Sherab Sangpo, mentioned to several scholars visiting the institute in Lha-sa that many works from the 'Bras-spungs Library have not been included in this catalogue, such as biographies of U-rgyan-pa (1230–1309), the principal teacher of the Third Karmapa, etc. The reason most probably was that they were regarded as secret, see LI 2011: 5, 19, 38, 57, 294.

collection can be roughly categorized into the following three groups (several works with identical titles in this list are counted as one):

1. The works identified as extant in the *gSung 'bum* published in 2006 – 86 works.
2. The works, the titles of which are listed as nonextant in the *gSung 'bum* – 4 works.
3. The works not appearing at all in the newly published *gSung 'bum* – 12 works.

For one additional work the editors of the 'Bras spungs dkar chag were not able to clarify beyond doubt the authorship of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

All three groups, but especially the second and third group, are of prime importance for the research on the literary oeuvre and thus also on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse of the Third Karmapa. By the sheer amount of works, the first group together with the other two groups prove that the Fifth Dalai Lama considered at least 102 from among Karmapa's collected works to be important for the view and practice of the bKa'-brgyud tradition. The second group contains those works which can be more or less clearly identified on the basis of the title list of nonextant works published in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*.<sup>60</sup> The third group consists of those twelve works not appearing at all in the *gSung 'bum* published in 2006.<sup>61</sup>

Here, except for the last title, only those works have been presented which can be clearly assigned to the Third Karmapa. If the title appears in the list of nonextant works, this is easy to identify. But a few other Karmapas, notably the Second Karmapa, sometimes signed their works by the same name "Rang-byung-rdo-rje." Nevertheless, here we mostly find either "Karma Rang-byung-rdo-rje," or "Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje" or "Chos-rje Rang-byung-rdo-rje." All cases not clearly attributed to the Third Karmapa have been left aside. This means that at least two more works have not been included here, because the author is just named "Karmapa."

In the context of the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP) the responsible scholars were able to compile a huge collection including additional works by the Third Karmapa. The catalogue offers 55 entries for "Karma pa 03" and 16 entries for the author "rJe Rang byung rdo rje."<sup>62</sup> The analysis shows that many titles are

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<sup>60</sup> This list appears in the *gSung 'bum*: vol. 1, pp. 39.6–43.5, fols. 15b–20b. Numbers have been assigned to these works in SEEGER 2009: 222–226.

<sup>61</sup> They have also been listed in Appendix 1.

<sup>62</sup> One of these entries is dedicated to 'Jigs-med-gling-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje and thus not counted.

repeated; they just have different owners or places. From the numbers of folios we can conclude that sometimes the editions must be different or that some pages are missing. In the list of the 71 entries, eight new extant works appear. None of them is listed in the title list of the 2006 edition. They have to be added to the list of newly identified extant works of the Third Karmapa.

In the year 2013, the dPal-brtseg-bod-yig-dpe-rnying zhib-'jug-khang in Lhasa published a further edition of the Third Karmapa's *gSung 'bum*. It appeared in the context of a compilation of the *gSung 'bums* of all seventeen Karmapas.<sup>63</sup> Again it has been compiled under the leadership of mKhan-po Lo-yag-bkra-shis and his team.<sup>64</sup> A collation of the two editions published in 2006 and 2013 reveals several remarkable differences between them.

In general, the format of the *dpe chas* is the same, but the print of the later edition is much clearer. This later edition consists of 13 volumes and does not include the commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* which had been published as the last five volumes (12–16) of the first edition. Without these commentaries the edition of 2006 consists of 11 volumes of the Third Karmapa's works, along with a few other works that have been regarded as closely connected to these *Collected Works* (examples see chapter 5). That means that, in comparison to the previous one, the edition of 2013 has been extended by two volumes except for the appended commentarial section from the first edition that has been left out.

The structure has also been changed. For example, the third volume of the first edition contains the collected songs (*mgur 'bum*) of Mi-la-ras-pa.<sup>65</sup> In the second edition this collection appears in the last volume (13) and has been enlarged by 88 pages (pp. 774–862). This does not imply additional songs of realization, but just slightly larger letters and a better print. Nevertheless, the first edition contains 179 extant works, the second edition 204 works. The 25 additional works appear, because several of the previous works have been separated into two, and mKhan-po Lo-yag-bkra-shis in the meantime has obviously found and identified a certain number of extant works and inserted them into the later edition.

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<sup>63</sup> The full title is: *Karma-pa sku phreng rim byon gyi bka' 'bum*, consisting of 108 volumes. Short title: *Karma-pa rim byon gyi bka' 'bum*.

<sup>64</sup> For the bibliographical details, refer to *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2. The *dKar chag* of this compilation lists the works of the Third Karmapa on pages 94–111.

<sup>65</sup> Known under the short title of *mDzod nag ma*; for the exact reference, see bibliography.

Altogether nine works from among the works in Part III of the previous edition (the title list of nonextant works) have been identified as extant. One work (*mDo phal po che'i bsdus don*, no. 50) again has been overlooked, even if it appears as an extant work in both editions. It is one of the works still identified as new by the present author. Nine works from the list of works newly identified by the author have now been inserted into the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2. Besides the important enlargement of the *gSung 'bum* this can be regarded as a valuable confirmation of the validity of his research and findings concerning the lost works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

To sum up, the two groups from the 'Bras-spungs catalogue together (4 + 12) amount to 16 additional extant works, plus the 8 from the NGMCP, plus the *sNying gtam tshig gcig ma*, mentioned above. Together these make up 25 newly identified extant works. If combined with the 5 additional works (14–8=6, minus the one extant but not counted =5) from the previous research, altogether  $25 + 5 = 30$  extant works have been newly identified by the present author. These additional 30 works obviously have not yet been identified by the editors and therefore not included in the *Collected Works*. They have to be incorporated into any new edition of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. All works identified as extant will be listed in Appendix 1.

### 1.2.5 The Sources of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Doctrinal Affiliations

After having discussed the structure and some of the more formal aspects of the *gSung 'bum*, we now come to the literature related to the contents relevant to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. A preliminary remark on the categorization of the *rNam shes ye shes* as bridging the two core teachings of the bKa'-brgyud lineage has already been made above. To be more precise, regarding the assignment of the Third Karmapa's works on the *rnam shes-ye shes* distinction to a certain category: On the one hand they belong to the Great Seal (*chag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) instructions handed down as one of the two essential teachings in the bKa'-brgyud tradition.

This can be understood from Karmapa's repeated reference to the practice of direct examination and recognition of the nondual nature of mind and the instructions related to the various aspects of buddha gnosis. Furthermore, the four concentration states leading to their realization seem to correspond to the four levels of Mahāmudrā practice as taught

by the meditation master sGam-po-pa (1079–1153).<sup>66</sup> Beyond that he substantiates this assignment by several literal or paraphrased quotations from various Mahāmudrā works. Naturally, those scholars commenting on the Mahāmudrā works of the Third Karmapa, at least in certain parts of their commentaries, later also referred back to his instructions on the *rnam shes–ye shes* distinction.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, the *rNam shes ye shes* appears as an appendix to the *Zab mo nang don*, the famous summary of tantric concepts. The subject serves as an underlying theme in the *Zab mo nang don* itself, which will be discussed in chapter 5. This clearly connects it to the teachings on inner energy, which according to the bKa’-brgyud tradition had been systematized by the Indian master Nāropa in his *Six Doctrines of Nāropa* (*NA ro chos drug*). Furthermore, as has been shown above, the First Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha’-yas, regards the *Zab mo nang don* including the *rNam shes ye shes* as especially expounding on the meaning of the inner chapter of the *Kālacakratāntra*, a major tantric work studied and practiced in all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Consequently, the editors of the *gSung ’bum* published in 2006 have underlined this bridging function of the *rNam shes ye shes* by inserting it into the seventh volume concluding the Sūtra section and introducing the tantra section of this compilation.

Nevertheless, the Third Karmapa integrated several further categories of teachings into this work and the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. The analysis of the processes of perception and cognition is solidly grounded on the Buddhist theory of cognition or epistemology (*tshad ma: pramāṇa*), which specifically distinguishes between deluded and correct or valid cognition. The highest form of undeluded cognition is said to be the awakened state or fully developed gnosis of a buddha. The understanding of the functions of mind is pivotal, not only for the experience and realization aimed at in Buddhist meditation practice, but especially in terms of the knowledge-oriented aspects underpinning modern cognitive science and psychology – including mindfulness and meditation research.

One important reason for this is that in a wider sense these instructions can be attributed to the collection of Abhidharma teachings. They systematically expound on the constituent factors (*dharma*) of experience, the components of the personality and how they relate to the external world. Thus Western scholars often refer to this field of

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<sup>66</sup> For more details, see chapter 4 (4.1.2).

<sup>67</sup> An example for such a commentary is the *Phyag chen mon lam ’grel pa*, 15b.5–16a.6, 17a.2–19b.2.

knowledge as Buddhist psychology, even if there are still differences with respect to a variety of essential assumptions, theories and doctrines in these two fields. This reference to Buddhist psychology is definitely part of the Third Karmapa's *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in general, as well as his more specific commentaries in the context of the Abhidharma teachings.<sup>68</sup>

The philosophical schools of thought of the Abhidharma, Yogācāra, Madhyamaka, and Tathāgatagarbha doctrines among other key concepts make up the integrated background of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *rNam shes ye shes* discourse (discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3). The primary literature – either directly quoted or paraphrased by the Third Karmapa in the relevant works – consists of a number of classical sources, such as the earlier and later Abhidharma compilations, the *Abhidharmakośa*, the *Pañcaskandha*,<sup>69</sup> and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ* of Vasubandhu (ca. fourth/fifth century C.E.), furthermore, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ascribed to Asaṅga (b. ca. 375 C.E.), as well as their important commentaries, the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* by Yaśomitra (fifth century C.E.), and the *Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyā* by Sthiramati (ca. 510–570 C.E.).

Rang-byung-rdo-rje's philosophical instructions especially expounding on the Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha doctrines are mainly based on the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and the other four well-known works ascribed to Maitreya or Maitreyanātha (ca. fourth century C.E.). Other primary sources are the works directly ascribed to Asaṅga, e.g., his *Yogācārabhūmi*, *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and *Mahāyānasamgraha*, as well as to Vasubandhu, e.g., his *Viṃśatikā* and *Triṃśikā*.

The general Madhyamaka teachings strictly follow the works ascribed to Nāgārjuna (ca. second century C.E.), such as the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *Dharmadhātustrota*, the *Suhṛllekha*, and the *Yuktiṣaṭīkā*, as well as the *Prasannapadā* and the *Madhyamakāvatāra* composed by Candrakīrti (ca. 600–650). The Pramāṇa (logical-epistemological) instructions are primarily based on the works of Dignāga (ca. 480–549), such as the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, and those of Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660), such as the *Pramāṇavārttika* and the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. The two principal tantric sources are the *Hevajratantra* and the *Kālacakratantra*. When additionally taking into consideration the sources quoted in later commentaries, notably those of the Fifth

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<sup>68</sup> This topic will be presented in connection with Karmapa's quotations in the following chapter.

<sup>69</sup> Here mostly the short titles of these works are mentioned; for their full titles, refer to the bibliography.

Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag and the First 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, many more classical works have been incorporated into the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. They will be discussed in the second part of the following chapter.

In terms of the relevant secondary historical and doxographical literature, in the last decades numerous scholars presented their respective interpretations of the role of the philosophical schools of thought in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes also in Chinese Buddhism. Except for a few representative examples, it is impossible to discuss here all books and articles which have appeared, even of only one of these schools.

One of the first contemporary scholars to analyze the spiritual practice and the corresponding viewpoint in the Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha schools of Indian, Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism is Lambert Schmithausen. Starting from an article entitled “Zur Literaturgeschichte der Älteren Yogācāra-Schule”, which originally had been a talk given in 1968 (repeated in 1997),<sup>70</sup> he published a variety of essays and held a number of lectures on these topics throughout his outstanding academic career, such as “Der Nirvāṇa-Abschnitt in der Viniścayasamgrahaṇī der Yogācārabhūmiḥ,”<sup>71</sup> published in 1969, “Spirituelle Praxis und philosophische Theorie im Buddhismus”<sup>72</sup> written in 1973, and “Aspects of Spiritual Practice in Early Yogācāra,”<sup>73</sup> which appeared in the year 2007.

In terms of the research even more closely related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, Schmithausen's seminal in-depth study of the fundamental mind or store consciousness entitled *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, was published in 1987. Later, as a continuation of his research, he reconsidered several of his own theories related to this subject, such as “The Problem of the Origination of the Concept of *ālayavijñāna*” and others.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969B; 1997. Anne MacDonald, University of Vienna, has compiled an extensive bibliography of the books and articles of Lambert Schmithausen, alongside the one presented at the Numata Zentrum für Buddhismuskunde (NZBK), University of Hamburg, (<http://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/>) under: <http://www.acmuller.net/yogacara/bibliography/schmithausen.html>, Yogācāra Buddhism Research Association, accessed 9 February 2018.

<sup>71</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969A.

<sup>72</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1973; 1976. English version: “On the Problem of the Relation of Spiritual Practice and Philosophical Theory in Buddhism.” He also formulated a later response to critical questions concerning this topic entitled “Reconsidering the Question of the Origin of Yogācāra ‘Idealism’ and the Problem of the Relation of Philosophical Theory and Spiritual Practice in Buddhism” in SCHMITHAUSEN 2014: 597–641.

<sup>73</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 2007.

<sup>74</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1987 and SCHMITHAUSEN 2014.

In 1997 Schmithausen composed an essay entitled “Yogācāra-Schule und Tathāgatagarbha-Richtung,” in which he started with an exposition on the Yogācāra system based on the *Yogācārabhūmi* (*Discourse on the Stages of Yogic Practice*), explaining “forms of the mind (*viññāna*)” – including a variety of translations of the term *viññāna* depending on the context,<sup>75</sup> – and nirvāṇa and buddhahood, including the four kinds of buddha knowledge (vier Arten von Buddha-Wissen, *jñāna*). In 2000 he published an article on another important Yogācāra concept, the “three natures” (Skt.: *trisvabhāva*) or “three marks of existence” (Skt.: *trilakṣaṇa*) as presented in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, a work attributed by most scholars to Asaṅga.<sup>76</sup> Thus, Schmithausen conducted a vast amount of valuable research on the sources relevant to the *viññāna*–*jñāna* distinction.

In a similar way David Seyfort-Ruegg, another outstanding scholar in terms of the philosophical schools in India and Tibet, contributed in general and specific ways to the understanding of the Indian sources with respect to this topic. As early as 1969, he published his well-known monograph *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra. Études Sur La Sotériologie Et La Gnoséologie Du Bouddhisme*. In 1973, Lambert Schmithausen composed an elaborate review on this compilation.<sup>77</sup> An indispensable source of information on the Madhyamaka school of thought, published in 1981, is Seyfort Ruegg’s *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*.<sup>78</sup> He also provided a number of lectures, books and articles which proved to be of importance for the present study.<sup>79</sup>

Extensive academic studies on the Indian and Tibetan history of Buddhist philosophy, which serve as background for this research, as well as key concepts related to the main subject of this thesis, are to be found in several dissertations published during the last decades. Important examples in chronological order are: Stephan Anacker, David Nicol Gordon Macleod, Mervin Higgo Hanson, John Peter Keenan, Daniel P. Brown, Brian Edward Brown, Ronald Mark Davidson, Kent Gregory Johnson, Richard Stanley,

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<sup>75</sup> The exact definitions and possible translations of the key terms *viññāna* and *jñāna* will be discussed in the third chapter (3.3).

<sup>76</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 2000.

<sup>77</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1973.

<sup>78</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1981.

<sup>79</sup> Selected examples are SEYFORD RUEGG 1968; 1976; 1989; 2000.

John Younghan Cha, Michael Zimmermann, and David Higgins.<sup>80</sup> They will be discussed in those sections related to their respective research.

Many books and articles elucidate the Indian origin of just one of the key subjects of this thesis. For example, Theodore Stcherbatsky, Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera, and Dieter Back explored the concept of *viññāna* in general. Erich Frauwallner, Lambert Schmithausen, and William Stone Waldron focused more specifically on the *ālayaviññāna*.<sup>81</sup> Jay L. Garfield and Shintaro Kitano discussed the major Yogācāra presentation of the “three natures” (*trisvabhāva*).<sup>82</sup> Edward Conze, Alex Wayman, and David Burton provided notes on the Sanskrit term *jñāna*,<sup>83</sup> Gadjin Nagao and John Makransky focused on the theory of buddha-body (*buddhakāya*).<sup>84</sup> One of the few scholars to comment on both key terms, *viññāna* and *jñāna*, in one article was Willibald Kirfel.<sup>85</sup> He referred back to a discussion of these terms by two other scholars, Hermann Jakobi and Ernst Leumann, on the basis of the above-mentioned article by Theodore Stcherbatsky.

Finally, several other well-known scholars and translators have worked on the classical Indian sources of the *rNam shes ye shes* theme. Only a few important examples can be mentioned here: Étienne Lamotte (1903–1983) edited and translated the *Samādhinirmocanasūtra* as well as the *Mahāyānasamgraha* ascribed to Asaṅga.<sup>86</sup> Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1866–1962) published the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Mādhyamikasūtras*) of Nāgārjuna together with the *Prasannapadā* and the *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ* and the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* ascribed to Vasubandhu.<sup>87</sup> Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935) also edited and translated the last mentioned treatise, as well as the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* ascribed

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<sup>80</sup> The bibliographical references for these studies are ANACKER 1970; MACLEOD 1978; HANSON 1980; KEENAN 1980; BROWN 1981; BROWN 1991; DAVIDSON 1985; JOHNSON 1988; STANLEY 1988; ZIMMERMANN 2002; HIGGINS 2012.

<sup>81</sup> See STCHERBATSKY 1929B; WIJESEKERA 1964; BACK 1987; FRAUWALLNER 1951; SCHMITHAUSEN 1973; WALDRON 1994; 2003.

<sup>82</sup> See GARFIELD 1997; KITANO 2000.

<sup>83</sup> See CONZE 1967; WAYMAN 1974; BURTON 2000.

<sup>84</sup> See NAGAO 1973; MAKRANSKY 1997.

<sup>85</sup> See KIRFEL 1938.

<sup>86</sup> See LAMOTTE 1935; 1973.

<sup>87</sup> See LA VALLEE POUSSIN 1903–13; 1912; 1923–31; 1928–29.

to Maitreya or Maitreyaṇātha.<sup>88</sup> Johannes Nobel (1887–1960) edited and translated the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan versions of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*.<sup>89</sup>

Concerning the Tibetan doxographical background of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, a few of the afore-mentioned studies, such as the author’s discussion of the viewpoint of Rang-byung-rdo-rje under the titles “The Third Karmapa and Dol-po-pa” as well as “The Third Karmapa and Klong-chen-pa,” the *rNying ma’i chos ’byung* and several other primary sources, have been presented in chronological order in the author’s previous literature review.<sup>90</sup> This included several of the most important Tibetan works on the gZhan stong (“extrinsic emptiness”) philosophy.<sup>91</sup>

Following are the major references used in this study in chronological order: works on the gZhan stong viewpoint by gSer-mdog Paṇ-chen Śākya-mchog-ldan (1428–1507); works composed by the First Karma-’phrin-las Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal (1456–1539) and the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554); several gZhan stong treatises by Jo-nang rJe-btsun Tāranātha (1575–1634), by the Sixth Zhwa-dmar Gar-dbang-chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (1584–1630); by the Thirteenth Karmapa bDud-’dul-rdo-rje (1733–1797), as well as by Kaḥ-thog dGe-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita ’Gyur-med-tshe-dbang-mchog-grub (1761–1829).<sup>92</sup>

Further selected primary sources are reference works contained in the above-mentioned *mDzod chen lnga (Five Great Treasuries)*, compiled by the First Kong-sprul, Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, alias Blo-gros-mtha’-yas; in the *Mi-pham gsung ’bum* by the First Mi-pham rNam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912); in the *bDud ’joms chos ’byung (History of the rNying-ma Tradition)* composed by bDud-’joms Rinpoche ’Jigs-bral-ye-shes-rdo-rje (1904–1987); as well as in a comparative work on various gZhan stong views by the contemporary scholar Padma-bi-dza, alias Zur-mang-mkhan-po Pad-ma-rnam-rgyal (twentieth century).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> See LÉVI 1907; 1911; 1925; 1932.

<sup>89</sup> See NOBEL 1937.

<sup>90</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 129–141.

<sup>91</sup> A selection of gZhan stong works considered important in the bKa’-brgyud tradition has been presented in SEEGER 2009: 34.

<sup>92</sup> The short bibliographical titles in this context are: *sTong nyid bdud rtsi*; *Dris lan yid kyi mun sel*; *Do ha skor gsum tī ka*; *dBu ma gZhan stong skor*; *gZhan stong snying po*; *gZhan stong dbu ma’i rgyan*; etc.; *rTogs brjod lta sgom spyod ’bras kyi glu*; *lTa sgom spyod pa’i skor*; *Nges don dgongs gsal*.

<sup>93</sup> Particularly the *Shes bya mdzod*; the *gZhan stong dbu ma chen po’i lta khrid* contained in the *rGya chen bka’ mdzod*; the *gZhan stong khas len* in *Mi-pham gsung ’bum*, A, vol. 3 (ga), pp. 359–378; the *rNying ma’i chos ’byung*; as well as the *Dris lan tshes pa’i zla ba*.

Of course it is impossible to discuss here in detail all the works related to the philosophical viewpoint of Rang-byung-rdo-rje in the wider sense. Therefore, in terms of the secondary literature, some representative sources that are to a greater degree dedicated to this topic are presented here in chronological order. In his doctoral dissertation<sup>94</sup> Klaus-Dieter Mathes provided his research results concerning the gZhan stong interpretation of the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, many times referring back to the Third Karmapa as being of major importance for the gZhan stong transmission in the bKa'-brgyud lineage.<sup>95</sup> The same applies for Mathes's analysis of *Gö Lotsāwa's Mahāmudrā Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhāga*.<sup>96</sup>

In two articles Mathes provided a concise overview of the viewpoint and the historical background of Tāranātha's teachings.<sup>97</sup> In this context he also described the viewpoint of the Third Karmapa, especially in comparison to that of Dol-po-pa, on the basis of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don*, the *Zab nang rtsa 'grel*, and other sources. Mathes had analyzed Dol-po-pa's gZhan stong presentation of the "two truths" in a previous article.<sup>98</sup> His research thus constitutes a major contribution to the understanding of the writings and the viewpoint of the Third Karmapa.

Cyrus R. Stearns has analyzed the Indian and Tibetan sources of the gZhan stong viewpoint including the presentation by Rang-byung-rdo-rje from the early masters of the Kālacakra transmission lineage up to most followers of the rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud lineages today.<sup>99</sup> In this context he discussed in detail the gZhan stong sources of the master Dol-po-pa (1292–1361), the relationship between the Third Karmapa and Dol-po-pa, as well as its impact on later developments.

Stéphane Arguillère has dedicated his Ph.D. thesis and its later publication<sup>100</sup> to the life and works of Klong-chen-rab-'byams (1308–1363), whose exegesis of many important Buddhist doctrines is regarded as authoritative in the rNying-ma lineage. In the course of his extensive research among other topics Arguillère has analyzed the

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<sup>94</sup> See MATHES 1996: 167–168.

<sup>95</sup> A more detailed discussion on the reception of Rang-byung's *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by the First Kong-sprul will be conducted in chapter 6.

<sup>96</sup> Published as part of the habilitation thesis by Mathes, in MATHES 2008: 51–75.

<sup>97</sup> See MATHES 2000; MATHES 2004: 288–292.

<sup>98</sup> See MATHES 1998 (in German).

<sup>99</sup> Presented in STEARNS 1999: 41–105, a slightly refined version of his Ph.D. thesis.

<sup>100</sup> See ARGUILLÈRE 2002; 2007.

connection of Klong-chen-pa to the Third Karmapa, including an annotated translation (into French) of a letter of the young Klong-chen-pa addressed to Rang-byung-rdo-rje.<sup>101</sup>

Jim Rheingans in his M.A. thesis “The Life and *Collected Works* of the First Karma-’phrin-las-pa (1456–1539)”<sup>102</sup> described the influence of Rang-byung-rdo-rje on the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506), one of the most important teachers of Karma-’phrin-las-pa, and through him on Karma-’phrin-las-pa himself, based on the *Dris lan yid kyi mun sel*.<sup>103</sup> In his research on the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554),<sup>104</sup> Rheingans scrutinized the Tibetan sources with respect to the philosophical viewpoint of several of the previous Great Seal masters and their influence on the Eighth Karmapa. In this context the Third Karmapa also plays an important role.

Dorji Wangchuk, when elucidating the rNying-ma view on the *tathāgatagarbha* theory including the distinction between the Rang stong (“intrinsic emptiness”) and gZhan stong (“extrinsic emptiness”) view, also mentioned the Third Karmapa and discussed the basis for designating him as a gZhan stong pa.<sup>105</sup> In another article he provided an insightful exposition: “On the Status of the Yogācāra School in Tibetan Buddhism.”<sup>106</sup> The viewpoint of the Third Karmapa and those of other masters of his time have to be understood on the basis of the background elucidated in this article.

In two articles on the *tathāgatagarbha* interpretation in Tibet and on the diversity of gZhan stong interpretations<sup>107</sup> Anne Buchardi analyzed the range of meanings of these terms, the latter based on two studies by classical Tibetan Buddhist scholars, Zur-mang Padma-bi-dza or Padma-rnam-rgyal (twentieth century) and Tāranātha (1575–1634). She referred to the primary sources and to the first article by Dorji Wangchuk mentioned above “for an account of various usages of *gzhan stong*.”<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, she listed many significant secondary sources, such as the studies by David Seyfard Rugg, Matthew

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<sup>101</sup> The short Tibetan title of this letter is *Dri yig* (see bibliography). Gene Smith also mentioned this letter in SMITH 2001: 279, fn. 81.

<sup>102</sup> See RHEINGANS 2004: 137–142.

<sup>103</sup> For the bibliographical details concerning this work, refer to the bibliography. Another title of this work is *Rang stong gzhan stong mi ’gal ba’i bstan bcos*, which literally translates as: “The Treatise of Rang stong and gZhan stong Not Being Contradictory.” This title specifically alludes to the viewpoint of the Third Karmapa later followed also by the Seventh Karmapa.

<sup>104</sup> See RHEINGANS 2008.

<sup>105</sup> See WANGCHUK 2004: 175.

<sup>106</sup> See WANGCHUK 2013. This article is contained in KRAGH 2013: 1316–1328.

<sup>107</sup> See BUCHARDI 2002; 2007.

<sup>108</sup> See BURCHARDI 2007: 1, fn. 2.

Kapstein, Cyrus Stearns, Paul Williams, Gene Smith and others.<sup>109</sup> When analyzing the Jo-nang-pa interpretation of the gZhan stong teachings, Michael Broido emphasized one of these possible interpretations, the distinction between the philosophical position (Tib.: *grub mtha'*) and the experience-based view (Tib.: *lta ba*).<sup>110</sup>

These and many other scholars have been strongly involved—often for extended periods of their lives—in exploring and rendering accessible the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist sources connected to the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction. In this way their contributions proved to be very helpful for this research. All other sources for Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *rNam shes ye shes* discourse will be dealt with in the respective chapters.

### **1.3 The Literature on the *rNam shes ye shes* Reception by Later bKa'-brgyud Masters and in Other Tibetan Buddhist Traditions**

Finally, this literature review briefly outlines the reception of this topic by later bKa'-brgyud masters and in other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. The various commentaries composed in the bKa'-brgyud lineage have already been mentioned. In terms of the *rNam shes ye shes* reception in other Tibetan Buddhist traditions, some selected examples represent their respective viewpoints. These examples relate to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as appearing in general presentations of the philosophical view, or in the works of highly respected and authoritative masters within the various schools.

The historical records are more or less the same as related to Tibetan history in general, particularly to the whole variety of lineages of spiritual instructions. They have been treated at the beginning of this chapter. Examples are the *Kam tshang gser phreng* by Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas & 'Be-lo Tshe-dbang-kun-khyab (b. 1718), the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* by the Second dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, and so on. Further important sources are the hagiographies and collected works of various Tibetan masters.

In recent years many works thought lost have reappeared. As a consequence research on the history of thought in Tibetan Buddhism has become increasingly popular and rewarding among scholars of Tibetology and Religious Studies. Therefore, some of the relevant dissertations, books and articles on this topic have to be mentioned here in

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<sup>109</sup> See SEYFORTH RUEGG 1989; KAPSTEIN 1992; STEARNS 1999; WILLIAMS 1998; SMITH 2001.

<sup>110</sup> See BROIDO 1989: 86–90. This topic will be discussed in detail in the section on Rang-byung-rdo-rje's philosophical view in chapter 4 (4.6).

chronological order and in relation to the lineages they have explored. In terms of the rNying-ma lineage the following scholars have conducted extensive research on important aspects of the *rNam shes ye shes* theme: Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Kent Gregory Johnson, Samten Gyaltsen Karmay, Tulku Thondup, David Francis Germano, Orna Almogi, John W. Pettit, Stéphane Arguillère, Dorji Wangchuk, William S. Waldron, and David Higgins.<sup>111</sup> Their contributions will be mainly discussed at the beginning of chapter 4, as well as in the second half of chapter 6.

Concerning the Sa-skya tradition David Jackson has explored the functions of the mind as taught by the master Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251).<sup>112</sup> Michael Broido, Cyrus R. Stearns, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Michael R. Sheehy analyzed the Jo-nang interpretation. David Seyfort Rugg elucidated the dGe-lugs-pa theory of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Kulatissa Nanda Jayatilleke, Collett Cox and Rita Langer among others have researched consciousness and the functions of mind in early Buddhism; Ronald Epstein explored this topic in the Chinese Consciousness-Only (*viññapti-mātra*) school.<sup>113</sup> These are just a few examples, which are designed to serve as support for further research on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in these various traditions.

## 1.4 Outline of the Dissertation

The study comprises eight chapters in two parts: six and two chapters respectively. Part I investigates the historical and doctrinal context for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as well as its precise meaning and functions in the *Collected Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje* (*Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*). Part II provides the critical editions and annotated translations of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and other relevant passages from the *gSung 'bum*.

The introductory chapter begins with a brief presentation of the objectives of this study. The following most extensive part of this chapter deals with the analysis of the state of research and the available primary and secondary sources. These sources refer to the historical and doctrinal context for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, to the life and

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<sup>111</sup> See EHRHARD 1982; JOHNSON 1988; KARMAY 2007; THONDUP 1989; GERMANO 1992; ALMOGI 2009; PETTIT 1999; ARGUILLÈRE 2002; 2007; WANGCHUK 2004; 2009; GERMANO/WALDRON 2006; and HIGGINS 2012.

<sup>112</sup> See JACKSON 1991–1993.

<sup>113</sup> The bibliographical references are BROIDO 1989; STEARNS 1995; 1999; HOPKINS 2006; 2007; SHEEHY 2005–2006; SEYFORT RUEGG 1968; JAYATILLEKE 1963; COX 1988; 1995; LANGER 2001; EPSTEIN 1985.

works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, his doctrinal affiliation, as well as to the reception of this discourse by later bKa'-brgyud masters and other Tibetan Buddhist traditions, followed by this outline of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 explores the Indian background for the *rnam shes-ye shes* (*viññāna-jñāna*) distinction. Here major topics are related to the integrated viewpoints of the philosophical schools of thought of the Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha doctrines among other Indian Buddhist key concepts. These especially serve as background for Karmapa's exposition on the Buddhist tantras. After the study of the Indian provenience of the *rNam shes ye shes* doctrine in general, there follows the analysis of the sources for the citations in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and its commentaries.

Chapter 3 is first of all dedicated to the classical hermeneutical guidelines formulated as the "four reliances." They prove to be essential sources for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. Second, then, is the analysis, on the basis of the available sources, of the different usages of the key terms *rnam shes* (*viññāna*) and *ye shes* (*jñāna*) in the relevant works.

Chapter 4 examines the Tibetan background of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. After a discussion of the Tibetan references related to the earlier and later propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, the chapter deals with the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools of thought in early Tibet. The Third Karmapa is shown as having the function of a lineage holder and teacher of the "eight practice lineages" (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*). The focus lies on his main lineage, investigating the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint as background for his teachings. This is followed by an exploration of the viewpoint of the Third Karmapa himself on the basis of the relevant sources. Concerning the question whether or not the Third Karmapa in fact held the viewpoint of a Rang stong pa or a gZhan stong pa, there is clear evidence that he adhered to a balanced approach.

Chapter 5 explores the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. It begins with a brief survey of the contents and structure of the *gSung 'bum* as background for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. This is followed by an exposition of the interrelation between the *rNam shes ye shes* and the two other treatises of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy to which it belongs. The next and most extensive section presents a detailed study of the role that the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse plays in the *gSung 'bum*. This includes the investigation of the major occurrences and their respective functions.

The last section of this chapter discusses the Third Karmapa's specific interpretation of the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction.

Chapter 6 analyzes the influence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse on later bKa'-brgyud followers and on other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. At first the author investigates how selected bKa'-brgyud masters after the Third Karmapa commented on his view, especially the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag, the First Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, and the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes* as treated in various Tibetan Buddhist traditions, such as the rNying-ma, the Jo-nang and the dGe-lugs lineages.

Part Two presents an analysis of the major source texts by means of critical editions and annotated translations. Chapter 7 focuses on the principal work, the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. The first section provides a brief overview of the extant manuscripts and editions, followed by both a critical edition as well as an annotated translation of the edited Tibetan text. Chapter 8 follows the same structure in terms of a critical edition and translation of selected passages from the *gSung 'bum* related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, such as from the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, etc.

After the abbreviations and the bibliography of the primary and secondary sources, Appendix 1 presents the complete list of newly identified extant works. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the Indian sources applied in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. Appendix 3 offers an up-to-date compilation of the modern works and translations of the *rNam shes ye she* discourse as known to the author. These additional materials are designed to facilitate further research on this subject. The concluding section offers a concise summary of the research results in English and German language.

## Chapter 2: The Indian Provenience of the *vijñāna–jñāna* Distinction

Chapter 2 starts with a discussion of the general Indian background of the *vijñāna–jñāna* distinction. When investigating the relevant Indian sources applied and commented upon by Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his discourse on the *vijñāna–jñāna* distinction, the following three principal topics will be covered: 1. a discussion of the origin and development of the Indian Buddhist doctrines incorporated into his works on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse; 2. his own direct or paraphrased citations from Indian sources in the main *rNam shes ye shes* treatise; 3. the major quotations applied in the various commentaries by later masters in order to substantiate the often extremely condensed verses composed by the Third Karmapa. The first subject will be discussed in the first part, the second and third in the second part of this chapter.

### 2.1 The Indian Background of the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

The Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje was one of the very few masters of his time who, by means of thorough studies, had gained an overview of the teachings and transmissions brought from India to Tibet.<sup>114</sup> He collected the transmitted oral and written material, clarified the key concepts as handed down in various lineages of spiritual instruction and passed them on to a great number of students.<sup>115</sup> In order to emphasize the Indian provenience of the teachings and to provide support for their authenticity, he based his commentaries in various ways on the works of the earlier Indian forefathers of the bKa'-brgyud tradition and other lineages of spiritual instruction in Tibet. One special way was to refer back to the lives of several of these masters, thus symbolically grounding his own teachings on the Indian Buddhist origins starting from the historical Buddha Śākyamuni up to the latest masters before the respective transmissions were brought to Tibet.

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<sup>114</sup> In the context of the literature review of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works, the previous chapter offered a short discussion on the early compilation of two bsTan-'gyur catalogues by the Third Karmapa including their bibliographical references (fn. 48). Such a compilation is only possible on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the majority of works available in Tibetan translation.

<sup>115</sup> The author previously conducted extensive research on the Third Karmapa as holder and teacher of the "eight original Tibetan lineages of spiritual instruction" in SEEGER 2009: 101–116.

The most important reference to the Indian sources is shown right at the beginning of his *gSung 'bum*, when dedicating those treatises [in the 2006 edition comprising the first two volumes] to the previous incarnations of the historical Buddha (*sangs rgyas skyes rabs: jātaka*) in short and detailed versions.<sup>116</sup> These works in chronological order are followed by hagiographies of Tilopa and Nāropa, the two principal Indian forefathers of the bKa'-brgyud transmission lineage.<sup>117</sup> The edition of 2013 introduces this section with the newly discovered life story of Vajradhāra (Tib. *Chos sku rdo-rje-chang gi rnam par thar pa*), before turning to Tilopa and Nāropa. Subsequently Rang-byung-rdo-rje focused on the Tibetan founders of the lineage in order to provide evidence for an uninterrupted continuity of their transmissions up to himself. From the perspective of Buddhist practice, when opening up to the qualities of the previous masters, he invoked the spiritual influence or blessing of these masters and of the complete lineage.<sup>118</sup>

In this context the famous yogi Mi-las-ras-pa (1040–1123) received special treatment: he appears twice in the list of lineage masters, indicating the practice-oriented approach in Karmapa's treatises. At first Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed a very detailed commentary on his collected songs of realization (*mgur 'bum*), comprising the complete third volume of his *gSung 'bum*.<sup>119</sup> In the context of the presentation of the founding

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<sup>116</sup> The essential work on this topic, the *Jātakamālā*, has been composed by Āryaśūra (fourth century). For the bibliographical entry of the critical edition of this work, refer to SPEYER 2007. As a supplement to the *Jātakamālā* Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed at least sixty-seven commentaries on the *Jātaka* tales in the following three treatises (the numbers refer to the composite list of his extant and nonextant compositions in Appendix One of SEEGER 2009: 221–232: A short summary on the *Jātaka* tales: 3 *Sangs rgyas skyes rabs kyi bsdu don*, *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 44–107; the actual commentary on the tales by Āryaśūra: 4 *Slob dpon dpa' bo 'i mdzad pa'i skyes rabs so bzhi pa*, *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 108–505, as well as his own collection of tales from other sources (listed in the colophon of his work in vol. 2, p. 665): 5 *Karma pa rang byung rdo rje mdzad pa'i sang rgyas kyi skyes rabs*, *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 1–666. Āryaśūra's tales together with Rang-byung-rdo-rje's supplement are called *sKyes rabs brgya pa* (see WANGCHUK 2007: 95, fn. 21 and bibliography). Further works on the *Jātaka* tales are listed below.

<sup>117</sup> This section of his writings presents more summarized versions of the hagiographies in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 1–83: 7 *Grub pa'i dbang phyug tai lo pa dang nA ro pa'i rnam thar*. The hagiographies of the two Indian masters were composed at the beginning of a longer section including the Tibetan bKa'-brgyud masters before Rang-byung-rdo-rje and his two autobiographies, *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 83 (repeated)–414: *rJe btsun tai lo pa nas rang byung rdo rje yan chad kyi bka' brgyud gser phreng gi bla ma rnams kyi rnam thar gyi skor las*.

<sup>118</sup> This practice in Tibetan is called *bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (Skt. \**guru-yoga*).

<sup>119</sup> This work is entitled *Karma pa rang byung rdo rje'i phyogs bsgrigs mdzad pa'i rje btsun mi la ras pa'i mgur 'bum mdzod nag ma*, short title: *mDzod nag ma*, contained in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 1–774. In the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, 2013, this work makes up the thirteenth and last volume, pp. 1–862.

fathers of the bKa'-brgyud lineage in the edition of 2006, the actual hagiography of Mi-la-ras-pa<sup>120</sup> then follows.

Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros (1012–1097), the actual Tibetan founder of the lineage, does not appear in the list of hagiographies collected in the 2006 edition. The reason seems to be that his life story had not come to light again at the time of publishing. At least in a short form it should have been included in his “bKa'-brgyud-gser-phreng (Golden Chain of bKa'-brgyud Masters)”, where it fails to appear. It has not even been included as a title in the list of nonextant works. Nevertheless, in the *gSung 'bum* published in 2013 the hagiography of Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros surfaces in an extensive form.<sup>121</sup> Obviously it had been discovered in the intervening years.

When investigating the list of nonextant works, it becomes apparent that Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed even more works related to the lives of Indian Buddhist masters. He commented on the twelve deeds of the historical Buddha, several special *jātaka* tales from the sūtras, life stories of the tantras, the hagiography of Saraha (ca. 8th century C.E.) – who is said to have been of special importance to the Mahāmudrā transmission in the bKa'-brgyud lineage – as well as the history of the Dohās, the songs of spiritual realization. The newly identified extant work *A Praise to the Distant Mahāmudrā Transmission Lineage* appears in the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (discussed in the previous chapter) and thus has to be added to the *gSung 'bum* as extant.<sup>122</sup> By expounding on these early hagiographies and the history of major sections of Indian Buddhism, Rang-byung-rdo-rje laid strong emphasis on the purity and continuity of the transmissions and substantiated his claim for an unmistakable interpretation of their contents.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Contained in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 83–117.

<sup>121</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, vol. 3, pp. 101–182.

<sup>122</sup> The Tibetan titles according to the composite list in SEEGERs 2009: 228–231 are: 190 *thub pa'i mdzad pa bcu gnyis*; 191 *mdo rgya chen rol pa nas btus pa'i skyes rabs*; 192 *'dul ba las byung ba'i skyes rabs*; 208 *rgyud lugs kyi rnam thar*; 209 *sa ra ha yi rnam thar*; 252 *do ha'i lo rgyus*. They also appear in the *dkar chag* of *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 39.6–43.5. Three additional works are contained in the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* and thus in the list of newly identified extant works: 1621. 018375 *skyes rabs kyi sdom tshig bzhugs*; 1644, 018660 *skyes rabs brgya pa'i bod rtsom cha tshang*; 810. 009034 *phyag chen ring rgyud la bstod pa*.

<sup>123</sup> In his hagiographies the Third Karmapa praised the extraordinary qualities of the Buddha and the previous masters, which implies that the transmissions have been passed on successfully and free from mistakes, and that Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself had properly received the teachings originating from the historical Buddha. In the title of one of his two autobiographies he referred to himself as the “All-knowing Precious Rang-byung-rdo-rje (*Thams cad mkhyen pa rin po che rang 'byung rdo rje*). This designation refers to his full realization of the omniscient or enlightened state of a buddha (discussed in SEEGERs 2009: 50–51). For his teachings – when being based on such a high level of realization – it logically follows that they must be free from mistakes.

This leads us to another method in which the Third Karmapa based his commentaries on the works of the earlier Indian Buddhist masters, such as the forefathers of the bKa'-brgyud tradition: In major parts of his *gSung 'bum* he expounded on their compositions. Except for several wishes (*gsol 'debs*), praises (*bstod pa*), spiritual instructions (*zhal gdams* or *man ngag*) and songs of accomplishment (*rdo rje'i mgur*), now mostly contained in volume 5 of the 2006 edition, nearly all other works collected in his *gSung 'bum* elucidate the classical Indian sūtras, tantras and śāstras.<sup>124</sup> In terms of the contents of his commentaries, in most cases he thus strictly followed the preserved teachings of the Indian masters.

As stated in the previous chapter, those topics essential to the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction can be traced back to early Indian Buddhist sources, such as the Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, Tathāgatagarbha, as well as tantric literature.<sup>125</sup> Some scholars even regard this distinction as originating from the Brāhmaṇical tradition, such as the epic literature.<sup>126</sup> A clear understanding of this discourse without an analysis of the relevant Indian sources is therefore virtually impossible. In the following sections the basic sources and doctrines which are related to these various Indian and Tibetan Buddhist schools of thought will be briefly discussed insofar as the Third Karmapa has integrated them into his teachings.

### 2.1.1 The Abhidharma Sources for This Discourse

The Abhidharma works deal with the constituents of existence making up the outer universe as well as each individual person. Furthermore, the inner aspect, the perceiving mind, which transforms a body into a living being, is carefully analyzed. The early Buddhist schools describe mind in terms of six functions of perception or consciousness

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<sup>124</sup> Chapter 6 in SEEGER 2009 provides an analysis of the *gSung 'bum* according to the genre distinction (pp. 152–157, according to the perspective of the related transmissions lineages (pp. 157–173), and according to Rang-byung-rdo-rje's most important treatises (pp. 177–180). The sūtra section covers the last part of volume 5, volume 6 and half of volume 7, whereby the order in the *gSung 'bum* strictly follows the threefold turning of the Dharma wheel (see SEEGER 2009: 154). This is then followed by his major commentaries on the Buddhist tantras in volumes 7 through 10. Volume 11 is mostly dedicated to the Mahāmudrā works, and volumes 12 through 16 to the later commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don*, his tantric masterpiece. This is how the editors structured his *gSung 'bum* published in 2006.

<sup>125</sup> Clark Johnson in his Foreword to ROBERTS 2001: 2 summarized Rang-byung-rdo-rje's integrative approach as follows: "Rangjung Dorje, being one of the great Buddhist thinkers of his time, in this text brings together the Abhidharma literature of the Theravadins, the Mahayana doctrines on emptiness, the Mind-only writings of the Cittamatrins, and the practice of examining mind directly of the mahamudra."

<sup>126</sup> See HIGGINS 2015: 352, especially fn. 43.

(Pali: *viññāṇa*, Skt.: *vijñāna*). These are the five sense perceptions with the mental function of cognition, the intellect (Pali: *manoviññāṇa*, Skt.: *manovijñāna*), as the sixth kind of perception. Only with the beginning of the Yogācāra school belonging to the Mahāyāna (ca. fourth century C.E.) was the sixth aspect subdivided into two further functions, the “defiled” or “maculate mind” (Skt.: *kliṣṭamānas*) and the “fundamental mind,” or “all-base consciousness,” or “store consciousness” (Skt.: *ālayavijñāna*).<sup>127</sup> The analysis of the cause for this development, especially concerning the relationship between Buddhist philosophical theory and certain forms of spiritual practice, lies outside the scope of this study.<sup>128</sup>

Throughout his presentations of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction, the Third Karmapa discussed eight aspects of *vijñāna*. Thus, in terms of the sources, he applied the teachings of the later tradition. Nevertheless, this approach includes and builds on the earlier tradition of six aspects.<sup>129</sup> According to the *Deb gter sngon po* (*Blue Annals*) the Third Karmapa studied – with Śākya gShon-nu, the abbot of the “Lower” monastery of gSang-phu – both the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ascribed to Asaṅga as well as the *Abhidharmakośa* composed by his half-brother Vasubandhu (the *Higher and Lower Abhidharma*, Tib. *mNgon-pa gong-'og*).<sup>130</sup> This means Rang-byung-rdo-rje was able to base his own presentation of Abhidharma topics by means of Tibetan translations on the essential Indian sources related to both the earlier and the later schools of Abhidharma doctrine. This leads us to a concise discussion of the relevant Indian Abhidharma sources, which form the background of his presentation.

The textual sources of Abhidharma vary considerably in different Indian Buddhist schools. Even if several collections of topics belonging to this group of teachings are said to have already been recited at the second Buddhist council, it is clear that the formation

<sup>127</sup> Lambert Schmithausen has conducted a considerable amount of research on this development, e.g. on the Sautrāntika pre-conditions of several works of Vasubandhu, in his articles SCHMITHAUSEN 1967 and 1969B, as well as on the seventh and eighth aspect of perception or consciousness in SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A and an unpublished manuscript entitled: “Satkāyadr̥ṣṭi, asmimāna und kliṣṭa-manas,” where he specifically analyzed the seventh aspect, the (*kliṣṭa-*) *manas*.

<sup>128</sup> Lambert Schmithausen wrote a German article on this topic, translated into English in SCHMITHAUSEN 1976. Dorji Wangchuk further elaborated on this complex theme, while refining the way of expressing the inherent dichotomies according to their historical and doctrinal relationships, in WANGCHUK 2015.

<sup>129</sup> In several of his works the Indian master Paramārtha (499–569) presented a ninth kind of perception or consciousness, the *amalavijñāna* (pure perception). It is said to be completely free from faults, identical with suchness and nonconceptual gnosis. For a more detailed discussion, refer to RADICH 2009.

<sup>130</sup> See *Deb gter sngon po*, (A), p. 427.1: *de nas gsang phu gling smad kyi gdan sa pa shwa kya zhon nu la ... mngon pa gong 'og ... mang du gsan* || For an English translation, refer to ROERICH 1949: 490.

of the Abhidharma as part of the Buddhist canon (Skt. *Tripiṭaka*) was conducted at a much later time.<sup>131</sup> The Theravāda or Sthaviravāda School preserved the following seven treatises in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* in Pāli: 1.*Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (Compendium of Phenomena); 2.*Vibhaṅga* (The Book of Analyses); 3.*Dhātukathā* (Discourse on Elements); 4.*Puggalapaññatti* (Classification of Individuals); 5.*Kathāvatthu* (Issues of Controversy); 6.*Yamaka* (The Book of Pairs); 7.*Paṭṭhāna* (Relationship of Conditions).<sup>132</sup>

Three direct commentaries on these works exist: 1. the *Aṭṭhasālinī* elucidates the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*; 2. the *Sammohavinodanī* expounds on the *Vibhaṅga*; and 3. the *Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā* comments on the other five works of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. Among these three the *Aṭṭhasālinī* is regarded as fundamental, because among other important topics it provides a comprehensive introduction to the historical development of the Abhidharma.

Besides the primary work *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the last of the seven works, the *Paṭṭhāna* (composed ca. second century B.C.E.), seems to be of considerable relevance to our principal subject, as it expounds on the process of perception and as part of that on the various conditions for this process. They will be discussed later in this section and again in the context of the Yogācāra viewpoint. Also other Pāli treatises, for example, the *Visuddhimagga* composed by Buddhaghōṣa (ca. fifth century C.E.) as a general commentary on the four *Nikāyas*, contain detailed explanations on abhidharmic topics, such as the aggregates, sense bases, and elements.<sup>133</sup>

The analysis of the functions of perception including their objects as well as their ontological status increasingly became a key topic in the philosophical schools prevalent in the first five centuries C.E. The Northern schools of Indian Buddhism, especially the

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<sup>131</sup> For example, Nyanatiloka Mahathera in MAHATHERA 1938: xi, holds the opinion that at least the three oldest works of the Abhidhamma collection were already recited at the Second Buddhist Council (*saṃgīti*), held in the first quarter of the fourth century B.C.E. or earlier at Vaiśālī. According to him the other four works were recited at the Third Council, held during Emperor Aśoka's reign (ca. 268–232 B.C.E.) under the presidency of the Arhant Thera Moggaliputta Tissa, ca. 250 B.C.E., at Pāṭaliputra. Written forms of these seven collections appeared around 200 B.C.E. Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids in RHYS DAVIDS 1975: xviii dated the compilation of the *Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi* to the middle of the fourth century B.C.E. She also provided a list of important commentaries to this work (xxii). According to most relevant sources, the early Buddhist Pāli canon then started to be compiled during the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī of Sri Lanka (29–17 B.C.E., according to VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 58 the dates are 104–76 B.C.E) (see also NORMAN 1983: 10–11).

<sup>132</sup> This order is given in the *Aṭṭhasālinī* (*Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary) 3–10. Erich Frauwallner provided a summary of the Abhidharma literature of the Pāli school including the relevant commentaries in FRAUWALLNER 1995: 39–95. Rita Langer discussed some neglected aspects of *viññāna* in the Pāli canon in LANGER 2001.

<sup>133</sup> See *Visuddhimagga*, p. 455; details appear in Part 3 on Understanding (*Paññā*), chapters 14 and 15. For an English translation of the relevant sections, refer to NĀṆAMOLI 1956: 455–466.

Sarvāstivāda school,<sup>134</sup> which starting from the second century B.C.E. had developed as a sub-school from the Sthavira or “Elder” branch, preserved another complete set of seven Abhidharma works in their early canon, this time in Sanskrit and later translated into Chinese. These works are listed here following the order given by Yaśomitra:<sup>135</sup> 1. *Jñānaprasthāna*; 2. *Prakaraṇapāda*; 3. *Vijñānakāya*; 4. *Dharmaskandha*; 5. *Prajñaptiśāstra*; 6. *Dhātukāya*; and 7. *Samgītiparyāya*.<sup>136</sup>

The two earliest of these seven works, the *Dharmaskandha* and the *Samgītiparyāya*,<sup>137</sup> mostly expand on doctrinal topics from the sūtra collection such as the path of practice, the “four noble truths,” sense perception, dependent origination etc. in the form of structured presentations of the Buddha’s teachings from the sūtras. Some scholars understand the *Vijñānakāya* as being of vital importance, since it presents the elements of reality as existing within the three times, as well as the four kinds of conditions (*pratyaya*), both of which became essential theories of the Sarvāstivāda school. The remaining four works present a more complex and refined analysis of the constituent factors of the inner and outer facets of experience and how they are interrelated. Among these seven treatises the *Jñānaprasthāna* is traditionally regarded as the primary text or the actual body of the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivādins, the other six being like its limbs (Skt.: *ṣaṭpādābhidharma* – the Abhidharma with six feet).<sup>138</sup>

Another important work, the encyclopedic *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* or *Abhidharma Vibhāṣā*, in the main a commentary to the *Jñānaprasthāna*, according to tradition began to be compiled at the fourth Buddhist council under the patronage of the

<sup>134</sup> This school spread further into various branches, notably the Sautrāntika and the Mūlasarvāstivādin, with minor differences concerning their transmission of the vinayas and the sūtras, most probably not different in terms of the Abhidharma presentation (see COX 1995, pp. 25–26, 36–41). Lambert Schmithausen has analyzed in detail those doctrines, which appear to be common or distinct between these schools, in SCHMITHAUSEN 1987B: 379–380.

<sup>135</sup> See *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, p. 11, 24–29: *kila-śabdaḥ parābhiprāyaṃ dyotayati. Ābhidharmikāṇāṃ etan mataṃ. na tvasmākaṃ Sautrāntikānāṃ iti bhāvaḥ. śrūyante hy Abhidharma-śāstrāṇāṃ kartāraḥ. tad-yathā Jñānaprasthānasya ārya-kātyāyanīputraḥ kartā. Prakaraṇapādasya sthavira-Vasumitraḥ. Vijñānakāyasya sthavira-Devaśarmā. Dharmaskandhasya ārya-Śāriputraḥ. Prajñapti-śāstrasya ārya-Maudgalyāyanaḥ. Dhātukāyasya Pūrṇaḥ. Samgītiparyāyasya Mahākauṣṭhilaḥ.*

<sup>136</sup> In terms of the order of these works Erich Frauwallner referred to this source in his survey of the Abhidharma literature of the Sarvāstivāda school in FRAUWALLNER 1995: 13–37. Collett Cox in COX 1988: 70–71, fn. 6, also applied this order of composition and provided some information on the authors and translators of these seven treatises. In COX 1995: 33 she offered a more detailed synopsis of the contents of these works, and in COX 1995: 46, fn. 50, a concise summary of the general examinations of Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma literature by scholars of Indology between 1905 and 1979.

<sup>137</sup> See COX 1995: 47, fn. 62, presenting the sources for the discussion on the dating of these two works.

<sup>138</sup> See *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* in WOGIHARA 1932–36: 9.12–13.

Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka.<sup>139</sup> This collection of topics, which is still extant in Chinese,<sup>140</sup> presents a discourse on various doctrinal positions related to the existence of entities in time etc., in preference to the contending views of other schools.<sup>141</sup> Consequently, the *Vibhāṣā* became the basis for the designation of the Sarvāstivādins of Kaśmīra as “Vaibhāṣikas.”

The followers of a major sub-school, often applying similes (*dṛṣṭānta*) in their argumentation on perception and other topics, were called Dārṣṭāntikas. They belonged mostly to the Western region of Gandhāra, therefore were also defined as non-Kāśmīri Sarvāstivādins. Later this school emphasized the importance of sūtras over śāstras. They regarded the meaning of any kind of “existence” as being based on the sūtra teachings and thus empirically verifiable through the six senses. Consequently, they were called “Sautrāntikas” (those who rely on the sūtras). In many ways their views were opposed to those of the Vaibhāṣika orthodoxy.<sup>142</sup>

In the fifth century C.E. (acc. to Frauwallner around 450 C.E.), Vasubandhu (acc. to Frauwallner ca. 400–480 C.E.) composed the most systematic and later very well-known Abhidharma treatise, the *Abhidharmakośa*<sup>143</sup> (lit. *Storehouse of the Abhidharma*, sometimes also translated as *Treasury of Dogmatics*), almost completely from the Sautrāntika perspective.<sup>144</sup> He clarified difficult points by means of an auto-commentary

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<sup>139</sup> The fourth council of the *Sarvāstivādins*, headed by Vasumitra and Aśvaghōṣa (both first and second century C.E., according to VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 63 under Vasumitra and Pārśva or Pūrṇaka), most probably took place at Jalandhara in the first or second century C.E. For a concise presentation of a chronology of Buddhist history, refer to KEOWN 2007: xv–xviii. The compilation of the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* was completed around mid-second century C.E. (see VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 63–64).

<sup>140</sup> See *Taishō*, nos. 1263; 1273; 1275.

<sup>141</sup> Collett Cox presented a summary of the research on the various works of the Sarvāstivādins conducted by Japanese scholars, in COX 1995, pp. 27–29. Furthermore, she analyzed the periodization of Abhidharma works in the same study, pp. 30–37.

<sup>142</sup> The actual opponents of the Sarvāstivādins, the second branch of the Sthavira school, were the Vibhajyavādins (translated as “the Distinctionists,” see LAMOTTE 1976: 272), who made an important distinction concerning the major topic of the Sarvāstivādins, the doctrine of the existence of dharmas in the three times. They accepted only the dharmas of the present time as existent. For a detailed definition of the Sautrāntikas, refer to COX 1995: 50, fn. 100.

<sup>143</sup> See FRAUWALLNER 1995: 128. As the earliest and principal source for Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* he identified the *Abhidharmasāra* of Dharmaśrī (ca. second century), which again is a compilation of materials from the seven Abhidharma works of the Sarvāstivādins (*ibid*, pp. 128–132).

<sup>144</sup> For bibliographical details, refer to *Abhidharmakośa* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Before Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana (1893–1963) had discovered the Sanskrit original MS. in the Tibetan monastery of Ngor in 1935, Luis de La Vallée Poussin (1869–1938) composed an annotated translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣyam* based on the study of the Chinese and Tibetan versions and the extant Sanskrit fragments in LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1923–31.

(Skt.: *bhāṣya*).<sup>145</sup> The master Yaśomitra wrote a detailed commentary (Skt.: *vyākhyā*) on this work. Vasubandhu's views are partially traceable to the *Vibhāṣā* collection of Abhidharma teachings, but he also criticized the *Vibhāṣā* works in some crucial points and discussed the views of other schools. The Vaibhāṣika master Saṅghabhadra (ca. fifth century C.E.) is said to have accepted the verses of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, but noted his objections to several details in Vasubandhu's auto-commentary. According to the *Bu-ston chos 'byung* Vasubandhu avoided a direct confrontation with this master, since he was his former teacher. Instead, he regarded the objections as clarifying some points of his own school.<sup>146</sup>

The contents of the *Abhidharmakośa* is organized in nine chapters. The *viññāna-jñāna* distinction plays a major role in this work. The first chapter (entitled *Dhātu-Nirdeśa*; Tib. *khambs bstan pa*) explains the constituents of a person by means of various divisions as aggregates (Skt.: *skandhas*), sense-bases (Skt.: *āyatana*s), and elements (Skt.: *dhātus*). A significant part of these divisions is the function of perception (Skt.: *viññāna*), e.g. as one of the five aggregates (Skt.: *pañcaskandha*). The second chapter (*Indrīya-Nirdeśa*; Tib. *dbang po bstan pa*) expounds on the nature of both the mental and material faculties. It discusses the mind and mental states, as well as causes and their results including the four conditions, which also play a key role in the *rNam shes ye shes* by the Third Karmapa (a more detailed presentation follows below). From among the other chapters of the *Abhidharmakośa*, the seventh is especially noteworthy (*Jñāna-Nirdeśa*; Tib. *Ye shes bstan pa*). It presents a profound analysis of the nature and varieties of gnosis, such as the Ten Kinds of Knowledge, the nature of a buddha's gnosis etc. Thus, to a high degree the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse is based on the teachings summarized in the *Abhidharmakośa*.

A distinction was made as to whether or not the Abhidharma teachings have been regarded as the “direct words of the historical Buddha.” From among the two important schools of Northern Indian affiliation, the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas, the latter

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<sup>145</sup> Collett Cox described the function of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* in COX 1995: 36 as follows: “Ultimately, for the later Buddhist tradition, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* came to occupy the position of an unsurpassable *summa*, virtually synonymous with Abhidharma itself. Consequently, the production of Abhidharma literature was reduced to a series of commentaries and digests intended to aid the interpretation and study of this work.”

<sup>146</sup> Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) presented Vasubandhu's biography in *Bu-ston chos 'byung*, pp. 231–234, in the edition contained in *Sa skya'i chos 'byung gces bsdus*, volume 2. The event mentioned here is to be found on pages 232–233, translation in OBERMILLER 1932: 144–145. David Seyfort Ruegg provided a detailed account of the life of Bu-ston-rin-chen-grub based on the biography (*rnam thar*) composed by his student sGra-tshad-pa Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal (1318–1388) in SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966.

school does not accept them as Buddha's words. Therefore, the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, which in terms of the early Abhidharma presentation mostly follow the Sautrāntika view, have attributed these teachings to Indian scholars and preserved them in the bsTan 'gyur, not in the bKa' 'gyur, the translated collection of the direct words of the Buddha.<sup>147</sup>

The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS), ascribed to the master Asaṅga,<sup>148</sup> attempts to create a system similar to that of Vasubandhu but from a slightly different perspective. For example, at least some passages have to be understood as having an “idealistic” meaning, especially when relating to the practice of a bodhisattva, even if according to Schmithausen “most parts of the AS are obviously written from the point of view of traditional “realistic” Hīnayāna ontology...”<sup>149</sup> This work, mostly translated as “The Compendium of the Higher Teaching,” consists of two parts: *Lakṣaṇasamuccaya* (“The Compendium of Characteristics”) and *Viniścayasamuccaya* (“The Compendium of Discernment”). Each part comprises four sections.

In this work those teachings directed against the mistaken concept of a truly existent substantial or permanent Self (Skt.: *ātman*) are expressed by means of the Yogācāra terminology of the “three characters” (Skt.: *trilakṣaṇa*) or “three natures” (Skt.: *trisvabhāva*).<sup>150</sup> This concept is closely connected to the *rNam shes ye shes* as its underlying structure (discussed below and in chapter 5). The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* can even be characterized as containing nearly all principal Mahāyāna subjects, and it can be regarded as a summary of all other works by Asaṅga.<sup>151</sup> It is also clearly influenced by the *Yogācārabhūmi*, which is several times quoted or closely paraphrased.<sup>152</sup> In those rare cases where the wording seems not to be in accordance with later Yogācāra works, the

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<sup>147</sup> The Beijing bsTan-'gyur (Ötani) (P) edited by Daisetz T. Suzuki, 1961, presents the Abhidharma works in the Mdo 'grel section under the title of “Mngon-pa'i bstan-bcos,” volumes 115–119. The sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur (D) published by the Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934, contains a separate section “Mngon-pa [Abhidharma]” in volumes 139–149. In P a total of nine translated Indian commentaries exist on the *Abhidharmakośa*, nos. 5590–5599, in D nos. 4089–4097. Marek Mejer has conducted a comparative study of these commentaries in MEJOR 1991. He provided their exact bibliographical details (Sanskrit and Tibetan), including the chapter headings and number of *kārikās* of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, on pp. 112–115.

<sup>148</sup> Achim Bayer discussed the authorship of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* in BAYER 2010: 37–39.

<sup>149</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1972: 154.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>151</sup> See RAHULA 2001: xviii.

<sup>152</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1972: 161. Schmithausen even regarded the *Yogācārabhūmi* “as the main source on which the AS is based.”

*Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*<sup>153</sup> attempts to comment on the root text in a harmonizing way.<sup>154</sup> The Tibetan tradition regards the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* as belonging to the later development of Buddhism, to the Mahāyāna or Higher Abhidharma (*theg chen thun mong ma yin pa'i mngon pa* or *mngon pa gongs pa*).<sup>155</sup>

When investigating the functioning of the causes (*rgyu: hetu*) and conditions (*rkyen: pratyaya*) in the process of perception as presented by Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his discourse on the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction, this topic was originally taught in the *Pratyayasūtra* (*Sūtra on the [Four] Conditions*), cited in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*<sup>156</sup> and in several other canonical sources. It seems to have been included in Mūlasarvāstivādin recensions of the Tripiṭaka.<sup>157</sup> Since a similar sūtra is also referred to in Sarvāstivādin treatises, it must have been common to the two schools. Unfortunately, as a complete and independent work it is now extant only in Tibetan translation.<sup>158</sup>

The four conditions are said to have also appeared in the *Āgamas* (see the research of Peter Skilling summarized below in the footnotes 157 and 158), but are not found in the extant versions of this collection. In the Pāli *Abhidhamma piṭaka* specifically the seventh work, the *Paṭṭhāna*, deals with the relationship of conditions (Pāli: *paccaya*). There, we find a detailed presentation of 24 conditions, from the so-called “root condition” or “causal condition” (Pāli: *hetu-paccaya*), through the “object condition” (Pāli: *ārammaṇa-paccaya*), the “predominant condition” (Pāli: *adhipati-paccaya*), the

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<sup>153</sup> For the Sanskrit version, refer to TATIA 1976.

<sup>154</sup> Schmithausen provided an example for this attempt to harmonize the wordings in SCHMITHAUSEN 1972: 157, fn. 12.

<sup>155</sup> See, for example, TRALEG 1998: 1.

<sup>156</sup> The section elucidating the *pratītyasamutpāda* comprises verses 18–28 in *Abhidharmakośa*, III. The concise text of the *Pratyayasūtra* is contained in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, II, 61.c–62 (edition PRADHAN 1975, 98.3).

<sup>157</sup> Peter Skilling has conducted a considerable amount of research on this sūtra, including an English translation in SKILLING 1998: 139–149. He logically concluded that it was contained in the section on fours in the (*Mūla-*) *Sarvāstivādin Ekottarikāgama*. He dated “the existence and transmission of the *sutra* from before the time of the Vibhāṣā (1<sup>st</sup> century CE [?]) up to the time of the latter two authors (Vasubandhu and Śamathadeva) (6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century [?])” - see SKILLING 1998: 143. Nevertheless, when relating this theory to the most likely order of the seven Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma works, Skilling stated: “If this dating is correct, the theory of four conditions must have evolved by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.”

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 140, especially note 3 provides the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts and references. On the following page 141, especially in note 7, Skilling presented in detail the Sanskrit and Tibetan sources for the term *pratyayatā* (conditions). On pp. 144–147 he also discussed the primary and secondary sources for the theory of four conditions in their historical perspective, including their presentation in the *Mūlāmādhyaṃakakārikā* (I, 2 ff.) ascribed to Nāgārjuna.

“immediate condition” (Pāli: *samanantara-paccaya*), to the “condition of not having disappeared” (Pāli: *avigata-paccaya*).

The Third Karmapa also explained the first four conditions—those taught in the above-mentioned *Pratyayasūtra*—in several of his works.<sup>159</sup> He especially discussed these important conditions in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise in verses 12–21. The elaborate presentation, which covers nearly the complete second half of the *rnam shes* part, clearly shows that this topic, which is based on the principle of dependent origination, was extremely important to him. In the following section those lines quoted by Rang-byung-rdo-rje will be discussed in greater detail.

Under the title of “Causation as the Handmaid of Metaphysics. From the *paṭṭiccasamuppāda* to the *Paṭṭhāna*,”<sup>160</sup> Noa Ronkin provided an overview of the law of causation and dependent co-arising (Pāli: *paṭṭiccasamuppāda*). He elaborated on this topic as presented in pre-Buddhist sources, in the Pāli *Nikāyas*, by Western philosophers such as David Hume (1711–1776) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), as well as in Abhidharma works, especially the above-mentioned *Paṭṭhāna*. As outlined above, this work explains in detail the four conditions in the context of a total of 24 conditions. Ronkin sketched the doctrinal transition from the *Nikāya* usage of the principle of dependent origination to a broader theory of relationships of causal conditioning as discussed in later Abhidharma treatises.

Furthermore, as has been stated above, one work from among the seven Abhidharma treatises of the Sarvāstivāda school is the *Vijñānakāya-śāstra*, mostly regarded as belonging to the middle period. It played a key role in explaining the influence of dependent origination (Skt.: *pratityasamutpāda*) on the process of cognition. The Chinese tradition attributes this work to Devaśarman,<sup>161</sup> who is said to have lived approximately 100 years after the passing of the Buddha. At that time Buddhist works had not begun to be written down, they were only transmitted orally, therefore, this can be consigned to the realm of legend.<sup>162</sup> It was translated by Hsüan-tsang’s team as the first of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma works in the year 649 C.E. and is now extant only in

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<sup>159</sup> A more detailed analysis of the function of this topic will follow in chapter 5 (5.4).

<sup>160</sup> See RONKIN 2005: 193–253.

<sup>161</sup> See COX 1988: 70–71, fn. 6.

<sup>162</sup> André Bareau in BAREAU 1955: 6 dated the Vātsīputrīa tradition around 280 B.C.E. and the *Vijñānakāyapādaśāstra*, as Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma work having been composed after this tradition, at the earliest three hundred years after the passing of the Buddha.

Chinese.<sup>163</sup> It was very influential and has been cited 39 times in the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra*.<sup>164</sup>

Particularly in its third and fourth chapters it elucidates in detail the six types of perception and their respective causes and conditions.<sup>165</sup> It presents causal relations, not merely as a part of the twelve links of dependent origination, but also in the context of functioning to produce the six aspects of perceptual consciousness. The Sarvāstivādins in this process distinguished six causes (*hetu*), four conditions (*pratyaya*), and five effects (*phala*).<sup>166</sup> As a consequence of this change of paradigm, the extension of the meaning of dependently originated factors played a major role in the later Abhidharma works, in the early Tibetan versions of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as well as in the presentation of this topic by the Third Karmapa.<sup>167</sup>

### 2.1.2 The Pramāṇa Sources

Obviously the Abhidharma sources figure prominently in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse of the Third Karmapa, especially when explaining the causes and conditions of the perception process. Therefore, they have been discussed here in greater detail. Another reason for this is that the subsequent topic, the Pramāṇa (Tib. *tshad ma*, Engl. valid cognition) portion in this discourse, is based to a large degree on the Abhidharma works as well. It just offers another perspective on the functions of cognition. Here the overarching topic is whether the process of cognition is deluded (*'khrul ba: bhrānta*) or free from delusion (*ma 'khrul ba: abhrānta*), and what exactly defines this distinction.

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<sup>163</sup> The *Vijñānakāya* of Devaśarman is contained in the *Taishō* edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, 26, 1539, 537a–543b. On p. 547b.22 the four *pratyayas* are defined as functions of the *vijñānas*.

<sup>164</sup> See, for example, WILLEMEN 1998: 197–205.

<sup>165</sup> See WILLEMEN 1998: 201–203.

<sup>166</sup> Akira Harikawa expounded in detail on the six causes, four conditions and five effects and how they are related to one another as taught in Sarvāstivādin sources in HIRAKAWA 1990: 179–184.

<sup>167</sup> It will be shown in the following part that the Third Karmapa as the key source for this section applied the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, even though he did not literally quote verse 28 from this work which outlines the topic of the “four conditions” in the context of three kinds of dependent origination (of *samsāra*, etc); (P 5549, vol. 112, p. 219, 8a.6–8b.2). After the causal condition (*rgyu'i rkyen*) has been explained in detail, the Tibetan (8b.1–2) reads: | *yang rnam par shes pa drug po dag rkyen du zhig gi skye zhe na* | *bdag po dang* | *dmigs pa dang* | *de ma thag pa'i rkyen rnams kyi skye'o* | *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba rnam po gsum po ... bzhi po 'di dag yin no* || – rendered as: “Furthermore, if one asks, from how many conditions the group of six perceptions arise, (the answer is) they arise from the dominant condition, the object condition and the immediate condition. The three kinds of dependent origination (of *samsāra*, etc) ... are the group of these four conditions.”

In Buddhism Pramāṇa has three aspects: 1.) direct clear perception or knowledge (*mngon sum tshad ma: pratyakṣapramāṇa*), 2.) inferential perception or knowledge (*rjes dpag tshad ma: anumānapramāṇa*) and 3.) scriptural authority (*lung, āgama*). Many of the early Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Āṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* etc., contain references to logical discussions. Nevertheless, until the fourth century C.E. no systematic works on Pramāṇa or Logic existed, only occasional references in the philosophical treatises. Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana stated: “With 500 A.D. began a period when Logic was completely differentiated from general philosophy, and a large number of Buddhist writers gave their undivided attention to that branch of learning.”<sup>168</sup>

Among the various schools of early Buddhism the Sautrāntika school is mostly regarded as the foremost, at least by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions.<sup>169</sup> In terms of its key doctrines it seemed to be very close to the Mahāyāna viewpoint. Since this school especially emphasized the process of perception, it became an important basis for the presentations of the Buddhist abhidharmic and epistemological (Tib. *blo rigs*) traditions as conducted by the masters Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their followers.

Collette Cox traced several early sources for the shift in emphasis from the ontological approach as laid out in the early Abhidharma works to the epistemological approach as emphasized by these later Pramāṇa masters. In an elaborate article Cox presented a variety of doctrinal debates conducted on the basis of Sarvāstivādin and Dārṣṭāntika theories concerning the fundamentals of perception. She argued that “the controversies precipitated by these disagreements would provide the background for the extensive epistemological inquiries of the Buddhist logicians.”<sup>170</sup> Obviously, these controversies generated a fertile ground for a completely new approach to the Buddhist theory of cognition: a more precise understanding of the mental functions combined with an experiential approach as the general Buddhist requirement in order to fulfil the soteriological purpose of the teachings.

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<sup>168</sup> See VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 78.

<sup>169</sup> For example, the significance of this tenet system for *Tshad ma* studies within the dGe-lugs tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in the last 600 years is discussed in KLEIN 1991: 19–21.

<sup>170</sup> For further details concerning the subjects relevant in this context, refer to COX 1988: 31, 68.

When going into detail concerning the various mental states outlined in the classical Pramāṇa works,<sup>171</sup> both the basic categories of deluded and undeluded types of cognition are further subdivided. The two types of unmistaken states of mind are said to be direct, clear perception (*mngon sum tshad ma: pratyakṣapramāṇa*) and correct inferential perception (*rjes dpag tshad ma: anumānapramāṇa*). The reason for this distinction into two aspects is given by Dignāga (ca. 480–540) as follows: “The means of cognition are direct, clear perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). Apart from the particular (lit. self-characterized or specifically characterized phenomenon, *rang mtshan: svalakṣaṇa*) and the universal (lit. generally characterized phenomenon, *spyi mtshan: sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) there is no other object to be cognized. Direct, clear perception has only the self-characterized for its object and inference only the generally characterized.”<sup>172</sup>

In terms of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, direct, clear perception functions as the basis for the outwardly-oriented six types of perception. This involves the first two of the four kinds of direct, clear perception which are distinguished in most classical sources. These four types of direct clear perception pertain to those moments in the perception process that are free from discursive thought or concepts (*rtog pa dang bral ba: kalpanāpodha*) and free from other mistakes such as defects in the senses (*ma 'khrul ba* or *'khrul med: abhrānta*). These four types are: (a) the first moment in the process of perception via the senses (*dbang po'i mngon sum: indriyapratyakṣa*) and (b) via mental perception (*yid kyi mngon sum: mānasapratyakṣa*), (c) the inner aspect of self-awareness (*rang rig mngon sum: svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*), as well as (d) the direct clear perception of a realized practitioner (*rnal 'byor mngon sum: yogipratyakṣa*).<sup>173</sup> From among these

<sup>171</sup> The works of the systematic Buddhist writers on Logic (500–1200 C.E.) have been discussed in detail in VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 78–144. See also the comprehensive studies of Dharmakīrti's philosophy and epistemology in DREYFUS 1989; 1997.

<sup>172</sup> See *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I. 2a–c: | *pratyakṣam anumānam pramāṇe lakṣaṇadvayam* | *prameyam ... na hi svasāmānyalakṣaṇābhyām anyat prameyam asti. Svalakṣaṇaviśayaṃ ca pratyakṣam sāmānyalakṣaṇa viśayaṃ anumānam iti pratipādayiṣyāmaḥ*. Tib. *Tshad ma kun las btus pa*, and *rang 'grel*, P 5700, 5701, vol. 130, fols. 13b.5–14a.1. A further English translation of this section is found in HATTORI 1968: 24. Anne Carolyn Klein provided an explanatory note on this terminology in KLEIN 1991: 204, fn. 24.

<sup>173</sup> Zhihua Yao in his article YAO 2004 presents a detailed discussion on the question of whether or not these four types of direct, clear perception have already been taught by the Indian master Dignāga or only later in the works of Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660), especially in his *Nyāyabindu*: I.7–11. Yao's conclusion is that all four types were presented in the works of Dignāga and later commentators. For example, the expression “self-cognition” or “direct clear perception of self-awareness” (Skt.: *svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*) is found in Dignāga's earliest known work, the *Nyāyamukha* (T1628: 3b), as well as in the *Nyāyabinduṭīkāṭīppaṇi* I.10 by Dharmottara (ca. 740–800) (see YAO 2004: 60–61).

four only the last one undisputedly relates to the various types of gnosis taught in the *Ye shes* part of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>174</sup>

Our sense perceptions (*rnam par shes pa*) are limited – even though normally they are direct and clear, on the ultimate level they cannot be regarded as valid cognition (*tshad ma: pramāṇa*). The scholar Dge-'dun-chos-'phel (1905–1951) described this fact precisely in his commentary on Nāgārjuna's thoughts:<sup>175</sup>

20. ... In whatever we decide, we have no means whatsoever other than deciding in dependence on these five sense organs. If it is not seen within these two eyes on the forehead, there is no other method to see forms. It is impossible to hear any sound that does not fit within this small hole of the ear. And so on. Therefore, to decide that all objects of knowledge are included within just this measure, based on these five weak senses, with the mistaken mind summoned to assist, and to remain content, saying that the mode of being which does not appear before our mind is nonexistent and impossible, is the door to all trouble.

<sup>174</sup> In the *Hetuvidyā* section (p. 340.2–13) of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, 2B6.3, the fourth type of (direct, clear) perception (*mngon sum, pratyakṣa*) is called pure perception (*dag pa'i mngon sum, śuddhapratyakṣa*). It includes the direct, clear perception of supramundane gnosis (Skt.: *lokottarajñāna*). Hōjun Nagasaki has listed and explained this type of direct, clear perception in NAGASAKI 1991: 223–225. Dorji Wangchuk, besides referring to these sources in WANGCHUK 2009: 224, provided a corresponding statement (p. 216) when introducing his theory of the purity and validity of perception in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: “Thirdly, this theory presupposes varying understandings of ontology, logic and epistemology (*pramāṇa*), gnoseology (i.e. the theory of *jñāna*, which in the Buddhist context can be understood as higher epistemology), and soteriology ...” Later in this article (p. 230), Wangchuk commented even more directly on the relationship between direct clear perception (Skt.: *pratyakṣa*) and gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*): “For most Buddhist scholars and mystics, it is the correct cognition of true reality, regardless of how it is defined by the various Buddhist systems, that makes the spiritual or soteriological breakthrough possible, and that the gnosis (*jñāna: ye shes*) of a *buddha* is by definition direct valid cognition (*pramāṇa: tshad ma*)”.

<sup>175</sup> See *Klu-sgrub sgongs rgyan*, 14.1–6. Verses 20–21. The Tibetan reads: | *rang res ni gang thag bcad pa yang dbang po lnga po 'di la brten nas thag bcad pa las gzhan thabs ci yang med | dpral ba na yod pa'i mig 'di gnyis kyi nang nas ma mthong na gzugs mthong ba'i thabs gzhan med | rna ba'i en khung chung ngu 'di'i nang du mi shong ba'i sgra gang yang thos mi nus pa sogs yin | des na nus pa zhan pa'i dbang po 'di lnga po'i steng du | 'khrul pa can gyi sems kyang grogs su sbran nas shes bya thams cas tshad 'di tsam gyi nang du 'dus so zhes thag bcad nas | rang gi sems ngor ma shar ba'i gnas lugs kyi don la | med pa dang mi srid par smras nas blo bde ste sdod pa yang rgud pa kun gyi sgo yin | rang cag gi dbang po'i tsha ma 'di dag gis sa rgya mi chod pa ni bcom ldan 'das nyid kyis gsal bar gsungs te | ji skad du ting 'dzin rgyal po las |.*

*mig dang rna ba sna yang tshad ma min ||*  
*lce dang lus dang yid kyang tshad ma min ||*  
*gal te dbang po 'di dag tshad yin na ||*  
*'phags pa'i lam gyis su la ci zhig bya || 23*

The Sanskrit verse 23 in *Samādhirājasūtra* chapter IX reads:

*na cakṣu prāmāṇyū na śrotra ghrāṇam*  
*na jihva prāmāṇyū na kāya cittam |*  
*pramāṇu yady eti bhavetur indriyā*  
*kasyāryamārgeṇa bhaveta kāryam ||.*

The English translation of the whole section originates from LOPEZ 2006: 52. A critical edition of both the Sanskrit and Tibetan verses appears in CÜPPERS 1990: 39–40.

21. That our sensory valid consciousnesses cannot be the criteria was also stated clearly by the Bhagavan himself. As it says in the *King of Meditations* (*Samādhirājasūtra* IX: 23):

“The eye, the ear, the nose are not valid;  
The tongue, the body, the mind are also not valid.  
If these senses were valid,  
What could the noble path do for anyone?”

When dealing with the deluded states of cognition Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his *rNam shes ye shes* treatise preferred to elucidate perception or cognition (Tib.: *rnam shes*) as such, contrasting it with the state of gnosis free from delusion (Tib.: *ye shes*), also called “nondeceptive cognition” (Skt.: *avisamvādi-jñāna*). This basic way of explanation, which forms part of the Abhidharma literature,<sup>176</sup> as has been shown above, places his presentation into the context of a combined ontological and epistemological approach. Clark Johnson has expressed this fact in popular terms: “*Distinguishing Consciousness from Wisdom* is an important text on psychology, as well as Buddhist philosophy.”<sup>177</sup> In this way, Karmapa’s teachings on the functions of perception are part of the discussion of the integrated Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, as well as Tathāgatagarbha philosophy. At the same time this approach renders them more easily accessible in terms of Mahāmudrā and tantric practice.

Nevertheless, in his commentary on the *Dharmadhātustava* ascribed to Nāgārjuna<sup>178</sup> the Third Karmapa shifted these paradigms and clearly connected his elaborate *rNam shes ye shes* presentation to the classical Pramāṇa teachings. In the context of “how to meditate based on the five sense doors (*sgo lnga la brten nas ci ltar bsgom pa ni*),”<sup>179</sup> he especially mentioned the “direct, clear perception of the eye sense faculty” (*mig gi dbang po’i mngon sum tshad ma*). As a reason for this designation he explained: “Because it is a direct perception and a valid cognition” (*| mngon sum yang yin la | tshad ma yang yin pa’i phyir ro |*). After that he taught in great detail the dependent origination of all other senses in the same way and how to meditate on them, as well as the functioning of the sixth aspect, mental cognition.

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<sup>176</sup> Paul M. Williams has analyzed the Abhidharma ontology on the basis of the major Abhidharma sources in WILLIAMS 1981, vol. 4, pp. 335–360.

<sup>177</sup> See ROBERTS 2001: 3.

<sup>178</sup> Entitled *Dbu ma chos dbyings bstod pa’i rnam bshad*, A: fols. 26a.2–30b.4, pp. 51.1–61.4. For bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>179</sup> This topic will be discussed in the fifth chapter, also in the eighth chapter, in the context of the *Phyag chen khrid yig*.

Finally, he summarized this section as follows: “The way how [to experience the nonconceptual gnosis (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*) of the six groups of perception] is the realization of its own clarity and emptiness [inseparable]. ... At the time when you realize the six objects and their perceptions explained above as being in essence just appearances of dependent origination, free from arising and ceasing, the characteristics of the nonconceptual and unmistaken direct clear yogic perception are complete.”<sup>180</sup> Later Karmapas, notably the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1464–1506), as part of their scholarly activities commented in greater detail on the Pramāṇa works of the Indian and early Tibetan masters in this field.<sup>181</sup>

The correct inferential perception refers to functioning logic (Tib. *rtags rigs*) which, as a result of following the rules of correct reasoning, finally allows interaction with a concrete object of perception. Asaṅga as one of the earliest Indian Buddhist scholars presented several sections on the rules of debate or inference in his two above-mentioned works, the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.<sup>182</sup> His half-brother Vasubandhu composed at least three works on debate: *Vādahṛdaya*, *Vādavidhāna*, and *Vādavidhi*.<sup>183</sup>

The Third Karmapa in his *rNam shes ye shes* teachings applied logical arguments in order to clarify the mistaken concepts or doubts of his followers. These arguments can be direct or paraphrased quotations from classical Indian sources, as shown in the following part. The way in which he built up his arguments strictly followed the rules laid down in the above-mentioned Indian abhidharmic or epistemological treatises.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>180</sup> See *Dbu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, fol. 30b.2–4, p. 60.2–4: *Rang gsal stong du rtogs pa'i tshul ni | ... yul drug po dang rnam par shes pa sngar bstan pa ltar rang gi ngo bos rten cing 'grel par 'byung ba tsam skye 'gag dang bral bar rtogs pa'i tshe | rnal 'byor mngon sum rtog pa dang bral zhing ma 'khrul pa'i mtshan nyid rdzogs pa yin no ||*.

<sup>181</sup> The principal treatise of the Seventh Karmapa elucidating the Pramāṇa works of the Indian and early Tibetan masters is his *Rigs gzhung rgya mtsho* (for details, refer to the bibliography). In terms of secondary literature, Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp provided a survey of “the development of Tibetan Buddhist epistemology from the eleventh to the thirteenth century” in VAN DER KUIJP 1983. David Jackson explored the Indian and Tibetan traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate as elucidated by Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) in JACKSON 1987.

<sup>182</sup> The relevant section is to be found in the Pradhan edition of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* on pp. 104–106. It is a condensed and slightly amended version of the *Yogācārabhūmi* section, entitled “The Science of Reasoning, Hetuvidyā,” Skt.: 2B6.3c–3A2.3a; Tib. D 4035, fol. 187a–7 until fol. 199b–2 (see VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 74). Alex Wayman has analyzed these sources in detail in WAYMAN 1958. Giuseppe Tucci provided a translated and commented outline of the same section in TUCCI 1929: 462–479.

<sup>183</sup> See TUCCI 1929: 482–488. A reference to these three works has also been provided in VIDYABHUSANA 1909: 75–77. For an English translation of the latter of the three works, refer to ANACKER 1970: 87–98.

<sup>184</sup> Examples for this kind of logical argument have been provided in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, 1.9–10, and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, 1.55ab. Further details will be shown in the translation section.

When relating the epistemological to the ontological or philosophical approach in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works, it becomes clear that the doxographical aspects of the *rnam shes-ye shes* or *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction are primarily concerned with a thorough analysis of the “two truths,” the relative or conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa: saṃvṛtisatya*) and the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa: paramārthasatya*). In this discourse they are mainly expressed in terms of the functions of perception (*rnam shes, vijñāna*) related to relative truth, and their purification or change of state into the various aspects of buddha gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*) by means of progressive Buddhist practice, in its fully perfected form referred to as ultimate truth.<sup>185</sup>

A detailed analysis of how this presentation is based on the key concepts pertaining to the various philosophical traditions prevalent at Rang-byung-rdo-rje's time reveals that, even though in the end the various perspectives of Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, as well as Tathāgatagarbha philosophy on the “two truths” cannot be separated in his works, still it is possible to identify clear hints of their different original concepts. Thus, a short survey of the Indian philosophical background also in this respect should prove helpful for understanding the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.

### 2.1.3 The Madhyamaka Sources

The Madhyamaka tradition was officially founded by Nāgārjuna in the second to third century C.E.<sup>186</sup> The essential canonical sources of the Madhyamaka school consist of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Ratnakūṭa* and the *Avataṃsaka* collections. According to several

<sup>185</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje explicitly elucidated this theme in his *Zab mo nang don*, B, fol. 22b.6: “The potential (or basic element) of sentient beings is the stainless buddha nature endowed with the “two truths.” The Tibetan lines read: | *sems can kham ni sangs rgyas kyi | snying po dri med bden gnyis ldan* | He further commented on these lines in his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, p. 544.5–6: “With respect to that the buddha nature is just the delusion of the above-mentioned eight collections [of perception] free from defilements.” The Tibetan lines read: | *de la sangs rgyas kyi snying po ni sngar smos pa'i tshogs rgyad kyi 'khrul pa'i dri ma med pa kho na yin ...* | 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in his *Zab nang snang byed*, C, p. 432.3–4, in this context explained the connection between the eight collections of perception, gnosis, and the “two truths:” “Its essence is endowed with the “two truths” in union, the ultimate truth, which is pure by nature and free from the defilements of the delusion of the eight collections [of perception], and the relative truth, which is the own light of the gnosis of that.” The Tibetan lines read: | *de'i ngo bo tshogs rgyad kyi 'khrul ba'i dri ma med cing rang bzhin gyis dag pa'i don dam pa'i bden pa dang de'i ye shes kyi rang 'od kun rdzob kyi bden pa gnyis zung du 'jug pa dang ldan pa ste* |.

<sup>186</sup> In SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 4–47 a detailed presentation of “The Early Period: The Formation of the Madhyamaka School” provides a valuable overview of the most important teachings ascribed to Nāgārjuna and their principal sources.

scholars this school has some roots going back to early Buddhist scriptures.<sup>187</sup> Nāgārjuna himself already provided a very clear reference to an early source in his seminal work, the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*. Here he paraphrased the *Kātyāyanāvavādasūtra* (Pāli: *Kaccāyanagottasutta*) and asserted that in this context the Buddha rejected the two extremes of existence (Skt.: *astitva*) and nonexistence (Skt.: *nāstitva*), or eternalism (Skt.: *śāśvata*) and nihilism (Skt.: *uccheda*), thus teaching the “middle path” (Skt.: *madhyamā pratipat*) as dependent origination (Skt.: *praṭītyasamutpāda*), which in other words is empty of independent existence.<sup>188</sup>

According to David J. Kalupahana, “this conception of ‘dependence’ (*praṭītya*) enabled the Buddha to avoid the two metaphysical assumptions regarding causation, namely, (a) the potential existence of the effect in the cause, hence the substantial connection between them or (b) the potential nonexistence of the effect and hence the absence of any connection between the cause and the effect.”<sup>189</sup> After the analysis of the early Buddhist notion of the middle path, he investigated this notion according to the principal Madhyamaka sources, emphasizing the “linguistic transcendence of ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya*).”<sup>190</sup>

The further development of the Madhyamaka school of thought is characterized by various interpretations related to Nāgārjuna’s teachings.<sup>191</sup> Even though all later followers agree that Nāgārjuna ultimately taught the nonsubstantiality (*anātman*), lack of inherent existence (*niḥsvabhāva*), nonessentiality (*nairātmya*) or emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of all

<sup>187</sup> For example, Luis O. Gómez in his article GÓMEZ 1976: 156 in this context refers to what he calls “Proto-mādhyamika in the pāli canon” as follows: “Some key passages from the *Aṭṭha(kavagga)* could be called “proto-Mādhyamika” passages in the sense that they anticipate some axial concepts of the Mādhyamika.”

<sup>188</sup> See *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*: 15.7. VAIDYA 1960C: 269. The Sanskrit reads: | *kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhayaṃ, pratiśiddhaṃ bhagavatā bhāvābhāva-vibhāvinā* | For an English translation, refer to KALUPAHANA 1991: 232.

<sup>189</sup> See KALUPAHANA 1979: 2–3. In this article, he also described this philosophical middle position as “the basis of the ethical path of ‘moderation’ between the two extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence.” He further traced the teachings of the above-mentioned sūtra in various later sources, such as Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, and in modified form even in Yogācāra commentaries (e.g. *Madhyāntavibhāga* 1.2).

<sup>190</sup> The discussion of the earliest sources of the Madhyamaka tradition is built on the research related to the origin of the Mahāyāna. Dorji Wangchuk in WANGCHUK 2007: 121–125 provided a concise outline of this controversial topic together with an analysis of the doctrinal contents of the Mahāyāna. According to the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (references see fn. 199 below) the doctrinal (and philosophical) contents comprise four categories. One of them consists of: “(c) the eight conceptual-perceptual apparatuses (*viññāna*), namely five sense-perceptions, mental perception-or-conception, defiled mind (*kliṣṭa-manas*), and the fundamental mind (*ālayaviññāna*); ...”

<sup>191</sup> Again, in SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 58–86 we find a detailed presentation of “The Middle Period: The Systematization of the Mādhyamaka School.” Seyford Ruegg characterized this period as starting from the middle of the sixth century C.E. and flourishing until the eighth century C.E..

phenomena in order to show how to overcome the clinging to all views, later masters disagreed on the methods leading to that goal. Bhāvaviveka (ca. 500–570 C.E.) accepted philosophical assertions by means of autonomous (*svātantra*) arguments on the relative level and thus according to Tibetan tradition became the founder of the so-called Svātantrika subschool.

Buddhapālita (ca. 470–540 C.E.) interpreted Nāgārjuna’s teachings as not asserting any position at all. He applied the method of showing the undesirable consequences (*prāsaṅga*) following from mistaken viewpoints, in this way founding the Prāsaṅgika subschool. In his interpretation he was strongly supported by Candrakīrti (seventh century C.E.), Nāgārjuna’s important later commentator. The Third Karmapa in terms of his philosophical approach to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse among other sources clearly based his presentation on Nāgārjuna’s teachings, which will be shown in the second part of this chapter. The early developments of these doctrines in Tibet, to the extent that they serve as basis for Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s presentation, will be discussed at the beginning of the fourth chapter.<sup>192</sup>

In the eighth century C.E. the Indian master Śāntarakṣita (725–788) composed his seminal work *Mādhyamakālaṃkāra* together with an auto-commentary, the *Mādhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti*. He consequently became regarded as founder of the Yogācāra Madhyamaka school of thought.<sup>193</sup> In general he refuted all mistaken views—Buddhist and non-Buddhist—that any entity could be real or truly existing.<sup>194</sup> Later he showed that perception or consciousness (*viññāna*) also does not truly exist, because it is devoid of a single and a multiple nature (verse 16 sq., with his final conclusion in verse 62).<sup>195</sup>

<sup>192</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg in SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 109–118 referred to “The Last Period of the Indian Mādhyamaka School” as mainly comprising the time of the scholars and meditation masters Bodhibhadra, Dharmakīrti of Suvarṇadvīpa (both active ca. 1000 C.E.), and Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna or Atiśa (born ca. 982 C.E.). This last period finished with masters such as Buddhaśrījñāna and Vibhūticandra (both flourished ca. 1200 C.E.). An outline of the earlier history of the Tibetan Mādhyamaka School appears in SEYFORD RUEGG 2000: 1–103.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 87–100. David Seyfort Ruegg offered a detailed analysis of the corresponding literature under the title of “The Yogācāra-Madhyamaka Synthesis.” In a short summary he stated that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795) had represented the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis and that this “tradition had become firmly established in Tibet during the second half of the eighth century...” (p. 112).

<sup>194</sup> See *Mādhyamakālaṃkāra*, verse 1. The Sanskrit lines (VAIDYA 1960C: 173.17–18) read: | *niḥsvabhāva amī bhāvāstattvataḥ svaparoditāḥ* | *ekānekasvabhāvena viyogātpratibimbavat* || The Tibetan reads:

*bdag dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag* ||  
*yang dag tu na gcig pa dang* ||  
*du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir* ||  
*rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin* || For an English translation, refer to DOCTOR 2004: 708.

<sup>195</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg elaborated on this topic in SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 91–92, showing that Śāntarakṣita’s teaching in this respect is in accordance “with the rest of the Mādhyamaka School which

Of course, this is highly relevant for the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction. In the same way as Śāntarakṣita, the Third Karmapa taught the emptiness or insubstantiality of all phenomena and thus regarded the doctrine of Mind-only (*cittamātra*) as of provisional meaning (*neyārtha*), as a step on the way toward comprehension of the Middle Path (*madhyamaka*) beyond any extremes.<sup>196</sup> In this respect he can be said to adhere to the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis. Nevertheless, as has been said above, besides the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools of thought he integrated even more doctrines into this discourse, such as the teachings on the buddha embryo or essence or nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), as well as tantric teachings. David Seyfort Ruegg analyzed the latter two sources in the context of “The Literature of the Mādhyamaka School.”<sup>197</sup>

## 2.1.4 The Yogācāra Sources

So far we have analyzed the Yogācāra elements in this discourse from the perspective of the Mahyamaka tradition. It is indispensable to provide a concise outline of Yogācāra thought in its own right, since it is a cornerstone in the *viññāna-jñāna* discourse as presented by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. The *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*<sup>198</sup> and the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*<sup>199</sup> definitely represent the two most influential canonical sources of this school of thought. Initially the above-mentioned half-brothers Asaṅga and Vasubandhu commented upon them in a systematic fashion in the second half of the fifth century C.E.<sup>200</sup> Even though the term “Yogācāra” appeared already in the full title of the *Catuhśataka* composed by Āryadeva (fl. ca. third century C.E.),<sup>201</sup> Asaṅga and

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refuses to assign a specially privileged status to mind, which it regards as empty of self-nature like any other *dharma*.”

<sup>196</sup> See, for example, *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 4.

<sup>197</sup> The way in which leading Madhyamaka masters incorporated the theory of the *tathāgatagarbha* has been shown in SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 95–96, the connection between Madhyamaka and Vajrayāna on pp. 104–108.

<sup>198</sup> According to John Powers this was composed in the first or second century C.E., see POWERS 1993: 4–11.

<sup>199</sup> Most probably composed in the fourth century C. E. and translated into Chinese for the first time around 420 C.E..

<sup>200</sup> Lambert Schmithausen among others, e.g. see HARRIS 1991: 63–65, has discussed in some detail the possibility of the existence of two Vasubandhus in SCHMITHAUSEN 1967: 109–110.

<sup>201</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 52. The full title is: *Bodhisattvayogacaryāśāstra-Catuhśataka-Kārikā* (Sanskrit fragments: *yogācāra*).

Vasubandhu became the actual founding fathers of the Yogācāra school.<sup>202</sup>

Asaṅga especially formulated the essential contents of this system by means of his monumental work, the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*,<sup>203</sup> and further by the *Mahāyānasamgraha*<sup>204</sup> and by one of the works actually ascribed to Asaṅga's teacher Maitreya(nātha) (first half of the fifth century C.E.),<sup>205</sup> the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*.<sup>206</sup> Vasubandhu's contribution to Yogācāra consisted mainly of the *Viṃśatikā*, the *Triṃśikā*, the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*, as well as the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*. Later commentators on these works included Sthiramati (sixth century C.E.), Dharmapāla (seventh century C.E.), and the Chinese scholar Hsüan-tsang (ca. 602–664 C.E.), who composed a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*. He was a student of Śīlabhadra and Dharmapāla (both sixth-seventh century C.E.) at the Nālandā University in India.

With respect to its doctrines the Yogācāra school focuses on the workings of the mind. The entire universe is regarded as “only ideas” (*vijñaptimātra*). A more precise analysis of the functions of mind reveals eight types of perception or consciousness and three characteristics (*trilakṣaṇa*) or three natures (*trisvabhāva*), the latter consisting of the “imaginary” or “imputed” (*parikalpita*), the “other dependent” (*paratantra*), and the “perfected” or “absolute” (*pariniṣpanna*) nature.<sup>207</sup> Both doctrines have been mentioned

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 109. Concerning the name of this tradition, Lambert Schmithausen in his important article on the history of the literature of this school, SCHMITHAUSEN 1969B: 811, fn. 2, pointed to the disadvantages of both common designations, Yogācāra and Vijñānavāda, finally preferring the practice-oriented term Yogācāra, even though the term literally simply stands for the spiritual practice of yoga. Richard King has reached the same conclusion in KING 1994: 659. He added: “In fact, since the early Yogācārins did not accept the ultimate reality of subjective consciousness (*vijñāna*), the term ‘Vijñānavada’ is particularly inaccurate.” He warned against the mistake to “read back the scholastic controversies of later times into the early stages of ‘Yogācāra’ thought” (p. 660).

<sup>203</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969B: 812–823. Schmithausen discussed in detail the authorship of the *Yogācārabhūmi* on the basis of an analysis of the coherence of the topics and chapters. He concluded that this work consists of heterogeneous components and layers leading to the consequence of distancing himself from the concept of a single author and suggesting the incorporation of older sources into the work.

<sup>204</sup> Chikafumi Watanabe has explored the contents of this work in WATANABE 2000: 29–36; a critical edition of the Tibetan text appears on pp. 133–178. The Indian translator Paramārtha (499–569) from the year 546 onwards introduced this and other principle works composed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in China (see PAUL 1984: 3–71).

<sup>205</sup> Tradition attributes several of Asaṅga's works to the future Buddha Maitreya, while scholars such as Frauwallner, Tucci, etc, distinguish Maitreyanātha as one of the founders of the Yogācāra school.

<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, in the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, I, verses 11–14, Asaṅga traced back the fundamental mind, or store consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), one of the key doctrines of the Yogācāra school, to earlier sources, stating that in the vehicle of the Śrāvakas the store consciousness is mentioned by synonyms (*paryāya*) (for an English translation, see LAMOTTE 1973: 48–53). Lambert Schmithausen fully dedicated his seminal work SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A to the origin and early development of this essential concept.

<sup>207</sup> See, for example, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, I, verses 3, 6–62; II, 1–29. Thomas E. Wood provided a doctrinal analysis of major Vijñānavāda works, such as the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*, the *Triṃśikā*, etc. in WOOD 1991. He particularly discussed the authors and texts on pp. 199–206.

briefly above and will be treated in more detail below.

Several scholars have composed articles and books exploring the relationship between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions. They detected an underlying unity as well as obvious differences. Richard King, for example, traced the notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) in both schools to the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. He stated that “both the historical and textual evidence ... displays a spirit of underlying continuity and acceptance.” In this respect Ian Harris argued that on the basis of a variety of transmission lineages coming from India to Tibet “in the early days, those unfamiliar with the tradition as such could easily confuse methods of interpretation, based on differing terminology, with sectarian differences.”<sup>208</sup>

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature is definitely considered authoritative by both schools. In section IV, 43–45, of the Maitreya chapter of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrika* (the *Prajñāpāramitā* in 25,000 lines) we even find an explanation of the “three natures” (*trisvabhāva*). Here they appear under the names of “imagined form” (*parikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ*), “discerned form” (*vikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ*), said to never exist independently (*svatantra*), and the “essential nature of form” (*dharmatā rūpaṃ*), said to be an appearance of ultimate reality (*paramārthāprabhāvitam*).<sup>209</sup> Even though this chapter could be regarded as a later interpolation into the body of the text on account of its difference in style and doctrine, at least many Tibetan scholars still understand this chapter as having definitive meaning (*nītārtha*).<sup>210</sup>

On the side of the differences, King mentions that “the Yogācāra ‘reformulation’ of the Middle Path is a marked movement away from the “negativistic” interpretation of

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<sup>208</sup> See HARRIS 1991: 75.

<sup>209</sup> See KIMURA 2006, p. 151. The Sanskrit reads: | ..., yad utedaṃ parikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ idaṃ vikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ idaṃ dharmatā rūpaṃ iti, ... Edward Conze and Ian Charles Harris provided English translations and a discussion of this section in CONZE 1979: 648–649 and in HARRIS 1991: 103–110, respectively.

<sup>210</sup> See, for example, Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa’s (1357–1419) *Legs bshad snying po*, B, vol. 153, 173b.4–178a.2. The last lines of this section (177b.8–178a.2) read: | dus gsum gyi rgyal ba thams cad kyi bgrod pa gcig pa’i lam shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i mdo la mdo de nyid kyi nang nas dgongs ’grel dang ’dra bar drang don du gtan la phab ’dug snyam du rtog ldan mkhas pa la ’khrul pa skye ba’i gnas ches ni byams zhus kyi le’ur snang zhing de nyid kyi don dbu ma pa chen po dag gis zhib tu bkral ba yang mi snang bas zhib tu gtan la phab pa’o || – rendered as: “It is a major place of the development of delusion for those intellectual scholars to think that [the chapter on the questions of Maitreya] would be established as of provisional meaning, in a similar way as the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, within that very sūtra among the sūtras of the Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*), is the single path of all victors (buddhas) of the three times. And since the great Mādhyamikas also do not appear to have commented extensively on the actual meaning of the chapter on the questions of Maitreya, I have established it in detail.” For a slightly different translation of the complete section, refer to THURMAN 1984: 355–363.

emptiness found in the Madhyamaka school.”<sup>211</sup> This means the Yogācāra masters strongly focused on counteracting the danger of falling into the extreme position of “nihilism” (*ye med la song ba: uccheda or ucchedavāda*). The answer to this criticism given by Nāgārjuna is that the teaching on emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is not advocating a nihilistic viewpoint, it merely shows the nonexistence of any kind of self-nature (*rang bzhin med pa: niḥsvabhāva*) in all phenomena.<sup>212</sup>

The opposite also holds true: Several Madhyamaka masters, for example Chandrakīrti,<sup>213</sup> criticized the proponents of Yogācāra, in this context called “Vijñānavāda,” for asserting an ultimate existence of consciousness, thus falling into the extreme of realism or eternalism (*śāśvatavāda*). The answer to this latter objection given by the Third Karmapa is that perception or consciousness (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) by means of practice finally changes its state (*gnas gyur pa: āśrayaparāvṛtti*) into gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*).<sup>214</sup> Therefore, both schools, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, on the ultimate level go beyond all viewpoints. Again, it is the relative level that differs in terms of the methods employed as steps on the way towards that goal.

The principal difference seems to be that Yogācāra, as the name implies, is more practice-oriented. In its earliest development it obviously started from the ideality of meditation objects extending its ontological status to the objects of ordinary experience.<sup>215</sup> Richard King has described this approach very precisely: “... in its

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<sup>211</sup> See KING 1994: 662.

<sup>212</sup> Nāgārjuna has outlined this viewpoint in *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*: 24.7 and 24.16.

<sup>213</sup> In his famous *Mādhyamakāvatāra*, LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1912 edition, pp. 117 ff.

<sup>214</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 21–22. This teaching of the Third Karmapa is in accordance with *Mahāyānaśaṃgraha*, I.48–49, and *Triṃśikā*: 29. A longer explanation of the meaning of “change of state” provided in the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*, pp. 552.3–553.6, will follow in the eighth chapter.

<sup>215</sup> Lambert Schmithausen, when analyzing the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* in SCHMITHAUSEN 1973: 171–186, and SCHMITHAUSEN 1976: 235–250, discovered a shift within the text from the ideal character of meditational objects to a later view concerned with ordinary objects of cognition. In SCHMITHAUSEN 1997: 6 he even suggested that the terms *cittamātra* and *vijñaptimātra* originated from spiritual practice. The original German lines read: “Im *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (viii. 7–8) werden dann die in den Visualisierungen beobachteten Verhältnisse auf *alle* Wahrnehmungen und Vorstellungen, auch die alltäglichen, übertragen, und festgestellt, dass auch die diesen zum Bewusstsein kommenden Erscheinungen nichts vom Geiste Verschiedenes seien, sondern bloß geistige Bilder darin. Und es ist dieser Geist, der den für die Yogācāras charakteristischen Terminus *vijñaptimātra*, „bloß Vorstellung“, prägt.“ Rendered into English: “In *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (viii. 7–8) the relationships observed in the visualizations are then transferred to all perceptions and conceptions, including the everyday ones, and it is established that even the phenomena that come to consciousness are not different from the mind, but merely mental images in it. And it is this mind that coins the term *vijñaptimātra*, “mere conception,” which is characteristic for the Yogācāras. In a part of SCHMITHAUSEN 2014: 597–641, published about 40 years later, he reconsidered the question of the origin of Yogācāra “idealism” and provided detailed answers to the criticism in the meantime exercised against his theory.

emphasis upon the ‘given’ of meditative and so-called ‘normative’ perception, the Yogācāra aim is to establish the appropriate parameters of linguistic usage and a rigorous logic for the establishment of the Mahāyāna position on experientially verifiable grounds.”<sup>216</sup> Accordingly, the Yogācāra critique of Madhyamaka is that its philosophy is not clearly enough informed by insights which can only be acquired through the practice of meditation. This approach made the Yogācāra context perfectly suitable for the discourse on the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction by the Third Karmapa.

### 2.1.5 The Tathāgatagarbha Sources

In terms of the buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) doctrine the focus lies with the mind of original purity. It is said to be covered by adventitious defilement. Expressed in other terms, the key doctrine of this philosophical school is that buddha nature is empty of adventitious stains, but not empty of its own qualities.<sup>217</sup> As has been shown for the previous topics, this doctrine also had ancient roots, in this case particularly in the Mahāsāṅghika school, asserting that consciousness is intrinsically pure and defiled only by adventitious veils.<sup>218</sup>

There are different opinions among scholars concerning whether or not the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* has to be regarded as the earliest source (ca. third century C.E.) for the buddha nature teaching.<sup>219</sup> Michael Zimmermann described this text as representing “the starting point of a number of works in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism centering on the idea that all living beings have the Buddha-nature.”<sup>220</sup> Other scholars, such as Michael Radich and Christopher V. Jones, focus on the *Mahāparinirvāṇamāhasūtra* as one of the earliest extant works on the Tathāgatagarbha

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<sup>216</sup> See KING 1994: 668.

<sup>217</sup> As, for example, taught in the *Śrīmālādevīsūtra*, P, vol. 24, *dKon-brtsegs* VI, 769, no. 48, fol. 278b.3–6: | *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po stong pa nyid shes pa ni 'di gnyis lags te* | *gnyis gang zhe na* | *'di lta ste* | *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po nyon mongs pa thams cad kyi sbubs dang* | *tha dad du gnas pa ma grol bas shes pa rnams kyis stong pa dang* | *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po sangs rgyas kyi chos tha dad du mi gnas shing* | *grol bas shes pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa gang ga'i klung gi bye ma las 'das pa snyed dag gis mi stong pa lags so* ||. For a complete English translation of this passage, refer to WAYMAN 1974B: 99.

<sup>218</sup> See LAMOTTE 1987: 51–54.

<sup>219</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1997: 10.

<sup>220</sup> See ZIMMERMANN 2002: 7.

doctrine.<sup>221</sup> In terms of the later development of this doctrine, Zimmermann stated, “it was doctrinally absorbed by the two main schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism on Indian soil, the Madhyamaka and the Vijñānavāda.”<sup>222</sup>

The most influential among the above-mentioned “number of works” is definitely the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, also known under the title of *Mahāyānauttaratantrasāstra*. It has to be regarded as a compendium of the Tathāgatagarbha literature. The fact that this work is counted among the Five Treatises ascribed to Maitreya(nātha) indicates the close connection between the major doctrines commented upon in these five works. The interpretations concerning this topic differ among scholars, but in these works there are at least sections dealing with the Prajñāpāramitā, the Madhyamaka, the Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda, and the Tathāgatagarbha doctrines. A more detailed discussion of the doctrinal contents of these Five Treatises, in the context of the quotations by the Third Karmapa and in the works of the First Kong-sprul, will follow in the next section.

Brian Edward Brown elucidated the connection between the doctrine outlined in the Tathāgatagarbha literature, such as the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, and the more practical discipline of the spiritual path as formulated in the Yogācāra works: “How precisely the phenomenal mind, individuated out of, but not separate from that fundamental Innate Mind, compromises and defiles the latter as it strays from its identity with it, demands a generic theory of consciousness.”<sup>223</sup> The doctrine of original purity thus can be understood on the grounds of an analysis of empirical consciousness as provided by means of the discourse on the distinction between perception and gnosis.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> See RADICH 2015. Christopher V. Jones provided arguments related to the incorporation of earlier or later forms of “buddha-nature” thought supporting the thesis that the *Mahāparinirvāṇamāhasūtra* is one of the earliest sources during his presentation on “Reevaluating the Buddha-Nature Idea in India,” at the Khyentse Center for Tibetan Buddhist Textual Scholarship, Hamburg, 9 November 2017.

<sup>222</sup> See ZIMMERMANN 2002: 53. Minoru Kiyota presented a detailed discussion concerning the question of whether or not the Tathāgatagarbha thought has to be regarded as an independent school in KIYOTA 1985: 210–213.

<sup>223</sup> See BROWN 1991: Introduction, xxviii. For a concise textual history of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, refer to SEYFORTH RUEGG 1976: 349–351.

<sup>224</sup> David Seyforth Ruegg has formulated the result of his research on this topic in a similar way in SEYFORTH RUEGG 1969: 2 as follows: »Pendant que la sotériologie se joint à la gnoséologie aussi longtemps qu’il est question de la voie par laquelle on atteint la délivrance qu’est l’Éveil et la fonction du *tathāgatagarbha*, le point de vue gnoséologique tend à prédominer lorsque l’attention se dirige davantage sur le *tathāgatagarbha* en soi et la Fruit à atteindre cognitivement (*adhigama*, etc.) par la Gnose (*jñāna*).... et la sotériologie et à la gnoséologie, qui embrasse ici la métaphysique, sont en dernière analyse les deux faces de la même médaille.« Rendered as: “While the soteriology already joined the gnoseology a long time ago, which is a question concerning by which of these one attains the liberation of awakening, and of the function of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the gnoseological view tends to dominate and the attention takes advantage in focusing on the *tathāgatagarbha* as such and the fruition to be attained cognitively (*adhigama*, etc.) by gnosis (*jñāna*)....and the soteriology as well as the gnoseology, which here embrace the metaphysics, in final analysis are the two sides of the same coin.” In short, as soon as the emphasis shifts from soteriology

The Third Karmapa has applied these hermeneutics in order to show the connection between the two topics. In several of his short poems or songs of realization, particularly in the fifth volume, he mentioned the manifestation of buddha nature (*sangs rgyas kyi rnying po: tathāgatagarbha*). For example, in his “Song Ascertaining the All-base” he expressed this topic as follows: “If you perceive the nondual essence, buddha nature manifests.”<sup>225</sup> Thus, in this song he clarified the very subtle distinction between fundamental mind (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*) and its pure essence, buddha nature.

Furthermore, Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed three separate works on buddha nature, one under the short title of *sNying po bstan pa*, Engl. *Showing the Essence*.<sup>226</sup> The close connection between this work and the *rNam shes ye shes* has been discussed in the previous chapter and will be further commented on in chapter 5 (5.2). Another work is a summary of the above-mentioned *Ratnagotravibhāga*, entitled *rGyud bla ma'i 'sdus don*. Furthermore, according to bKra-shis-'od-zer (b. 1474), a student of the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506), Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed a *Commentary of Understanding the rGyud bla ma* (so far not extant) together with this summary.<sup>227</sup>

The soteriological goal of the analysis of the workings of perception (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) is the manifestation of buddha nature together with its inherent qualities. According to Zimmermann “when living beings later become buddhas they turn into what they already carry within themselves in miniature .... [this] has to do with the purification of the buddha within from the sheaths surrounding him, he himself being equipped with *tathāgatajñāna* and the other qualities which will allow living beings to turn into buddhas; that is, he is not an attribute but that into which living beings will turn.”<sup>228</sup> In this way

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to gnoseology as a means for attaining enlightenment, the buddha nature teachings receive more attention together with the fruition to be attained, but ultimately they are identical.

<sup>225</sup> The Tibetan lines (262.6) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 262.3–263.2, read:

*gnyis med ngo bo mthong ba na ||*  
*rgyal ba'i snying po mngon du gyur ||.*

<sup>226</sup> For further details concerning the various editions of this work, refer to the bibliography, and SCHAEFFER 1995.

<sup>227</sup> See *rGyud bla ma'i bstan bcos* in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, p. 132.1–2: | *de nas rim pa bzhin brgyud de gsang phu'i chos rje 'jam dbyangs shwa kya gzhon nu la | chos rje rin po che rang 'byung rdo rjes gsan nas rgyud bla ma thogs 'grel dang bcas pa la bsdu don gyi 'grel pa mdzad* | – rendered as: “With the Dharma Lord 'Jam-dbyangs shwa-kya gzhon-nu of gSang-phu the precious Dharma Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje studied (this teaching). After that he composed a *Commentary of Understanding the rGyud bla ma* together with a summarizing commentary.” This summary was not extant, but in the meantime has been found, at least a major part of it, and published in the 2013 edition of the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, vol. 5, pp. 531–534. The First Kong-sprul composed a detailed commentary on the *rGyud bla ma* under the short title of *rGyud bla ma'i 'grel chen*, translated in FUCHS 2000.

<sup>228</sup> See ZIMMERMANN 2002: 53.

Zimmermann refers to buddha gnosis (*tathāgatajñāna*) as an essential quality of buddha nature. He further comments: “It is said to pervade all living beings. The destruction of wrong conceptions harbored by living beings would make them aware of the fact that they are penetrated by *tathāgatajñāna* and lead them to a state of equality with the *tathāgatas*.”<sup>229</sup>

## 2.1.6 The Tantric Sources

The explanations concerning the function of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction in comparison to the buddha nature teachings provided above clearly reveal that there is a causal (sūtric) approach and a resultant (tantric) approach to awakening.<sup>230</sup> The former emphasizes the discriminative analysis of the nature of phenomena, in order to reach the soteriological goal, whereas the latter applies direct identification with the qualities inherent in buddha nature on the basis of the Buddhist tantras. This can be called the gnoseological approach, because the emphasis here lies on the qualities constituting the nature of mind, such as buddha gnosis etc.<sup>231</sup> This already answers a major part of the question concerning the connection between the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and the Buddhist tantras, which will be discussed now as the final theme in this first part of the chapter.

An important example of a short presentation of the discourse on the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction in the context of relative and absolute truth is the *Hevajratantra* (datable to the late eighth or early ninth centuries C.E.). Georg W. Farrow and Indu Menon have rendered a characteristical section, Part 2, verses 35, 36, into English as follows:<sup>232</sup>

<sup>229</sup> See *Ratnagotravibhāgavyākhyā*, 24.3–6, in ZIMMERMANN 2002: 54. The term *tathāgatajñāna* (*de bzhin gshegs pa 'i ye shes*) as applied in the Newark edition of the *Tathāgatarbhasūtra* is one of the epithets of the term *jñāna* (*ye shes*) (see also TAKASAKI 2000: 76–77). This term will be analyzed in detail in the second part of the following chapter.

<sup>230</sup> In the context of the fourfold categorization of the buddha's body the *Vimalaprabhāṭikā*, chapter 1, p. 43 classifies the “system of perfections” (*Prajñāpāramitā*) as having the characteristic of the cause, while the “system of the *mantras*” has the characteristic of the result, see WALLACE 1995: 168. John Ronald Newman applied the same classification in NEWMAN 1987: 363.

<sup>231</sup> Harunaga Isaacson, besides providing a comprehensive overview of available tantric scriptures in ISAACSON 1998: 1–6, commented on the development of tantric Buddhism as a soteriology (p. 4, fn. 8): “... it is clear that many elements—such as the use of ‘magic formulas’—that are commonly (and not incorrectly) associated with Vajrayāna Buddhism are found in earlier texts, but usually employed for a variety of this-worldly purposes rather than as particularly effective means to enlightenment.” Even though the tantric teachings are meant to be soteriological, the actual application obviously does not always meet the requirements for this purpose.

<sup>232</sup> See FARROW & MENON 1992: 194–195. Sanskrit and Tibetan see SNELLGROVE 1959: 56–57:

*indriyaṃ viśayaṃ caiva indriyavijñānam eva ca |*  
*dhātavo 'ṣṭādaśākhyātā yoginīnām tu bodhaye ||* (35)

For the information of yogīnis there are eighteen essential aspects, comprising the six organs, the six objects and the six awarenesses of sensory experience. (36) Their intrinsic nature is that of primordial nonarising and is neither true nor false. Their nature is like the reflection of the moon in water. Know this if you wish, O Yoginīs.

David L. Snellgrove's English translation of this passage (p. 98) differs from the above-mentioned in some minor points. He published a Sanskrit edition of this section together with the Tibetan verses.

The Indian master Jālandharipāda (ca. late ninth – early tenth century) in his commentary on the practice of this tantra has further explained the connection between the eight cremation grounds, which are part of this practice, and the eight aspects of perception:<sup>233</sup>

The eight charnel grounds represent the purities of the eight consciousnesses (*rnam par shes pa brgyad*): the five sense consciousnesses (*rnam shes lnga*), that of the eye, and so forth; the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi'i rnam shes*); the subjective consciousness (*yid kyi rnam shes*); and the afflicted consciousness (*nyon mongs pa can gyi yid*). The purities of these consciousnesses are symbolized by the eight examples of illusion: an image in a mirror (*me long nang gi gzugs brnyan*), a dream (*rmi lam*), a magical creation (*rnam 'phrul*), an optical illusion (*smig rgyu*), a city of *gandharvas* (*dri za'i grong khyer*), an echo (*sgra brnyan*), a reflection on water (*chu nang gi gzugs brnyan*), and space (*nam mkha'*). In order that conceptions of apprehender, apprehended, and so forth, be overcome through knowledge

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*svabhāvam ādyanutpannam na satyaṃ na mṛṣā tathā |  
udakacandropamaṃ sarvaṃ yoginyo jānacchayā || (36)*

*dbang po dang ni yul nyid dang || dbang po'i rnam par shes pa nyid ||  
rnal 'byor ma rnams go bya'i phyir || khams ni bco brgyad rnams su bshad || (35)*

*rang bzhin gdod nas ma skyes pa || brdzun min bden min de bzhin du ||  
thams cad chu yi zla ba ltar || 'dod pas rnal 'byor mas shes kyis || (36).*

<sup>233</sup> The critically edited Sanskrit section appears in GERLOFF 2017: 186: | *aṣṭaśmaśānam vijñānāṣṭakaviśuddham || aṣṭavijñānam iti | cakṣurādīpañcavijñānam | ālayavijñānam | manovijñānam | klišṭāmanovijñānam | ādarśasvapnamāyāmarīcikā gandharvanagara pratiśrutka jalacandrākāśam iti | ata eva śmaśānāṣṭakam sarvadharmaparijñā\* nena grāhyagrāhakavarjitam | ity ṣṭavijñānadr̥ṣṭāntena jñāyante śmaśānāni || 8 ||*

The Tibetan in *Vajrapradīpā*, P 2366, vol. 56 (zha), p. 118, fols. 90b.8–91.a.3. reads: | *dur khrod brgyad ni rnam par shes pa brgyad rnam par dag pa'o || rnam par shes pa brgyad ces pa ni mig la sogs pa'i rnam par (91.a) shes pa lnga dang | kun gzhi rnam par shes pa dang | yid kyi rnam par shes pa dang | nyon mongs pa can gyi yid kyis rnam par shes pa zhes pa ste | me long dang | rmi lam dang | sgyu ma dang | smig rgyu dang | dri za'i grong khyer dang | sgra brnyan dang | chu zla dang | nam mkha' zhes pa'i dpe brgyad rnam par dag pa dur khrod brgyad du shes par bya'o || des na dur khrod brgyad ni chos thams cad yongs su shes pas gzung bya dang | 'dzin pa la sogs pa spangs pa'i phyir rnam par shes pa brgyad kyis dpes dur khrod brgyad rnams shes pa'o | The English translation originates from GUARISCO & MCLEOD 2005: 288–289.*

of all phenomena, the charnel grounds are to be understood through those eight examples that symbolize the purities of the eight consciousnesses.

The *Kālacakratāntra* and one of its major commentaries, the *Vimalaprabhā*, were composed sometime around the tenth century and introduced to Tibet at the beginning of the eleventh century C.E.<sup>234</sup> The *Vimalaprabhā* in its first chapter comments on a section in the *Kālacakratāntra* dedicated to the refutation of mistaken viewpoints held by various non-Buddhist and Buddhist schools of thought. In order to overcome the mistaken view of a truly existing consciousness as asserted by the Vijñānavādins, the text explains: “The true, perfect Buddha is beyond the reality of consciousness (*vijñānadharmatā*; | *rnam par shes pa'i chos nyid*).”<sup>235</sup> To substantiate this statement the *Vimalaprabhā* quotes the twenty-third verse from chapter 8 of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, a tantric work that is studied and recited in all Tibetan Buddhist traditions.<sup>236</sup> John Ronald Newman offered the following translation of this verse:

Beyond the consciousness reality,  
Gnosis, he holds the mode of nonduality.  
Without conceptual thought, spontaneous,  
He has performed the deeds of the perfect Buddhas of the three times.

In the corresponding footnote 43 Newman elaborated on the meaning of this rather condensed verse, summarized here by the present author in a few sentences. Newman identified the “consciousness reality” as the “store consciousness” (*kun gzhi rnam shes*:

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<sup>234</sup> The introduction of this tantra to Tibet has been and still is regarded as the beginning of the later Tibetan chronology in the year 1027 C.E.

<sup>235</sup> See NEWMAN 1987: 351–352.

<sup>236</sup> See *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, chapter 8, verse 23, or when counted throughout the whole work, verse 99. See also WALLACE 1995: 155. The edition by Alex Wayman contained in WAYMAN 1985, in addition to an English translation, presents the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions in chapter VIII on Discriminative Wisdom, p. 93:

*vijñānadharmatātīto jñānam |*  
*advaya rūpadhṛk ||*  
*nirvikalpo nirābhogas |*  
*tryadhvasambuddhakāryakṛt ||*  
*rnam par shes pa'i chos nyid 'das ||*  
*ye shes gnyis med tshul 'chang ba ||*  
*rnam par rtog med lhun gyis grub ||*  
*dus gsum sangs rgyas las byed pa ||*

Having transcended the nature of perception,  
Knowledge maintains a non-two nature;  
Without constructive thought and without effort,  
[Mañjuśrī] performs the buddha deeds in the three times.

*ālayavijñāna*). Gnosis, the Bhagavan, is clear light free from conceptual thought and thus beyond any truly existing (store-) consciousness. Being emptiness and compassion inseparable, profound and vast, he “holds the mode of nonduality.” He is spontaneous bliss, free from any effort, thus performing the activity of the Buddhas of past, present and future.

While the above quotation from the *Hevajratantra* expresses in terms of ultimate truth the intrinsic nature of the six kinds of awareness etc. as “of primordial nonarising” and “like the reflection of the moon in water,”<sup>237</sup> thus emphasizing the emptiness aspect, the *Kālacakratāntra* together with its commentary and the closely related *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* strongly emphasize the clarity aspect of mind. This contains the qualities of gnosis, bliss, compassion and activity for the benefit of others. Obviously, the interpretations of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction in the tantras can significantly differ from the sūtras and even within the tantras. It is also stated in various tantras that the six or eight types of perception or consciousness after purification change their state into the six or eight principal *bodhisattvas*.<sup>238</sup>

Related to this topic, one very specific interpretation of this discourse, given in the *Kālacakratāntra*, has to be mentioned. One subchapter within the fifth chapter deals with the four bodies of a buddha.<sup>239</sup> Urban Hammer has translated verse 89 as follows:<sup>240</sup>

That which is neither *prajñā* nor *upāya*, the *sahajatanu* became the *dharmakāya*.  
*Prajñā* (wisdom) and *upāya* (means) are its own nature,  
indeed lacking darkness (*tamas*), because of the division into *jñāna* and *vijñāna*.  
So, [becoming] this *sambhogakāya*, resounding like an echo,  
and being the agent for the sake of many intelligent beings,

<sup>237</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje has also quoted this famous simile from the *Hevajratantra*, 2.3. 36b–d, in his *rNam shes ye shes* treatise (see translation in chapter 7, verse 4, line 21).

<sup>238</sup> One famous example is the *Bar do thos grol chen mo*, 207(A)1–208(B)2: | *sems dpa' brgyad kyi dgongs pa 'dis* | *rnam shes tshogs brgyas rang grol nas* | Here the eight female bodhisattvas “represent the natural transformation of mental constructs associated with the eight classes of consciousness.” (Translation see DORJE 2006: 397–398). Another example is the *Vimalaprabhā*, Part 4: Sādhana: Methods of Accomplishment, the Body Vajra, 2. The generation of the male and female bodhisattvas, teaches that “from the six purified inner sources of consciousness arise these six male bodhisattvas” (KILTY 2004: 292). The corresponding Tibetan section appears in P 2064, vol. 46, rGyud-'grel *kha*: *Bsdus-pa'i rgyud-kyi rgyal-po dus-kyi 'khor-lo'i 'grel-bzhad rtsa-ba'i rgyud-kyi rjes-su 'jug-pa stong-phrag-bcu-gnyis-pa dri-ma med-pa'i 'od*, chapter 4 (*sgrub-thabs-kyi-le'u*), section 2 (*skyed-pa'i rim-pas sku rdzogs-pa'i mdor-bsdus chen-po*), fols. 114a.6–114b.7. Furthermore, Thrangu Rinpoche explained in ROBERTS 2000: 16, that “in paying homage to the bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas can be seen as the eight consciousnesses.” See also the slightly longer citation in chapter 7.5 of this thesis.

<sup>239</sup> See *Kālacakratāntra*, verses 89–126.

<sup>240</sup> See HAMMER 2005: 159.

for the sake of maturing the living beings, it [becomes] the *Buddha-nirmāṇakāya*.<sup>241</sup>

The summarized explanation of this verse<sup>242</sup> relates to the way the four bodies (*kāya*) of a buddha manifest. The term *sahajatanu* translates as “the subtle innate.” The body of the innate (*sahajakāya*) is accomplished for one’s own benefit beyond the duality of wisdom and means (*prajñā* and *upāya*). In order to accomplish the benefit of others, the *dharmakāya*, being of the nature of wisdom (*prajñā*) and means (*upāya*), originates from the *sahajakāya*. It lacks the darkness of deep sleep, which has ended at that stage. This happens because of the distinction between perception (*vijñāna*) and gnosis (*jñāna*).

*Jñāna* in this context is the apprehending mind (*grāhaka-citta*), the subject. *Vijñāna* refers to the apprehended (*grāhya*) objects of knowledge (*jñeya*). Here, the subject consists of wisdom (*prajñā*) because it is devoid of mental constructions (*kalpanā*), while the apprehended object is enlightened awareness manifesting as the world (here designated as *vijñāna*). It is conceptually fabricated (*parikalpita*) and has the nature of compassion. This distinction between *jñāna* and *vijñāna* again gives rise to the *sambhogakāya*, appearing like a reflected form or sound and acting for the benefit of sentient beings. For the sake of maturing living beings it then manifests the *nirmāṇakāya*.

This tantric explanation of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction in the context of the four buddha bodies provides a small glimpse of an identical terminology with a different meaning, applied in terms of the pure level of this experience. In his tantric commentaries Rang-byung-rdo-rje referred many times to this method or perspective of the pure view, mostly formulating it in a more general way. For example, in his *Zab nang rang ’grel* he stated:<sup>243</sup>

In the great Vajrayāna, [the following three] are indivisible: the gnosis of the perfect result, the development of the knowledge of the remedy that is in accordance with this [gnosis], as

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<sup>241</sup> The Sanskrit verse 98 quoted from the *Kālacakratāntra* (BANERJEE 1985: 222, *Vimalaprabhā* V.2, vol. III. 1994: 45, line 18) reads as follows:

*na prajñā nāpy upāyaḥ sahaajanur iyaṁ dharmakāyo babhūva  
prajñopāyasvarūpaḥ khalu vigatatamo jñānavijñānabhedāt |  
so ’yaṁ sambhogakāyaḥ pratiravaka ivānekasattvārthakartā  
sattvānām pākahetor bhavati punar asau buddhanirmāṇakāyaḥ ||.*

<sup>242</sup> The summary follows the detailed commentaries by Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) and other masters provided in WALLACE 1995: 165–166; HAMMER 2005: 161–167.

<sup>243</sup> See *Zab nang rang ’grel*, chapter 9, p. 544.2–3. The Tibetan reads: | rdo rje ’i theg pa chen po las yang dag pa ’i ’bras bu ye shes dang | de nyid dang rjes su mthun pa ’i gnyen po ’i shes pa bskyed pa yang dag pa ’i lta ba ’byung ba ’i rgyu sangs rgyas kyi chos rnam par dkar ba dag ni dbyed ba med pa ’i phyir | ’bras bu lam du byed pa zhes smos so |.

well as the completely positive teachings of the Buddha as the cause for the arising of the correct view. Therefore, we say that we apply the result as the path.

This possible interpretation should be kept in mind when discussing the various meanings of the key terms in the second part of the following chapter.

## 2.2 The Indian References in the *rNam shes ye shes* and Commentaries

After laying the groundwork for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse with respect to the Indian sources, a concise exploration of the actual references in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise is designed to facilitate the comprehension of the Third Karmapa's literal or paraphrased quotations from these sources. Most of them are also applied in other works related to this discourse. These references form the cornerstones for the integration of the above-mentioned, far-ranging and profound topics into his discourse. As single quotations they often represent a complete philosophical, epistemological or meditative tradition. When repeated, the sources point to a key concept for which the respective source seems to be the most significant one from the perspective of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. The principal sources were mentioned in general in the context of the literature review in the previous chapter.<sup>244</sup> The complete list of Indian sources in the *rNam shes ye shes* appears in Appendix 2.

The only work composed by the Third Karmapa that is fully dedicated to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, naturally becomes the starting point for research on the references. Since other works by Karmapa that are dedicated to this topic mostly rely on the same sources, with a few exceptions they will be treated in chapter 5, when dealing with the *rNam shes ye shes* theme in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *gSung 'bum*. Here the major references provided in the commentaries beyond the principal treatise will be analyzed. The most extensive one is the full-fledged interlinear commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* by the First Kong-sprul, Blo-gros-mtha'-yas.<sup>245</sup> In addition to his own explanations, he provided 91 quotations from about 50 different sources belonging to both the sūtras and the tantras, in order to substantiate the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Even though this vast material can only be

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<sup>244</sup> The most significant section for this particular literature here is 1.2.5, the "Sources of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Doctrinal Affiliations."

<sup>245</sup> For bibliographical references, refer to the short title of *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*.

discussed here in summarized form, it of course offers invaluable support in identifying and analyzing the classical sources of a major part of the respective teachings.

The direct or paraphrased quotations in the root texts will be clarified mainly in the annotations to the translations in chapters 7 and 8. Additional explanations in these chapters refer to the understanding of the translations of the Tibetan root texts. Here, the quotations are contextualized and enlarged by further citations in the commentaries to the *rNam shes ye shes* on the basis of the sources mentioned above. The investigation of the functions of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *gSung 'bum* will follow in chapter 5.

### 2.2.1 The Perception Part of the *rNam shes ye shes*

Following the introductory praise, lines 1 and 2 of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise offer the first paraphrased quotation. It originates from the *Abhidharmakośa* and refers to the three kinds of higher knowledge (*shes rab: prajñā*) of study, reflection and meditation.<sup>246</sup> Even though Rang-byung-rdo-rje stated in this opening verse that he expresses the fundamental topic on the basis of his meditative experience in retreat, at the same time with this quotation he provided a frame for the whole treatise. When he stated “having thoroughly relied upon study and reflection,” this is adequate expression of his profound and vast erudition, since he definitely belonged to the most outstanding scholars and meditation masters of his time.<sup>247</sup> It also means that he did not invent the contents of this treatise, but to a great extent passed on what he had studied and reflected upon in terms of the available sources.

At the same time this quotation implies that Karmapa presented these teachings from among other sources on the grounds of the most important lower Abhidharma work

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<sup>246</sup> See *Abhidharmakośa*, 6.5ab in PRADHAN 1967, 1975: *vṛttasthaḥ śrutacintānvānbhāvanāyāṃ prayujyate* || The Tibetan in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Tib. *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi tshig le'ur byas pa*, D 4090, fol. 7b, reads:

*tshul gnas thos dang bsam gtan nas ||  
bsgom pa la ni rab tu sbyor ||.*

English translation in CHOEPHEL 2012: 63: With conduct, listening, contemplation, completely train in meditation.

<sup>247</sup> Earlier the author discussed the special significance of the Third Karmapa as a historical figure in the context of the research on his life and works, see SEEGER 2009: 15–19. Furthermore, section 4.5 of the present study outlines the sources of his view, including a list of studied subjects from the most elaborate biography in the *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*. This list covers most of the classical Indian treatises quoted in the *rNam shes ye shes* and related works.

(*mngon pa 'og ma*), Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*. This is also affirmed by the First Kong-sprul's commentary.<sup>248</sup> As has been shown in the previous part of this chapter, Vasubandhu's *Magnum Opus* elucidates the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction from the abhidharmic perspective as one of its essential topics. It is therefore a well-chosen starting point in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, and from the beginning positions this discourse close to the category of Abhidharma presentations. This background is not only a major source for Karmapa's *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in general, but he explicitly commented on this topic in his analysis of the five aggregates or *skandhās* (*phung po lnga: pañcaskandhāḥ*) in the context of a summary of the Abhidharma.<sup>249</sup>

The following quotation in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise on the four alternatives of arising refers to four possible positions (*catuṣkoṭi*), in this case related to the law of causation.<sup>250</sup> Lines 5–7 of *rNam shes ye shes* – together with the paraphrased quotations in verse 4, lines 15–18 – originate from the seminal Madhyamaka treatise by Nāgārjuna, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, verse 1.1. It has been cited and commented upon in several later works, such as the *Prasannapadā* by Candrakīrti.<sup>251</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje even repeated it twice, in this way emphasizing Nāgārjuna's doctrinal approach and the logical reasoning applied in this school of thought in order to overcome the clinging to all views. It seemed to be important to the Karmapa right from the beginning to base his exposition on the mainstream Madhyamaka teachings, which the Tibetans later called the Rang stong

<sup>248</sup> Further details concerning this topic in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* will be shown in the translation section, chapter 7.

<sup>249</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 443–455. The full title of his commentary is: *Chos mngon pa'i phung po lnga'i rab tu byed pa'i bzhung*, no. 58 in the title list of the author's M.Phil. thesis. When applying several Mahāyāna key concepts, Karmapa bases this work in large part on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ascribed to Asaṅga. For further details, refer to chapter 5, section 5.3.

<sup>250</sup> The term *catuṣkoṭi* is mostly applied to the four possible alternatives of existence, nonexistence, both and neither, also called the “four extremes” (*mtha' bzhi: caturanta*) in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991, Glossary of Enumerations, p. 129. Nevertheless, David Seyfort Ruegg composed a very detailed article on the “Uses of the Four Positions of the *Catuṣkoṭi*”, SEYFORT RUEGG 1977: 3, in which he stated: “The positions of a ‘tetralemma’ have been variously used in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* for analysing the concept of causation ...” He quoted and translated the relevant lines as follows (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, verse 1.1, VAIDYA 1960D: 4):

*na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ ||  
utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana kecana ||*

Entities of any kind are not ever found anywhere  
produced from themselves, from another,  
from both [themselves and another], and from no cause.

<sup>251</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg in SEYFORT RUEGG 1977 referred back also to the canonical sources (p. 20), to “Vijñānavāda definitions of reality” (pp. 22–32), including a discussion of the reasoning “beyond identity and difference” (pp. 28–29), which immediately follows in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, as well as a list of major secondary sources (p. 58, fn. 4).

view. Otherwise the reader could develop the misconception that all elements in this discourse that point to the Yogācāra Madhyamaka view, which was later designated by the Tibetans as the gZhan stong school of thought, would exclude or contradict Nāgārjuna's philosophical teachings. Obviously, the Third Karmapa offered a balanced approach toward these two essential philosophical doctrines.<sup>252</sup>

The famous quotation in line 14 (“These three realms are merely mind.”) figures prominently in various sources, such as in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*,<sup>253</sup> the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, the *Triṃśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, in short form even in the title, the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*,<sup>254</sup> etc. (see also SCHMITHAUSEN 1997: 5–7; 2001: 1057–1061). In order not to leave the slightest doubt that this is just the provisional level of teachings, Rang-byung-rdo-rje immediately continued with the repetition of the Nāgārjuna stanza and his teaching on the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness, lines 15–18, as mentioned above. He extended his excursion into mainstream Madhyamaka philosophy by stating that all phenomena are free from the opposites of identity and difference as well as of deception and truth. He concluded the verse by quoting the famous simile of the moon's reflection in water.

In fact, in this section of verse 4, lines 15–19, Rang-byung-rdo-rje presented the “five great Madhyamaka reasonings” ([*dbu ma 'i*] *gtan tshigs chen po lnga*) without explicitly designating them as such. Nevertheless, each of these arguments and all of them together appear in many Indian and Tibetan sources, such as right at the beginning of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, chapter 1, verses 1–14, etc.<sup>255</sup> Among other sources the

<sup>252</sup> The Third Karmapa's view, particularly his balanced approach, will be treated at the end of chapter 4.

<sup>253</sup> See VAIDYA 1963: 19 | *punaraparaṃ mahāmate vikalpabhavatrāyaduḥkhavinivartanama-jñānatṛṣṇākarma-pratyayavinivṛtīm svacittadṛśyamāyāviśayānudarśanaṃ bhāṣiṣye* | rendered in SUZUKI 1978: 36 as: “Again, Mahamati, my teaching consists in the cessation of sufferings arising from the discrimination of the triple world; in the cessation of ignorance, desire, deed, and causality; and in the recognition that an objective world, like a vision, is the manifestation of Mind itself.” Accordingly, *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, P, fol. 64a.3–4 reads: | *khyod kyi sems dang yid dang | yid kyi rnam par shes pa dang bral zhing nang du sbyod pas | chos thams cad rnam par sgom par bya ste | phyi rol gyi don du lta ba la mngon par chags pas ni ma yin no* || – rendered as: “You should familiarize yourself with [the fact] that all phenomena exist inside and are free from your fundamental mind, mental cognition and perception of the mind. You should not have any attachment towards the views that recognize the reality of external objects [apart from the mind itself].” Corresponding quotations appear also in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fol. 9a.2–5.

<sup>254</sup> See *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, chapter 8, 7–8 in LAMOTTE 1935: 90–91; the *Triṃśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* in LÉVI 1925: 3; the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, chapter 6, in RAHDER 1926: 49.10, E, reads: *tasyaivaṃ bhavati | cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ tṛaidhātukam* |. For an English translation, refer to ANACKER 1984: 161.

<sup>255</sup> According to BGT: 1036, these five logical arguments can be summarized in the following way: 1. Analysis of the cause (*rgyu*): *rdo rje gzebs pa 'i gtan tshigs*; 2. Analysis of the result (*'bras bu*): *yod med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*; 3. Analysis of cause and result (*rgyu dang 'bras bu*): *mu bzhi skye 'gog gi gtan*

*Madhyamakālaṃkāra* especially elucidates the argument of “neither one nor many” (*gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs*) in detail, throughout 62 of its 97 stanzas. A precedent for Śāntarakṣita’s use of this argument is stanza 327 in chapter 14 of Āryadeva’s *Catuhśataka*; (Tib. *bsTan bcos bzhi brgya pa*, *Four Hundred Stanzas*). This is referred to almost verbatim in stanza 61 of the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. The final paraphrased quotation, lines 17, 20–21, in verse 4 of the *rNam shes ye shes* originate from *Yuktiśaṣṭikā* (*Sixty Verses of Arguments*), another mainstream Madhyamaka work ascribed to Nāgārjuna.<sup>256</sup>

The following quotation, lines 32–34, originating from several Yogācāra works, falls under the heading “Establishing the Appearances as Mind.” It shows that the outer world is not different from the cognizing awareness. At first glance, it just seems to repeat the previous statement that “these three realms are merely mind.” Nevertheless, there is a significant difference: This quotation is just the beginning of a complex reasoning. Line 32 provides a clear hint that careful analysis on the basis of higher knowledge is required, because the following reasoning of the seventh and eighth verses is very profound. It concerns the relationship between outer objects and experiencing awareness. The relevant sections in the commentaries have been translated and added in the translation chapter.<sup>257</sup>

Takashi Iwata has conducted extensive research on this type of reasoning as taught in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*<sup>258</sup>, as the famous

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*tshigs*; 4. Analysis of the essential nature (*ngo bo*): *gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs*; 5. Analysis of the appearance (*snang ba*): *rtan ’brel gyi gtan tshigs*.

<sup>256</sup> See *Yuktiśaṣṭikā*, 45.abc (The Sanskrit text has not been preserved.). The Tibetan (*Rigs pa drug cu pa*, LINDTNER 1987: 114) reads:

*gang dag brten nas dngos po rnams ||*  
*chu yi zla ba lta bur ni ||*  
*yang dag ma yin log min par ||*  
*(’dod pa de dag bltas mi ’phrog ||)*

English: *Sixty Verses of Arguments* (LINDTNER 1987: 115): “But those who are convinced that conditioned things (*bhava*) are like the moon in the water ((u) *dakacandra*), neither true nor false, (they are not carried away by dogmas (*dṛṣṭi*)).

<sup>257</sup> All three principal commentators provide precise explanations as to this logical argument by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Nevertheless, Kong-sprul starts out with an elaborate discussion on the causes and conditions of the perception process before expounding on the actual argument in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, B, fol. 12a.2–12b.4.

<sup>258</sup> See *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, 1.9 in HATTORI 1968: 103, 107:

*svasaṃvittiḥ phalaṃ vātra tadrūpo hy arthaniścayaḥ |*  
*viśayābhāsataivāsyā pramāṇaṃ tena mīyate || 9 ||*

An English translation appears in HATTORI 1968: 28, including the notes on pp. 102–107:

9a. or [it can be maintained that] the self-cognition of the cognition cognizing itself (*svasaṃvittiḥ*) is here the result [of the act of cognizing]–

*sahopalambhaniyama* (*lhan cig dmigs par nges pa*; certainty of [subject and object] being perceived together) argument in IWATA 1984; 1991. This includes the review on IWATA 1991, his published Ph.D. thesis, provided in KRASSER 1994. Another form of this argument is the so-called “*saṃvedana*-inference.” Here, the logical assertion is that “the object is not different from the cognizing awareness, because it is being cognized (*saṃvedyamāna*).” Expressed in terms of showing the consequence of the mistaken viewpoint: external objects, if truly or independently existent, would be unknowable.

The Third Karmapa in verse 7 refers to classical Pramāṇa sources when expounding on the two connections of the same nature, lines 35–36, and of cause and effect, lines 37–41. Dharmakīrti elucidated these two possible connections of identity (*tādātmya*) and of cause and effect (*tadutpatti*) in his *Pramāṇavārttika* as well as in his *Sambandhaparīkṣā*. In Tibet Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251) discussed them in his *Tshad ma rig gter: A Precise Analysis Which Examines Connections*.<sup>259</sup> Kong-sprul expounded on the reason given by Rang-byung-rdo-rje in verse 8, lines 47–48 “that because nothing is established to exist externally as different [from mind], creators like *Brahmā*, etc., do not exist,” by a quotation referring to the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra*. Mañjuśrī explains that “these outer objects have not been produced by a creator. They appear through the influence of the fully developed power of the habitual tendencies of the conceptual mind.”<sup>260</sup>

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9b. because the determination of the object (*artha-niścayaḥ*) conforms with it [viz., the self-cognition].

And the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, 1.55ab, in VETTER 1966: 94, n. 4; KRASSER 1994: 650; STEINKELLNER 2007: 42 reads:

*sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ* | 55.ab

The corresponding Tibetan lines in P 5710, 264a.1–2, critical edition in VETTER 1966: 94, read:

*lhan cig dmigs pa nges pa'i phyir* ||  
*sngon dang de blo gzhan ma yin* ||

A German translation appears in VETTER 1966: 95; English translation in KRASSER 1994: 650:

... gibt es keine Verschiedenheit zwischen Blau und seiner Erkenntnis,  
 weil sie notwendig gleichzeitig wahrgenommen werden.

Blue and its cognition are not different from each other,  
 Because they are necessarily perceived together.

<sup>259</sup> See *Pramāṇavārttika*, 1.2, in GNOLI 1960: 3–4. For an English translation of this section, refer to MOOKERJEE 1964: 21. See also *Sambandhaparīkṣā*, in FRAUWALLNER 1934: 263–279, 1–2, especially 1.b. The recurring refrain here reads: “*tasmāt sarvasya bhāvasya sambandho nāsti tattvataḥ*,” rendered as: “Therefore, in reality relations of all entities do not truly exist.” A German translation appears on pp. 279–282. Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251) provided a Tibetan study of this topic in his *Tshad ma rig gter*, chapter 6, pp. 128–169: ‘*brel pa brtag pa'i rab tu byed pa* |.

<sup>260</sup> The title of the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra* (‘*Phags pa 'jam dpal rnam par rol pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*) implies a teaching given by the Bodhisattva *Mañjuśrī*, and this sūtra is mentioned in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 14a.1–2 as the source of the quotation: ...*phyi rol gyi yul 'di rnam byed pa pos byas pa*

The ninth verse, lines 49–52, of the *rNam shes ye shes* builds on the previous two verses. It continues the discussion of the relationship between perceived objects and the perceiving mind, now expounding on the connection between the sixth aspect of perception, the mental cognition, and phenomena (*vid dang chos kyi 'brel ba*). Since the information coming from the sense perceptions is passed on to the sixth aspect, there is no direct connection to the outer object anymore. Therefore, Rang-byung-rdo-rje compares this function of mental cognition to the experience in a dream with no direct connection to outer objects of perception. Because of attachment to the “reality” of what is focused on, there is no realization of the fact that phenomena appear through the coming together of various causes and conditions and that in the whole process of cognition substantial entities do not truly exist. The complete verse has to be regarded as a paraphrased, almost literal quotation from Vasubandhu’s *Viṃśikārikā*, 16ab–17a.<sup>261</sup>

The following three quotations (verses 10 and 11) represent a summary of the whole first part of the treatise. The first four lines (53–56) closely resemble and expound on verse 3 in chapter 1 of the *Madhyāntavibhāga* ascribed to Maitreya(nātha),<sup>262</sup> which

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*ma yin te | sems rnam par rtog pa'i bag chags mthu brtas pa'i dbang gis snang ba yin no |*. Nevertheless, the Peking, sDe-dge, Co-ne, sNar-thang and sTog editions of this sūtra, which are more or less identical, do not contain this quotation. The name of the person asking, Padmavīkrīḍita, does not even appear in the various editions of this work. Kong-sprul’s quotation might originate from a similar teaching given by *Mañjuśrī* in another sūtra.

<sup>261</sup> The Sanskrit lines read:

*pratyakṣabuddhiḥ svapnāḍau yathā sā ca yadā tadā |  
na so 'rtho dṛśyate tasya pratyakṣatvaṃ katham matam || 16 ||*

Sylvain Lévi besides the first Sanskrit edition, published in LÉVI 1925: 1–11, reprinted in ANACKER 1984: 413–421, also provided a precise French translation of these lines in LÉVI 1932: 55–6: «16 a. – L’idée de l’évidence, c’est comme dans le rêve etc. C’est-à-dire qu’elle est sans objet, on l’a montré plus haut. 16 bcd. – Et quand elle (existe), déjà l’objet même n’est plus vu; comment entendre alors qu’il est évident? 17a. – Nous avons montré comment la Notification (se fait) sous tel ou tel Semblant». - rendered as: “The idea of evidence (of the object itself) is like in a dream. That means it (cognition) is without an object which has been shown above. And when it (exists), already the object itself is not seen anymore; how could one assume that it is evident? 17a. We have shown how the information makes itself known by means of such and such a semblance.” In case the meaning of the last line (17a) is not completely clear, we read in KOCHUMUTTOM 1982: 185: “It has [already] been said that there is a representation of consciousness, which appears as that, [namely the respective object].”

<sup>262</sup> Following the *Madhyāntavibhāga* edition in NAGAO 1964: 19, the *kārikā* reads:

*arthasattvāt mavijñaptipratibhāsaṃ prajāyate ||  
vijñānaṃ nāsti cāsyārthaḥ tadabhāvāt tad apy asat || 1.3.*

The Tibetan lines in *Madhyāntavibhāga*, P 5522, vol. 108, p. 19. fol. 43b.6–7, corresponding to the first part of this quotation read:

*don dang sems can bdag rnam rig ||  
snang ba'i rnam par shes pa ni ||  
rab tu skye'o ... ||*

This part of the verse is rendered in STANLEY 1988: 18 as follows:

besides the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* and Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* is regarded as one of the most fundamental Yogācāra works.<sup>263</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje, by alluding to this source, clearly shows that he advocates the view of the middle beyond extremes in order to overcome all mistaken views. And this is exactly what the second quotation, lines 57–59, also refers to, because it is the second repetition of the famous *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* reasoning leading beyond the extremes of true existence and nonexistence.

The third citation, verse 11, lines 60–61, provides the logical conclusion of the previous verses. It is not an exact repetition of the quotation given in line 14, because there the three realms were taught to be merely mind, while here it is stated that “the whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is only mind.” Line 14 refers to the three realms comprising the cycle of existence (saṃsāra), this second occurrence includes even the state of liberation from the cycle of existence (nirvāṇa). Both, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are merely mind (*'khor 'das thams cad sems tsam ste*). Kong-sprul comments on that line after defining all phenomena of saṃsāra as forms of the deluded mind and all phenomena of nirvāṇa as being free from the stains of duality: “... in all sūtras and tantras together with their commentaries phenomena are taught to be mind only.”<sup>264</sup>

The next part of the treatise deals with “the explanation of the eight groups (of perception or cognition) as causes and conditions for illusion.”<sup>265</sup> According to Kong-sprul, this answers the question, how the mode of being or function (*tshul*) of the mind

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Consciousness comes into being in the appearances,  
As objects, sentient beings, the self and representations.

<sup>263</sup> See the Yogācāra sources of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the previous section (2.1.4).

<sup>264</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fol. 15b.6: | *mdo rgyud bstan bcos thams cad las chos rnams sems tsam du gsungs pa ste* | He substantiates his statement by quoting a corresponding teaching from the *Dohākośagīti*, lines 166–169, as well as from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Tib. *mDo sde rgyan*), chapter 6, verse 8; Skt. in LÉVI 1907: 24.

<sup>265</sup> This part (*'khrul pa'i rgyu rkyen tshogs brgyad bshad pa*) comprises verses 12–21 in the root text. It is strictly based on the principle of dependent origination providing a detailed explanation of the fourfold conditions (*pratyaya*). According to SKILLING 1998: 139–149 they were first taught in the *Pratyayasūtra* (*Sūtra on the [Four] Conditions*) and later e.g. presented in detailed form in the Abhidharma expositions of the *Vijñānakayaśāstra*, the *Paṭṭhāna*, in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, chapter 1, section 2, 10b, as well as in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 1.2. The verse in the latter work (VAIDYA 1960C: 26) reads:

*Catvāraḥ pratyayā hetuś cālambanam anantaram |*  
*tathaivādhipateyaṃ ca pratyayo nāsti pañcamah ||*

David J. Kalupahana in KALUPAHANA 1991: 106 has rendered this verse as: “There are only four conditions, namely, primary condition, objectively supporting condition, immediately contiguous condition, and dominant condition. A fifth condition does not exist.”

is.<sup>266</sup> A concise explanation, verse 12, first outlines the saṃsāric mind by expounding on the dependent origination of the eight aspects of perception. In Kong-sprul's commentary this is followed by the dependent origination of nirvāṇa which is the pure *dharmakāya* element endowed with great qualities existing within ourselves. One short quotation from a tantra on the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*)<sup>267</sup> and one longer quotation from the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, chapter 5, verses 9–11, on the perfection of the qualities of a bodhisattva support Kong-sprul's outline.

The detailed explanation then comprises the verses 13–21. Rang-byung-rdo-rje expounds on the causes and conditions for illusion by applying the above-mentioned classical presentation of the following four mental functions: 1. the object condition, the objects of the six senses, verse 13; 2. the predominant condition, the six sense faculties, verse 14, both together, verse 15; 3. the immediate condition together with the defiled mind, verses 16–19; and finally 4. the causal condition of the fundamental mind, the all-base or store consciousness, verses 20–21. The third Karmapa in his *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad* explained in a concise way the complete dependent origination of the eightfold group of perception as follows:<sup>268</sup>

The fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*) together with the seeds is the cause of the cycle of existence. From the functioning [of the fundamental mind] as a causal condition the other seven groups of perception become the results. From them ripen all karmas and sufferings of the three realms individually. And because they all also generate the capacity of the fundamental mind, it is also called [their] result. Like that [functions] dependent origination itself.

In this context Rang-byung-rdo-rje again incorporated three classical sources. The first is a summarized quotation, lines 70–71, referring to the key topic of the *Ālambanaparikṣāvṛtti* (Tib. *Dmigs pa brtag pa'i 'grel pa*; Engl. *An Examination of the Objects of Thought*) composed by Dignāga. This subject shows the relationship between the object of perception (*yul*), the sense faculty (*dbang po*) and cognition (*rnam rig*). David J. Kalupahana, in a fashion similar to the Third Karmapa, summarized the content

<sup>266</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fol. 16b.2–3.

<sup>267</sup> The *Vajraśikharamahāguhyayogatantra* (Tib. *rDo rje rtse mo*, or *Gsang ba rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud rdo rje rtse mo*; translated in short as *Vajra Pinnacle Tantra*); P 113, vol. 4, p. 283; D 480.

<sup>268</sup> The *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, p. 28.4–5, comments on the *Dharmadhātustotra*, verses 15–16, P 2010, fol. 74a.1–3. The Tibetan lines read: | *khör ba'i rgyu dang sa bon ni kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa ste* | *des rgyu'i rkyen du byas nas rnam par shes pa'i tshogs gzhan bdun po 'bras bur 'gyur ba de las kham gsum gyi las sdug bsngal thams cad so sor smin cing* | *de thams cad kyang kun gzhi'i nus pa bskyed par byed pas 'bras bu zhes kyang bya ste* | *de ltar rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba nyid de* ||.

of the last one and a half stanzas (7.cd–8.) in this composition as follows: “From time immemorial this objective aspect (*viṣayarūpa*) and the force which transforms consciousness into the subject-object relationship, that is, the sense organ, continue to be mutually conditioned.”<sup>269</sup>

The following two lines 72–73, representing the second quotation, originate once more from the *Madhyāntavibhāga*.<sup>270</sup> The lines are cited more or less literally except for the verb *'du byed* (meaning “to produce, to construct, or formation”), which in the two earlier editions, the *rNam ye brtag pa* and the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* reads as *'du shes* (to discriminate). The present author had to decide on one of these two versions in his translation. In this case, the verb *'du byed* seems preferable, following mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje, who commented (root text bold):<sup>271</sup>

**Even if these are the [sense] perceptions of the faculties which cognize (lit. see) the objects, the mental factors actually (or clearly) construct knowing their particulars,** such as their classification into “pleasant” and “unpleasant.”

Further reasons for this decision will be discussed in the annotations to the translation. Nevertheless, more detailed research yields the result that both of these alternative terms appear in the *Madhyāntavibhāga* root text and its commentaries in the context of the following stanza (1.9) with clear definitions, especially in the respective commentaries. It seems that the two early commentaries by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa and the First Kong-sprul here followed Sthiramati's explanations, whereas the Fifteenth Karmapa (as well as

<sup>269</sup> See *Ālambanaparīkṣā* (not preserved in Sanskrit) together with the auto-commentary, P 5703, *Tshad ma*, vol. 130, p. 73, fol. 178a.7–178b.4; English translation summarized in KALUPAHANA 1970: 125. The Tibetan lines of the root text read:

*lhan cig byed dbang nus pa yis || ngo bo gang yin dbang po 'ang yin || 7*  
*de yang rnam rig la mi 'gal || de ltar yul gyi ngo bo dang ||*  
*nus pa phan tshun rgyu can dang || thog ma med dus 'jug pa yin || 8.*

<sup>270</sup> See *Madhyāntavibhāga*, 1.8c–d in NAGAO 1964: 21:

*tatrārthadr̥ṣṭir vijñānaṃ tadviśeṣe tu caitasāḥ ||*

The Tibetan lines appear in P, vol. 108, *Sems-tsam Bi*, 4a.1–2:

*de la don mthong rnam par shes ||*  
*de yi khyad par sems las 'byung ||*

*Don tsam mthong ba ni rnam par shes pa'o || don gyi khyad par mthong ba ni sems las byung ba rnams tshor ba la sogs pa'o ||* – rendered as: “With respect to that the perception sees an object, mental states see its particulars (or distinct features).” (*Bhāṣya*): “Perception merely sees the object; the mental factors see the particulars of the object, such as sensations etc.” For a further English rendering, see STANLEY 1988: 37. Stanley translated the relevant expression from Sthiramati's commentary as ‘imaginative constructions.’

<sup>271</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 424.5–6: (The root text is written in bold face, corresponding to the translation above.) | ... **don rnams mthong ba ni dbang po'i rnam par shes pa rnams yin kyang** | *de rnams kyi dbye ba yid du 'ong mi 'ong gyi khyad par shes pa* | **sems byung gi mngon par 'du byed pa ni** |.

all later editions of the *rNam shes ye shes*) relied on a more literal interpretation of the root text including the *Bhāṣya*. The lines in the root text and its commentaries run as follows:

This next verse (1.9) provides the explanations of the afore-mentioned two lines (1.8c–d):

Furthermore, the treatise shows the characteristics of engagement.

The first (*rnam par shes pa*) is the conditional consciousness,

The second (*sems byung*) is endowed with sense-experience (lit. enjoyment),

Sense-experience, thorough performance and

The mental factors that cause their engagement.

The *Bhāṣya* comments:<sup>272</sup> “In terms of the characteristics of engagement, the first is the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*). It is the consciousness that is the [causal] condition for the other [seven] consciousnesses. [The second] which arises from that is the engaging perception. It is endowed with sense-experience. The sense-experience refers to sensation (or feeling). The thorough performance is [conceptual] discrimination [Sthiramati: consisting of the apprehension of any particulars of an object]. The mental factors cause these consciousnesses to engage. These are mental activities such as volition and interest etc.”<sup>273</sup> Thus, both interpretations based on the respective Tibetan terms *'du byed* and *'du shes* are equally meaningful.

Almost the whole last section of the perception part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise consists of quotations from a classical Indian source. Lines 74–77, as well as lines 82–104, correspond to a few sections of the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, composed by Asaṅga. The first paraphrased quotation in four lines, verses 16–17, deals with the two aspects of cognition (*yid: manas*), the immediate and the defiled mind. Asaṅga's root text, after explaining the function of the immediate mind, without interruption also presents the

<sup>272</sup> See Sthiramati's *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*, P 5534, vol. 109, Sems-tsam *Tshi*, p. 143, fol. 37b.6: | ... *don gyi khyad par gang yin pa de 'dzin pa ni 'du shes so* ||

<sup>273</sup> The Tibetan lines of verse 1.9 (P 5522, vol. 108, Sems-tsam *Bi*, 4a.2–4) including the headline read as follows:

*'jug pa'i mtshan nyid kyang ston te* ||  
*gcig ni rkyen gyi rnam par shes* ||  
*gnyis pa nye bar spyod pa can* ||  
*nye bar spyod dang yongs gcod dang* ||  
*de'i 'jug byed sems las byung* ||

*Bhāṣya*: *Kun gzhi rnam par shes pa ni rnam par shes pa gzhan dag gis rkyen gyi rnam par shes pa'o* || *de las byung ba 'jug pa'i rnam par shes pa ni nye bar spyod pa can no* || *nye bar spyod pa'i tshor ba'o* || *yongs su spyod pa ni 'du shes so* || *rnam par shes pa 'jug par byed pa dag ni 'du byed rnams te* | *sems pa dad yid la byed pa la sogs pa'o* ||. See also STANLEY 1988: 39–42; DHARMACHAKRA TR. COMMITTEE 2006: 32–33.

second aspect, the defiled mind, as well as a short summary of both together, verses 18–19, lines 82–91.<sup>274</sup>

Lines 92–95 represent a paraphrased quotation from the *Abhidharmasūtra*, which appears in the second verse of the *Mahāyānasamgraha*. Except for the reversed order of the lines, the major differences consist in those addressed by the teaching on fundamental mind (*kun gzhi rnam shes: ālayavijñāna*). The *Abhidharmasūtra* reads: “I have revealed the fundamental mind to the noble ones,”<sup>275</sup> while Rang-byung-rdo-rje quotes: “Especially to those endowed with intelligence (or wisdom, *blo gros ldan rnams*) [the Buddha] taught the fundamental mind.” The noble ones here according to Kong-sprul and dKon-mchog-yan-lag are the followers of the Mahāyāna. In fact, in verse 4 of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* there appears another quotation, this time from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, V, 7: “It is not suitable to conceptualize it as a self, thus, I did not teach it to childish beings.”<sup>276</sup> In other words, the Buddha taught it only to intelligent

<sup>274</sup> See *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.6.1–2. (Sanskrit not available) The Tibetan, P 5549, vol. 112, p. 217, 4a.4–7, reads: | *de la yid ni rnams pa gnyis te* | *de ma thag pa'i rkyen byed pas* | *gnas su gyur pa'i phyir* | *rnam par shes pa 'gag ma thag pa yid ces bya ba rnam par shes pa skye pa'i gnas dang* | *gnyis pa nyon mongs pa can gyi yid nyon mongs pa bzhi po 'jig tshogs la lta ba dang* | *nga'o snyam pa'i nga rgyal dang* | *bdag la chags pa dang* | *ma rig pa dang rtag tu mtshungs par ldan pa ste* | *de ni rnam par shes pa kun nas nyon mongs pa'i gnas so* | *rnam par shes pa ni gang gnas gcig pos ni bskyed la* | *gnyis pas ni nyon mongs pa can du byas te* | *yul rnam par rig pa'i phyir rnam par shes pa'o* | *de ma thag pa dang ngar sems pa'i phyir yid ni rnam pa gnyis so* ||. Étienne Lamotte's rendering of this section appears in LAMOTTE 1973: 36, translated into English including the key terms in Sanskrit by Gelongma Karma Migme Chodron: “Among these three (*citta*, *manas*, *vijñāna*), *manas* is twofold (*dvividha*): i) Acting as immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*) and forming support (*āśrayābhūta*), the consciousness that has just disappeared (*anantaraniruddha vijñāna*) is the support for the birth (*utpattyāśraya*) of the mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*). ii) The second is the afflicted *manas* (*kliṣṭamanas*), always associated (*samprayukta*) with the four afflictions (*kleśa*), i.e., wrong view of the self (*satkāyadrṣṭi*), pride of the self (*asmimāna*), attachment to the self (*ātmasneha*) and ignorance (*avidyā*). It is the support of the defilements (*sāṃkleśa*) of the consciousness (*vijñāna*). The consciousnesses arise because of the first *manas* as support; the second one is defilement. Because it cognizes the object (*viśayavijñaptēḥ*), the *manas* is a consciousness; as antecedent (*samanantara*), as thinking (*manana*), the *manas* is of two kinds.” This quotation except for a few variations literally appears also in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fol. 22a.5–22b.3. The specific interpretation of the seventh aspect (*yid*) by the Third Karmapa will be discussed at the end of chapter 5 (5.4).

<sup>275</sup> See P 5549, vol. 112, p. 217, fol. 3b.6:

*de bas kun gzhi rnam shes te* ||  
*dam pa dag la ngas bshad do* ||

also cited in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, (B) fol. 23a.3.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 4a.1:

*bdag tu rtog par gyur na mi rung zhes* ||  
*'di ni byis pa rnams la ngas ma bstan* ||

See also LAMOTTE 1935: 58. The corresponding Sanskrit lines read:

*bālāna eṣo mayi na prakāśi* |  
*mā haiva ātmā parikalpayeyuḥ* ||

beings or those endowed with wisdom, as mentioned by Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

The first half of verse 21, lines 100–102, expounds on the fundamental mind functioning as the causal condition for the arising of all seeds. These lines correspond to the second section in verse 14 of *Mahāyānasamgraha*.<sup>277</sup> The third section then explains its nature of being the fruit.<sup>278</sup> Here, dKon-mchog-yan-lag clarifies the understanding of what “fruit” in this context means by citing from verse 17 of the same source: “The fundamental mind is the cause of the defiled *dharmas*; in the same way the defiled *dharmas* are the cause of the fundamental mind.”<sup>279</sup> The last three lines of this first part explain that when the sevenfold group is overcome the fundamental mind is counteracted at the state of complete awakening. This topic is again elucidated in the *Mahāyānasamgraha*.<sup>280</sup> Here, the last three lines of this section build up a perfect connection to the second part of the treatise, the gnosis part.

## 2.2.2 The Gnosis Part of the *rNam shes ye shes*

The second part of the *rNam shes ye shes* is dedicated to the change of state (*gnas 'gyur pa: āśrayaparāvṛtti*) of the ordinary functions of perception into the state of gnosis. The standard version, also applied in this treatise, verses 23–32, consists of the following five kinds of gnosis (*ye shes lnga: pañcajñānāni*):

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<sup>277</sup> For the Tibetan lines, see P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 218, fol. 6b.1–2: | *de skye ba'i rgyu mtshan nyid do* | *de la rgyu nyid kyi mtshan nyid ni de ltar kun gzhi rnam par shes pa'i rang gi sa bon thams cad pa de kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos de nyid kyi rgyu nyid du dus thams cad du nye bar gnas pa yin no* |. Étienne Lamotte's rendering of this section appears in LAMOTTE 1973: 54, translated into English including the key terms in Sanskrit by Gelongma Karma Migme Chodron: “(ii) Next, its nature of being cause (*hetuvalakṣaṇa*): this store-consciousness furnished with all its seeds (*sarvabījaka*) is always present as the cause of these afflictive dharmas.”

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 6b.2–3: *de la 'bras bu nyid du rnam par zhag pa nyid ni* | *gang kun gzhi rnam par shes pa kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos de dag nyid kyi thog ma med pa'i dus gyi bag chags la brien nas byung ba'o* ||. Étienne Lamotte's rendering in LAMOTTE 1973: 54 translated into English: “(iii) Finally, its nature of being fruit: the store-consciousness arises by virtue of the eternal dispositions (*anādikālikā vāsanā*) of these same afflictive dharmas.”

<sup>279</sup> The translation in chapter 7 provides the Tibetan lines. The same quotation appears in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, (B) fol. 25a.5–6. Kong-sprul then summarized (25b.1): | *de dag gi tshul theg bsdus las rgyas par 'byung ba ltar ...* | – rendered as: “The functions of these [aspects of the fundamental mind] originate in detail from the *Theg bsdus* (*Mahāyānasamgraha*).” See also the *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, p. 28.4–5, cited above.

<sup>280</sup> See *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.48–49. The Tibetan in P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 220, fol. 11b.6–7: reads: | *de la thos pa'i bag chags kyi sa bon chung ngu dang 'bring dang chen po yang chos kyi sku'i sa bon du lta ste* | *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa'i gnyen po yin pas kun gzhi rnam par shes pa'i ngo bo nyid ma yin pa dang* | – rendered as: The seed of the habitual tendencies of listening (or studying) (*śrutavāsanabīja*), small, medium and great, is also the seed of the *dharmakāya*. Since it is the antidote against the fundamental mind, it is not the actual nature of the fundamental mind.

1. The mirror-like gnosis (*me long lta bu'i ye shes: ādarśajñāna*)
2. The gnosis of equality (*mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes: samatājñāna*)
3. The discriminating gnosis (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes: pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*)
4. The all-accomplishing gnosis (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes: kṛtyanuṣṭhānajñāna*)
5. The *dharmadhātu* gnosis (*chos dbyings ye shes: dharmadhātujñāna or tathatājñāna*)

This part is considerably shorter than the first part. Altogether it comprises 16 verses, 22–36, including 25a, b, or 74 lines, 105–179. Even though many lines again originate from classical Indian sources, the Third Karmapa here cited from only three different works: the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* ascribed to Maitreya(nātha), the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* composed by Asaṅga and the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*. Some lines still refer in a general way to the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, the primary source of the previous section. Additionally, the commentaries, especially Kong-sprul's, again provide a wealth of material from many sūtras and tantras in order to substantiate and clarify the condensed verses of the Third Karmapa.

The gnosis part in Kong-sprul's commentary starts out with a longer quotation from the same treatise as before, the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, showing the logical connection of this part to the previous one. Kong-sprul states that “the cause of buddhahood arises from the change of state of the five aggregates of sentient beings.”<sup>281</sup> This sentence serves as an introduction into a longer quotation expounding on what kind of mastery is obtained by this change of state.<sup>282</sup> In this context, the *skandha* of perception or consciousness (*vijñānaskandha*) changes its state into four kinds of gnosis of a buddha. Since it is the main topic of this second part, it is explained in greater detail. Kong-sprul begins this part

<sup>281</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, (B) fol. 26a.4: | *sangs rgyas kyi rgyu sems can gyi phung po lnga gnas 'gyur ba la byung ba ste* |.

<sup>282</sup> For explanations of the expression “change of state,” see *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.49, P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 220, fol. 12a.6. The change of state of the five aggregates is taught in chapter 10.5, P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 234, fol. 44b.1–5. For an English rendering of this verse, refer to LAMOTTE 1973: 374–375, starting: “By how many masteries (*vibhūtvā*) does the *dharmakāya* acquire sovereignty? In brief, (*samāsataḥ*), it acquires it in five ways (*pañcavidhā*): ... v) By the transformation of the consciousness aggregate (*vijñānaskandhaparāvṛtti*), it acquires sovereignty over the mirror-like knowledge (*ādarśajñāna*), the knowledge of sameness (*samatājñāna*), the knowledge of contemplation (*pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*) and the knowledge of the accomplishment of what had to be done (*kṛtyanuṣṭhānajñāna*).” A detailed explanation of the term “change of state” (*gnas gyur pa*) is to be found in the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan* in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 554.5–560.1 (see chapter 8, 8.3.2). Furthermore, Ronald M. Davidson has dedicated his Ph.D. thesis DAVIDSON 1985 to a study of the Yogācāra presentation of the concept of “change of state” (*gnas 'gyur pa: āśrayaparāvṛtti*).

by providing a first citation from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* concerning the causes of the four kinds of gnosis.<sup>283</sup>

In the *rNam shes ye shes* root verses 23–29 Rang-byung-rdo-rje goes into more detail concerning these four kinds of gnosis. When explaining the result of purification of the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*) as the mirror-like gnosis, in lines 111–115 he refers to the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*.<sup>284</sup> As Kong-sprul showed, the last line 116 of verse 23 also refers to a classical source. He explained: “With respect to that this mirror-like gnosis is called ‘the *dharmakāya*’.” The reason for that is again described in the *Theg bsdus*: “Because in terms of the completely pure phenomena of buddhahood the *dharmakāya* is obtained from the change of state of the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*).”<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> The Tibetan title of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* is: *Theg pa chen po mdo sde'i rgyan gyi tshig le'ur byes pa*, in short *mdo sde'i rgyan* or *rgyan*. For bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography. The relevant Sanskrit lines in chapter 9, verse 76, in LÉVI 1907: 48 read:

*dhāraṇātsamacittācca samyagdharmaprakāśanāt |*  
*kṛtyānuṣṭhānataścaiva caturjñānasamudbhavaḥ || 76*

The Tibetan verse 76, chapter 9, in P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fols 13a.8–13b.1, runs as follows:

*'dzin pa'i phyir dang sems mnyam phyir ||*  
*yang dag chos rab ston phyir dang ||*  
*bya ba bsgrub pa nyid kyi phyir ||*  
*ye shes bzhi po yang dag 'byung ||* – rendered as:

Because of holding and because of an equal mind,  
Because of perfectly teaching the authentic *dharmā*, and  
Because of truly accomplishing the actions,  
The group of four gnosers arises in a perfect way.

<sup>284</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verses 68–69. The Sanskrit lines in LÉVI 1907: 46 read:

*ādarśajñānamamāparicchinnaṃ sadānugam |*  
*sarvajñeṣṣvasaṃmūḍhaṃ na ca teṣvāmukhaṃ sadā || 68*  
*sarvajñānamittatvānmahājñānākaropamam |*  
*saṃbhogabuddhatā jñānapratibimbodayācca tat || 69*

The Tibetan version of these two verses originates from P 5521, vol. 108, fol. 13a.2–3:

*Me long ye shes nga yi med || yongs su ma chad rtag tu ldan ||*  
*Shes bya kun la ma rmongs la || rtag tu de la mngon phyogs min || 68*  
*Ye shes kun gyi rgyu mtshan phyir || ye shes 'byung gnas chen po 'dra ||*  
*Longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas nyid || ye shes gzugs brnyan 'byung phyir ste || 69*

The English translation in THURMAN 2004: 98–99 reads as follows:

68. The mirroring intuition appropriates nothing as “mine,” poses no divisions, always coheres, is without confusion amid all objects, and never confronts them.

69. It resembles a great mine of intuitive wisdoms, since it is the cause of all intuitions. It is beatific Buddhahood itself, (called “mirroring intuition”) since the (other) intuitions arise as reflections within it.

<sup>285</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 28b.6–29a.1: | *de la me long lta bu'i ye shes 'di la ni chos kyi sku zhes brjod pa yin te | de'i rgyu mtshan yang theg bsdus las | sangs rgyas kyi chos rnam par dag pa ni kun gzhi'i nam par shes pa gnas gyur nas | chos kyi sku 'thob pa'i phyir ro ||* – quoted from *Mahāyānasamgraha*,

The second aspect is the gnosis of equality. Lines 120–121 summarize the content of the corresponding verse from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*. The full verse has been cited (with small variations) in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*: “The gnosis of equality towards [all] sentient beings is stated as [coming about] through pure meditation. Furthermore, resting in the nonabiding nirvāṇa (lit. peace) is said to be the gnosis of equality.”<sup>286</sup> Concerning the discriminating gnosis the root text in lines 128–132 again provides a paraphrased quotation (with slightly altered order of the lines) from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*: “If the perceiver together with its objects changes its state into something else, because joy bodies (or states) (*sambhogakāyas*) are demonstrated as it is wished, one will obtain authentic mastery over pure lands. The related concepts completely change their state, there is gnosis at all times, and one will obtain authentic mastery over the completely unimpeded activity.”<sup>287</sup>

Lines 137–140 in verse 26 represent the following quotation from the same source. They build on the previous explanations and describe the afore-mentioned two kinds of gnosis – the gnoses of equality and of discrimination – together as the joy state of a

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10.7, English rendering in LAMOTTE 1973: 381. The original Tibetan lines are contained in P, 5549, vol. 112, *Li*, p. 234, fol. 45a.1–2.

<sup>286</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 30a.2, quoted from *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verse 70. The Sanskrit verse appears in LÉVI 1907: 47:

*sattveṣu samatājñānaṃ bhāvanāśuddhito 'malaṃ [matam] |*  
*apraṭiṣṭhasaśamāviṣṭaṃ samatājñānaṃ śyate || 70 ||*

The Tibetan lines originate from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 13a.4–5:

*sgom pa dag pas sems can la ||*  
*mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes 'dod ||*  
*mi gnas zhi bar bzhugs pa yang ||*  
*mnyam nyid ye shes yin par 'dod ||.*

<sup>287</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verses 43–44 in LÉVI 1907: 41:

*sāṃsthodagrahaparāvṛttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param |*  
*kṣetraśuddhau yathākāmaṃ bhogaśamdarśanāya hi || 43 ||*  
*vikalpasya parāvṛttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param |*  
*avyāghāte sadākālaṃ sarveṣāṃ jñānakarmaṇām || 44 ||*

The Tibetan lines originate from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 11b.4–6. The two verses appear separately in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 31a.5–6, and fol. 31b.2–3:

*don bcas 'dzin pa gzhan gyur na ||*  
*ji ltar 'dod bzhin longs spyod dag ||*  
*bstan phyir zhing ni dag pa la ||*  
*'byor pa dam pa 'thob par 'gyur || 43*  
  
*rnam rtog gzhan du gyur na ni ||*  
*dus rnams rtag tu ye shes dang ||*  
*las rnams kun tu thogs med la ||*  
*'byor pa dam pa 'thob par 'gyur || 44.*

buddha, or literally “body of complete enjoyment” (*longs spyod yongs su rdzogs pa 'i sku: sambhogakāya*). Kong-sprul’s verse runs - again with small variations and slightly reversed order.<sup>288</sup>

[The bodhisattvas] possess love and great compassion at all times, according to the inclination [to benefit] all sentient beings, [as well as] they definitely manifest buddha forms. The complete cycle of existence is pointed out to all *maṇḍalas* of the retinue. And since all doubts are cut, the rain of *Dharma* truly falls. It is surely like a treasury of *samādhis* and *dhāraṇīs*.

In the same way as before in terms of the *dharmakāya*, the commentators allude to further sources and different teachings related to the *sambhogakāya*. Kong-sprul mentioned the so-called “five certainties” (*nges pa lnga*) of the *sambhogakāya* summarized again in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 61: “In all realms the *sambhogakāya* is distinguished by gathering a perfect retinue, by the [pure] realm, by the signs [of his] body, by [providing] the enjoyment of the supreme *Dharma* and by pure activities.”<sup>289</sup>

<sup>288</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 71; 72.2 ; 73 in LEVI 1907: 47:

*mahāmaitrīkṛpābhyāṃ ca sarvakālānugaṃ matam |*  
*yathādhimokṣaṃ satvānāṃ buddhabimbanidarśakam || 71 ||*  
*dhāraṇīnāṃ samādhīnāṃ nidhānopamam eva ca || 72.2 ||*  
*parīṣanmaṇḍale sarvavibhūtināṃ nidarśakam |*  
*sarvasaṃśayavicchedi mahādharmapravarṣakam || 73 ||*

The Tibetan lines originate from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fols 13a.5, 13a.6–7, 12b.4. The two and a half verses also appear separately in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 32a.4, 32b.1, 32b.3:

*dus rnams kun tu byams pa dang ||*  
*thugs rje chen po dag dang ldan ||*  
*sems can rnams la mos pa bzhin ||*  
*sangs rgyas sku ni nges par ston ||*  
*'khor gyi dkyil 'khor rnams su ni ||*  
*'khor ba thams cad ston mdzad pa ||*  
*the tshom thams cad bcod pa yi ||*  
*chos chen char ni rab tu 'bebs ||*  
*ting nge 'dzin dang gzungs rnams kyi ||*  
*gter dang 'dra ba kho na'o ||.*

<sup>289</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 61 in LÉVI 1907: 45:

*sarvadhātuṣu sām̐bhogyo bhinno gaṇaparigrahaḥ |*  
*kṣetraīś ca nāmabhiḥ kāyair dharmasaṃbhogaceṣṭitaiḥ || 61 ||*

The Tibetan lines originate from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 12b.6. Explanations concerning these five certainties appear again in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 32b.4–5:

*longs spyod rdzogs pa kham kun tu ||*  
*'khor yongs sdud dang zhiṅ dang mtshan ||*  
*sku dang chos rdzogs longs spyod dang ||*  
*mdzad pa dag gis tha dad do ||.*

dKon-mchog-yan-lag even referred to a teaching in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra* (Tib. *gSer 'od dam pa'i mdo*) presenting the purified defiled mind as the *sambhogakāya* (*de la gnas pa'i yid dag pas longs skur ston*: “the purified [defiled] mind resting on that [fundamental mind] is taught as the *sambhogakāya*).”<sup>290</sup>

Verse 27 at first speaks about the purification of the six sense perceptions.<sup>291</sup> It is shown to arise from [four] pure concepts, lines 142–143. mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje explained these four pure concepts by referring to the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. The translation of mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's lines is contained in chapter 7. A literal translation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* verse would read as follows: “Those 1. whose seed is interest in the *Mahāyāna* teachings, 2. whose mother is higher knowledge giving birth to the qualities of a buddha, 3. whose stable meditation states are like staying in a pleasant womb, 4. whose compassion is like the prince's nanny, these persons are sons of the Buddha (*bodhisattvas*).”<sup>292</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje, starting from the same line 143 as before, continued to elucidate the purification process. The two lines together, 143–144, summarize a large section taught in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ascribed to Asaṅga. It

<sup>290</sup> See *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 454. Both, the *sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur*, D 556, Pa, fol. 36b.2, as well as the Beijing *bKa'-'gyur*, P 174, chapter 3, fol. 38a.5, display a version which is slightly different from the line quoted by dKon-mchog-yan-lag: | *rtsa ba la brten pa'i sems nye bar zhi bar gyur pa'i phyir ni longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku ston par 'gyur ro* || – rendered as: “The mind, because of being closely pacified in terms of relying on a root, is taught as the *sambhogakāya*.” The version of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra* paraphrased by dKon-mchog-yan-lag has been edited in NOBEL 1937: Tibetan edition II (section not preserved in Sanskrit), 172b, p. 205. 4–5: | *kun gzhi la gnas pa'i yid sbyangs pas longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku ston to* |. Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi and Ye-shes-sde have translated this sūtra at the beginning of the ninth century. Johannes Nobel, according to the introduction to the Tibetan edition (in NOBEL 1937: XIV), has mainly applied the version of a hand-written *bKa'-'gyur* of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. Obviously, the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa in the sixteenth century has applied a similar source different from the mainstream compilations of the Tibetan *bKa'-'gyur*. Kong-sprul referred to the same source in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 35a.4–5.

<sup>291</sup> The Tibetan line reads: | *sgo lnga yid kyi cha gcig ni* || – rendered as: “In terms of the five doors and the one aspect [of the mental cognition] ...” The “five doors” in general relate to the sense faculties (*dbang po*: *indriya*), the bases for the perception to connect with the sense objects (*don*: *viśaya*). But in combination with the one aspect of mental cognition this line clearly refers to the sense perception itself (*rnam shes*: *vijñāna*). The same has to be understood concerning the first line in the following verse 28, which reads: | *dbang po lnga rnam gnas gyur ni* || – rendered as: “The five [sense-perceptions of the five] faculties change their state ...” This interpretation is confirmed by the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, fol. 432.4 (see chapter 7, verse 27).

<sup>292</sup> See *Ratnagotravibhāga* or *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, chapter 1, 34. The Sanskrit lines in JOHNSTON 1950: 97–98 (in slightly different wording in the *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, chapter 4, 11) read:

*bījaṃ yeṣāṃ agrayānādhimuktir mātā prajñā buddhadharmaprasūtyai |  
garbhaśthānaṃ dhyānasaukhyam kṛpaktā dhātṛī putrās te 'nujātā munīnām* || 34 ||

The corresponding Tibetan lines appear in P 5525, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 56b.1–2:

*theg mchog la mos sa bon shes rab ni ||  
sangs rgyas chos bskyed ma dang bsam gtan gyi ||  
bde ba'i mngal gnas snying rje'i ma ma can ||  
gang yin de dag thub pa'i rjes skyes sras || 34 ||*

deals with the sixteen aspects of the Four Noble Truths accomplished on the path of seeing (*mtshong lam*).<sup>293</sup> The two following verses, 28 and 29, lines 147–154, except for the last line, consist completely of quotations from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*.<sup>294</sup> The last line 155 according to dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 456, again originates from the *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra*, chapter 3 (*sku gsum rnam par 'byed pa*).<sup>295</sup>

This hint by dKon-mchog-yan-lag, referring to the same passage from this sūtra as before, stating that “the perception, because of being purified of interacting with entities, is taught as the *nirmāṇakāya*” is especially interesting, because the corresponding passage in the Sūtra consists of a general and a specific part. First, in the context of elucidating the three bodies (or states) of a buddha, the general part refers to the three characteristics (*trilakṣaṇa*) or three natures (*trisvabhāva*), the “imaginary” or “imputed” (*parikalpita*), the “other dependent” (*paratantra*), and the “perfected” or “absolute” (*pariniṣpanna*)

<sup>293</sup> See *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, Part II, chapter 1, titled “Determining the Truths” (*Satyaviniścaya*). The relevant Sanskrit section on the Four Noble Truths appears in TATIA 1976: 49–94. The Tibetan originates from P 5550, *Li*, fols. 110b.1–111b.4. For an English rendering, refer to RAHULA 2001: 81–177. In comparison to Rang-byung-rdo-rje, Kong-sprul provided a more detailed explanation in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 33a.3–33b.3.

<sup>294</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 41, 74 in LÉVI 1907: 41, 47 :

*pañcendriyaparāvṛttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param |*  
*sarvārthavṛttau sarveṣāṃ gunadvādaśaśatodaye || 41*

*krtyānuṣṭhānatājñānaṃ nirmāṇaiḥ sarvadhātuṣu |*  
*citrāprameyācintyaiśca sarvasattvārthakāraṇam || 74*

The Tibetan verses originate from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 11b.3 (The two verses also appear separately in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 34a.4–5, and fol. 34b.4–5.):

*dbang po lnga rnams gnas gyur na ||*  
*don kun 'jug dang thams cad kyi ||*  
*yon tan brgya phrag bcu gnyis 'byung || 41*

*bya ba grub pa 'i ye shes ni ||*  
*kham rnams kun tu sna tshogs shing ||*  
*dpag med bsam yas sprul pa yis ||*  
*sems can kun don sgrub pa 'o || 74.*

<sup>295</sup> The section of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra* paraphrased by dKon-mchog-yan-lag has been edited in NOBEL 1937 (1944): Tibetan edition II (not preserved in Sanskrit), 172b, p. 205. 3–4: | *'jug pa 'i rnam par shes pa sbyangs na sprul pa 'i sku mngon du 'gyur ro* || rendered as: “Since [the buddhas] have purified the perception which engages [into objects], they manifest the *nirmāṇakāya*.” The German translation in NOBEL 1958: 56–57 reads: “Weil (die Buddhas) den Gedanken, der die Gegenstände entstehen lässt, beseitigt haben, offenbaren sie den Verwandlungskörper“. || In the same way as it was shown above, both, the sDe-dge bKa’-’gyur, D 556, fol. 36b.2, as well as the Beijing bKa’-’gyur, P 174, fol. 38a.5, display a slightly different version of the line quoted by dKon-mchog-yan-lag: *bya ba slong pa 'i sems nye bar zhi bar gyur pa 'i phyir ni sprul pa 'i sku ston par 'gyur ro* || – rendered as: “Since the mind which causes to rise activities has been closely pacified, it displays the *nirmāṇakāya*.”

nature. Here, the understanding of the function of the imputed aspect leads to the manifestation of the *nirmāṇakāya*. The first quotation is rendered as:<sup>296</sup>

Son of a good family, all ordinary people because of having the three characteristics possess limitations and veils. Therefore, they leave the three bodies far away and do not come close to the three bodies. What are these three? 1. The characteristic of complete imputations, and 2. the characteristic of arising dependently, and 3. the characteristic of complete perfection. Because [ordinary people] did not understand these three characteristics and did not pacify them and did not thoroughly purify them in this way [related to the three characteristics respectively], they did not come close to the three bodies. The buddhas, because they have understood, closely pacified and thoroughly purified the three characteristics in this way, are endowed with the three bodies.

The second more specific part is the paraphrased quotation by dKon-mchog-yan-lag mentioned above. In the next verse 30 there again appear two lines (159–160) that are a condensed quotation from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*. The verse explains the essential body (or state) of a buddha (*svābhāvikakāya*).<sup>297</sup> At the beginning of the following verse (31), Rang-byung-rdo-rje once more demonstrated his vast erudition with respect to the classical sources by summarizing in the following way (lines 162–163): “In some other scriptures the Victor taught this [*svābhāvikakāya*] to be the *dharmakāya*.”<sup>298</sup> Kong-sprul

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<sup>296</sup> See *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra*, D 556, vol. 89, p. 71, *Pa*, fol. 36a.4–7; P 174, chapter 3, fols. 37b.7–38a.2: || rigs kyi bu so so 'i skye bo thams chad ni mtshan nyid gsum dang ldan pa 'i phyir 'ching ba dang bcad shing sgrib pa dang bcad pas sku gsum po dag thag ring du spong zhing sku gsum po dag dang nye bar mi 'gyur ro || gsum gang zhes na || kun tu brtags pa 'i mtshan nyid dang | gzhan gyi dbang las byung ba 'i mtshan nyid dang yongs su grub pa 'i mtshan nyid do || 'di ltar mtshan nyid 'di dag yongs su ma shes pa 'i phyir dang zhi bar ma gyur pa 'i phyir dang | yongs su ma dag pa 'i phyir te | de lta bas na sku gsum po 'di dag dang nye bar ma gyur pa yin no || 'di ltar mtshan nyid gsum po 'di dag shes shing nye bar zhi ba dang | yongs su dag par gyur pa 'i phyir de lta bas na sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams sku gsum dang ldan par 'gyur pa yin no ||.

<sup>297</sup> The Sanskrit lines of *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 77, in LÉVI 1907: 48 read:

gotrabhedād avaiyarthiyāt sākalyād apy anāditah |  
abhedān naikabuddhatvaṃ bahutvaṃ cāmālāśraye || 77 ||

The Tibetan originates from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 13b.1–2. The verse also appears with slight variations in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 35b.3–4:

tha dad rigs don med phyir dang ||  
rdzogs dang thog(s) ma med pa 'i phyir ||  
sangs rgyas gcig min dri med gnas ||  
tha dad min phyir gcig pa 'ang min || – rendered as:

Because there does not exist a difference between the potential and the ultimate meaning,  
Because of being perfected and free from a beginning (or unobstructed),  
Buddhahood is not a unity. Since in terms of the undefiled ground  
It is not different, it is also not identical.

<sup>298</sup> One example is the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 60. The Sanskrit lines in LÉVI 1907: 45 read:

in this context further quoted from the *Mahāyānasamgraha*: “With respect to that the essential state (*svābhāvikakāya*) is the truth state (*dharmakāya*) of the Tathāgatas, because it is the state of mastery over all phenomena.”<sup>299</sup>

## 2.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter explored most of the relevant Indian sources applied and commented upon by Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his discourse on the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction. The first part provided a general outline in terms of the origin and development of the various schools of thought integrated into the discourse. Except for the Abhidharma section containing most of the core teachings of this discourse, the others had to be discussed in a very condensed form. The material is just too vast to be presented in more detail. Nevertheless, it could be shown that Rang-byung-rdo-rje, one of the most erudite scholars of his time, based his exposition of this theme to a high degree on the Indian philosophical key concepts transmitted to Tibet. He thus emphasized the Indian provenience of the teachings and provided support for their authenticity. After the translation process from India to Tibet had come to an end, he compiled this material into a kind of survey and integrated it into the essential teachings of the bKa’-brgyud lineage as well as other lineages of spiritual instruction.

The second part of this chapter investigated the direct or paraphrased quotations from Indian sources applied in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and in the three main commentaries on this work. As a result it became apparent that more than half of the

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*svābhāviko 'tha sām̐bhogyaḥ kāyo nairmāṇiko 'paraḥ |*  
*kāyabhedā hi buddhānāṃ prathamas tu dvayāśrayaḥ || 60 ||*

The Tibetan originates from P 5521, vol. 108, *Phi*, fol. 12b.4. The verse also appears with variations in the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 36a.3–4:

*sangs rgyas rnams kyi sku dbye ba ||*  
*rang bzhin longs spyod rdzogs pa dang ||*  
*gzhan ni sprul pa'i sku yin te ||*  
*dang po gnyis po'i rten yin no ||* – rendered as:

The classification of the states (or bodies) of a buddha [means],  
 That there is the nature (*svābhāviko*), the *sambhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya* for [the sake of] others.  
 The first is the basis of the other two.

<sup>299</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 36a.5–6. The original source is: *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 10.1. The Tibetan in P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 233, fol. 43a.5–6 reads: || *de la ngo bo nyid kyi sku ni de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyi chos kyi sku ste | chos thams cad la dbang sgyur ba'i gnas yin pa'i phyir ro ||*.

composition consists of quotations from classical source texts, most probably 92 from among the 179 lines. The first part on perception incorporates or alludes to 16 Indian śāstras, where the compositions of Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and their followers figure prominently. Nevertheless, several lines of the *rNam shes ye shes* can also be traced back to the mainstream Madhyamaka teachings of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. The prime source for this first part seems to be the *Mahāyānasamgraha* by Asaṅga. The gnosis part of the treatise focuses on just three principal sources, among which the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* definitely is the main one.

In terms of the contents, Rang-byung-rdo-rje strictly followed tradition, while in terms of the outer form, he presented this topic as an inspiring song of realization. This seeming contradiction could be the cause of criticism when reading the last line of the first verse (“I shall express this mode [of perception and gnosis] as it became apparent [at that time]”) and asking, if he did not pretend to have composed this treatise as a result of his meditative realization, while in fact more than half of the work consists of citations from classical sources. The answer is: Following the custom of his times, Rang-byung-rdo-rje simply incorporated these citations into his treatise without further identifying the source texts. The investigation of the context, however, reveals Karmapa’s progressive development from “having thoroughly relied upon study and reflection” until he was finally able “to apply [this] in the practice of meditation.” By referring to well-known sources, he even showed that relying on the classical scriptures was a crucial prerequisite for his personal realization.

Extending the analysis to the commentaries on this work, especially the *rNam ye ’byed ’grel* composed by the First Kong-sprul proved to be an invaluable support for identifying the various direct or paraphrased citations and contextualizing them. Nevertheless, the rich material of the commentaries could only be incorporated into the discussion in summarized form. The contents and function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse will be further investigated in the following chapters.

## Chapter 3: The Concept of the *viññāna-jñāna* Distinction

Following the investigation of the general Indian background of the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction and of the cited Indian sources in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, in the third chapter the concept of this distinction itself will be discussed in greater detail. It starts with a concise section on the historical-philological approach applied in this study, followed by an analysis of the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction from the perspective of Buddhist hermeneutics. When reflecting more closely on the distinction between perception and gnosis, the so-called “four reliances” immediately come to mind. A careful analysis of these classical hermeneutical guidelines reveals that they should be regarded as major sources of this discourse. Thus the first part of this chapter will be mainly dedicated to this topic.

The second part continues the discussion by focusing on one of the “four reliances.” According to most related sources the contrast between the two terms *rnam shes: viññāna* and *ye shes: jñāna* represents the highpoint and summary of the “four reliances.” The analysis of the range of their forms and usage clarifies in depth the terminology applied in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and the translation of the relevant materials. The discussion of the key terms and their various cognates based on the available sources thus serves as an introduction into the principal subject.

### 3.1 The Historical-Philological Approach

The analysis of the distinction between perception and gnosis should begin with a few methodological considerations. The principal scientific method used is the historical-philological approach to the primary sources. It provides a solid foundation for a reliable exegesis and for the possible application of the contents in different fields. The philological work consists of text-critical editions and annotated translations from Tibetan into Western languages, as well as the exegesis of the translated material. This process requires an awareness of the respective cultural setting, including the time of writing for both the researcher and the subject under research, in this case the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, composed in the fourteenth century, i.e. ca. 700 years ago. Only with sufficient awareness of the relevant conditions on both sides does it seem possible to let

the historical author speak for himself. This should be the goal of the translation process.<sup>300</sup>

A proper translation builds on the command of the classical Tibetan language, the specific field of study, as well as the awareness of the different periods of translation within Tibetan Buddhism, including their respective terminology.<sup>301</sup> Many reasons could exist for the application of different terminologies for somewhat identical contents. The philosophical and spiritual instructions must always suit the inclinations and capacities of the students in order to become effective. As soon as these instructions become more or less organized, they form the background of a specific transmission lineage or school.

In early Tibetan Buddhist translations of Sanskrit works, as was said above, seeming differences concerning terminology could originate from a variety of methods of interpretation and not necessarily—as many scholars have wrongly assumed—from sectarian differences.<sup>302</sup> This early period of translation is characterized by more literal formulations in comparison to the Sanskrit original and sometimes even by counting the Tibetan syllables in order to arrive at exactly the same number as contained in the Sanskrit versions. In later periods of translation an up-to-date formulation of the classical contents became more important than the outer form.

Throughout the centuries the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, the primary subject of this study, has received a great variety of interpretations in various Buddhist traditions.<sup>303</sup> In this context the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1557) complained that already in the classical Indian works the distinction between perception (*rnam shes*) and gnosis (*ye shes*) was not always presented clearly enough by means of exact definitions. This could be one significant cause for the confusion in the translation process.<sup>304</sup> His

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<sup>300</sup> In this context, Donald S. Lopez in LOPEZ 2006: 123–124, elaborated on the meaning of the term “thought” (Tib. *dgongs pa*) as having “the sense of intention, of what [an author such as] Nāgārjuna really had in mind when he made a particular statement. The term is especially important in Buddhist hermeneutics, where, faced with widely contradictory statements by the Buddha in a vast range of sūtras, Buddhist scholastics developed strategies for identifying what the Buddha meant, regardless of what he said. Such strategies, of course, are predicated on the claim that it is possible to discern the contents of the mind of the enlightened one, contents that may be quite different from the semantic meaning of his words.”

<sup>301</sup> See KRETSCHMAR 2004, “The Two Translation Periods and the Tibetan Canon,” particularly notes 49–51. The problems and perspectives of Buddhist translations have been extensively discussed in DOBOOM 2001.

<sup>302</sup> See HARRIS 1991: 75.

<sup>303</sup> For later interpretations, see chapter 6 on “The Treatment of the *vijñāna-jñāna* Distinction in the Later bKa’-brgyud Lineage and in Other Tibetan Buddhist Traditions.”

<sup>304</sup> See *Dwags brgyud sgrub pa’i shing rta*, 33.1–3. For an English translation of this section, refer to HIGGINS 2015: 353.

secretary, the Second dPa-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba (1503/4–1566), provided a relevant example for this statement. He explained that early Indian and Tibetan translators and scholars (*lo pan*), when translating the Sanskrit term *jñāna*, applied different Tibetan terms when relating it to the cognition of sentient beings (*shes pa* or *rnam shes*) and of buddhas (*ye shes*) respectively.<sup>305</sup>

Secondary sources often emphasize the differences between the relevant teachings within various Buddhist schools. The reason might be the Western tendency towards an “either ... or” way of thinking as opposed to the Eastern “both ... and” way of thinking. Thus Western scholars tend to identify controversial views where Asian scholars would often only see minor differences or no controversies at all. This is not to say that there were no controversies among the various Buddhist traditions; but instead of expressing final fixed ideas, these differences often function as pedagogical tools for developing the highest possible viewpoint, which ideally is connected to direct experience.

A great challenge is the adequate transfer of classical Tibetan into modern languages, where the corresponding technical terms are still in the process of being coined. As Sean Gaffney has expressed it: “... there is often no English term that could be safely employed that would not distort the sense of the original or, more seriously, import some cultural or philosophical nuances that are absent in the original.”<sup>306</sup> An important example for this thesis is the nearly one century-long discussion on the key terms *rnam shes* (*vijñāna*) and *ye shes* (*jñāna*).<sup>307</sup> In his previous research the author has analyzed the different issues connected with the translation process and how to deal with them under the subtitle “The Translation of Original Works in Classical and Modern Tibetan.”<sup>308</sup>

One vital aspect of the translation process is to develop an increasing awareness of the actual nature of this process. This concerns the application of language and its contents as such, a major topic for linguistics in general. As a specific approach, Buddhist epistemology offers a thorough analysis of language. Language is regarded as a process of mental abstractions (*spyi mtshan*) in relation to its actual contents, the concrete objects being labeled by language (*rang mtshan*). In this context language is referred to as “means

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<sup>305</sup> See *sPyod 'jug rnam bshad*, p. 764.5–6. This statement has been quoted and translated also in HIGGINS 2012: 97, including fn. 257.

<sup>306</sup> See GAFFNEY 2000: 13.

<sup>307</sup> One of the major early Western sources for this discourse is the article STCHERBATSKY 1929B. The topic will be explored in detail in the second part of this chapter.

<sup>308</sup> See SEEGER 2009, chapter 2, pp. 54–59, 2.3.1–2, including “Hermeneutical Strategies”.

of expression” (*rjod byed*), whereas its contents are designated as “objects of expression” (*brjod bya*).<sup>309</sup>

The results of such an analysis facilitate the understanding of the process of translation and exegesis on a theoretical and practical level. Fortunately, the Third Karmapa himself has also provided detailed explanations on the labeling process (*kun brtags*), both when discussing the conceptual and nonconceptual functions of cognition in his predominantly practice-oriented works, as well as in his presentation of the “three natures” in the works related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>310</sup>

The text-critical methods of this research represent an important foundation for a reliable exegesis. For example, several translations of Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s *rNam shes ye shes* treatise already exist, but previous translators did not rely on a critical edition, which in the case of this study is based on 10 different extant manuscripts and books of the Tibetan text. Since the later editions mostly have copied the earlier ones, they still display many mistakes, typos and problematic readings.<sup>311</sup> The result must necessarily be somewhat inaccurate translations. Any study built on a precise text-critical edition automatically provides more serious scientific standards for the translation. It naturally becomes more reliable.<sup>312</sup> This concerns the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise here, and it holds true in the same way for the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, which has been published in five editions. The specific text-critical methods applied in this thesis will be introduced in chapters 7 and 8.

One aspect of the applied inter-textual methods consists of the analysis of the Indian sources incorporated into the relevant Tibetan treatises as literal or paraphrased

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<sup>309</sup> See, for example, *Rigs gzhung rgya mtsho* by the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506), edition D, vol. 2, *mngon sum le’u*, pp. 26–131, as well as *rjes dpag gi le’u*, vol. 4, pp. 3–18; 79–81. For a modern study of this subject based on the comparison between European and Tibetan Buddhist linguistics, refer to the Ph.D. thesis of Eva Ottmer: OTTMER 2003.

<sup>310</sup> Except for the structure of the *rNam shes ye she* itself, three further examples are the presentations of the “three natures” or “three characteristics” in Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s commentary, entitled *Chos mngon pa’i phung po lnga’i rab tu byed pa’i bzhung* in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung ’bum*, vol. 5, pp. 443–455, as well as his commentaries on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan* in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung ’bum*, vol. 6, p. 497.1–4, and on the *Dharmadhātustotra*, vol. 7, p. 16.4–5, the *Chos dbyings bstod pa’i rnam bshad*.

<sup>311</sup> The exact analysis of the various editions will be presented in chapter 7.1.

<sup>312</sup> In order to counteract misunderstanding concerning the reliability of critical editions, Harunaga Isaacson has made important remarks in his review article ISAACSON 2009: 13: “It should always be remembered, however, that a critical edition is, properly considered, a hypothesis ... the production of even an excellent critical edition, by the most learned and discriminating of scholars, cannot mean that other scholars and students of a text will cease to consider the primary evidence of the manuscripts themselves, to test, critically, the editor’s hypothesis, and to form their own conclusions and hypotheses.”

quotations. Another aspect is the comparison of similar topics within different works by different authors and within the collected works of the same author. Both of these investigations have to be conducted in terms of the relevant treatises within the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* and in various Tibetan lineages.

Just as with other masters, the Third Karmapa relied on numerous citations from classical Indian source texts (see chapter 2). Furthermore, his presentation of the *viññāna–jñāna* distinction closely resembles the one given by the eighth/ninth century translator Ye-shes-sde, which will be discussed in the following chapter. He also has applied many different forms of expression for the same contents, such as the literary compositions in various genres, in verse as well as in prose, in order to suit the different levels of understanding or mentalities of his students. The same holds true for the later commentators of his works. This points to the second principal topic of methodology important to this study: Buddhist hermeneutics.

### 3.2 The Hermeneutics of the Four Reliances

In terms of Buddhist hermeneutics,<sup>313</sup> at first it is important to be aware of the fact that in a certain way all Buddhist teachings can be regarded as skilful methods (*thabs mkhas: upāya*) in guiding the followers towards the desired soteriological goal.<sup>314</sup> In a more restricted sense several topics in each of the traditions fall under the category of pedagogical advice or methodology. A few of these concepts have been and still are particularly influential in all Buddhist traditions.

One such concept is called “the four great references” (Pāli: *cattāro mahāpadesā*), sometimes translated as “the four great authorities,” which provide guidelines for testing the authority of Buddhist teachings. These instructions are directly connected to another even more basic teaching: “the four reliances” (*rton pa rnam pa bzhi: catvāri pratiśaraṇāni*), also rendered as the “four orientations” or “four refuges,” fundamental to any Buddhist exegesis. These four guidelines are mostly translated as follows:<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Donald S. Lopez as editor and author provided a comprehensive discussion on this subject in LOPEZ 1988.

<sup>314</sup> See the research of Michael Pye in PYE 2003.

<sup>315</sup> See *Mahāvvyutpatti*, nos. 1545–1549. The order in the translation of this passage from the *Catupratiśaraṇasūtra* and the *Mahāvvyutpatti* has been changed to accord with that in the *Yogācārabhūmi* by Asaṅga (D, 4035, *tshi*, fol. 130b.1), as well as the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (p. 704 in U. Wogihara's

Rely on the doctrine, not on the person;  
Rely on the meaning, not on the words;  
Rely on the definitive meaning, not on the provisional meaning;  
Rely on your wisdom mind, not on perception.

The first line recommends regarding meaningful Buddhist teachings as more important than the teacher, since these teachings are the methods for attaining the soteriological goal of liberation from suffering. The second line stresses the importance of the meaning or content of the teachings over the words. The third advice emphasizes the ultimate level of meaning. It is important to rely on the definitive meaning or absolute truth, not on the provisional meaning or relative truth. The final instruction characterizes more precisely the definitive meaning or absolute truth and advises relying on gnosis rather than on perception or consciousness.

Early Buddhist practitioners, for example, emphasized the first of these four reliances. They also provided further subdivisions for clarification. In order to clearly distinguish whether or not a Buddhist teacher is instructing the students in the authoritative teachings of the Buddha, the so-called “four great references” (*mahāpadesa*), sometimes also translated as “four great authorities,” have been given. These guidelines were previously presented independently as the *Mahāpadesa Sutta*, the sixteenth Sutta of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*Collection of Long Discourses*) and later incorporated into the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*.<sup>316</sup>

According to tradition the Buddha taught the references in order that students can authenticate his teaching. 1. A teaching must be based on the authority of the Buddha himself, 2. on a formally constituted community and 3. on one or 4. several learned Elders. Furthermore, if a Buddhist teacher claims to pass on authentic Buddhist teachings, they should be compared to the *Sutta* (Discourses) and the *Vinaya* (Right Conduct).<sup>317</sup> If they correspond, they can be accepted, if not, they should be rejected. It is interesting that the *Abhidhamma* (Special Doctrine) is not mentioned here. It is either included in the Discourses or the formation of this collection in the Buddhist canon was conducted at a

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edition), which Lamotte takes as representative of the eight or so texts in which it is found or quoted (see the discussion of this topic in the following section).

<sup>316</sup> See *Dīghanikāya*, DN 16.4.7 pada II: 124–126. The relevant section in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* has been edited and translated in WALDSCHMIDT 1950: 238–253.

<sup>317</sup> In terms of this comparison, Steven Collins critically remarked in his article COLLINS 1990: 75, 85–86, fn. 17, that a closed canon or fixed collection of texts even according to tradition did not exist during the Buddha’s lifetime: “Perhaps the most obvious way to take them is in a sense of a general conceptual and practical agreement (in ‘spirit’ as opposed to ‘letter’).”

later time.<sup>318</sup> In essence, the “four great references” are just a more elaborate presentation of the first reliance: “Rely on the teachings and not on the person.”<sup>319</sup>

Obviously the “four reliances” comprise several of the key concepts of Buddhist hermeneutics. These instructions also play an important role in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by the Third Karmapa; in fact, all of them are indispensable for the understanding of his works. Although, as far as we know today, Rang-byung-rdo-rje did not teach all four of them in a formal way, nevertheless, the last two reliances can be regarded as a common thread through his *gSung 'bum*. It concerns the topic of the provisional and definitive meaning, the “two truths,” and especially the instruction on the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes*. We will see in the course of the analysis of his oeuvre, that this theme is absolutely fundamental. It names the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, and this is exactly what the Third Karmapa has commented upon many times. Therefore, the “four reliances” serve as a classical background for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse from the methodological perspective.

This fourfold advice provides clear guidelines for trustworthy Buddhist sources. Yaśomitra (fl. 580 C.E.) formulated one of the earliest versions of the fourfold advice in his commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu.<sup>320</sup> Étienne Lamotte (1903–1983) in his groundbreaking article on the assessment of textual authenticity in Buddhism<sup>321</sup> regarded this version as representative of the eight or so works in which the “four reliances” are found or quoted, even though in Yaśomitra’s commentary the order of the four lines differs slightly from several other versions. Most of the known sources are mentioned in the context of Lamotte’s research. The Sanskrit version in the list below originates from the commentary by Yaśomitra. The Tibetan lines correspond to the two versions of the *BGT* and of Tsepa Rigzin.<sup>322</sup> Only the order of the last two lines is reversed in these two dictionaries in comparison to the order given here.

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<sup>318</sup> The development of this collection has been shown in the section on the Abhidharma sources in the previous chapter (2.1.1.).

<sup>319</sup> See HARRISON 2003: 22: “As the *Mahāpadesaśūtra* suggests, the values of the tradition cannot be dispensed with, no matter who says so: another way of stressing the primacy of the dharma over the person.”

<sup>320</sup> See *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, p. 704 (in Unrai Wogihara’s edition).

<sup>321</sup> See LAMOTTE 1984–5, Part 2: 4–24. The second part of this article, particularly concerning the “four reliances,” has also been published in LOPEZ 1988: 11–28.

<sup>322</sup> See *BGT*: 1080: *lam du 'jug skabs kyi blang bya'am yid ches par bya ba'i chos bzhi ste* | – rendered as: “The four teachings which should be accepted and trusted when embarking on the path.” RIGDZIN 1986: 110–111: “The four principles to be followed when one embarks on a Buddhist path or teaching.”

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| 1. <i>dharmah pratiśaraṇaṃ na pudgalaḥ.</i><br><i>gang zag la mi rton chos la rton  </i>              | Rely on the teachings and not on persons.                          |
| 2. <i>arthaḥ pratiśaraṇaṃ na vyañjanaṃ.</i><br><i>tshig la mi rton don la rton  </i>                  | Rely on the meaning and not on words.                              |
| 3. <i>nītārthasūtraṃ pratiśaraṇaṃ na neyārtham.</i><br><i>drang don la mi rton nges don la rton  </i> | Rely on the definitive meaning and not on the provisional meaning. |
| 4. <i>jñānaṃ pratiśaraṇaṃ na vijñānaṃ.</i><br><i>rnam shes la mi rton ye shes la rton  </i>           | Rely on gnosis and not on perception.                              |

For a proper understanding, each of these four kinds of refuge actually requires further explanations. Thus, commentaries have been composed in all Buddhist traditions throughout many centuries. Concerning the earliest sources Lamotte states:<sup>323</sup> “Even if the sūtra in question was not given its definitive form until a period after the establishment of the Buddhist sects and schools, the ideas which it contains had already been evolving since the earliest texts of the Buddhist canon.”

Donald S. Lopez in the context of his study on the authority and orality in the Mahāyāna wrote:

Thus, we find in many texts, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, the so-called four reliances: “Rely on the dharma, not on the person. Rely on the meaning, not on the letter. Rely on the definitive meaning, not on the provisional meaning. Rely on knowledge (*jñāna*); not on consciousness (*vijñāna*).” In each opposed pair, the former is the privileged term, the latter is the debased counterpart.<sup>324</sup>

Lamotte in his above-mentioned article provided a brief but precise survey of most of the sources for these “four reliances:”

The Catuḥpratiśaraṇasūtra “Sūtra of the Four Refuges” ... first appears in compositions pertaining to the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣika school, such as the Abhidharmakośa (tr. L. de La Vallée Poussin, IX, p. 246), the Abhidharmakośavyākhyā (ed. U. Wogihara, p. 704) and the Mahāvvyutpatti (ed. Sakaki, Nos. 1546–9); it is again found in the sūtras and śāstras of the Mādhyamika school, such as the Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra quoted in the Mādhyamakavṛtti (ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, 43), the Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra (tr. *Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, 1:536–540), and the *Dharmasaṃgraha* (ed. Max Müller, chapter 53); finally, it

<sup>323</sup> See LAMOTTE 1984–5, Part 2: 5.

<sup>324</sup> See LOPEZ 1995: 40.

is repeated in several treatises of the Yogācāra school, such as the Bodhisattvabhūmi (ed. U. Wogihara, p. 256) and the Sūtrālaṃkāra (ed. S. Lévi, p. 138).<sup>325</sup>

Following the brief comments on the first reliance from the perspective of early Buddhism, the essential points of the other three can be explained as follows: Concerning the second reliance the main point is to take the content of the teachings as more important than the outer form in which they appear, even if they are delivered in nice words, a perfect language or a beautiful form. The third reliance recommends regarding all provisional teachings as steps on the way in order to suit the needs of different students. Finally, only the definitive meaning of the teachings can guide the students towards a full realization of ultimate truth.

The Indian philosophical systems provided different presentations of the definitive meaning. The Madhyamaka system in general regarded the teachings on emptiness (*stong pa nyid: śūnyatā*) as definitive (*nītārtha*) and all others as provisional (*neyārtha*) including the gnosis of a buddha (*jñāna*); the Yogācāra system presented the three natures or characteristics (*rang bzhin gsum* or *mtshan nyid gsum: trisvabhāva* or *trilakṣaṇa*) for this purpose:<sup>326</sup> the imagined (*kun brtags: parikalpita*), the dependent (*gzhan dbang: paratantra*), and the perfected, consummate, or absolute (*yongs grub: pariniṣpanna*) nature, also called “suchness” (*de bzhin nyid: tathata*). In most presentations it is the dependent nature free from the imagined aspect which changes into the perfect nature and thus is commonly designated as the definitive or absolute meaning in the Yogācāra system.<sup>327</sup>

The Jo-nang master Tāranātha Kun-dga'-snying-po (1575–1634) in a summary went more into detail concerning these three aspects:<sup>328</sup>

From among the three natures—imputational, other-powered, and thoroughly established:

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<sup>325</sup> See LAMOTTE 1984–5, Part 2: 4–5.

<sup>326</sup> See e.g. the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*. Lambert Schmidhausen provided a detailed discussion of the “Three Yogācārabhūmi Passages Mentioning the Three Svabhāvas or Lakṣaṇas” in SCHMITHAUSEN 2000.

<sup>327</sup> See, for example, *rNying ma'i bstan pa'i rnam gzhas*, pp. 231.5–249.3. English translation under the subtitle “The Two Truths according to Great Madhyamaka” in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 206–216.

<sup>328</sup> See *gZhan stong snying po*, p. 192.6–4. The Tibetan reads: || *kun brtags gzhan dbang yongs grub gsum las | kun brtags la gzung ba'i kun brtags dang 'dzin pa'i kun brtags gnyis || gzhan dbang la ma dag pa'i gzhan dbang dang || dag pa'i gzhan dbang gnyis || yongs grub la 'gyur med yongs grub dang phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs grub gnyis yod pa las || kun brtags dngos gzung ba dang || yongs grub dngos 'gyur med dang ngo bo gcig pa'i phyin ci ma log pa cig yod pa de min* ||. The translation originates from HOPKINS 2007: 111–112. A corresponding explanation on the basis of the *Trimśikā* by Vasubandhu appears in GANGULY 1992: 51–52.

1. Imputational natures are twofold, apprehended imputational natures (*gzung ba'i kun brtags*) and apprehender imputational natures (*'dzin pa'i kun brtags*).
2. Other-powered natures are twofold, impure other-powered natures (*ma dag pa'i gzhan dbang*) and pure other-powered natures (*dag pa'i gzhan dbang*).
3. Thoroughly established natures are twofold, immutable thoroughly established natures (*'gyur med yongs grub*) and undistorted thoroughly established natures (*phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs grub*).

From among these, actual imputational natures are the apprehended ones, and actual thoroughly established natures are the immutable ones and not the undistorted ones that are one entity with the immutable.

The “two truths” (*bden pa gnyis: satyadvaya*) are another way of expressing this distinction in more general terms, the conventional or relative truth (*tha' snyad bden pa* or *kun rdzob bden pa: saṃvṛtisatya*) and the absolute truth (*don dam bden pa: paramārthasatya*). Here, the provisional teachings belong to the category of methods applied on the level of relative truth, whereas the definitive teachings point to the absolute truth. In the Tibetan doxographical systems for Rang stong pas usually *vijñāna* and *jñāna* are both relative (*saṃvṛti*), whereas for gZhan stong pas *jñāna* is regarded as ultimate (*paramārtha*). The Indian master Chandrakīrti has expounded on these “two truths” in his well-known *Madhyamakāvatāra*.<sup>329</sup>

Conventional truth functions as the method,  
 Absolute truth becomes [the goal] arisen from the method.  
 Whoever does not know about this distinction,  
 Will enter erroneous paths because of wrong conceptions.

The “four reliances” are closely interconnected: the later three follow logically from the first of these “four reliances.” When giving priority to the teachings over the person, the teachings consist of words and meanings or contents. From among these two priority is given to the meanings. The meanings again consist of two aspects, the provisional and

<sup>329</sup> For the critical edition of the Sanskrit lines, refer to XUEZHU 2015: 14:

*upāyabhūtaṃ vyavahārasatyam |*  
*upeyabhūtaṃ paramārthasatyam ||*  
*tayor vibhāgam na paraiti yo vai |*  
*mithyāvikalpaiḥ sa kumārgayātaḥ || 80*

The Tibetan version edited in LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1912, chapter 6, p. 175, verse 80, reads:

*tha' snyad bden pa thabs su gyur pa dang ||*  
*don dam bden pa thabs byung gyur pa ste ||*  
*de gnyis rnam dbye gang gis mi shes pa ||*  
*de ni rnam rtog log pas lam ngan zhugs ||.*

the definitive meaning. Here one is to rely on the definitive meaning. With respect to the definitive meaning one should rely not on perception, but on gnosis. The highest meaning in Buddhist tradition is said to be the all-knowing gnosis of a buddha.<sup>330</sup> Thus, the distinction between perception and gnosis can be regarded as the culmination and summary of these “four reliances.”

Since the fourth reliance is the essence of the other three and expresses the basic topic of this thesis, a few more explanations might be helpful to the understanding of this profound subject. Normally, when presented as the fourth reliance, this topic appears more like a title, which is designed to serve as an introduction to the actual content of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. The reason is that the scope of this advice is normally restricted to the hermeneutical perspective. This teaching is understood as a guideline for Buddhist scholarship and practice. Only if an experienced master, such as e.g. Rangbyung-rdo-rje, expounds in detail on what this orientation actually implies and demonstrates the profound nature of this advice, does it become something like a map of the various functions of perception and gnosis. In this sense, the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse itself with its profoundness and its great varieties will be further investigated in the following chapters.

In the context of Buddhist hermeneutics, Lamotte, when commenting on the fourth reliance, tries to point out its actual essence. He elucidates:

IV. *Direct knowledge (jñāna) is the refuge and not discursive consciousness (vijñāna).* This last exegetical principle, which summarizes the previous three, shows that sound hermeneutics are based not on a literal though theoretical understanding of the noble truths, but on direct knowledge.” “... Having been prepared through faith and reflection, undefiled Prajñā transcends them with its sharpness (*paṭutva*) and attains its object directly. It constitutes the single and indispensable instrument of true exegesis.<sup>331</sup>

<sup>330</sup> 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa'i-rdo-rje (1648–1721) cited in his *Drang nges rnam 'byed* the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, D, vol. wi, fol. 136a.6–136b.6 - see MAGEE 2015: 51–60: *Table of Quotations in the Great Exposition of the Interpretable and Definitive on the Four Reliances*. Concerning the connection between the four reliances, in this work (pp. 303.5–304.2) he further quoted from Tshong-kha-pa's *Legs bshad snying po* (B, 123a.1–3), where Tsong-kha-pa paraphrased the *Bhūmivastu* (*Sa'i dngos gzhi*) also known as *Yogācārabhūmi* by Asaṅga (D, 4035, *tshi*, fol. 130b.1): | *sa yi dngos gzhi las gang zag la mi rton par chos la rton pa'i chos la tshig don gnyis dang don la drang nges gnyis dang nges don la rnam shes la mi rton ye shes la rton zhes gsungs pa lta bu'o* | (123a.2–3). The original verse by Asaṅga runs as follows (quoted and translated in MAGEE 2015: 120, fn. b): “Rely on the doctrine, but not on the person; rely on the meaning, but not on the letters; rely on sūtras of definitive meaning, but not on sūtras of interpretable meaning; rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness.” The Tibetan reads: | *chos la rton gyi gang zag la ma yin pa dang don la rton gyi yi ge la ma yin pa dang* | *nges pa'i don gyi mdo sde la rton gyi* | *bkri ba'i don gyi mdo sde la ma yin pa dang* | *ye shes la rton gyi rnam par shes pa la ma yin pa* |.

<sup>331</sup> See LAMOTTE 1984–5: 17–18; LOPEZ 1988: 23–24.

As we have seen above, one of the classical commentaries on the “four reliances” is the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* ascribed to Asaṅga,<sup>332</sup> most probably composed in the late fourth century C.E. Peter D. Hershock, when discussing the grounds for warranting the validity of a given translation or interpretation (of Ch’an textual sources) and evaluating its usefulness, mainly resorts to this source:

In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, a telling commentary runs as follows: *viññāna* is capable of generating knowledge of the letter, while meaning (*ārtha* or fruit) is attained only by *jñāna* (BB 257). Now, *viññāna* arises on the basis of either listening (*śruti*, the resort to existing authority or scholarship) or reflecting (*cintā* inference and extrapolation). According to the CPS [*Catuhpratiśaraṇasūtra*], however, the realization of meaning is not a mental process, but rather a function of *bhāvanā* or practice.<sup>333</sup>

Hershock here implies that from among the so-called “three kinds of higher knowledge” (*shes rab gsum*) the first two, the higher knowledge of listening or learning and reflecting (*thos pa’i shes rab*, *bsam pa’i shes rab*), within the fourth reliance, pertain to the aspect of *viññāna*, whereas the third higher knowledge of meditating (*sgom pa’i shes rab*), the “realization of meaning,” as he calls it, emphasizes *jñāna*.<sup>334</sup> Paul J. Griffiths has explained this difference between the knowledge-oriented and the practice- or experience-oriented approach on the level of the definitive meaning in Buddhism in the following way:

The Buddhist hermeneutic thus grew out of and has always been controlled by the tradition’s soteriological needs ... For the scholastics of the Buddhist tradition, true understanding of a

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<sup>332</sup> See LOPEZ 1988: 23.

<sup>333</sup> See HERSHOCK 1998: 163.

<sup>334</sup> In the opening verse of the *rNam shes ye shes* the Third Karmapa in the first two lines referred to his own approach to the primary topic by means of these three kinds of higher knowledge (see chapter 7). At the same time, from the very beginning of this treatise he alluded to his *Phyag chen smon lam*, (A) in this case verse 5:

*lung rig thos pas mi shes sgrib las grol ||*  
*man ngag bsam pas the tshom mun nag bcos* (B *bcom*) ||  
*sgom byung ’od kyis gnas lugs ji bzhin gsal ||*  
*shes rab gsum gyi snang ba rgyas par shog ||* – rendered in SEEGER 2009: 9 as:

Studying scriptures and reasoning frees from the veils of ignorance.  
 Contemplating the essential instructions disperses the darkness of doubt.  
 The light arising from meditation illuminates the natural state the way it is.  
 May the radiance of the three wisdoms increase.

The First Kong-sprul in his *rNam ye ’byed ’grel* (A): 6a.4–6b.1. Book ed. (C): 69–70, commented extensively on the two first lines of the *rNam shes ye shes*.

sūtra's definitive meaning consists, finally, in having the same insights, and thus the same transformation of consciousness, as that possessed by its omniscient author.<sup>335</sup>

Of course, many Tibetan scholars of all schools have commented upon these teachings, either quoting the “four reliances” directly or elaborating on their contents.<sup>336</sup> When analyzing the above-mentioned sources compiled by Lamotte, from the *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu up to the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* ascribed to Maitreya, most of the sources were part of the standard curriculum of Tibetan Buddhist institutes. It was taken for granted that whoever studied at these institutes also had to study these “four reliances.” Additionally, many of the Tibetan scholars or meditation masters' teachings were very much inclined to various kinds of hermeneutics. Examples for this approach, therefore, appeared throughout the centuries in all Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

A well-known example for the constant application of this guideline is the name “rTon-pa-bzhi-ldan,” “the One Endowed with the Four Reliances.” This was the name Dol-po-pa Shes-rab rGyal-mtshan (1292–1381) used to sign his works. It was a constant reminder of his viewpoint in terms of a clear distinction between *jñāna* and *viññāna*. He saw his system as radically opposed to the Yogācāra or Viññānavāda viewpoint which he understood as being both identical and mistaken. He criticized the followers of this view as adhering to the extreme of existentialism, when regarding *citta* and *viññāna* as ultimate truth. He saw himself as a Jñānavādin who made this clear distinction between *viññāna* and *jñāna*. This was the reason for referring to himself by the name of “rTon-pa-bzhi-ldan.”<sup>337</sup>

Also many of his students used to designate Dol-po-pa by this name. For example, the name is contained in praise of his hagiography right at the beginning of his *Collected Works*: “The Jewel Garland which is a Praise of the Life story of the All-knowing One who is Endowed with the Four Reliances.”<sup>338</sup> A later influential master of the Jo-nang school, Tāranātha Kun-dga'-snying-po (1575–1634), included a section in his *gZhan*

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<sup>335</sup> See GRIFFITHS 1990: 259.

<sup>336</sup> For example, an extensive collection of contributions entitled “The Four Reliances” by Tibetan masters such as the First “Mipham, Jikme Lingpa, Dungse Thinley Norbu, the 14th Dalai Lama, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse, Sogyal Rinpoche, Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche” has been compiled in SHYONNU 2013.

<sup>337</sup> Dorji Wangchuk passed on this background information to the author in a personal conversation, July 2014. Klaus-Dieter Mathes expounded on the doxographical position of Dol-po-pa in MATHES 2008: 75–84. This topic will be treated briefly in the fourth chapter of this study. The sixth chapter discusses further the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the Jo-nang lineage.

<sup>338</sup> See *Dol-po-pa gsung 'bum*: 1: 91–110: *Kun mkhyen rton pa bzhi ldan gyi rnam thar bstod pa nor bu'i phreng ba*.

*stong dbu ma'i rgyan* related to misunderstanding and thus speaking wrongly about the “four reliances” (*| de dag rton pa bzhi yang log par smra |*).<sup>339</sup> In this section Tāranātha analyzed and refuted critical arguments of Tsong-kha-pa and other proponents of intrinsic emptiness (*rang stong smra ba*) leveled at Dol-po-pa and his followers.

This leads us to the fact that this hermeneutical teaching also very often appeared in the dGe-lugs tradition. We have seen above that this theme was part of the standard curriculum of all major Tibetan Buddhist institutes. Especially the dGe-lugs lineage strongly emphasized Buddhist studies. It was also shown above that the dGe-lugs masters Tshong-kha-pa in his *Legs bshad snying po* and 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa'i-rdo-rje in his *Drang nges rnam 'byed* commented on several topics connected to the “four reliances.”

The First Kong-sprul elucidated this topic in the seventh chapter of his *Shes bya mdzod*.<sup>340</sup> When presenting the short form of the “four reliances,” he quoted from the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*<sup>341</sup> (*Āryamahāparinirvāṇanāmamahāyānasūtra*, the Mahāyāna version of this sūtra which is not included in Lamotte's list of sources cited above). As a further source Kong-sprul mentioned the extremely detailed explanation of the meaning (*de'i don shin tu rgyas pa*), as it appears in the *Akṣayamatirdeśasūtra*.<sup>342</sup> This is followed by Kong-sprul's own exposition. The third section deals with the distinction between *vijñāna* and *jñāna*. The first two lines summarize the essential points: “Rely on gnosis which is the essence of selflessness free from conceptual elaboration. Don't rely on perception which is a mental state holding on to the concepts of characteristics.”<sup>343</sup> The remaining part of this section simply presents a commentary on these two lines.

<sup>339</sup> See *gZhan stong dbu ma'i rgyan*, fol. 113.4–7. The presentation of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse provided by Tāranātha will also be discussed further in the sixth chapter.

<sup>340</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod* (A), vol. 3: 9–11. Kong-sprul provided a further reference to the “four reliances” (vol. 2, 729), which is concerned with the systems of Buddhist tantra *gdul bya'i blo dang 'tshams par snying po'i don ngos bzung zhing rton pa bzhi la brten nas bshad dgos te |* – rendered in GUARISCO & MCLEOD 2005: 297 as: “In a way appropriate to the intellect of the student, one must introduce the pith meaning and teach the tantra based on the four reliances.” This shows that according to Kong-sprul also the Buddhist tantras have to be taught on the basis of these principles.

<sup>341</sup> See *Mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*, chapter 8: On the Four Dependables; English translation in YAMAMOTO 1973: 84–87.

<sup>342</sup> See *Blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa'i mdo*, chapters 9–10, academically explored in BRAAVIG 1993: Tibetan edition pp. 109–119, translation pp. 440–456; quoted also in the *Mādhyamakavṛtti* contained in LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1903–13.

<sup>343</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod* (A), vol. 3: 10.21:

*pros bral bdag med snying po'i ye shes rton ||*  
*mtshan rtog 'dzin blo'i rnam shes la mi rton |.*

Another important Tibetan commentator on these teachings was 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912). In his well-known poem *Shes rab ral gri* he dedicated 32 verses in all to the “four reliances.”<sup>344</sup> The verses 80–83 from this section are presented here in order to provide a short impression of the First Mipham’s way of expounding on the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction. As a great scholar and meditation master he applied this context to provide very profound and practical instructions on how to work with mind. A slightly shorter version given in another of his famous compositions, the *mKhas pa'i tshul la jug pa'i sgo* (short: *mKhas 'jug*),<sup>345</sup> largely corresponds to the one cited here.<sup>346</sup>

80. When taking the definitive meaning into experience, do not rely upon the ordinary dualistic mind that chases after words and concepts, but rely upon nondual wisdom itself.
81. That which operates with conceptual ideas is the ordinary mind, whose nature is dualistic, involving perceiver and perceived. All that it conceptualizes in this way is false, and can never touch upon the actual nature of reality.
82. Any idea of real or unreal, both or neither —any such concept, however it’s conceived— is still only a concept, and whatever ideas we hold in mind, they are still within the domain of illusion.

<sup>344</sup> See *Shes rab ral gri*: verses 62–93.

<sup>345</sup> See *mKhas 'jug* (A): fols. 148b–161b. Tibetan text and English translation in SCHMIDT 2002: 197–198.

<sup>346</sup> Translated by Adam Pearcey, Lotsawa House, Rigpa Translations, 2004. One of several Websites presenting this poem with slight variations is <http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/sword-of-wisdom>, accessed 15 January 2014. Matthew Kapstein in KAPSTEIN 1988 cited a paraphrased section on this topic, published in LOPEZ 1988: 161–162. The Tibetan (p. 443.2–4) reads:

*nges don nyams su len pa na ||*  
*sgra rtog rjes 'brang gzung 'dzin sems ||*  
*rnam par shes la mi rton par ||*  
*gnyis med ye shes nyid la rton ||*  
  
*dmigs pa can gyi bdag nyid ni ||*  
*gzung dang 'dzin pa'i rang bzhin sems ||*  
*de des gang dmigs de ltar rdzun ||*  
*chos nyid don la dngos mi reg ||*  
  
*dngos po dmigs dang dngos med dmigs ||*  
*gnyis su dmigs dang gnyis min dmigs ||*  
*ji ltar dmigs kyang dmigs pa ste ||*  
*dmigs pa gang bzung bdud kyi ni ||*  
  
*spyod yul yin zhes mdo las gsungs ||*  
*dgag dang sgrub pa gang gis kyang ||*  
*dmigs pa 'jig par mi nus la ||*  
*bsal bzhag med par mthong na grol ||.*

83. This has been stated in the sutras. It is not by any assertion or denial that we will put an end to concepts. But once we see without rejecting or affirming, there is freedom.

We find a summarized definition of these two lines of the fourth reliance in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, which comprehensively explains a great variety of contents of both guidelines: “Not relying on perception (or consciousness) ... means a perception which holds the view of both sides (subject and object) as being true, which conceptualizes the characteristics of a self and of the aggregates (*skandhas*) etc and which is a dependent state of mind clinging to the pleasant feelings of the five qualities [of the senses] etc. One should not rely on that.”<sup>347</sup> And “Relying on gnosis ... means to understand the ultimate nature of phenomena as being free from the extremes of all conceptual elaborations of arising and ceasing etc., the gnosis which knows the two kinds of selflessness as it is. One should rely on that.”<sup>348</sup>

Finally, there is ample evidence for Rang-byung-rdo-rje having studied this topic in different classical works. The record of teachings received (*gsan yig*) from the *Kam tshang gser phreng*, quoted and translated in the following chapter, contains several relevant sources, such as the works ascribed to Asaṅga. Furthermore, the biography of the Third Karmapa contained in the *Blue Annals* reads: “From Śākya gShon-nu, the abbot of the “Lower” monastery of gSang-phu [he studied] many texts belonging to the Mādhyamaka system, the “five doctrines of Maitreya” (*Byams-chos*), the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, the *Abhidharmakośa* (*mNgon-pa Gong-'og*), and the Five Divisions of the *Yogācāryābhūmi* of Asaṅga (*Sa-sde*),<sup>349</sup> the *Nyaya* and other texts.”<sup>350</sup> From this and other sources one therefore has to conclude that Rang-byung-rdo-rje had studied the works containing the “four reliances” in Tibetan translation at gSang-phu before composing the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and other corresponding works.

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<sup>347</sup> See BGT: 1577: *rnam shes la mi rton pa ... | tshu rol bden par lta ba dang | bdag dang phung po la sogs pa mtshan mar rtog pa dang | 'dod pa'i yon tan lnga'i bde ba la der 'dzin gyi blo'i gzhan dbang du gyur pa la sogs pa ni rnam par shes pa ste de la yid rton par mi bya'o |*.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2596: *ye shes la rton pa ... | chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs don dam par skye 'gag la sogs pa'i spros pa'i miha' thams cad dang bral bar shes pa dang | bdag med pa gnyis ji bzhin mkhyen pa ni ye shes te de la yid rton par bya ba'o |*.

<sup>349</sup> The short Tibetan title *Sa sde lnga* or *sa lnga* is used for the *Yogācāryābhūmi* ascribed to Asaṅga. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is the 15th section of the *Yogācāryābhūmi*; whose complete title in Tibetan is: *Rnal 'byor spyod pa'i sa las byang chub sems dpa'i sa*.

<sup>350</sup> See *Deb gter sngon po*. (A), p. 427.1: *de nas gsang phu gling smad kyi gdan sa pa shwa kya zhon nu la dbu ma'i skor mang po dang | byams chos lnga | mngon pa gong 'og dang sa lnga | tshad ma la sogs mang du gsan ||*. For an English rendering, refer to ROERICH 1949: 490.

In his autobiography and according to the *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, Rang-byung-rdo-rje particularly stressed his close connection to the teachings of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. He reported that in a vision “for a certain time he heard the teachings of Maitreya with one voice from three teachers close to a multi-storied mansion on top of Mount Meru; and as a result the meaning of all the teachings of Maitreya in his mind became even clearer than ever before.”<sup>351</sup> Since the teachings on the “four reliances” have been provided several times in the works of Maitreya(nātha) and Asaṅga, they must be included here. Furthermore, within the classical Indian sources for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse a strong emphasis lies on the works of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, who are among the main promulgators of the “four reliances.”<sup>352</sup>

It is obvious that the distinction between perception and gnosis is a major topic in the history of Buddhist thought – not only within Tibetan Buddhism, but also in all other Buddhist traditions. Even if the Third Karmapa did not formally expound on the whole set of these four teachings, still the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse is definitely a detailed commentary on the fourth of these four reliances. When regarding the Mahāmudrā context and the core position of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, in which the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise appears,<sup>353</sup> it is clear that the Third Karmapa incorporated this methodological advice together with its philosophical and epistemological impact into the essential spiritual instructions of the bKa’-brgyud lineage.

### 3.3 The Terminology of the *vijñāna-jñāna* Distinction

After this discussion of the “four reliances” or “four refuges” the next logical step is to explore in greater detail the adequate definition and translation of the key terms *rnam shes*: *vijñāna* and *ye shes*: *jñāna*, which appear as the climax and summary of these four important guidelines. The subtitle of this dissertation “The Third Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s Discourse on the Distinction between Perception (*rnam shes*: *vijñāna*) and Gnosis (*ye shes*: *jñāna*)” already introduces the two fundamental concepts of this study,

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<sup>351</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar tshigs bcad ma*, p. 389.1–2: *re zhig lhun po'i steng na khang stegs drung | bshes gnyen gsum gyi byams chos gsal bar gsungs | sad kyang blo la gsal snang de phyin chad | byams chos don rnams legs par go bar byung ||* & *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, p. 366: *ri rab kyi rtser khang pa brtsegs pa'i drung du dge ba'i bshes gnyen gsum gyis byams chos mgrin gcig tu gsan pas byams chos mtha' dag gi don thugs su sngar bas kyang gsal bar byung ||*.

<sup>352</sup> The Indian sources for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse have been discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>353</sup> See the discussion on the most important treatises of Rang-byung-rdo-rje in the first and fifth chapters, and in SEEGER 2009: 177–180.

the Tibetan terms *rnam shes* and *ye shes*, in Sanskrit *vijñāna* and *jñāna*.

The thesis argues that the distinction between these two notions appears as a major theme in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. Since the works of the Third Karmapa are indigenous Tibetan texts, the variety of meanings of the Tibetan terms has priority here over the different usages in the Indian sources. Nevertheless, as has been shown in the previous chapter, these expressions—filtered by a translation process over several centuries—strive to convey the essential contents of the equivalent terms in the classical Indian treatises.

Both terms at first glance seem to be very clear, but, as it often evolves when investigating them more carefully, each term has a certain range of meanings that is difficult to represent by a single equivalent term in another language.<sup>354</sup> Thus, a terminology has to be selected that incorporates at least the main content of the original terms. At first, the Tibetan understanding of both terms has to be considered, concerning what it expresses and what it does not express. The Tibetan dictionary *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* provides the following definitions for *rnam shes* and for *ye shes*, respectively.<sup>355</sup>

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|------------------|--|
| <i>rnam shes</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A mind which makes perceptible and known the identity of an object, possessing the nature of discerning the essence of one's own perception. There are six aspects of perception (or cognition), from the eye perception up to the mental cognition.</li><li>2. The mental body of the intermediate state</li></ol> |
| <i>ye shes</i>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A knowledge which abides from the beginning, an awareness of the emptiness and clarity which naturally abides in the mental continuum of all sentient beings</li><li>2. Insight (or wisdom, or knowledge) of the Noble Ones<sup>356</sup></li></ol>   |

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<sup>354</sup> Cameron Bruce Hall has explored “the meaning of the term *vijñapti* in Vasubandhu's concept of mind,” as well as “the other terms for mind,” namely *citta*, *manas*, and *vijñāna*, in the second part of his insightful article HALL 1986: 10–13, including the Sanskrit sources related to Vasubandhu's works (notes 3 and 7) and further important secondary sources on the respective terms (pp. 21–23). He particularly argued for a certain variety of translations of the term *vijñāna* depending on the context.

<sup>355</sup> See BGT: 1572, 2593–2594: *rnam shes*: 1. *yul gyi ngo bo rnam par rig cing shes par byed cing | rang gi dmigs pa'i ngo bo so sor rtog pa'i bdag nyid can gyi sems te | mig gi rnam par shes pa nas yid kyi rnam par shes pa'i bar gyi rnam shes tshogs drug rnams so | 2. bar do'i yid lus || ye shes*: 1. *ye nas gnas pa'i shes pa ste sems can thams cad kyi rgyud la rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i stong gsal gyi rig pa | 2. 'phags pa'i mkhyen pa ||*.

<sup>356</sup> In correspondence with this second definition “*'phags pa'i mkhyen pa*” of “*ye shes*,” Dorji Wangchuk at first discussed the idea of following Lambert Schmithausen in pointing out the problematic nature of the translation of *jñāna* as “wisdom.” In later works he would apply the translation “insight.” (German:

These definitions seem to cover most of the applications of *rnam shes* and *ye shes*. The first definition referring to the process of perception is easy to understand. It should be added, that *rnam shes* can be regarded as a contraction of the term *rnam par shes pa*. In this case the first part *rnam par* can mean 1. “completely;” 2. “in the form of;” 3. “in detail” or “distinctly.” The second part *shes pa* mostly is rendered as “to know, to cognize, to understand, etc,” together this term literally means “to know completely” or “to know distinctly” or “clearly perceive various particulars.”<sup>357</sup> The second definition of *rnam shes* designates the mental continuum that passes through the intermediate state and enters the next existence. In its continuation this appears also as the third link from among the twelve links of dependent origination (*rten 'brel yan lag bcu gnyis: dvādaśāṅga-pratītyasamutpāda*). Here the general terms “consciousness,” “mental continuum” or “mind stream” are mostly applied in the translations.

Another interesting point is that the definition of *rnam shes* here mentions just six aspects. It does not mention the two last aspects from among the eight, which are inside-oriented: the defiled mind (*nyon mongs can gyi yid*) and the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa*). The reason could be that this is a very general definition which is applicable to both the traditions of early Buddhism plus the dGe-lugs-pas and of later Buddhism including most of the other schools. They teach six and eight aspects, respectively.<sup>358</sup> A further reason might be that as long as the mind is outward-directed the term “perception” fits well, but for the inside-oriented aspects it does not make much sense. Here “cognition” or “consciousness” might cover the other functions. This already

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Einsicht). As a consequence, the subtitle of this thesis would change into: The Third Karma-pa Rangbyung-rdo-rje's Discourse on the Distinction Between Sight (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) and Insight (*ye shes: jñāna*). “Sight” here would be another expression for “perception.” This would be, of course, a nice play on words. Later Wangchuk changed the translation of this term into “gnostic” or “liberating insight.” The discussion below will show that the range of meanings of the term “*ye shes: jñāna*” extends beyond “insight.” Therefore, it is adequate to add either “insight into the nature of mind,” or “liberating insight” or “insight of the noble ones,” the definition given in the *BGT*. This might be the reason that Schmithausen in several of his publications has opted for a translation, which is closer to the Sanskrit original.

<sup>357</sup> See, for example, in RANGYESHE 2003: 1556, 1563, 2734.

<sup>358</sup> The Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje in *bLa ma khams pa'i dris lan*, pp. 221.5–222.1, has summarized these various presentations as follows: | *rnam shes dang ye shes kyi ris su bye ba med pa tshogs mtha' yas ...* | *glo bur dri ma'i sems ni ye shes sam rnam shes ming gang rung du brjod kyang rung* | *mang na tshogs brgyad dang nyung na tshogs drug dang* | *ches bsdud na tshogs gcig las 'da' ba med de* | *shes bya nyi tshe mthong ba'i shes pa nyi tshe ba yin pa'i phyr* |. The English translation provided in HIGGINS 2015: 357–358 renders this section as follows: “Now, the mind that is buddha nature in the mind-streams of sentient beings is a limitless and immeasurable whole that is indivisible into categories of “consciousness” and “wisdom.” However, the adventitious mind may have been arbitrarily described using the terms “wisdom” or “consciousness”: if [described] extensively, it is the eightfold constellation [of Yogācāra traditions]; if more concisely, it is the sixfold constellation [of non-Yogācāra traditions], and if most succinctly, it is nothing more than a single constellation because it is a partial cognition that sees a partial object of knowledge.”

holds true for the sixth aspect, the *yid kyi rnam shes* which has both, the outside-oriented and the inside-oriented facets.

The term “consciousness,” which in many translations has been applied to all eight aspects of *rnam par shes pa*, is in general useful, but does not cover all subtle functions of the eight aspects. It is not precise enough concerning the functions of the object-oriented sense perceptions. First of all, they cannot said to be (at least conceptually) “conscious,” and secondly to translate “to be conscious” here falls short; it always has to be rendered as “to be conscious of” something.<sup>359</sup> Whether or not the eighth aspect can be called “all-base consciousness,” will be discussed below.<sup>360</sup> The term “perception” has been chosen in the subtitle of this dissertation following the Third Karmapa (and Kongsprul’s commentary) in emphasizing the distinction between the deluded function of mind of all sentient beings in the cycle of existence (*’khor ba*: saṃsāra) in contrast to liberation or the fully awakened awareness of a buddha (*mya ngan las ’das pa*: nirvāṇa).<sup>361</sup>

This leads us to the second term in the list of definitions: *ye shes*. The first part of this definition refers to each syllable of the term separately, *ye* = from the beginning, and *she* = knowledge, together “a knowledge which abides from the beginning.” The second part is an explanation of the content: “an awareness of the emptiness and clarity which naturally abides in the mental continuum of all sentient beings.” Only someone who has developed deep insight into the nature of mind can experience this awareness. If such insight has become stable and the practitioner has reached the soteriological goal of liberation from saṃsāra, in the Buddhist tradition this person is called a “Noble One” (*’phags pa*: ārya). The “insight or knowledge of the Noble Ones” is the second definition of the term “*ye shes*.”

The Tibetan term *mkhyen pa*, a polite form of *shes pa*, is often also rendered as “wisdom.” John Peter Keenan in his Ph.D. thesis has analyzed this notion in Yogācāra thought.<sup>362</sup> In this context he translated the *Buddhabhūmyupadeśa* including detailed

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<sup>359</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A: 85.

<sup>360</sup> See the presentation of the contribution to this topic by Lambert Schmithausen in SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A.

<sup>361</sup> See *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, A: 2b.1–2b.3. C: 64: | *’khrul pa dang bcas pa’i sems can la ’khor ba’i rtsa ba rnam par shes pa’i tshogs brgyad ji ltar yod pa dang* | *’khrul pa bral ba’i sangs rgyas la mya ngan ’das kyi rang bzhin ye shes ji ltar snang ba dang* | *de gzhi gcig la rnam par tha dad du snang ba’i tshul rnam par ’byed pa ste* || – rendered as: “This is the complete distinction between how eight groups of ordinary perception exist, which are the root of the cycle [of existence] for deluded sentient beings and how the gnosis appears being the nature of the nirvāṇa of a buddha, who is free from delusion, and the mode of their appearance as different manifestations on the same base.”

<sup>362</sup> See KEENAN 1980.

presentations of the various aspects of buddha gnosis.<sup>363</sup> Orna Almogi in a similar way in her Ph.D. thesis investigated the discourses on Buddhology by the Tibetan scholar Rongzom Chos-kyi-bzang-po (1012–1088) including chapters on the Three *Kāyas* and the Four Gnoses.<sup>364</sup> The same can be said about David Germano and David Higgins, who have dedicated major parts of their respective Ph.D. theses to the topic of “primordial gnosis” as taught by Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer (1308–1363) and “primordial knowing” taught by several rDzogs-chen masters.<sup>365</sup>

The term “gnosis” for “*ye shes*” has been chosen in the subtitle of this thesis, following several previous translations based in the main on the cognates of the Sanskrit term *jñāna* with “gnosis,” “kennen, erkennen” and “knowing, knowledge.” More aspects of this specific approach will be discussed below. The often applied term “wisdom” again is not precise enough, since in Tibetan and Sanskrit sources we find many aspects of wisdom. The primary term for “wisdom” or “higher knowledge” is *shes rab: prajñā* or *paññā* in Pāli.<sup>366</sup> Comprehensive literature on this subject exists in the *Shes rab kyi pharol tu phyin pa (Prajñāpāramitā)* scriptures. Here the Tibetan terms *rig pa* and *shes pa* in certain contexts have similar connotations and can convey the meaning of “awareness,” “intelligence,” “knowledge,” or “wisdom.”<sup>367</sup>

With respect to the reception of the two concepts of *rnam shes* and *ye shes* in the West, from about 1921 onwards, an ongoing discussion developed among scholars of buddhology on how to understand the original terms and how to translate them as precisely as possible. A brief review of this discussion is designed to present some solutions to this problem and to provide more background for the choice of their main translation in this thesis as “perception” and “gnosis,” respectively.

Theodore Stcherbatsky (1866–1942) defended himself against the critique of his presentation of the terms *cittam*, *manas*, and *vijñānam* as synonyms in early Buddhism, in an article composed in 1923, and later published as a monograph entitled “The Central

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<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 645–801.

<sup>364</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 61–70, 138–171, 188–220.

<sup>365</sup> See GERMANO 1992: 83–127, HIGGINS 2012: 74–106, particularly the rDzogs-chen interpretations of “ye” and “ye shes” in HIGGINS 2012: 95–106.

<sup>366</sup> Fa Quing has conducted a considerable amount of research on the development of *prajñā* in Buddhism in QUING 2001.

<sup>367</sup> See, for example, BGT: 2682: *rig pa*: 1. *mithong ba* ..., (to see, perceive, realize) 2. *rtogs pa'am shes pa* ..., (to realize or to know) 3. *bslab par bya ba'i gzhi* ..., (basis of what should be studied) 4. *chos lugs khag gis bshad pa'i rnam shes* (discriminative knowledge which explains the divisions of the Dharma traditions).

Conception of Buddhism.”<sup>368</sup> For this purpose he wrote another article in German, entitled “Über den Begriff *viññāna* im Buddhismus” (On the Term *viññāna* in Buddhism). In this context he defined the term *viññāna* as “reines, d. h. undifferenziertes Bewußtsein” (pure, i.e. undifferentiated consciousness) or “reine Rezeptivität des Geistes” (pure receptivity of mind), originating from the earlier Abhidharma literature.

The question in the criticism centered on how these three terms *cittam*, *manas*, and *viññānam* could be regarded as identical, if Stcherbatsky clearly discriminates between *manas* as the intellect and *viññāna* as sense perception. After listing various sources for the presentation of the three above-mentioned terms as identical, Stcherbatsky explained the difference:<sup>369</sup>

The one element of the pure consciousness, which can be designated by three names, has to be classified into six functions according to six kinds of surroundings, in which it appears. If it is surrounded by a sense element, we have five varieties of sensation (*pañca-viññāna-kāya*); if not, we have a purely intellectual element (*mano-bhūmika eva*). The intellect is coordinated with the five sense powers as a sixth power (*indriya*).

Stcherbatsky then provided further distinctions:

In order to prevent misunderstanding, I have to add that even though I hold the meaning of pure receptivity (*artha-mātra-grāhitva*) for the *viññāna* = *citta* = *manas* of the earlier Buddhism as being evidenced, this is not an exhaustive description of the different meanings under which this term can appear according to context. It is as ambiguous as the terminus *dharma*. E.g. in *Visuddhi-magga*, p. 437, *viññāna* appears as something in between *saññā* [perception] and *paññā* [knowledge].<sup>370</sup> As the third link in the chain of the *pratītya-samutpāda* [dependent origination] *viññāna* just means life (= *bhavanga-viññāna*)... In later Buddhism, in the Mahāyāna, the meaning has shifted according to the general changes. Following Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, *citta* designates the *ālaya-viññāna*, *manas* the immediately preceding moment of consciousness and *viññāna* the six kinds of pure consciousness, of which five are sensual and one non-sensual.

Even at this early stage of the introduction of Buddhist concepts in the West, Stcherbatsky offers an impressive range of meanings for this term. It covers the majority of occurrences in earlier and later Indian and Tibetan sources. At the same time it renders extremely difficult the task of determining one single translated expression which would

<sup>368</sup> See STCHERBATSKY 1923: 16–20; a major critical review is contained in WALLACE 1928: 398–405.

<sup>369</sup> See STCHERBATSKY 1929B: 137–139.

<sup>370</sup> Terms in square brackets added by the author.

satisfactorily comprise at least most of these meanings. In accordance with the above article by Stcherbatsky, the German scholar Willibald Kirfel (1885–1964) suggested some synonyms for both terms. He designated *viññāna* as “the world of *saṃsāra* or *skandhadhātu*, the components of worldly appearance,” *jñāna* as “*bhūtatathātā*, absolutely realized reality, also *dharmadhātu*, the “sacred,” or *nirvāṇa*, blown away into the absolute, peace of mind.”<sup>371</sup>

In the year 1964, the Sri Lankan scholar Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera arrived at similar results by analyzing the concept of *viññāṇa* in Theravāda Buddhism. He translated the term *viññāṇa* as “perceptive-“ or “cognitive-consciousness.” Furthermore, he defined *viññāṇa* as that which is regarded as the cause for the individual’s survival after death, also called the *stream of Viññāṇa* (*viññāṇa-sota*) or the “stream of becoming” (*bhava-sota*). In Pāli Buddhism it plays an important role in the blueprint of spiritual training or meditation generally known as *jhāna* [*dhyāna* in Sanskrit], the four levels of meditative absorption or concentration (*samādhi*). The second of these four levels is called the “infinity of *viññāṇa*” (*viññāṇānañcāyatana*). It is a state of deep concentration, but not yet the highest state of emancipation (*parimutti*) or liberation from the cycle of existence. In his conclusion Wijesekera summarized the different connotations of this important term:<sup>372</sup>

It has the sense of cognitive or perceptive consciousness in most of the passages. ...the so-called “separate meanings” of *Viññāṇa* do not refer to so many different entities but to *aspects* of the same phenomenon. ... in the Pali Canon *Viññāṇa* was the basis for all conscious and unconscious psychological manifestations pertaining to individuality as it continued in *Saṃsāra* or empirical existence. ... In itself, however, it was ... only an aspect of *Bhava* or Becoming which was emphatically declared as being subject to constant change (*vipariṇāmadhamma*) and finally to cessation at the attainment of *Nibbāna*.

Dieter Michael Back, similarly to Stcherbatsky (in German), primarily explored the Sanskrit term *viññāna* as the essential focus of the Vijñānavāda school. He started from the theory of the five *skandhas*, set the term into the context of the *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), and discussed the causes and conditions of perception and cognition (*viññapti*) based on Vasubandhu’s *Viṃśikākārikā*. Back defined the *viññāna* as “the conditioned movement of cognizing based on the stream of cognition (*viññānasamṭāna*).”

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<sup>371</sup> See KIRFEL 1938: 496.

<sup>372</sup> See WIJESEKERA 1964: 254–259.

He added to this explanation that “*viññāna* can also be applied in a general sense, as Lambert Schmithausen has shown in an article on the same subject.”<sup>373</sup> Back concluded his analysis of this section by stating: “What remains as being conceivable is the fact of cognition (*viññaptimātratā*).” In the last part of his article Back then elaborated on the notion of *viññāna* as “the epitome of no release from suffering.”<sup>374</sup>

As an annotation, Back already mentioned the thesis of Alex Wayman, that *viññāna* could have a double meaning in Buddhism, as “perception” and “an etymological meaning of “devoid of (*vi-*) knowledge (*jñāna*)”.”<sup>375</sup> Back did not agree with this etymological explanation, since for him it is more an interpretation than a safe linguistic decoding of the meaning behind the term.<sup>376</sup> The syllable “vi” in several Sanskrit dictionaries is rendered as “apart from,” “hence,” “distinguished from,” “to discern,” “diverse,” “in various directions.”<sup>377</sup> The translation as “devoid of” seems to be only one of many interpretations. Nevertheless, on the ground of his etymological analysis, Wayman presented interesting suggestions in the process of translating the various applications surrounding the two terms *viññāna* and *jñāna*.

Wayman held the opinion<sup>378</sup> that “two of the most important Indian philosophical terms can be translated into English by words which, apart from suffixes, have descended from the same Indo-European roots, some four millenniums ago. ... Thus, a consideration of etymology (*nirukti*) and usage (*rūḍhi*) indicates that *jñāna* and *vidyā* are satisfactorily translated by their respective cognates, *knowledge* and *wisdom*.” He further classified “knowledge” into two kinds, mundane and supra-mundane, where according to the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* and other sources mundane knowledge (*laukikajñāna*) is said to be empirical knowledge of objects and cognitions, while supra-mundane knowledge (*lokottarajñāna*) is said to be “pure intuition of subject-objectless pure consciousness.”<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1967: 120 ff. Furthermore, Hugh B. Urban and Paul J. Griffiths provided an extensive discussion of the relevant terms for mental imagery in the *Madhyāntavibhāga*-Corpus in URBAN & GRIFFITHS 1994: 3–21.

<sup>374</sup> See BACK 1987: 83–91.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 91, note 35; see WAYMAN 1955: 267.

<sup>376</sup> See BHSD: 485–486. This special etymological explanation does not appear in this dictionary, even though it contains a variety of applications for *viññāna*. At the same time it offers a critical conclusion: “In the last four categories often rendered consciousness, etc.; no single word or brief phrase can, of course, really suffice.”

<sup>377</sup> See, for example, MW: 908.

<sup>378</sup> See WAYMAN 1955: 253.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

Wayman also mentioned the term *prajñā*, usually translated as “wisdom” or “higher knowledge.” He rendered it as “insight” without providing a proper definition, which would especially distinguish it from *jñāna*. He just referred to some quotations from classical Indian and Tibetan sources. Furthermore, he mentioned that the term “insight” by the master Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419) has often been used interchangeably with *vipaśyanā*, which is literally “higher vision.”<sup>380</sup> Surprisingly, he translated the Sanskrit term *jñāna* in the title of a tantra explained by Tsong-kha-pa differently from before as “gnosis,” without a clear reason for his choice, except for the fact that there is no implication of a sectarian connotation in the employment of the word “gnosis.” At the same time, he admitted that the term “gnosis” is only a provisional translation, “since it would not be certain at the outset that the tantric usage would be the same as the nontantric usage.”<sup>381</sup> In summary, one can say that his general translation of the two terms was “perception” (*viññāna*) and “knowledge” (*jñāna*), respectively.

The British scholar Edward Conze (1904–1979) composed an article, published in 1966, on the connection between “Buddhism and Gnosis.”<sup>382</sup> Of course, he was not inclined to compare Buddhism with “the Gnostics,” a name for a number of Christian sects, or with gnostic-theosophic teachings in the main based on a pamphlet published in Leipzig, 1828, by the tibetologist Isaac Jacob Schmidt (1779–1847). Conze referred to this notion in most forms of Hellenistic mysticism and described some basic similarities to Mahāyāna Buddhism, such as “Salvation takes place through *gnōsis* or *jñāna*, and nothing else can finally achieve it. Both words are etymologically derived from the same Indo-European root. Their meaning also is quite similar.” In a Buddhist context he regarded wisdom as the highest form of gnosis.

Following the chronological order, one of the next scholars to discuss these key terms is Lambert Schmithausen. Back had mentioned that according to Lambert Schmithausen *viññāna* can also be applied in a general sense, referring to those kinds of cognition not necessarily directed toward an object, such as the *ālayaviññāna*.<sup>383</sup> In a more specific sense, Schmithausen in the same article (pp. 119–120), as well as in several other articles and books provided translations and definitions for the central terms of this thesis. For example, he applied the expression “stream of cognition” (*Erkenntnisstrom*)

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<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 259, notes 30, 31.

<sup>382</sup> See CONZE 1967.

<sup>383</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1967: 120 ff.

(*vijñānasamṭāna*) (p. 113), defining it according to both the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra works.

In one of his earliest papers<sup>384</sup> Schmithausen rendered the term *citta* as mind (Geist) and *jñāna* as knowledge (Wissen). Whenever *citta* is regarded as synonymous with *vijñāna*, both are rendered as “perception.” According to his analysis, the translation of “consciousness” for the terms *vijñānam* or *citta* fits only in a few contexts. For example, in *1, 11c*<sup>385</sup> he translated the Tibetan expression *sems dang bcas pa’i spyod pa* as “... to move in [the sphere of] life connected to consciousness” (...und sich anschließend wieder in [der Sphäre des] mit Bewusstsein verbundenen Lebens bewegt (*sacittakacaritaṃ carati*, o.ä.)). And the expression “states of consciousness” (Bewusstseinszustände) was his translation of the Sanskrit term *cittāni*.

As soon as the *ālayavijñāna* is included, this rendering of “consciousness” no longer fits, since according to Schmithausen’s interpretation of Vasubandhu’s *Triṃśikākārikā*, verse 3, “the *ālayavijñānam* explicitly is qualified as “unconscious” (*asaṃvidita*).”<sup>386</sup> The *ālayavijñānam* is said to be only subliminally “conscious” or even “unconscious,” since it still exists during the five unconscious states (*sems med pa’i gnas skabs: acittikā avasthā*). A second function could serve as a basis for the other aspects; in this case the translation should be “basic perception.” According to Erich Frauwallner (1898–1974) the *ālayavijñāna* has to be called “basic cognition (Grunderkennen).”<sup>387</sup> The latter two interpretations closely conform to the Tibetan terminology of the *kun gzhi’i rnam par shes pa*, in this thesis mostly rendered as “fundamental mind.”

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<sup>384</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969A: 93, 127, 128, fn. 85a), 160 (translation from German provided by the present author).

<sup>385</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969A: 58–59.

<sup>386</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A: 85–142. In his seminal study on the *ālayavijñāna* Schmithausen discussed the question whether or not the *ālayavijñāna* qualifies as a “veritable *vijñāna*.” The same question has been asked and answered by the First Kong-sprul in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, A, f. 23.b.1–3: *Rnam par shes pa ni don mthong ba la brjod na ’dir don tu ji ltar bzhas ce na | rnam smin dang sa bon thams cad dang ldan pa yul dang kun gzhi’i gsal cha yul can ltar gyur nas rnam par shes pa tshogs bdun gyi nyer len las phan tshun rgyu dang rkyen gyi dngos por ’gyur ba’i phyir na rnam par shes pa zhes bya’o* | – rendered as: “If one asks: If a consciousness is defined as what perceives an object, how is it established here in relation to an object? [The answer is:] It becomes the objects being endowed with the ripening aspect and all the seeds corresponding to the object holder (or subject), which is the clarity aspect of the all-base. From being the original cause of the sevenfold group of perception, it becomes an entity of causes and conditions [which influence] one another. Therefore, it is called “consciousness.”” This explanation is in accordance with a quotation from the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.17: “In the same way as the all-base [consciousness] is the cause of those completely defiled [phenomena], those completely defiled [phenomena] are also said to be the cause of the all-base [consciousness] (*theg bsdus las | kun nyon rnams kyi rgyu kun gzhi yin pa ltar kun gzhi’i rgyu kun nyon rnams yin par gsungs*,” P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 219, fol. 7a.3).

<sup>387</sup> See FRAUWALLNER 1958: 328 ff.

In other cases according to Schmithausen the usage of the term “consciousness” has to be reserved for the terms *saṃvid* and *saṃjñā*. Furthermore, “cognition” for *viññānam* is hardly applicable without the danger of gross misunderstanding. Contrary to that the terminus “perception” seems to be better suited for rendering *viññānam*, especially in connection with the *ālayaviññānam*, since it is (in the sense of Leibnitz’s *petites perceptions* = perceptions which are not apperceived) also applicable to “subconscious forms of mentality.”

In another early essay, Schmithausen translated the term *viññāna* in the context of the sense perceptions as “perception,” in its function as carrier of the seeds as “mind” (without further definition), and later also as “forms of mind.”<sup>388</sup> In an ontological context he applied the usual translation of *citta* (*sems*) as “mind.” In a footnote, he also referred to the term *ādānaviññāna* as a “subliminal form of mind,”<sup>389</sup> translating it as “perception of appropriation (Aneignungsperzeption),” which according to the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* 5, 3 is to be regarded as synonymous with the *ālayaviññāna*.<sup>390</sup> In general, he preferred to render the Sanskrit terms *citta*, *viññapti*, and *viññāna* as “mind,” “cognition,” and “perception” respectively.<sup>391</sup>

This also holds true for the transcript of an introductory talk on the Yogācāra school and Tathāgatagarbha thought that Schmithausen held in 1997 at the University of Hamburg.<sup>392</sup> This essay at the same time presents some special explanations. He started with an exposition on the Yogācāra system based on the *Yogācārabhūmi* (*Discourse on the Stages of Yogic Practice*). Then he explained “forms of the mind” (*viññāna*) including a variety of translations of the term *viññāna* depending on the context.<sup>393</sup> Schmithausen continued with a discussion of the terms “Nirvāṇa” and “buddhahood,” including the “four kinds of buddha-knowledge” (vier Arten von Buddha-Wissen, *jñāna*). Finally, he

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<sup>388</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969B: 817–823, and fn. 54.

<sup>389</sup> William Stone Waldron particularly applied this designation in his monograph WALDRON 2003. The title indicates his psychological interpretation: *The Buddhist Unconscious: The Ālayaviññāna in the Context of Buddhist Thought*. Nevertheless, he described the Pali term *viññāna* from the perspectives of consciousness and cognitive awareness (pp. 21–32). A previous study, WALDRON 1994, alluded to a more investigative approach: “How innovative is the *ālayaviññāna*? The *ālaya-viññāna* in the context of canonical and Abhidharma *viññāna* theory.” Among other sources Waldron quoted from the above-mentioned work of Schmithausen (SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A) and focused on the previous claims of orthodoxy, origination and innovation of the *viññāna* theory within Abhidharma and Yogācāra.

<sup>390</sup> See LAMOTTE 1935: 55, 24–26.

<sup>391</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1969B: 811.

<sup>392</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1997.

<sup>393</sup> For example, he translated *viññāna* either as sense perception, as mental cognition, or as the constituent of a living being within the twelve links of dependent origination.

expounded on the Tathāgatagarbha school primarily based on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Thus, he commented on most of the terms essential to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and in this way provided guidelines for an adequate translation of the key terms.

David Burton and Nobuyoshi Yamabe provided more recent contributions to this topic. Burton expounded on the Yogācāra notions of “nondual (*advaya*) consciousness (*citta/vijñāna*),” the “substratum consciousness” or “storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*),” as well as the ultimate reality of “consciousness-only (*cittamātra*)” or “cognition-only (*viñaptimātra*).”<sup>394</sup> Burton characterized the full realization of this ultimate reality as being ineffable, “an inconceivable (*acintya*) supramundane (*lokottara*) knowledge (*jñāna*), free from grasping subject and grasped object (*Triṃśikākārikā*, 29–30).”<sup>395</sup>

Yamabe in Buswell’s *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*<sup>396</sup> presents the “Theories of Consciousness” in a variety of contexts. The first is the more general “rebirth and the theory of dependent origination,” followed by the “ālayavijñāna theory and the theory of the eight consciousnesses,” according to the Yogācāra school. Three further topics are the “Sautrāntika theories of consciousness,” “Buddhist epistemology,” and the “relationship with the tathāgatagarbha theory.” All in all, Yamabe in this concise survey offers a comprehensive account of the various applications of the Sanskrit term *viññāna* without elaborating on subtle details.

Concerning the most important terms here, a few special interpretations and compounds remain to be discussed. One interesting understanding of the term “*rnam par shes pa*” appears in George N. Roerich’s *Tibetan-Russian-English Dictionary*.<sup>397</sup> This term when not contrasted with “*ye shes*,” can obviously bear quite a positive connotation. Here it is rendered as “to understand, to perceive fully, to discern,” and the Sanskrit term “*viññāna*” as “discriminating consciousness.”<sup>398</sup> Correspondingly, the expression “*rnam par shes pa can*,” lit. “somebody who possesses thorough understanding,” is rendered as a “wise man.” It seems to designate somebody, who is able to discriminate and to understand

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<sup>394</sup> See BURTON 2000: 53.

<sup>395</sup> See BURTON 2012: 20.

<sup>396</sup> See BUSWELL 2004: 175–178.

<sup>397</sup> See ROERICH 1983: vol. 2, p. 132.

<sup>398</sup> In JÄSCHKE 1881: 315 a similar first rendering is given for *rnam rig* and *rnam shes*, as a verb: 1. to know fully, to understand thoroughly.

deeply. This positive definition even goes to the point of presenting a “*rnam par shes pa'i sangs rgyas*,” in Sanskrit “*vijñāna-buddha*.” From the previous entry in this dictionary it becomes clear that this expression has to do with the doctrine of *rnam par shes pa'i lta ba* or Vijñānavāda and speaks of buddhahood in this system.

According to Dorji Wangchuk, the term “gnoseology” is defined as “a theory of meditative insight or gnosis (*jñāna: ye shes*).” In the context of “A Typology of *Bodhicitta*” (*bodhicitta* defined as “The Resolve to Become a *Buddha*”) Wangchuk characterized one of the five types of *bodhicitta* as “gnoseological *bodhicitta*.”<sup>399</sup> He explained this type of *bodhicitta* as follows: “Occasionally knowledge (*vidyā: rig pa*), discriminating insight (*prajñā: shes rab*), or meditative insight or gnosis (*jñāna: ye shes*) is considered to be *bodhicitta*. I call such a type of *bodhicitta* characterized by cognitive insight ‘gnoseological’ *bodhicitta*.”<sup>400</sup> Synonyms of gnoseological *bodhicitta* are “nonconceptual gnosis” (*nirvikalpajñāna: rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*), “diamond-like gnosis” (*rdo rje lta bu'i ye shes*), “mirror-like gnosis” (*me long ye shes*) and “self-arisen gnosis” (*svayaṃbhūjñāna: rang byung gi ye shes*). Wangchuk summarized these explanations as follows: “Gnoseological *bodhicitta* is, as it were, the very heart of Mahāyāna soteriology.”<sup>401</sup>

John Makransky called the first of the synonyms mentioned above “nonconceptual awareness” (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*). This awareness is definitely experienced at the stage of buddhahood. But it is also experienced before buddhahood by “bodhisattvas in meditative equipoise when they see emptiness, the general characteristic of all things. In post-meditation they know the individual characteristics [of things] to be merely an illusion, through their purified awareness of the world (*dag pa'i 'jig rten pa'i ye shes*).” After a longer chain of arguments, the quotation finishes as follows: “Therefore, at the level of a buddha, there is no purified awareness of the world per se (*dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes*), [such as a bodhisattva possesses].”<sup>402</sup>

<sup>399</sup> See WANGCHUK 2007: 43. “The Resolve to Become a *Buddha*” is also the title of Wangchuk’s Ph.D. dissertation.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–199. Wangchuk provided a further analysis of gnoseological *bodhicitta* and gnosis, including the respective sources on pp. 199–205 and the concluding assessment on pp. 232–233.

<sup>402</sup> See MAKRANSKY 1997: 351–352 cited from the *lTa ba'i khyad par* by the early Tibetan translator Ye-shes-sde (late eighth century), P 5847: 106–1–1 to 1–4; D Jo 219b.4–6; lines 415–420, 441–442 in the critical edition in KROBATH 2011: 49–50: *byang chub sems dpa' ... mnyam par gzahags pa'i dus na ni rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyis dngos po thams cad kyi spyi'i mtshan nyid stong pa nyid du gzigs la | de las bzhengs nas rjes las thob pa dag pa 'jigs rten pa'i ye shes kyis sgyu ma tsam du rang gi mtshan nyid mkhyen pa ... | ... de bas na sangs rgyas kyi sa la dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes mnga' bar mi 'gyur ro |*. This work,

In terms of the latter above-mentioned synonym, the *BGT* defines the “self-arisen gnosis” (*svayambhūjñāna*: *rang byung gi ye shes*) as follows: “The self-arisen gnosis is the awareness of the nondual (inseparable) sphere and gnosis which abides from the very beginning in the mind stream of sentient beings.”<sup>403</sup> Orna Almogi, in her Ph.D. thesis, analyzed this term in Indian and Tibetan sources. She stated that “the notion of self-occurring gnosis (*svayambhūjñāna*: *rang byung gi ye shes*) in the sense of intrinsic gnosis is central to the philosophy of the rNying-ma school, particularly in connection with the rDzogs-chen tradition.” Furthermore, she quoted from several works composed by Rong-zom-pa under the title of “Rong-zom-pa on Self-occurring Gnosis.”<sup>404</sup>

In the previous chapter we have seen that the expression “buddha gnosis” (the exalted gnosis of a buddha, *sangs rgyas ye shes*: *buddhajñāna* or *de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes*: *tathāgatajñāna*) can be regarded as describing the essential quality of the buddha nature.<sup>405</sup> That these two are identical has been taught in the *Śrīmālādevīsūtra* as follows: “The actual gnosis of the tathāgata essence is the gnosis of the emptiness of the tathāgatas.”<sup>406</sup> The term “*de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes*: *tathāgatajñāna*” itself does not express whether or not this gnosis is just present as potential or fully manifest. This very

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one of the early Tibetan references for the *rNam shes ye shes*, will be analyzed in detail at the beginning of the following chapter (4.1.1).

<sup>403</sup> See *BGT*: 2650: | *sems can gyi rgyud la ye nas gnas pa'i dbyings dang ye shes gnyis su med pa'i rig pa'o* |. Sometimes this nondual state is called also *gnyis su med pa'i ye shes*, mostly rendered as “nondual wakefulness.” With respect to this expression we find in ALMOGI 2009: 104 the following statement, given under “Buddhology in Its Historical and Philosophical Context: An Overview:” “Nondual gnosis itself is the abode of all *tathāgatas*.”

<sup>404</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 206–220; the term particularly has been expounded on in *Rang byung ye shes* composed by Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po. It plays a major role also in HIGGINS 2012: 26, 86, 92, 93–94, 97–99, 165, 166. The gnosis of a buddha as understood in the rNying-ma tradition will be further discussed in chapter 6 (6.2).

<sup>405</sup> As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Michael Zimmermann has shown that the term *tathāgatajñāna* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes*) has been applied in the Newark edition of the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* (manuscript from a Kanjur, originally found in Batang). According to Jikido Takasaki, as explored in TAKASAKI 2000: 76–77, this terminology is correct and has to be adjusted “in the light of the Chinese equivalent.”

<sup>406</sup> The translation here follows the quotation provided by Asaṅga in his *Ratnagoṭravibhāgavyākhyā*, P 5526, fol. 118b.7: | *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i ye shes nyid ni* | *de bzhin gshegs pa rnam kyi stong pa nyid kyi ye shes yin la* |. Rang-byung-rdo-rje has provided the identical citation in his *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad* in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, fol. 25b.5. It has been translated in a similar fashion also in WAYMAN 1974B: 99. The *sTog* edition, vol. 40, fol. 427a.4 (p. 853) reads in a slightly different way (*shes pa*, knowing or knowledge instead of *ye shes* gnosis, and no connecting particle): *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po shes pa nyid ni de bzhin gshegs pa rnam kyi stong pa nyid kyi ye shes lags te* |. The Beijing edition of the *Lha mo dpal phreng gi mdo*, P 24, fol. 277a.2, and the sDe-dge edition D 92, fol. 271, p. 541, read: | *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ni* | *de bzhin gshegs pa'i spyod yul lags te* | – rendered as: “The essence of the *tathāgata*, the *bhagavān*, is the very object of experience of the *tathāgatas*.” This is then followed by the statement that it is not the object of experience of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

much depends on the context. When discussing the gnosis of a buddha, countless distinctions can be made. For example, the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*<sup>407</sup> provides a great number of entries for *ye shes* and its compounds.

Here, as in other dictionaries and glossaries, we even find different explanations for the same terms. For example, “two types of gnosis” (*ye shes gnyis*) can be understood as the gnosis knowing the objects of knowledge as they are and how many there are. Both together make up the “gnosis of the dharmakāya” (*ye shes chos sku*).<sup>408</sup> A second interpretation refers to the “gnosis of meditation” and “post-meditation.”<sup>409</sup> This is also translated as “supermundane” (*'jig rten las 'das pa: lakottara*) and “mundane” (*'jig rten pa: laukika*) “Highest Wisdom (of a Saint).”<sup>410</sup> The three types of unmixed gnosis (*ye shes ma 'dres pa gsum*) relate to the knowledge of the three times (past, future and present, *'das pa, ma 'ong pa, da lta ba*). Similarly, the classical treatises offer a certain variety of numbers of gnoses, four, five, six, ten, etc., when determining how the gnosis of a buddha can be subdivided.

Finally, many tantric applications of the term *ye shes* (*jñāna*) exist. For example, Tsepak Rigzin in his *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* offers several important definitions connected to the tantric usages of the term.<sup>411</sup> The expression “*ye shes kyi snang ba*” (*jñāna-āloka*) is translated as “The primordial wisdom appearance; the primordial wisdom vision. The vision of everything seen as totally pure.” This so-called “pure view” according to tradition is the background for any tantric practice. Then, “*ye shes kyi phyag rgya*” (*jñānamudrā*) is rendered as “the primordial wisdom mudrā. The wisdom of nondual profundity and clarity.”<sup>412</sup> And the *ye shes sems dpa'* (*jñānasattva*) literally refers to the “wisdom being. The actual meditational deity ...; a generation stage practice of meditation in Tantra.”

<sup>407</sup> See DKT, pp. 1866–1867. The BGT also offers a great variety of entries, pp. 2593–2596.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, DKT: 1867: | *shes bya ji lta ba dang ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyi chos thams cad kyi mtshan nyid ji lta ba bzhin mngon sum du gzigs shing thugs su chud pa'i mkhyen pa de la ye shes chos sku zhes pa* |.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, 1867: | *mnyam bzhag ye shes dang | rjes thob ye shes* |.

<sup>410</sup> See JOHNSTON 1950: 241–242.

<sup>411</sup> See RIGDZIN 1986: 251.

<sup>412</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 91. Here, in the context of “Rong-zom-pa’s presentation of Tantric Buddhology,” B. *Mudrās*, it belongs to the classification of that which is to be signified (three types). The exact explanation is given on p. 101: “(2) The *jñānamudrā* is the body of a female deity (i.e. a non-physical consort) that is generated from gnosis.”

### 3.4 Concluding Remarks

The result of this discussion of the various applications of the key terms shows that most scholars agree on the terminology based on the respective definitions only in the context of a more general discussion.<sup>413</sup> This holds particularly true for the first part of this chapter, when dealing with the hermeneutical aspects of these terms. To understand the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction in the context of the “four reliances” shows the relevance of this discourse for all Buddhist traditions. The terminology in the second part requires more detailed investigations. Here it becomes obvious that it is difficult to ascertain one single term, which would cover all functions of either *rnam par shes pa: viññāna* or *ye shes: jñāna*.

There are two possible solutions to this problem: The first would be to choose one term for all applications, while changing the meaning in each context through the respective definition. For example, many scholars have chosen the translation of “consciousness” for “*rnam shes: viññāna*” and added a definition for each application. The advantage of this approach is that it comes closer to the Pali or Sanskrit original, where one term covers many meanings, even if in the Mahāyāna context the three terms *citta*, *manas*, and *viññāna* already designate different aspects. The same applies for the Tibetan terms *sems*, *yiḍ*, and *rnam shes*. The disadvantage is that without the specific definition a misunderstanding is virtually unavoidable.<sup>414</sup>

The second solution is to select different terms for each function. For example, “perception” would be applicable, whenever *rnam shes* is directed towards an outer or inner object. “Cognition” would refer to the processing of information by the sixth aspect of *rnam shes*, the intellect or mental perception (*yiḍ kyi rnam shes*). “Consciousness” could be the chosen term for what leaves the body at death and enters a new existence after the intermediate state (*bar do*). It would be the third link in the chain of twelve links of dependent origination (*rten ’brel: pratītyasamutpāda*). Of course, as soon as the stream of clear and aware (*gsal zhing rig pa*) moments of consciousness is meant, this could be designated as “mental continuum,” “mind stream” (*cittasaṃtāna*) or “stream of

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<sup>413</sup> For example, David Seyfort Ruegg in SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 66, in the context of presenting Bhāvaviveka’s view, describes the basic Madhyamaka principle as “the emptiness of all *dharma*s including consciousness (*viññāna*) and the highest nonconceptual gnosis (*jñāna*) achieved in meditative realization.”

<sup>414</sup> See the quotations related to the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje and the Second dPa-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba at the very beginning of this chapter (3.1).

cognition” (*viññānasaṃtāna*).<sup>415</sup> This second approach has more or less been applied in the translation of the *rnam shes ye shes* distinction in this thesis, since one single term for different applications could easily lead to confusion and would be difficult to read, even when repeating the corresponding definition again and again.

In this chapter the focus lies exclusively on the two key terms of this study. All other questions related to the terminology will therefore be discussed either in chapter 5, in the context of the functions of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s works, or in the translation sections in the chapters 7 and 8. This concerns the terminology of the buddha nature concept (*de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po: tathāgatagarbha*), the change of basis or change of state (*gnas gyur: āśrayaparivṛttiḥ*), the five gnoses (*ye shes lnga: pañcajñāna*), the theory of buddha bodies or states (*sangs rgyas kyi sku: buddhakāya*), the terminology related to the Mahāmudrā tradition – such as “the ordinary mind” (*tha mal gyi shes pa: prākṛitajñāna*), the simultaneously arisen or coemergent gnosis (*lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes: sahajajñāna*), as well as the Yogācāra presentation of the three natures (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*).<sup>416</sup> All presentations of the corresponding terms belonging to other Tibetan traditions will be discussed in chapters 4 and 6.

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<sup>415</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1967: 113.

<sup>416</sup> For details concerning this last term, see above (3.2) and in chapters 5, 6. A summarized tantric explanation of this concept has already been presented in the previous chapter.

## Chapter 4: The Tibetan Background of the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

Chapter four investigates the reception of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in early Tibet. One of the main activities of Rang-byung-rdo-rje was to collect all available oral and written Buddhist teachings and render them accessible for the future. Therefore, his early Tibetan sources for this discourse also have to be analyzed. The analysis encompasses some of the principal early Tibetan references, followed by a short introduction into the doctrinal context for the discourse before the cultural background of late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Tibet. After a period of emphasis on the Madhyamaka school, the prevalent philosophical traditions at that time developed into a new combination of the Yogācāra, Tathāgatagarbha and Madhyamaka schools of thought. This approach was especially suitable for formulating the fundamental view for tantric practice.

Two well-known examples of the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction illustrate how their combination enables a progressive realization on the basis of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel. These are shown to be an important link to the teachings of the Third Karmapa, as Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied the same structure in his oeuvre and in his *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. The Third Karmapa is presented as lineage holder and teacher of the “eight practice lineages” (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*) and several minor transmissions. Among these eight lineages of spiritual instruction, Karmapa’s principal lineage was the Karma bKa’-brgyud tradition. Therefore, the principal bKa’-brgyud viewpoint in Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s time will be investigated. Finally, the chapter treats the major sources of Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s own viewpoint and his balanced philosophical approach as formulated in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.

### 4.1 Early Tibetan References to the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

#### 4.1.1 The Early Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet

The earliest Tibetan references to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse appeared during the reign of the first kings who favored the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. It was King Khri-srong-lde-btsan (742–797) who established Buddhism as the official state religion. He invited to his court qualified Indian scholars and meditation masters such as

Padmasambhava (ca. eighth century), Śāntarakṣita (ca. 725–788) and Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795). At that time the tantric master Padmasambhava is said to have subdued obstructive forces, while the other two brought the essential Buddhist philosophical teachings from India to Tibet and subsequently became the founders of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school of thought.<sup>417</sup>

According to tradition, Padmasambhava himself composed, among other treatises, the *Bar do thos grol chen mo*, well-known in the West under the title *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, literally “Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate State.” This cycle of teachings, which is based on the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, was hidden and later, in the fourteenth century, rediscovered by the “treasure revealer” Kar-ma gLing-pa (1352–1405).<sup>418</sup> In the context of expounding on the background of this work, Gyurme Dorje provided “A Brief Literary History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead.”<sup>419</sup>

The work is connected to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in two different sections. The topic appears for the first time in the second chapter entitled “The Great Liberation by Hearing;” the second under the title “The Introduction to Awareness: Natural Liberation through Naked Perception” in the thirteenth chapter.<sup>420</sup> The first section is concerned with the appearance of the Buddha Vairocana during the first day after death. In this context, the text reads: “A blue luminosity, radiant and clear, bright and dazzling, [indicative of] the pristine cognition of reality’s expanse, which is the natural purity of your aggregate of consciousness, [will emanate] from the heart of Vairocana and his consort.”<sup>421</sup>

<sup>417</sup> See the short outline of the three main periods of the Madhyamaka school in terms of their respective sources in chapter 2, section 2.1.3, particularly fn. 193.

<sup>418</sup> The complete work has been translated based on a critical edition of all available Tibetan editions in DORJE 2006. Bryan J. Cuevas provided a list of the extant Tibetan editions at the beginning of his bibliography in CUEVAS 2003: 271–274.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxvi–xxxix.

<sup>420</sup> This section in Tibetan is called *Rig pa gcer mthong*, in short. The above-mentioned order corresponds to the one in the Pad-ma-’phrin-le edition (A), which differs slightly from the English rendering in DORJE 2006. The latter, as a selection of the available material, presents the first section in the eleventh chapter and the second section in the fourth chapter. In the most extensive Tibetan edition (B) by Sherab Lama, the order is again different. The *Bar do thos grol* in two parts is contained in vol. 3, pp. 41–162; in the Pad-ma-’phrin-le edition (A), pp. 7(A)–67(A). The *Rig pa gcer mthong* appears in vol. 2, pp. 479–488, in the Pad-ma-’phrin-le edition (A), pp. 347(A)–371(A). John Myrdhin Reynolds offered an English translation of the latter work in REYNOLDS 1989: 9–28. For all further references, see CUEVAS 2003: 246, fn. 56.

<sup>421</sup> See DORJE 2006: 237. The Tibetan *Bar do thos grol*, 29(A)3 reads: | *rnam par shes pa’i phung po gnas su dag pas* ’od mthing ga chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes | *gsal la dwang pa* | *bkrag la* ’tsher ba zhig rnam par snang mdzad yab yum gyi thugs ka nas khyod rang gi bdun du mig gis mi bzod pa tsam du zug nas ’ong ngo ||. The author has provided further explanations on the “pristine cognition of reality’s expanse”

In the following days after death the other four buddhas appear, each essentially representing one of the five kinds of gnosis and the pure aspect of one of the five aggregates (*phung po: skandha*). This tantric teaching implies that the pure aspects of the five aggregates manifest each as one buddha from among the “five buddha families” (*sangs rgyas kyi rigs lnga: pañcatathāgata kula*) and one of the buddha gnoses respectively. Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his commentaries on the *Yoginīsañcāryatantra* and several other tantras followed the same structure.<sup>422</sup> On the other hand, in his sūtric presentations of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, he taught that, when purified, only the aggregate of perception (or consciousness) in its eight aspects changes its state into all five kinds of gnosis. Alexander von Rospatt provided several classical sources concerning the emphasis of the consciousness aggregate discussing “the superiority of consciousness over the other skandhas” in VON ROSPATT 1995: 236–237; fn. 517.

The second work by Padmasambhava presents in nine-syllable verse a brief outline of the rDzogs-chen view concerning the nature of mind. Since this relates to the rNying-ma perspective on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, it will be treated in a more general way in chapter 6. Here, just one short passage illustrates the connection to the Third Karmapa’s teachings. The overall topic in the work is the distinction between the deluded state of mind (perception) and the state free from delusion (gnosis). The topic is not especially structured but formulated in a more practice-oriented way on a very fundamental level:<sup>423</sup>

By not seeing that your own mind is actually the Buddha, nirvāṇa becomes obscured.

With respect to saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, [the difference is simply due] to ignorance or to awareness, respectively.

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(*dharmadhātujñāna* or *tathatājñāna*) in notes 229, 405, 406. The whole section covers pp. 29(A).2–51(A).5.

<sup>422</sup> See the *mKha’ ’gro ma kun tu spyod pa’i rgyud kyi ’brel pa* | in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 8, pp. 159.4–161.4.

<sup>423</sup> See REYNOLDS 1989: 23. The Tibetan verses in *Rig pa gcer mthong*, 365(A).2–5, read:

*Rang sems sangs rgyas ma mthong myang ’das sgribs ||*  
*’khor ’das gnyis la rig dang ma rig gis ||*  
*skad cig gcig gis bar la bye brag med ||*  
*rang gis sems la gzhan du mthong bas ’khrul ||*  
*’khrul dang ma ’khrul ngo bo gcig pas te ||*  
*’grol la sems rgyud gnyis su ma grub pas ||*  
*sems nyid ma bcos rang sar bzhas pas grol ||*  
*’khrul pa de nyid sems su ma rig ni ||*  
*chos nyid don de nam yang mi rtogs pas ||...*

But at this single instant [of pure awareness], there is in fact no actual difference between them [in terms of their essence].

If you come to perceive them as existing somewhere other than in your own mind, this is surely an error.

[Therefore,] error and non-error are actually of a single essence [which is the nature of mind]. Since the mind-streams of sentient beings are not made into something that is divided into two,

Its being allowed simply to remain in its own [original] natural condition liberates the unmodified uncorrected nature of the mind.

If you are not aware that the fundamental error or delusion comes from the mind,

You will not properly understand the real meaning of the *Dharmatā* [the nature of reality].

Among the principal students of Padmasambhava were several capable translators who, together with their master, were significantly involved in the early propagation of Buddhism in Tibet (*bstan pa snga dar*). The translators especially mentioned and praised in the historical record composed by bDud-'joms Rinpoche are "Pagor Vairocana, Kawa Paltsek, Cokro Lūi Gyeltsen and Zhang Yeshe De"<sup>424</sup> (all in the second half of the eighth century). Together with Indian scholars such as Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi, Dānaśīla and Jñānagarbha, they "translated the transmitted precepts of the sūtra, and mantra traditions, as well as the foremost commentarial treatises, into Tibetan."<sup>425</sup>

The first in this list, the Tibetan-born monk and translator Vairocana, appeared also under the name of Vairocanarakṣita<sup>426</sup> in the colophons of his translated works. Together with Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra he was one of the three principle masters credited for bringing the rDzogs-chen (Great Perfection) teachings to Tibet. He is especially mentioned as translator under this name of Vairocanarakṣita together with the Indian master Śrī Siṃha in the colophon of a seminal tantric work connected to Atiyoga entitled *Bodhicittabhāvanā* (Skt.), or *Byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa* (Tib.).<sup>427</sup> According to the colophon, the author of this treatise was the Indian master Mañjuśrīmitra (Tib. 'Jam-dpal-

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<sup>424</sup> The transcribed Tibetan names are sPa-gor Bē-ro-tsa-na, sKa-ba dpal-brtsegs, Cog-ro klu'i-rgyal-mtshan and Zhang-sna-nam ye-shes-sde.

<sup>425</sup> See bDud 'joms chos 'byung, p. 137: | lo tsā ba thon-mi bai-ro ska cog zhang gsum rnams bka' drin dang ngo mtshar che'o ||. For the English translation, refer to DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 515.

<sup>426</sup> The name Vairocanarakṣita was also the more usual name of the Indian master Vairocanavajra (eleventh–twelfth century) who for a long time was active in Tibet and became famous for his *dohā* translations. His name was often abbreviated to Vairo (*Bai-ro*) or Bhero (*'bhe-ro*). Thus, these two masters should not be confused.

<sup>427</sup> In the rNying-ma tradition this work is also well-known under the title *rDo la gser zhun* (see ALMOGI 2009: 178). For an English translation, refer to NORBU & LIPMAN 1986: 55–68.

bshes-gnyen, ca. seventh century C.E.), one of the gatekeepers (*dvārapāla*) of the famous Nālandā University in India.<sup>428</sup>

The work has to be regarded as of major importance in the history of thought within Tibetan Buddhism. This can be easily understood from the sheer number of at least 27 editions – 13 editions in the various collections of rNying-ma tantras (*rNying rgyud*), seven editions in the canonical collections of śāstras (in P, D, see bibliography etc., also contained in the *gDams ngag mdzod*,<sup>429</sup>) and a further seven editions in the respective commentaries. These editions have become well-known in different regions of Tibet and the Tibetan-Nepalese borderland, as well as in Bhutan.

In the context of teaching on the cultivation of the enlightened mind or “the resolve to become a Buddha,” as Dorji Wangchuk prefers to express it,<sup>430</sup> Mañjuśrīmitra dedicates altogether about 30 from among 159 verses to the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction. A few important examples will be selected here. Verses 35–37 provide an outline of the essential topic discussed from the perspective of the Buddhist teachings on the Four Noble Truths:<sup>431</sup>

- (35) That path<sup>432</sup> is taught as the path of complete liberation (*rnam grol lam*), although freedom is not attained by means of the perception of the sense faculties.
- (36) Sense perception and mental cognition (*rnam rig shes*), which do not overcome any suffering, are the origin of the emotional defilements.
- (37) Therefore, the Victors have taught that what is perceived by ordinary people is actually deluded.

The author then expounded on how this delusion comes into existence in terms of mind (*sems*) and mental formations (*sems las byung ba*), said to happen in three stages (verses 41–45, here paraphrased): 1. The accumulation of habitual tendencies based on various mental activities (*'du byed*) gives rise to the unreal dualistic split between subject and object; 2. The mental continuum together with its tendencies is conceptualized as a self

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<sup>428</sup> For a brief biography of 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen, refer to POWERS/TEMPLEMAN 2012 (*HDT*): 331.

<sup>429</sup> See *gDams ngag mdzod*, A, vol. ka, pp. 203–212. The exact title is: *Rdzogs pa chen po sems sde spyi'i snying po'i bstan bcos byang chub sems bsgom pa rdo gser zhun*.

<sup>430</sup> This expression refers to the title of Wangchuk's Ph.D. thesis in WANGCHUK 2007.

<sup>431</sup> Verses 35–37 read: (35) *las de rnam grol lam du bstan cing dbang po'i shes pas mi thar te* | (36) *sdug bsngal 'ga' yang mi 'jil rnam rig shes te nyon mongs 'byung ba'i gnas* | (37) *de phyir skye bos mthong ba de dag 'khrul par mngon zhes rgyal bas gsung ||*.

<sup>432</sup> “That path” refers back to the previous verse talking about the path of the “Noble Ones” (*phags pa'i lam*).

or ego. 3. Through being defiled by the power of mental activities and not realizing the subtle [fundamental mind, Skt.: *ālayavijñāna*] cognition (*rnam rig*) arises.<sup>433</sup>

The next verses explain the process of conceptualization including mistaken philosophical views (46–49) as well as the conditions of positive or negative actions influencing the ripening of habitual tendencies from the fundamental mind (50–57). Verses 58 and 59 then expound on the characteristics of perception or cognition (*rnam par shes pa*) as the basis for all appearances as follows:<sup>434</sup>

(58) Since cognition, furthermore, perceives different characteristics on the basis of the continuum of mental formations,

(59) It appears as eight [aspects] according to its different functions, even though it does not exist as many types (*rigs*).

The following verses elucidate the relationship between these different aspects of cognition and the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi*) (60–67). In this context verses 62 and 63 correspond in terms of contents to the statement provided in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*<sup>435</sup> and other sources, that “the three realms (or phenomena) are merely mind:”<sup>436</sup>

(62) The phenomena of the Noble Ones and the ordinary people do not exist elsewhere than in their own mind stream.

(63) All these manifold [phenomena] appear as the own contemplation (or mental focus) (*ting 'dzin*) [originating] from the classes of six sentient beings (lit. streams).

The next section teaches that all conditioned phenomena do not truly exist. In verse 68 the author provided a statement which is more or less identical to verse 12 in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise: “All these (i.e. mind and habitual tendencies) are known to arise and cease following the principle of dependent origination.”<sup>437</sup> Careful investigation reveals

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<sup>433</sup> Verses 41–45 read:

(41) *sems dang sems las byung ba de nyid lus gsum don du snang ba yin |*  
(42) *'du byed sna tshogs dag gi bag chags bsags las gang goms mthu brtag tshe |*  
(43) *sems nyid yul dang lus 'drar snang ba rus pas gang ba bzhin du snang |*  
(44) *bag chags bsags pa'i rgyun la dmigs skyes yid la brtags pa'i bdag ni med |*  
(45) *'du byed mthu yis bsgribs shing phra ba ma mthong de las rnam rig skye ||.*

<sup>434</sup> Verses 58–59 read:

(58) *rnam shes de yang 'du byed rgyun la mtshan ma tha dad 'dzin pas na |*  
(59) *las kyi khyad par dag gis brgyad du snang gi rigs la du ma med |.*

<sup>435</sup> See the reference given in chapter 2, fn. 253.

<sup>436</sup> Verses 62–63 read:

(62) *rang sems rgyun las 'phags pa skye bo'i chos ni gzhan na yod ma yin |*  
(63) *rgyud drug rigs las de yang sna tshogs de dag rang gi ting 'dzin to ||.*

<sup>437</sup> Verse 68 reads: *| 'di kun rten cing 'brel 'byung tshul te skye dang 'gag par 'gyur zhes pa ||.*

that cause and effect appear from the conceptual attachment to entities, but ultimately do not exist. Therefore, arising and ceasing also do not exist (verses 70–71). Furthermore, the mind together with its habitual tendencies is shown to be beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence in ultimate truth (verses 75–78). Verses 76, 77, and 78 show the inherent logic, which is again similar to the one that Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided in verse 4 of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise (based on “the five great Madhyamaka arguments” (*gtan tshigs chen po lnga*):<sup>438</sup>

(76) Since there is no object of experience, the fundamental mind (or all-base) does not exist, and there is also no [truly existing] cognition.<sup>439</sup>

(77) Since there are no directions, a focus and a locality do not exist either. How then can cognition arise?

(78) Therefore, this mind is beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence, as well as free from being single or multiple.

The following section (verses 79–84) deals with the question of whether or not gnosis exists at the stage of a buddha. Orna Almogi has translated and analyzed this section in her Ph.D. thesis. In chapter three she provided the principal bibliographical references of the work and its commentaries in the context of a general outline of “The Controversy Surrounding the Existence of Gnosis.”<sup>440</sup> Later, she translated the relevant verses (79–84) and concluded that Mañjuśrīmitra propounded the nonexistence of both aspects of buddha gnosis, the nonconceptual and the pure mundane gnosis.<sup>441</sup>

The final three selected verses refer to the “faultless explanation of the meaning of meditation” (*bsgom pa'i don ma nor bar bstan pa*). Verse 112 expounds on the relationship between mind (*sems*) and the sphere of reality or the true nature (*chos nyid*). This presentation is in accordance with the buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) doctrine adhering to the original purity of the mind (as outlined in chapter 2, 2.1.5). It also corresponds to the tantric approach, since this work, the *Bodhicittabhavana*, is mostly

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<sup>438</sup> Verses 76–78 read:

(76) *spyod yul med phyir kun gzhi med cing rnam rig de yang med pa yin |*  
 (77) *phyogs rnams med phyir dmigs dang gnas med rnam par rig pa ji ltar skye ||*  
 (78) *de phyir sems 'di yod med mtha' las 'das shing gcig dang du ma bral ||.*

The “five great Madhyamaka arguments” have been explained in chapter 2, fn. 255.

<sup>439</sup> Here the author provided an epistemological explanation of the relationship between objects of perception, the fundamental mind and the process of cognition, based on the Yogācāra ontology, i.e. the actual nature of the various mental functions expressed in Yogācāra terms.

<sup>440</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 178–179.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306–309.

counted among the Buddhist tantras. In this context, verse 112 expresses the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction in slightly different terms than later elucidated by the Third Karmapa. Verses 117 and 123 provide practical advice concerning how to hold the mind:<sup>442</sup>

(112) The field of experience of the fundamental mind, [on the basis of which] perceptions (or cognitions) [objectify] phenomena, is the sphere of reality.

(117) Do not engage the mind with effort, do not [direct] the mind on whatsoever, be free from cognition and noncognition.

(123) Having meditated on the sphere of mind is the path, whereas having meditated on anything else [means] that the [reality of the] Clear Light will not manifest.

These three verses actually strongly resemble the ones from the *Rig pa gcer mthong* cited earlier. The whole work can be said to explicitly combine elements of Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, Prajñāpāramitā, Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, Tathāgatagarbha, Mahāmūdra, Mahāati and the tantras (all mentioned in the text). As has been shown, a significant part of the teachings relate to the *rnam shes-ye shes* or *viññāna-jñāna* distinction. It is mainly the rNying-ma perspective which defines the difference to the presentation in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise composed by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. As was said before, this special perspective will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

The last of the above-mentioned translators was (Zhang-sna-nam) Ye-shes-sde, who, together with a team of Indian scholars, translated an impressive collection of at least 344 known works.<sup>443</sup> Among his translations of philosophical works are several core treatises of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, Sthiramati and Jñānacandrā, Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, just to mention some of the most famous masters. Furthermore, he composed three (or four) treatises.<sup>444</sup> One of his own works has received a considerable amount of attention also by modern scholars, the *lTa ba'i khyad par*,

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<sup>442</sup> Verses 112, 117 and 123 read:

(112) *sems kyi spyod yul shes pa de dag chos rnams kyi ni chos nyid yin |*

(117) *rtsol ba yid la mi byed gang la 'ang sems med shes dang mi shes bral |*

(123) *sems kyi dbyings su bsgoms pas lam gyi gzhan du bsgoms pas 'od gsal mi 'gyur ro ||.*

<sup>443</sup> Sherab RhalDI has listed all 344 works translated by Ye-shes-sde known so far, in his article RHALDI 2002: 21–34. Additionally, on p. 36, note 9, he mentioned three works composed by Ye-shes-sde himself, among which the second is entitled *Dr̥ṣṭiviśeṣa*, in Tibetan *lTa ba'i khyad par*.

<sup>444</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1979: edition 2004, p. 271, note 20.

translated as either *Distinctions among the Views*, or *Differentiating the Views*, or *A Classification of [Philosophical] Views*.<sup>445</sup>

According to this title the work in general is regarded as one of the two earliest Tibetan doxographical treatises (*grub mtha': siddhānta*), the second being the *lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa* by sKa-ba-dpal-brtsegs (P 5853).<sup>446</sup> Besides being preserved in several bsTan-'gyur editions (e.g. P 5847; D 4360), Ye-shes-sde's composition fortunately still exists in the form of a manuscript found at Tun-huang, now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris under the entry Pelliot tibétain 814. This offers a unique chance for comparing and reorganizing the somewhat disordered canonical versions, even if the last part of the Tun-huang edition is missing.<sup>447</sup>

David Seyfort Ruegg dedicated a considerable amount of research to these different editions and carefully analyzed the work in 1979.<sup>448</sup> As a result of his investigation he stated that the work does not deal extensively with the general Indian Madhyamaka schools, such as Bhā(va)viveka's *Mdo sde pa'i dbu ma*, later known as *Svātantrika*, and not at all with Buddhapālita's *Thal 'gyur ba (Prāsaṅgika)*, but mostly with the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school of thought and the Vijñānavāda.<sup>449</sup> Seyfort Ruegg appeared to be particularly impressed by the fact that around the year 800 a Tibetan scholar was able "to penetrate deeply the fundamentals of Buddhism and present them in such a comprehensive and masterly way."<sup>450</sup>

What he means concerning "the fundamentals of Buddhism (doctrines fondamentales du bouddhisme)" is a list of subjects which closely correspond to those treated in the

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<sup>445</sup> One of the at least five canonical Tibetan editions of this work is contained in P 5847, fols. 252a.5–269b.6, the others being the Co-ne, sDe-dge (D), Lha-sa and sNar-thang editions.

<sup>446</sup> Among others, Jacob Dalton briefly discussed this work in DALTON 2005: 146–147.

<sup>447</sup> Florian Krobath in his Mag. Phil. thesis, KROBATH 2011, has produced a critical edition of the Tibetan text on the basis of the extant text witnesses. In the course of his research he has attempted to reorganize and amend the material, mostly following the Tun-huang edition.

<sup>448</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1979. Furthermore, David Snellgrove particularly referred to and quoted from Ye-shes-sde's study in SNELLGROVE 1987: 439–440. He also provided the following list of contents: "Entitled 'Variety of Views' (*lTa-ba'i khyad-par*), it surveys four philosophical schools, the three ways (*yāna*), the set of four wisdoms, the eight kinds of consciousness, the two aspects of truth, the two styles of no-self, the three modes of manifestation, and the twelvefold causal nexus." He then went more into detail concerning the four schools as presented in this treatise and praised the work and the author.

<sup>449</sup> David Higgins provided an analysis of the doxographical implications of this work under the title of "Ye shes sde's Eighth Century Synthesis of Late Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha Views" in HIGGINS 2012: 156–159.

<sup>450</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1979: p. 286: « ... mais aussi de composer un traité qui témoigne à la fois d'une pénétration des doctrines fondamentales du bouddhisme et d'une capacité de présenter celles-ci d'une façon compendieuse et magistrale. »

*rNam shes ye shes* by the Third Karmapa. Ye-shes-sde presented them in a slightly different order and in prose, not in verse like Rang-byung-rdo-rje. In some points he also went into more detail. The *lTa ba'i khyad par* consists of 857 lines altogether, while the *rNam shes ye shes* has just 179 lines. Otherwise, even a rough comparison shows surprising similarities between these two treatises. They not only treat the same subjects, but also often cite from the same classical Indian sūtras and śāstras in order to substantiate the respective teachings.

The first topic of the *lTa ba'i khyad par* is the presentation of the various philosophical vehicles (lines 4–283). This corresponds to the opening theme in the *rNam shes ye shes*, comprising verses 2–11.<sup>451</sup> Quotations identical with or similar to the ones in the *lTa ba'i khyad par* originate from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna and the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* of Śāntarakṣita as well as other works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. In verse 6 Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided exactly the same philosophical teaching, namely that “there is nothing established outside, like particles, etc.” Also verse 7 makes use of the identical *sahopalambhaniyama* argument (*lhan cig dmigs par nges pa*; certainty of [subject and object] being perceived together) as in the *lTa ba'i khyad par* (lines 96–101). The same holds true for verses 8–11. Ye-shes-sde simply went more into detail concerning the same philosophical teachings (lines 101–180).<sup>452</sup>

The following section in the *rNam shes ye shes* (verses 13–21) treats “the eight groups (of perception or cognition) as causes and conditions for illusion.” Here, the Third Karmapa has changed the order of subjects in comparison to Ye-shes-sde’s presentation, who dedicated his next subjects to the four kinds of gnosis and the three buddha bodies (or states) (*lTa-ba'i khyad-par*, lines 284–574),<sup>453</sup> finishing with a short discussion concerning the way in which these buddha bodies are permanent (*rtag pa*). Of course, these subjects make up the whole second part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, the *ye*

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<sup>451</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje offered a more detailed discussion on the various philosophical tenets in his commentary on the *Hevajratana*, entitled *dGyes par do rje'i rnam bshad*, pp. 297.2–300.3, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 275–489. This section can be understood as an auto-commentary on the respective verses in the *rNam shes ye shes*.

<sup>452</sup> Additionally, at the end of this section Ye-shes-sde discussed in some detail the theory that there is ultimately only one vehicle (lines 251–283); see WANGCHUK 2007: 112; for the exact references to the critical edition, see also note 447 (KROBATH 2011).

<sup>453</sup> Orna Almogi has discussed, critically edited and translated a short section from this chapter of the work dealing with the controversy regarding the existence of gnosis at the stage of a buddha, in ALMOGI 2009: 185–186, 343–346 and 457–459. She also provided a short list of scholarly treatments of the work (p. 185, fn. 126). John Makransky also analyzed and translated a section from this chapter in MAKRANSKY 1997: 349–361.

*shes* part (verses 22–32), except for the last four verses,<sup>454</sup> including more or less identical quotations, such as from the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*.

Ye-shes-sde then presented the eight kinds of perception or cognition (lines 575–670) right after the four kinds of gnosis and the three buddha bodies. He described the functions of all eight aspects in the same way as Rang-byung-rdo-rje; but with respect to how precisely they work together, he only mentioned the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi* or *sems*) as functioning as the cause of all phenomena.<sup>455</sup> Otherwise, he treated the principle of dependent origination as a separate topic, referring it only in general to the functions of perception or cognition (lines 761–856). For example, he did not explain the “immediate condition” (*de ma thag pa'i rkyen*), which according to the Third Karmapa (in accordance with the *Mahāyānasamgraha*) “is the condition for the arising and ceasing of the sixfold group [of perceptions]” (verse 17).

The final sections of the *lTa ba'i khyad par* briefly treat the “two truths” (*bden pa gnyis*) (lines 671–685), the “two aspects of selflessness” (*bdag med pa rnam pa gnyis*) (lines 686–731), the “three natures” or “three characteristics” (*rang bzhin gsum* or *mtshan nyid gsum*) (lines 732–758) and the “dependent origination” (*rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba*) (lines 758–856). The way Ye-shes-sde concluded his composition actually shows its proximity to the *rNam shes ye shes*: “When the completely defiled side ceases, it becomes the purified side. ... When unawareness ceases, awareness arises.”<sup>456</sup> The final result is then the accomplishment of the nonabiding nirvāṇa (*mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa*) of buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

In short, after careful investigation it seems plausible that the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise represents some kind of summary of the *lTa ba'i khyad par*, composed from the perspective of the bKa'-brgyud tradition. The first third of the *rNam shes ye shes* is dedicated to various views and this part can even be regarded as a doxographical treatise

<sup>454</sup> Nevertheless, even the important verse 33 stating that “the all-base (*ālāya*) [consciousness] free from stains is called the buddha nature” (... *dri mar ldan gang kun gzhi yin | dri med rgyal ba'i snying por brjod* |) finds its correspondence in lines 338–339: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po gsal bar ma gyur pa'i tshe ni kun gzhi zhes bya'o | gsal bar gyur pa de'i tshe ni chos sku zhes bya'o* | – rendered in MAKRAŃSKY 1997: 446, fn. 73 as: “When Buddha-nature (*tathagatagarbha*) has not yet become clear, it is the foundation consciousness (*alayavijñāna*). But when it has become clear, it is *dharmakāya*.” The statement in the *lTa ba'i khyad par* is simply more complete and reveals the relationship between the *alayavijñāna* and the *dharmakāya*.

<sup>455</sup> See line 622: | *de chos thams cad la rgyu'i dngos por 'jug cing 'brel bas na kun gzhi'o* ||.

<sup>456</sup> See lines 846–847: | *kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyogs 'gags nas | rnam par byang ba'i phyogs su 'gyur te* | ... | *ma rig pa 'gags te rig pa byung*.

(*grub mtha'*: *siddhānta*), similar to the *lTa ba'i khyad par*. The order of perception and gnosis is reversed, and with respect to the eight kinds of perception Rang-byung-rdo-rje provides slightly more subtle explanations (see chapter 5, 5.4). This approach renders the *rNam shes ye shes* more suitable as background for the essential bKa'-brgyud practices. The doctrines of the “two truths,” the “two aspects of selflessness” and the “three natures” or “three characteristics” are implicitly contained in the structure of the treatise; the outer and inner dependent origination is shown as the way outer phenomena appear, as well as how the cognizing mind functions.

From the closeness of the two presentations it seems appropriate to conclude that, in terms of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, the Third Karmapa relied on Ye-shes-sde's treatise as a progenitor, particularly when citing many identical Indian sources. Obviously, he summarized, reorganized and reformulated its teachings in a masterly fashion according to the needs of his bKa'-brgyud followers. The reason why and the exact manner in which he did this in the context of his *gSung 'bum*, will be discussed in the following chapter.

#### 4.1.2 The Later Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet

When investigating the Tibetan sources of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse connected to the later period of propagation of Buddhism in Tibet (*bstan pa phyi dar*), we find various works composed in poems as well as in prose. For example, the important rNying-ma scholar Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po (1012–1088) has been mentioned above in terms of his presentation of the “The Controversy Surrounding the Existence of Gnosis” at the stage of a buddha, a theme that was explored by Orna Almogi in her Ph.D. thesis. In the context of “Rong-zom-pa's Discourses on Buddhology” she also analyzed “The Theory of the Three Kāyas,” “The Four Gnoses,” “A Buddha's Knowledge (*jñāna*: *ye shes*): A Brief Discussion of the Key Terms” and different tantric concepts related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, such as the use of formulas expressing enlightened qualities: *mantras* (*gsang sngags*), *vidyās* (*rig sngags*) and *dhāraṇīs* (*gzungs sngags*). These topics presented from the rNying-ma perspective will be further discussed in chapter 6.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 61–67, 68–70, 76–107, 108–114, 114–118, 160–162. Even though Rong-zom-pa for doctrinal reasons could be regarded as belonging to the earlier propagation, his life dates and many activities relate to the time of the later propagation with access to a greater variety of sources (see ALMOGI 1997: 11, fn. 18).

With respect to the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the three principal Tibetan founding fathers, Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros (1012–1097), Mi-la-ras-pa (1040–1123), and sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079–1153), all presented the *rNam shes ye shes* theme in their songs of realization (*rdo rje mgur*). In one of Mar-pa's *vajra* songs, we find the following reference to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse:<sup>458</sup>

Thus, the father jetsün kindly accepted me.  
 He empowered me with the four profound inner sign abhiṣekas.  
 He blessed me, completely purifying my being.  
 The germ of motivation sprouted deep within.  
 As the character of mind, inner insight,  
 Is continually flowing luminosity,  
 He showed me the unfabricated, innate essence.  
 Momentary thoughts dissolved into space,  
 And undefiled bliss arose within.  
 The stream of ālaya, primordially pure,  
 Was understood as the ground, path, and fruition of the trikāya.  
 I met mother dharmatā face to face.

The teacher mentioned in this song is the Indian master Maitrīpa (ca. 1007–1078). The English translation originating from 1980 could be improved in some points. For example, instead of “being” in the third line the term “mind stream” (*rgyud*) fits better, instead of “insight” “awareness” (*rig pa*), instead of “continually flowing luminosity” “clear light free from arising and ceasing” (*'od gsal skye 'gag med pa*), instead of “momentary thoughts” more precisely “adventitious concepts” (*glo bur gyi rnam rtog*), instead of “was understood as ground, path, and fruition of the trikāya” in the *Mar-pa'i*

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<sup>458</sup> See *Mar-pa'i rnam thar*, 157.1–3. The Tibetan, which also appears in the *bKa'-brgyud mgur mtsho*, 133.1–4, reads:

*pha rje btsun des kyang thugs rjes gzigs ||*  
*nang zab mo brda yi dbang bzhi bskur ||*  
*rgyud yongs su dag par byin gyis brlabs ||*  
*gzhi 'dun pa'i sa bon gting nas gyos ||*  
*nang rig pa sems kyi bzhugs tshul de ||*  
*'od gsal skye 'gag med pa'i phyir ||*  
*gzhi ma bcos gnyug pa'i ngo bor bstan ||*  
*blo bur gyi rnam rtog dbyings su thim ||*  
*zag med kyi bde ba nang du shar ||*  
*gdod nas dag pa kun gzhi'i rgyud ||*  
*gzhi la (lam) sku gsum gtan la phab ||*  
*sems chos nyid ma dang zhal yang mjal ||.*

The English translation cited here originates from TRUNGPA 1980: 156–157.

*rnam thar (bKa'-brgyud gser phreng)* "...in terms of the ground was established as the three Buddha bodies," (*gzhi la sku gsum gtan la phab*). The *bKa'-brgyud mgur mtsho* (Rum-btegs edition, 1972) has *lam* instead of *la*, changing the line into "was established as the three buddha bodies in terms of the ground and the path." Nevertheless, this excerpt from Mar-pa's song expounds on the *rNam shes ye shes* theme in a very profound way, combining tantric elements with those of the Mahāmudrā level of teachings.

The famous yogi Mi-la-ras-pa (ca. 1040–1123) also incorporated the *rNam shes ye shes* theme in a short form in one of his songs of realization. This song is contained in the collection of songs, entitled "The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa." Here, Mi-la-ras-pa answered the request of Tshe-ring-ma and her retinue to express his realization by expounding on the ultimate truth. He presented his teachings in the context of distinguishing the "two truths:"<sup>459</sup>

In accordance with the minds of those of inferior intellect,  
 The omniscient Buddha taught, "All [things] are existent."  
 But with reference to the ultimate truth,  
 Due to (*mDzod nag ma*: different from) obstructions there is not even buddhahood.  
 There are no practitioners nor practices,  
 No path [to go], no stages and no realization (*mDzod nag ma*: no signs on the path,)   
 Results such as buddha bodies and gnoses do not exist,  
 Therefore, nirvāṇa [also] does not [truly] exist.  
 For these are merely designated by names and phrases.  
 ...  
 With respect to relative truth,  
 The Sage has taught that everything exists, both, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.  
 [In actual fact,] existence, the appearance of entities,  
 As well as nonexistence, the true nature of emptiness,  
 These two are of one taste, in essence inseparable.  
 Therefore, self-awareness, other-awareness, existence, nonexistence,  
 All [phenomena] are in spacious union.

<sup>459</sup> See *Mi-la-ras-pa'i mgur 'bum*, pp. 724.1–731.6. The exact title of the song is: *Bye brag ngams rdzong snyan brgyud rtsa ba tshe ring skor gsum gyi zhus lan rdo rje'i mgur*. It is also contained in the *mDzod nag ma*, fols. 531.6–532.6 with a different spelling in several lines. Dwags-rams-pa Chos-rgyal-bstan-pa also quoted this song in *Zab nang 'grel bshad*, B, pp. 473.6–475.1. He thus directly connected the song to the primary teachings of the Third Karmapa. His version with one exception (*rtegs* instead of *rtogs*) corresponds to the *Mi-la-ras-pa'i mgur 'bum*. For a translation of the relevant section, refer to CHANG 1962: 325 (song no. 29). bDud-'joms Rinpoche quoted most of the relevant lines in his *rNying ma'i nstan pa'i rnam gzhaq*, fol. 98a.3–98b.3 (pp. 225.3–226.3). For an English translation, refer to DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 200–201.

Thus, those skilled in realization,  
 Do not see perception, they see gnosis.  
 They don't see sentient beings, they see buddhas.  
 They don't see conditioned phenomena, they see actual reality.<sup>460</sup>

Further variations of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse within the bKa'-brgyud lineage originate from the scholar and meditation master sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079–1153). As one of the two principal students of Mi-la-ras-pa he founded the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud school by combining the spiritual instructions of both the bKa'-gdams and bKa'-brgyud lineages.<sup>461</sup> Orna Olmogi showed that sGam-po-pa in his teachings, here represented by the *Dwags-po thar rgyan*, expounded on the issue of gnosis at the stage of a buddha. In this context he described the distinction between the deluded state of mind and the state of gnosis from the perspective of a buddha.<sup>462</sup>

<sup>460</sup> The Tibetan text (*Mi-la-ras-pa'i mgur 'bum*, p. 725.2–3; 4–6) reads:

<i>khyed blo dman rnam kyi bsam pa dang   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: bsam ngo dang)</i>
<i>bstun nas kun mkhyen sangs rgyas kyi   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: sangs rgyas kun mkhyen)</i>
<i>thams cad yod ces gsungs pa yin   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: yod par)</i>
<i>don dam bden pa'i dbang du ni   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: dbang gis)</i>
<i>bgegs pas sangs rgyas nyid kyang med   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: bgegs las)</i>
<i>sgom pa po med bsgom bya med   </i>	
<i>bgrod bya sa dang lam rtogs med   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: rtags; Zab nang 'grel bshad: rtags)</i>
<i>'bras bu sku dang ye shes med   </i>	
<i>de phyir mya ngan 'das pa med   </i>	
<i>ming dang tshig gis btags pa tsam   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: grags pa)</i>
...	
<i>kun rdzob bden pa'i dbang du ni   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: na)</i>
<i>'khor ba dang ni mya ngan 'das   </i>	
<i>thams cad yod ces thub pas gsungs   </i>	
<i>yod pa dngos por snang ba dang   </i>	
<i>med pa stong pa'i chos nyid gnyis   </i>	
<i>ngo bo dbyer med ro gcig pas   </i>	<i>(mDzod nag ma: ngo bor)</i>
<i>rang rig gzhan rig yod min te   </i>	
<i>thams cad zung 'jug yangs pa yin   </i>	
<i>de ltar rtogs pa'i mkhas pa yis   </i>	
<i>rnam shes ma mthong ye shes mthong   </i>	
<i>sems can ma mthong sangs rgyas mthong   </i>	
<i>chos can ma mthong chos nyid mthong   </i>	

<sup>461</sup> The other principal student of Mi-la-ras-pa was Ras-chung-rdo-rje-grags-pa (1084–1161). Trungram Gyaltrul Rinpoche, Sherpa, has explored this synthesis of the spiritual instructions (in short: *bka' phyag zung 'brel*) in GYALTRUL 2004: 158–185. In his Ph.D. thesis, pp. 97–124, he also provided a summary and review of each work in the *Collected Works of sGam-po-pa*. For this review he used the reproduction of a manuscript belonging to the bKra-shis-chos-rdzong Monastery in Miyad Lahul.

<sup>462</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 356–357. Mkhen-po dKon-mchog rGyal-mtshan provided a further English translation in KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 284. The Tibetan in *Dwags-po thar rgyan*, A, fol. 221b.1–5, p. 626 (corresponding to the critical edition in ALMOGI 2009: 467) reads: | *sangs rgyas ni rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyi mjug ('jug) tu ma rig pa spangs nas | chos 'ga' yang mthong ba med pa'i tshul du de kho na'i don gzigs pas | kun rdzob 'khrul pa 'di sangs rgyas la mi mnga' ste | dper na mig nad dag pa'i gang zag la skra shad dang rab rib mi snang ba lta bu'o || des na kun rdzob snang ba 'di ma rig pa'i dbang gis yin pas | 'jig rten la ltos nas bzahag par zad kyi | sangs rgyas la ltos nas med pas de mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyang med*

[Immediately] after the Diamond-like Samādhi [has arisen in him], a *buddha* discards [even undefiled] ignorance, and he sees true reality, in that [he] does not see any phenomena. Therefore, these deceptive conventional [phenomena] do not exist in a *buddha*’s field of perception]. For example, it is just like strands of hair and [other] “floaters” no [longer] appearing to a person whose eye disease has been cured. Therefore, the appearance of conventional [phenomena] is caused by ignorance, and thus [can] be established from a worldly perspective only, while from the perspective of a *buddha* it does not exist. Nor, then, does any gnosis of knowing it exist either. If a *buddha* had a mind (*blo*) that is subject to appearances, deceptive objects would appear [to him], and this would lead to the undesired consequence that a *buddha* himself is subject to delusions.

In the same way as the two earlier forefathers of the lineage, sGam-po-pa in one of his songs of realization<sup>463</sup> literally expressed the *rNam shes ye shes* topic as follows:<sup>464</sup>

I sing a song from the *dharmadhātu* of great bliss.  
 I speak these words in the state of wisdom.  
 Thus resolving the truth of nonduality.  
 This compassion that is free from attachment and that benefits others –  
 Seize firmly as supreme upāya.  
 This coemergent consciousness –  
 Seize firmly as wisdom.  
 When certainty arises, that is it.  
 These discursive thoughts of fixation –  
 Seize firmly as dharmakāya.  
 When one experiences this, the essence is seen.

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*pa yin no || gal te sangs rgyas la snang ba dang bcas pa'i blo yod na | 'khrul pa'i yul snang bas sangs rgyas nyid kyang 'khrul bcas su 'gyur ... |.*

<sup>463</sup> This song is contained in the *bKa'-brgyud mgur mtsho*, fols. 116a.3–116b.5. English translations appear in TRUNGPA 1980: 241–242, and in GYALTRUL 2004: 170–171.

<sup>464</sup> The Tibetan lines (*bKa'-brgyud mgur mtsho*, fol. 116a.3–5, p. 231.3–5) read:

*bde chen chos dbyings kyi ngang nas dbyangs shig len ||  
 ye shes kyi ngang du tshig gcig 'debs ||  
 gnyis med kyi don 'di gtan la 'bebs ||  
 gzhan phan snying rje zhen med 'di ||  
 thabs kyi mchog tu gtsir gyis bzung ||  
 lhan cig skyes pa'i rnam shes 'di ||  
 ye shes yin par gtsir gyis bzung ||  
 nges shes skyes na de nyid yin ||  
 mtshan mar 'dzin pa'i rnam rtog 'di ||  
 chos sku yin par gtsir gyis bzung ||  
 nyams su myong na snying po mthong ||.*

sGam-po-pa here presented a slightly more detailed exposition of what he had summarized in the fourth of the well-known *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa* (*Dwags-po chos bzhi*).<sup>465</sup> These four lines express a common introductory wish among bKa'-brgyud practitioners towards the teachers of the lineage to grant their blessings in order to accomplish these four:

Grant your blessing (*byin gyis rlobs*) that

- 1) The mind turns towards the *dharma* – *blo chos su 'gro ba*<sup>466</sup>
- 2) The *dharma* turns into the path – *chos lam du 'gro ba*
- 3) The path clarifies delusion – *lam 'khrul pa sel ba*<sup>467</sup>
- 4) Delusion arises as gnosis – *'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba*

sGam-po-pa himself in his *Summary on the Four Dharmas* defined the last line as follows: “Furthermore, the function of delusion arising as gnosis is: Through the power of having meditated that in ultimate reality all phenomena are free from arising and ceasing, since everything that appears, that has been realized, is resolved into its essence, this is said to be delusion that arises as gnosis.”<sup>468</sup>

In the context of answering the questions of the First Karmapa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (1110–1193) he formulated this explanation in a slightly different way: “In terms of delusion arising as gnosis also the benefit of others itself is still delusion.”<sup>469</sup> When the essence free from the concept of clinging to a self is realized, delusion arises as gnosis.

<sup>465</sup> For a detailed academic treatment of this teaching, see SCHEUERMANN 2015. See also RINGU 2012: 34–50.

<sup>466</sup> In *Chos bzhi mdor bsdus*, pp. 522.2, 523.2, 3, 524.1, the reading of the first line is slightly different: | *chos chos su 'gro ba* | This line is literally rendered as: “Dharma going for the [pure] dharma.” See GYALTRUL 2004: 139. Trungram Gyaltrul Rinpoche discussed this topic as it appears in the *Collected Works of sGam-po-pa* under the Headline of “The Four Dharma Theory” (pp. 137–141). He commented on the first line: “i.e. religious acts performed for their own sake, without any consideration of this worldly reward.”

<sup>467</sup> There also exists a slightly different version of this line, e.g. in the *Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa'i zhu lan*, 238.3, which will be quoted below: *lam gyi 'khrul pa sel ba* meaning “to clarify the delusion of the path.”

<sup>468</sup> See *Chos bzhi mdor bsdus*, p. 524.1–2: | *de nas 'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba bya ba yin te | don dam par chos thams cad skye 'gag dang bral bar bsgoms pa'i stobs kyis | cir snang cir rtogs thams cad rang gi ngo bor chod tsa na | 'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba yin gsung so* ||. In terms of the fourth line Rolf Scheuermann states in SCHEUERMANN 2015: 118: “The fourth *dharma* can therefore be seen as an addition to the original fourfold Bka' gdams topos that adds a further perspective, closely connected with Mahāmudrā. Similar formulations can be found, for example, in Mar pa's *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag* or *Mahāmudrā-Upadeśa*, where one finds the phrase “the sixfold assembly that appears as wisdom.” See *Mar pa lo tsā'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, p. 222.8–9: | *yang tshogs drug ye shes su shar bas dbang po rang log zhes bya ste | mig gzugs mthong ba de bde stong du shar ba la sogs pa'o* |, rendered as: “Furthermore, since the six collections [of perception] appear as gnosis, the senses are said to naturally dissolve. The seeing of forms [by] the eyes appears as bliss-emptiness, and so on.”

<sup>469</sup> To act for the benefit of others was referred to in the explanations on the previous two lines.

There does not exist any separate remover of delusion. Since it is the very essence, it removes the delusion of the path.”<sup>470</sup> In comparison to the third line quoted above, the meaning of “to remove the delusion of the path” is slightly different from “the path clarifies delusion.” The Third Karmapa confirms the latter interpretation when applying the instrumental particle (*gyis*): *Lam gyis 'khrul pa sel ba*.<sup>471</sup> According to the various commentaries, both interpretations of the third line seem to be feasible.

Obviously, sGam-po-pa in both explanations of the fourth line instructs his followers to look at the essence or nature of delusion and gnosis as being identical, beyond any dualistic concepts. This is in stark contrast to what he taught above in the *Dwags-po thar rgyan* in terms of the clear distinction between delusion or perception and gnosis. In this song, it refers to the ultimate or resultant level of teachings as applied in the Tathāgatagarbha or tantric approach focusing on the original purity of mind. It also incorporates the instructions on the practice of Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*), since it leads to the realization of the nondual state beyond the separation of subject, object and action. The same can be said with respect to the later commentators.

In the context of this research, the first and foremost commentator on the fourth line of the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa* is of course the Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje. In addition to his topical outline on this theme, he also referred to this teaching in a commentary on the practice of gCod (Severance) as taught in the *bKa' tshoms chen mo*, attributed to Ma-gcig-lab-sgron (ca. 1055–1149), where he explained the connection between delusion and gnosis as follows (particularly at the end of this citation):<sup>472</sup>

Second, with respect to unawareness and gnosis there are two [aspects]: Concerning ignorance changing into gnosis this refers to six lines, “*de bas rig med*” and so on [in the root text]]. Furthermore, when duality and appearances without any space in between change into the gnosis of the clear light of the space of phenomena (*'od gsal chos kyi*

<sup>470</sup> The Tibetan in *Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa'i zhu lan*, 238.1–3, reads: | 'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba ni | gzhan don de nyid kyang 'khrul pa yin te | ngar 'dzin rtogs pa dang bral ba'i ngo bo de rtogs na 'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ro || 'khrul pa sel mkhan logs na med | ngo bo nyid yin pas na | lam gyi 'khrul pa sel ba'o |.

<sup>471</sup> See the Tibetan line in *Man ngag gi rim chos bzhi (pa'i bsdus pa'i don)*, p. 611.4, also titled *Chos rje sgam po pa'i chos bzhi'i bsdus don*, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 611–615. This work composed by the Third Karmapa seems to be a topical outline of La-yag-pa's extensive commentary on the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa*, see SCHEUERMANN 2015: 86.

<sup>472</sup> *gCod kyi tikka*, p. 292.3–4. The Tibetan reads: | gnyis pa ma rigs pa ye shes la gnyis las | gti mug ye shes su bsgyur ba ni | de bas rig med la sogs tshig rkang drug ste | de yang gnyis dang snang ba bar mtshams med par 'od gsal chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes su gyur na | snyems byed rang sar grol zhing yul snang gi 'khrul pa ye shes su shar ba ni | sangs rgyas dngos so zhes pa'o || For a slightly different English translation, refer to SORENSEN 2013: 544–545.

*dbyings kyi ye shes*), the demon of ego-clinging is liberated in its own place and the delusion concerning the appearance of objects arises as gnosis. This is known as the actual state of awakening.

The Fourth Zhwa-dmar Chos-grags-ye-shes (1453–1524) later also commented extensively on sGam-po-pa's *Four Dharmas*. In the context of his explanations of the fourth line he quoted from one of the explanatory tantras of the *Guhyasamājatantra*, in Sanskrit *Vajrajñānasamuccaya*, in Tibetan *Ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa*<sup>473</sup>:

Whatever perception (*rnam par shes pa*) has arisen from Clear Light, which is called mind, cognition, and perception (*sems dang yid dang rnam par shes pa*), is the root of all phenomena. And it possesses the nature of the completely defiled and the completely purified. Out of that, concepts change into duality (lit. become two) ... Therefore, delusion itself changes its state into gnosis. At the stage of not realizing these as not being two, you should very much practice all the paths that remove delusion and purify defilements.

Finally, he summarized the content of the last two lines as follows<sup>474</sup>:

To guard the natural state of whatever arises in relation to all appearances of the objects of the six groups [of perception] is “the path clarifying delusion.” The realization, that the dualistic appearances without exception are from the very beginning highest gnosis by nature, is called “delusion arises as gnosis.” These are the summarized key points.

Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa Dri-med-'od-zer (1308–1364) also composed a commentary on the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa*, in Sanskrit entitled *Dharmacaturratnamālanāma*, in Tibetan *Chos bzhi rin po che'i phreng ba*. It illustrates the rNying-ma perspective and functions as an introduction into the fundamental doctrine of rDzogs-chen (Skt. *mahāati*). In the context of commenting on the third line (“the path clarifies delusion” or “to remove

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<sup>473</sup> The Tibetan in *Dwags-po'i chos bzhi*, 357.20–25 reads: | gang 'od gsal ba las byung ba'i rnam par shes pa de nyid sems dang yid dang rnam par shes pa zhes bya la | de ni chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba ste | kun nas nyon mongs pa dang rnam par byang ba'i bdag nyid can no || de las rtog pa gnyis su 'gyur te | ... | des na 'khrul ba nyid kyang ye shes su 'gyur te | gnyis med du ma rtogs pa'i gnas skabs su | 'khrul pa sel ba dang dri ma sbyong ba'i lam thams cad kyang shin tu nyams su len dgos pas |. The Tibetan text of the citation extracted from the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya*, P 84 (ca), fol. 291a.3–4, has been amended to the one in P.

<sup>474</sup> The Tibetan in *Dwags-po'i chos bzhi*, 357.19–21 reads: | tshogs drug gi yul snang thams cad kyi steng du gang shar gi ngang babs skyong ba lam 'khrul pa sel ba yin | gzung 'dzin gyi snang ba ma lus pa gdod nas ye shes chen po'i rang bzhin du rtogs pa 'khrul pa ye shes su shar pa zhes bya ba ni gnad mdor bsdus pa yin no ||.

the delusion of the path”) Klong-chen-pa elucidated the actual nature of deceptive appearances and the perceiving mind as follows<sup>475</sup>:

Thus whether samsaric appearances, sentient beings, the environment or whatever – there are no (outer) objects (for consciousness) to grasp. They are like magical creations or visual apparitions. Furthermore, in the exact same manner, there is no (inner) consciousness to grasp anything. All is pure like empty space. As both consciousness and its objects do not really exist, samsara has never been experienced as being existent. By realizing that it is a deceptive appearance and by nature not really existent, you become liberated from it.

Furthermore, in the context of commenting on the fourth line (“delusion arises as gnosis”) Klong-chen-pa directly expounds on the purification of delusion into gnosis as follows:<sup>476</sup>

When you recognize the natural ground (lit. the own place) for the arising of desire, anger, closed-mindedness, pride and jealousy, (you see that) they automatically settle. They naturally dissolve, purified as the five aspects of pristine awareness. This is known as the provisional purification of the confusion of the five poisons into the major pristine awarenesses, namely analytic, mirror-like, sphere of voidness, equalizing and accomplishing. As for the ultimate (attainment), when you remove the fleeting stains from the expanse (of the Buddha nature) and discover the peaceful spotless state of perfection (lit. awakening), the nature of this sphere becomes manifest just as it is. The three Buddha Bodies, Dharmakaya, single taste or pristine awareness that you discover is known as the Body of the Sphere (of Voidness) possessing double purity. This is not an object (known) by

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<sup>475</sup> For this English translation, see BERZIN 1979: 27. The Tibetan, *Chos bzhi rin chen phreng ba*, fol. 260.3–5, reads:

*'di ltar snang srid snod bcud chos rnams la ||  
gzung ba'i yul med sprul pa mig yor bzhin ||  
'dzin pa'i sems med par snang dag pa 'dra ||  
gzung 'dzin gnyis med 'khor ba'i od ma myong ||  
med snang 'khrul pa rang bzhin shes pas grol ||.*

<sup>476</sup> For this English translation, refer to BERZIN 1979: 35–39 (without the additional commentaries). The Tibetan, *Chos bzhi rin chen phreng ba*, fols. 262.5–263.2, reads:

*'dod chags zhe sdang gti mug nga rgyal dang ||  
phrag dog skyes pa'i rang sa ngos zin dus ||  
rang bzhag rang grol ye shes rnam lnga dag ||  
kun rtog me long chos dbyings mnyam pa nyid ||  
bya ba grub pa'i ye shes chen po ru ||  
dug lnga'i 'khrul pa gnas skabs dag ces bya ||  
mthar thug khams kyi glo bur dri bral te ||  
byang chub zhi ba rdul bral brnyes pa na ||  
dbyings kyi rang bzhin ci 'dra mngon du gyur ||  
sku gsum chos sku ro gcig ye shes brnyes ||  
dag pa gnyis ldan dbyings kyi sku zhes bya ||  
rgyal ba nyid las gzhan gyi yul min pa ||  
chos dang longs spyod sprul pa'i sku gsum nyid ||  
ye shes dang bcas ngo bo nyid skus bsdus ||.*

anyone other than the Buddhas. The three Buddha Bodies, namely the Body that Subsumes Everything (Dharmakaya), the Utility Body (Sambhogakaya) and the Emanation Body (Nirmanakaya), together with pristine awareness, are all incorporated into the Body of the Essential Nature (Svabhavakakaya).

This last section explains in a very practical manner the change of state of perception into the various aspects of buddha gnosis. Klong-chen-pa simply expressed it in the terminology of the rNying-ma-pas. Otherwise it resembles the manner in which Rang-byung-rdo-rje taught it, especially in the second part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. Even though the latter two commentaries were composed after the Third Karmapa's, they both relate to an early Tibetan teaching, the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa* (*Dwags-po chos bzhi*).

The master sGam-po-pa exerted a strong influence on all major and minor subschools of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud tradition that he had founded. For example, Yang-dgon-pa rGyal-mtshan-dpal (1213–1258)<sup>477</sup> was an early 'Bri-gung bKa'-brgyud master, a student of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po-rdo-rje (1189–1258), the well-known founder of the Upper 'Brug-pa (*stod 'brug*) branch of the bKa'-brgyud lineage. Yang-dgon-pa spent extended periods of his lifetime in retreat. He composed elaborate meditation instructions for his students with a special focus on Mahāmudrā exegesis essentially going back to sGam-po-pa's particular way of teaching.

In one of his manuals on the Mahāmudrā practice in retreat, the *Phyag chen snying po*,<sup>478</sup> in the context of the progressive development on the path (*lam gyi rim pa*), Yang-dgon-pa explained the meaning of the expression “not engaging into mental activity” (*yid la mi byed pa*; *amanasikāra*) in terms of the function of the eightfold group of perception or in other words the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. His interpretation of the key term *yid* belonging to the expression *yid la mi byed pa* in this context is especially noteworthy:<sup>479</sup>

<sup>477</sup> Biographies of Yang-dgon-pa appear in *Deb ther sngon po*, A, vol. 2, pp. 806–809; English rendering in *The Blue Annals*, pp. 688–691; in *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. 1, p. 852, as well as in *Yang dgon pa bka' 'bum*, A, vol. 1, pp. 23–104.

<sup>478</sup> For the full title and further bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>479</sup> See *Phyag chen snying po*, A, pp. 247.6–248.2; B, pp. 82.6–83.3: | *yid la mi byed pa la 'khrul gzhi byung nas* | *rnam rtog dang kun rtog gis yul can byas nas* | *de byed pa la mi byed par go nas yid la mi byed par song ba yang 'dug* | *'di'i don ni kun gzhi dang sgo lnga ji ltar shar yang rtog med du rang gsal ba phyag rgya chen po'i rang gshis yin* / [248] *de la nyon yid kyis kun gzhi la kha nang du bltas nas bdag tu bzung* | *yid shed [sic!] kyis sgo snga la phyir bltas nas rigs su bcas [sic!]* | *de ltar yid gnyis kyi bzung 'dzin ni 'khor ba'i chos dang* | *bzang ngan gyi 'dzin pa thams cad yid yin la* | *de las 'das shing mi gnas pa phyag rgya chen po yin no* ||. A slightly different translation of this section appears in HIGGINS 2006: 295.

Concerning not engaging into mental activity (*yid*), after the basis of delusion has arisen, this has produced the subject by means of concepts and imputations. We have to let go [of the idea] that not engaging into mental activity would mean with respect to that activity not engaging into any activity. The meaning of that is that even though the fundamental mind and the five [sense-] doors arise in any way, they are of the nature of the Mahāmudrā of nonconceptual self-clarity. With respect to that the defiled mind (*nyon yid*) after looking to the inside on the fundamental mind (lit. all-base, *kun gzhi*) perceives it as a self. The mental cognition when looking to the outside on the five [sense-] doors discriminates into categories. In terms of the dualistic perception of these two aspects of mental activity (*yid*) the saṃsāric phenomena as well as all perceptions of good and bad are “mental activity” (*yid*). Going beyond this and not abiding in it is “Mahāmudrā.”

In the same work we find another important section in which Yang-dgon-pa expounded on the so-called “four yogas” (*rnal 'byor bzhi*), the four well-known levels of Mahāmudrā practice.<sup>480</sup> Here he explained them through the purification of the five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) and the eightfold group of perception as follows:<sup>481</sup>

Through the realization of the meditation phase being free from the five aggregates, the subsequent realization [in the post-meditation phase] is the systematic purification of the eightfold group (of perception). This means that at the time of “one-pointedly focusing” (*rtse gcig*), we are free from the aggregate of form and the perceptions of the five senses (*sgo lnga'i rnam shes*) are purified. At the time of being “free from mental fabrication,” (*spros bral*) we are free from the aggregates of sensations and conceptual discriminations and the mental perception (*yid kyi rnam shes*) is purified. At the time of “one taste,” (*ro gcig*) we are free from the aggregate of mental formations and the defiled mind (*nyon mongs pa can gyi yid*) is purified. At the time of “non-meditation,” (*bsgom med*) we become free from the aggregate of consciousness and the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi'i rnam shes*) is purified.

<sup>480</sup> Alexander Schiller, in his Ph.D. thesis related to these four levels, presented a table of contents of the relevant section in *Phyag chen snying po*, A, pp. 255.3–257.2, see SCHILLER 2014: 255. The ninth from among the eleven topics following the teachings of rJe Dwags-po-sgom-chung Shes-rab-byang-chub (1128–1171) is entitled: “Bereinigung der acht “Bewusstseinsarten” (*rnam shes*) während der nachfolgenden Erkenntnis”; rendered as “The purification of the eight types of consciousness during subsequent realization.” The Tibetan line 256.3 reads: | *rjes shes tshogs brgyad kyi 'dag lags ni* | The following note provides the complete Tibetan lines of this translated section. The present author would like to thank Dr. Jim Rheingans for drawing his attention to this reference in Schiller’s study.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.* A, pp. 256.3–5; B, pp. 93.2–3: | *de la mnyam bzhaq phung po lnga bral kyi rtogs pas* | *rjes shes tshogs brgyad kyi 'dag lags ni* | *rtse gcig dus su gzugs kyi phung po dang bral* | *sgo lnga'i rnam shes 'dag* | *spros bral dus su tshor ba dang 'du shes kyi phung po dang bral* | *yid kyi rnam shes 'dag* | *ro gcig dus su 'du byed phung po dang bral* | *nyon mongs pa can gyi yid 'dag* | *sgom med dus su rnam par shes pa'i phung po dang bral kun gzhi'i rnam shes 'dag pa yin no* ||. Dwags-po-paN-chen-bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1511–1587) also cited this passage in his *Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer*, B, p. 335.4–5; translated in a slightly different way in LHALUNGPA 1986: 370.

Finally, Yang-dgon-pa, as some kind of summary of the above-mentioned explanations, provided the following definition of nonconceptual gnosis:<sup>482</sup>

This mind which is without outside or inside appearing as unhindered gnosis, when being free from the elaboration of characteristics knowing its own face as not being an object, is called completely nonconceptual gnosis.

The four levels of Mahāmudrā practice mentioned above – according to Schiller, by several early Tibetan masters, such as Lo-ras-pa (1187–1250), rGos-tshang-pa (1189–1258), and sPyan-snga-ba Rin-chen-ldan (b. 1202) – were regarded as originating from a tantra entitled *Ālikāliguhyācintyatantra*.<sup>483</sup> The eighth chapter of this tantra elucidates the connection between these four Mahāmudrā levels and the four states of correct concentration (*yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin*), taught by the Third Karmapa in the *ye shes* part of the *rNam shes ye shes*, as follows:<sup>484</sup>

1. The *rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin* (vajra-like *samādhi*) relates to the level of *bsgom du med pa* (nonmeditation).
2. The *dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin* (heroic *samādhi*) produces the experience of *ro gcig* (one taste).
3. The *sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin* (illusion-like *samādhi*) lets appear *spros bral* (freedom from mental elaboration or complexity).
4. The *seng ge rnam par bsgyings pa'i ting nge 'dzin* (majestic lion-like *samādhi* or concentration state of the sixteen aspects of the “four truths”) brings about *rtse gcig* (one-pointedness).

Then we turn to another aspect of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, still related to how the early bKa'-brgyud masters taught. Interestingly, the Second rGyal-dbang-'Brug-pa Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor (1428–1476) was able to combine two of the above-mentioned prominent sources by Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa on the basis of one coherent system of philosophical views related to the three (with him extended to four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel (*dharmacakrapravartana*).<sup>485</sup> In the same way as in the teachings of the

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<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, A, p. 263.3–4; B, p. 99.3–4: | *sems phyi nang med par ye shes zang thal du shar ba la* | *mtshan ma'i spros pa med par yul med du rang ngo shes pa de rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes ces bya te* ||.

<sup>483</sup> See SCHILLER 2014: 195. Schiller located two Tibetan editions of this tantra in *Bo-dong-pa'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 92, pp. 1–110 and vol. 125, pp. 1–94.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, translation of the relevant section pp. 196–197, critical edition of the Tibetan text pp. 757–758. The four concentration states appear in *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 22–29.

<sup>485</sup> The concept of the threefold turning of the *dharma* wheel originates primarily from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, chapter 7, P 774, fols. 26b.8–27a.7.

master Nāgārjuna, he identified Mi-la-ras-pa's lines concerning "existence" as commenting on the "four truths" of the first turning; the lines on "nonexistence" referring to the second or middle turning on the lack of defining characteristics; the emphasis on "gnosis" as opposed to "perception" elucidating the third or ultimate turning of the wheel; and the teachings on all phenomena as the play of nondual method and insight (*chos thams cad thabs shes gnyis su med pa'i rol pa*) relating to the tantric level of teachings (*gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa*).<sup>486</sup>

Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor continued by connecting the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa* to the same four levels of teachings. He stated that the first line, "mind follows the *dharma*," implies renunciation of the cycle of existence, thus corresponding to the first turning of the wheel. "*Dharma* turns into the path," the second line, refers to the realization of the empty nature of phenomena or their dependent origination, thus the second turning. The third line "the path clarifies delusion" means to realize the nature of the mind as clear light free from accidental defilements, the contents of the third turning. He related the fourth line, "delusion arises as gnosis," to the Secret Mantra Vajrayāna, the coemergent great bliss free from defilements. He literally stated: "The complete change of the delusion, such as attachment etc., does not refer to something that has to be abandoned, but is perfected as the essence which is the *svabhāvikakāya* and highest gnosis."<sup>487</sup>

Finally, he explained who among the later bKa'-brgyud masters until his time clearly taught these four levels according to the three (or four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel: "Likewise, in the great treatises of Lord 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Lord Gling-ras, Glorious Rang-byung-rdo-rje etc there appears only this way of commenting on the [Buddha's] thought. Therefore, those commentaries that have the authentic intent of the bKa'-brgyud [lineage] should definitely make similar assertions."<sup>488</sup> For clarity's sake it has to be added that the same structure has also been applied in works of the rNying-ma lineage, at least in the above-mentioned rNying-ma tantra, the *Bodhicittabhavana* or *Byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa* composed by Mañjuśrīmitra.

<sup>486</sup> For the Tibetan reading, refer to *Grub pa'i shing rta*, fol. 2b.4–7.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 3a.1–5. The Tibetan commentary concerning the last line (3a.5–6) reads: | *gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa dang* | *'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba mthun pa'i tshul ni* | *snang srid sku gsum gyi rol pa zag pa med pa'i bde ba chen por lhan cig skyes pas* | *chags sogs 'khrul pa'i rnam par 'gyur ba ma spangs bzhin du ngo bo sku dang ye shes chen po'i ngo bor rdzogs pa yin no* ||.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 3a.6–3b.1. The Tibetan reads: | *de bzhin du rje 'jig rten mgon po dang* | *rje gling ras dang* | *dpal rang byung rdo rje la sogs pa'i bstan bcos chen mo rnams na* | *dgongs pa 'grel tshul 'di kho na bzhin snang bas* | *bka' brgyud kyi dgongs pa tshad ldan du 'grel ba rnams kyis ni 'di bzhin du* | *shin tu kas blang bar bya'o* ||.

Concerning the Third Karmapa's treatises, the statement of the Second rGyal-dbang-'Brug-pa is confirmed. We even find two levels of application of this structure, a gross and a subtle level. On the gross level all known treatises composed by Rang-byung-rdo-rje can be grouped into these four categories.<sup>489</sup> The first group treats mainly the topic of mindfulness and the Four Noble Truths related to the first turning of the *dharma* wheel. The second group consists of commentaries on the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and the teachings on emptiness related to the second turning. The third group elucidates buddha nature and related topics belonging to the third turning. Finally, the last group is closely connected to the Buddhist tantras.

The subtle level refers directly to the main *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. It definitely contains the same structure related to the three (or four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel. Rang-byung-rdo-rje at first explains existence (verses 3–4), then emptiness and dependent origination (verses 4–21) and in the second part gnosis (verses 22–32) and buddha nature (verse 34). He goes much more into detail in terms of the teachings on buddha nature in the subsequent treatise of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, the *sNying po bstan pa*. This serves as background for the actual tantric level of teachings in the *Zab mo nang don* itself. Thus, all four levels of teachings or turnings of the wheel are either explicitly or implicitly represented in the *rNam shes ye shes* and the works directly connected to it. This topic will be further investigated in the following chapter, in the context of his *gSung 'bum*.

Altogether, these are just a few examples selected from the transmitted scriptures of the early scholars and meditation masters in Tibet. More material related to the *rNam shes ye shes* theme will be presented in a later section of this chapter on the “bKa'-brgyud Viewpoint in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Time” (4.4). Nevertheless, these citations in terms of structure and contents already show a direct connection to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. They clearly prove that this discourse of Indian provenience was incorporated into the Tibetan history of thought from the very beginning and figured prominently there before Rang-byung-rdo-rje's time. This leads us to the next topic, which is a concise investigation of the development of the philosophical teachings prevalent at his time, the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

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<sup>489</sup> In chapter 2 the present author briefly mentioned that the Third Karmapa in his works expounded on the classical Indian sūtras, tantras, and śāstras by strictly following the threefold turning of the *dharma* wheel.

## 4.2 The Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Viewpoints in Early Tibet

It was emphasized in chapter 2 that the philosophical views in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse have to be understood in the context of the historical development of these views. This holds true also for the first centuries of Tibetan Buddhism. After the Indian philosophical systems (*grub mtha': siddhānta*), founded primarily by the masters Nāgārjuna (c. 150 C.E.) and Asaṅga (c. 325 C.E.), had been introduced to Tibet,<sup>490</sup> the first 500 years (from around 750 to 1250 C.E.) saw a constant development and reorganization of these systems. One of the reasons for this was that, as long as Indian scholars still came to Tibet introducing new source texts from India, the philosophical concepts in Tibet were still in a process of refinement. Another reason was that at the beginning the Tibetan language was not ready to incorporate the extremely complex and subtle contents of Buddhist philosophy. A completely new terminology had to be developed.<sup>491</sup> It was during this formative period when the task of incorporating the most profound teachings and their systematization into Tibetan culture approached its fulfillment.

As a consequence, an entire literature of classifying Indian philosophical schools developed in Tibet, which can be called doxography.<sup>492</sup> Within this doxographical literature the most frequently applied system for presenting the Buddhist schools of thought is that of four philosophical schools, the four tenet system or “the Four-Siddhāntic Scheme,” as Dorji Wangchuk designates it in a subtitle.<sup>493</sup> In this article he also provides some sources, e.g. a *Hevajratantra* commentary by Vajragarbha, for the idea that a fifth system is impossible, as well as for expounding on the system of four philosophical schools. These four schools are: the Vaibhāṣika (*bye-brag-smra-ba*, Great Exposition)

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<sup>490</sup> Dorji Wangchuk provided a concise survey of the history of the Madhyamaka tradition in India in WANGCHUK 2000: 213–214. The present author has investigated the Indian provenience of the relevant sources in chapter 2. In the context of discussing the Madhyamaka sources, the two masters Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla were mentioned as founders of the newly developed synthesis of the Yogācāra and the Madhyamaka schools of thought (see SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 87–100).

<sup>491</sup> The methodological considerations at the beginning of chapter 3 offer a concise analysis in terms of the use of a certain well-defined terminology in the different periods of translation, including major reasons for a change of paradigm.

<sup>492</sup> Pierre-Julien Harter analyzed the terms “doxography” and “philosophy” in Buddhist perspective in his article HARTER 2011. Instead of supporting the common usage of the term “doxography,” or “doxographical categories,” a term coined by Hermann Diels (1848–1922) in DIELS 1879 “to name compositions by ancient writers that reported the opinions of other philosophers” (p. 96), Harter prefers the expression “school denominations” for *grub mtha': siddhānta*.

<sup>493</sup> See WANGCHUK 2013: 1318, particularly fn. 9.

school, the Sautrāntika (*mdo-sde-pa*, Sūtra) school, the Cittamātra (*sems tsam pa*, Mind-Only) school, and the Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*, Middle Way) school.<sup>494</sup>

Among the four philosophical schools, the first two schools (Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika) are regarded as the two lower tenets, the last two, Cittamātra (which often is identified with Yogācāra) and Madhyamaka, as the two higher tenets. Nevertheless, the Sautrāntika viewpoint asserts some points very closely connected to the Cittamātra school, e.g. when teaching self-awareness (*rang rig*), and in this case can also be counted among the Mahāyāna or higher tenets.<sup>495</sup> Similarly, some subschools within the Cittamātra system, as long as they do not assert consciousness as having true or independent existence, have a tendency towards the next higher system. They are understood as being very close to the Madhyamaka thought, if not part of it.<sup>496</sup> This will be further discussed below.

Dorji Wangchuk later stated in his comprehensive article: “The rigidity of this doxographical scheme compelled Tibetans to squeeze all Buddhist schools or strands of thought, be they Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, Tathāgatarbha, Prajñāpāramitā, or the Buddhist tantric systems, into the framework of the four doxographical systems, with those that did not fit into it facing the risk of being designated and discarded as non-Buddhist.”<sup>497</sup> The first solution to this problem was to exert stronger emphasis on the subschools within this rigid system, which had already existed in India.<sup>498</sup> Later, these subschools progressively developed a more independent character, reinforced by controversial debates on their exact meaning and function. This concerned the Yogācāra

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<sup>494</sup> Jacob Dalton presented a detailed analysis of the development of the Indian and Tibetan classification systems, particularly the tantric systems, in DALTON 2005.

<sup>495</sup> See ALMOGI 2010: 137; WANGCHUK 2013: 1318, fn. 8, and corresponding explanations in lectures held by the scholar mKhan-po Karma Nges-don at the Buddhist retreat center Karma Guen, Malaga/Spain, June 2006.

<sup>496</sup> For example, Dorji Wangchuk right at the beginning of his article WANGCHUK 2013: 1316 stated: “Yogācāra philosophically has generally been perceived in Tibet as a poor man’s Madhyamaka, ...” The decisive question is whether or not a clear separation is made between Yogācāra and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.

<sup>497</sup> See WANGCHUK 2013: 1318. One of the systems falling under the latter category of being discarded as non-Buddhist, at least by many dGe-lugs-pa scholars and some academics, was the Jo-nang school; see the discussion in chapter 6 (6.3).

<sup>498</sup> See ALMOGI 2010: 136–139. With respect to two examples for these subdivisions Almogi stated: “It is well-known that both ways of subclassifying Madhyamaka—that is, the division into Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka prevalent during the early propagation of Buddhism in Tibet and the division into Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka prevalent during the later propagation period—were attempts made by Tibetan scholars to systematically define and differentiate the various strands of Madhyamaka found in Indian sources.”

school,<sup>499</sup> as well as the Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, Tathāgatagarbha, Prajñāpāramitā, or Buddhist tantric systems.

Further Tibetan designations of major sub-schools within the Madhyamaka tradition are the Rang stong (“intrinsic emptiness,” lit. self-empty) and gZhan stong (“extrinsic emptiness,” lit. other-empty) philosophical systems. In this case, the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka is mostly regarded as very close to or even identical with the gZhan stong view.<sup>500</sup> The Rang stong view holds that the self of the person as well as the self of phenomena do not truly or independently exist. It thus functions as an antidote to the attachment to true existence (or existentialism). The gZan stong view, by its followers also called Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*),<sup>501</sup> emphasizes the qualities inherent to the nature of mind, the so-called buddha nature. This is empty of everything else (other), of any adventitious defilements. The nature of mind is basic awareness or gnosis. This viewpoint thus mainly functions as an antidote against attachment to nonexistence (or nihilism).

The realization of the nature of mind by the followers of the Madhyamaka school is said to result from direct experience beyond all conceptual elaborations. The Rang stong view approaches this goal by means of a thorough analysis, the gZhan stong view by means of identification with the qualities inherent in mind. By applying a balanced approach, which avoids falling into either of the extremes, both viewpoints complement rather than contradict each other.<sup>502</sup> Therefore, any dispute on this topic makes sense only

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<sup>499</sup> Christian Lindtner conducted a detailed research on “Cittamātra in Indian Mahāyāna until Kamalaśīla” in LINDTNER 1997. He contrasted the term “cittamātra” with “yogācāra,” stating, for example, that “Kamalaśīla accepts the notion of *cittamātra* as a *tattvapraveśa* in the sense of universal emptiness, but not in the sense of mere *viññapti*, or idealism. So, obviously, there are different ways of understanding the canonical term *cittamātra* in Mahāyāna: that of Madhyamaka and that of Yogācāra, and perhaps, that of ‘Madhyamaka-Yogācāra’.” (p. 116). For a detailed description of Yogācāra idealism refer to CHATTERJEE 1962.

<sup>500</sup> See *gZhan stong snying po*, 179.5: | *gnyis pa dbu ma chen po ni* | *bod du gzhan stong du grags pa rnam rig gi dbu ma ste* | – rendered as: Secondly, Great Madhyamaka is known in Tibet as *gZhan stong*, the Madhyamaka of cognition. See HOPKINS 2007: 62; CALLAHAN 2007: 201.

<sup>501</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg provided a concise analysis of the term “*dbu ma chen po*” from the perspective of the Jo-nang-pas and the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554), Shākya-mchog-ldan (1428–1507), and Go-rams-pa bSod-nams-seng-ge (1429–1489), in SEYFORT RUEGG 1963: 89–90, fn. 78. Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp discussed this term in different contexts, such as the so-called “three greats” (*chen po gsum*), where the remaining two are *rdzogs chen* (Great Perfection) and *phyag chen* (Great Seal), in VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 37–45.

<sup>502</sup> For example, the Sixth Zhwa-dmar-pa has elucidated this complementary function of the two views in his *rTogs brjod lta sgom spyod ’bras kyi glu*, p. 4. For details, refer to chapter 6 (6.1), especially fn. 835.

as a means of transcending mistaken concepts.<sup>503</sup>

The author has already shown in his previous research that the viewpoint of a master is closely related to his function as lineage holder of either a scholastic tradition or an explanatory lineage (*bshad brgyud*).<sup>504</sup> This viewpoint often serves as the background for the practice of the Buddhist tantras in such a way that it can be regarded as instruction for practice rather than as pure philosophical thought. Several earlier studies confirmed this strong affiliation to the practice of the Buddhist tantras, especially for the gZhan stong school of thought.<sup>505</sup> Thus, any dispute on the question of whether or not a master such as the Third Karmapa actually adhered to the Rang stong or gZhan stong school of thought is based on the mistaken assumption that these schools are in opposition to each other. Instead, as was shown above, they function on different levels in order to arrive at a direct experience of the nature of mind. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in the last section of this chapter.

### 4.3 The Third Karmapa as Holder of Major Practice Lineages in Tibet

Both the early propagation of the Buddhist teachings, also called “the old translation period” (*rnying-ma*), as well as the later propagation, also called “the new translation period” (*gsar-ma* or *gsar-’gyur*), except for a few significant translations,<sup>506</sup> had come to an end by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Qualified Indian and Tibetan masters – such as Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita for the first period, and Atīśa (982–1054), Rin-chen-bzang-po (958–1055), Mar-pa Lo-tśā-ba (1012–1096), ’Brog-mi Lo-tśā-ba (992–1074), and Khyung-po-mal-’byor (ca. 990–1135) for the second period, to mention just a few of the most prominent – had helped in one of the most extensive and profound religious and cultural transfers that mankind has ever seen.

The political situation before and during the time of the Third Karmapa can be briefly characterized as follows: In 1240, the Mongol Emperor Ögödei Khan (r. 1229–1241) conquered Tibet and under Qubilai (or Kublai) Khan (1216–1294) Tibet formally became

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<sup>503</sup> See further quotations concerning Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s balanced approach in the last section of this chapter.

<sup>504</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 101–102.

<sup>505</sup> See BROIDO 1989: 86–90; PETTIT 1999: 113; BUCHARDI 2007: 9–10.

<sup>506</sup> See, for example, the *rDor-rje-gsum-gyi-bsnyen-sgrub* or *O-rgyan-bsnyen-sgrub* (Three vajras instruction lineage) founded by the Third Karmapa’s principal teacher mKhas-grub O-rgyan-pa (1230–1309).

part of the Mongol empire in China.<sup>507</sup> Altogether, the Mongol rule lasted from 1240 until 1368. The exchange of religious guidance for political protection was initiated by Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251), who met Godan Khan in 1247 and established the first priest/patron relationship in Tibetan history.<sup>508</sup> Around 1261 his nephew and successor Chos-rgyal-'phags-pa (1235–1280) became state preceptor and later was appointed by Kublai Khan as viceroy and temporal ruler over the 13 myriarchies of Tibet.<sup>509</sup> From 1305 onwards, Zla-nyi-bzang-po-dpal (1262–1324) performed the function of the ruling Lama of Sa-skya. He reigned for eighteen years, assisted by two administrators.

Several lamas of other traditions, particularly the Karmapas of the bKa'-brgyud lineage exerted considerable influence on the Imperial court in China.<sup>510</sup> The Second Karmapa Karma Pakshi (1224–1283) became the teacher of the Emperor Kublai Khan. Like him, all subsequent Karmapa incarnations until the Tenth Karmapa Chos-byings-rdo-rje (1604–1674) were invited to the Chinese court and became teachers of the respective emperors. Western scholars have studied in greater detail Rang-byung-rdo-rje's involvement with the Imperial (Mongol) court in China at the end of his life.<sup>511</sup>

In the course of the thirteenth century, the transmission of teachings from India slowly diminished. Distinctive Tibetan forms of Buddhist practice had already developed. Tibetans came to regard Buddhism as their own indigenous religion. The early fourteenth century, this special era of the flourishing of Buddhist teachings and their practice, is often designated as the most formative period during the long history of Tibetan Buddhism. Several of its most outstanding teachers flourished at that time. They collected and practiced all available transmissions and brought the essential teachings into the form most widely used in the various lineages of spiritual instruction. The practice-oriented traditions were at a climax of their development, maybe only comparable to the nineteenth century nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement. As described in several Tibetan historical

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<sup>507</sup> For further details, refer to PETECH 1990: 5–32.

<sup>508</sup> See SHAKABPA 1967: 61–72; SEYFORTH RUEGG 1997.

<sup>509</sup> See SCHUH 1977: 79–103; KAPSTEIN 2000: xix.

<sup>510</sup> See DAVIDSON 2005: 332–335. Paul Demiéville, for example, has collected many sources concerning the religious situation in China at the time of the Second Karmapa Karma Pakši (1204–1283) in DEMIÉVILLE 1973. Giuseppe Tucci provided a comprehensive account of the first and second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet until the thirteenth century in TUCCI 1988: 1–28.

<sup>511</sup> See PETECH 1990: 85–88; SCHUH 1977: 128–142; RICHARDSON 1958: 145–146.

records, the Third Karmapa together with a few other masters was a key figure in this inspiring period.<sup>512</sup>

According to his two autobiographies and later biographical sources,<sup>513</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje studied extensively and received all available tantric transmissions from 16 principal teachers and from more than 100 teachers in all.<sup>514</sup> He became a holder of all major lineages of spiritual instruction prevalent at this time. He composed essential treatises on these lineages and passed the teachings on to more than 60 distinguished students belonging to all these lineages.<sup>515</sup> He thus exerted a profound influence on the whole of Tibetan Buddhism, at his time and right up to the present day.<sup>516</sup>

In his previous research, the author discussed the difference between lineages of spiritual instruction (*gdams ngag*) and established Buddhist traditions (*chos lugs*),<sup>517</sup> as well as between a practice tradition (*sgrub brgyud* or *sgom lugs*) and a scholastic tradition (*bshad brgyud*, lit. explanatory lineage).<sup>518</sup> Even if a practitioner of a practice tradition is supposed to study the philosophical viewpoint forming the basis of the respective practice, still the emphasis lies on the application of these teachings in meditation practice. On the other hand, studying according to a scholastic tradition is not necessarily directly connected to meditation experience, even though, in the long run, any philosophical view in Buddhism has a soteriological purpose.

A further categorization of transmissions of predominantly tantric provenience became popular during the nineteenth century nonsectarian movement: “the eight great chariots of spiritual accomplishment” (*sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*), or in short “the eight practice lineages” (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*).<sup>519</sup> These lineages of spiritual

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<sup>512</sup> For example, in *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 428.2; English translation in ROERICH 1949: 492.

<sup>513</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 35–49.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, 79–128.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–116, 157–173.

<sup>516</sup> This influence on the later followers in his main school and in other traditions, especially in connection with the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction, will be discussed in chapter 6.

<sup>517</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 64–68. Matthew Kapstein has clarified the distinction between “sect” and “lineage” in KAPSTEIN 1980: 139, and KAPSTEIN 1995: 284, fn. 2.

<sup>518</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 101–102.

<sup>519</sup> A well-known collection of practice instructions related to these eight lineages was compiled by the First 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas as one of his *Five Great Treasuries*: the *gDams ngag mdzod*: *a treasury of precious instructions of the major and minor Buddhist traditions of Tibet, brought together and structured in a coherent system*. The First Kong-sprul also provided another detailed presentation of these eight lineages in his *Shes bya mdzod*, A., pp. 275–464 under the title *rDor rje theg pa'i sgom rim man ngag gts'o bor byed pa bye brag tu bstan pa'i skabs*, English translation in HARDING 2007. For further details, refer to the bibliography.

instruction originated in India and were transmitted to Tibet between the eighth and twelfth centuries C.E., whereby the land of Uḍḍiyana or O-rgyan<sup>520</sup> as the origin of one of these lineages is mostly regarded as being connected to India. Both the Jo-nang and the dGe-lugs traditions do not belong to this set of lineages, precisely because they started in Tibet and not in India.<sup>521</sup>

Even if this categorization can be regarded as a limitation to the richness of the transmissions and lineages of spiritual instructions extant at that time,<sup>522</sup> the concept of the “original practice lineages” by many Tibetan and Western scholars is held to be essential for Tibetan Buddhism. Furthermore, even nowadays most of the instructions applied in the practice-oriented lineages of Tibetan Buddhism are based on this system, because in the way how they were formulated they mainly go back to the masters of the nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement.

The author in his M.Phil. thesis provided a detailed analysis of these eight practice lineages in the context of the inner biography of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.<sup>523</sup> Therefore, only a brief discussion is included here, in order to satisfy the need to clarify the background for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. Cyrus Stearns, in the introduction to the early history of the Lam-'bras tradition, has similarly provided a concise presentation of the origins of these eight lineages including their respective founding fathers.<sup>524</sup> He elaborated on the background for the Lam-'bras teachings as the principle subject of his study. Other more detailed presentations of the complete history and contents of these eight lineages can be studied from an article and a book written by Matthew Kapstein and Ringu Tulku, respectively.<sup>525</sup>

The standard list comprises the following eight lineages:<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> An area situated in what is today called the Swat Valley between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

<sup>521</sup> As for the Jo-nang lineage, the Tibetan master Kun-spangs Thugs-rje-brtson-'grus (1243–1313) founded the first Jo-nang monastery in 1294.

<sup>522</sup> See KAPSTEIN 1995, expanded in PRATS 2007: 125. The First Kong-sprul here provided the reason for not including numerous sub-lineages of spiritual instruction into his compilation of the eight practice lineages in his *gDams ngag mdzod*: “Because the minor traditions are exceedingly many, their origins and the definitive ordering of their instructions, etc., cannot all be related here.”

<sup>523</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 101–114.

<sup>524</sup> See STEARNS 2001: 3–8.

<sup>525</sup> See KAPSTEIN 1995; RINGU 2006: 97–191.

<sup>526</sup> For a short presentation in a verse, refer to the *Shes bya mdzod*, volume 1, commentary, fol. 175:

*Bod yul sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad ||  
rnying ma bka' gdams lam 'bras bka' brgyud pa ||  
shangs pa zhi byed shyor drug bsnyen sgrub bo ||* – rendered as:

1. sNa-'gyur mnying-ma (Ancient Instruction Lineage)
2. bKa'-gdams-pa, ([The Buddha's] Word as Instruction Lineage)
3. Lam-'bras or Sa-skya (Path and Result Instruction Lineage)
4. Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud (Oral Instruction Lineage of Mar-pa)
5. Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud (Shang-pa Oral Instruction Lineage)
6. Zhi-byed or gCod (Pacification (of Suffering) or Severance Instruction Lineage)
7. rDo-rje-mal-'byor (Vajra Yoga Instruction Lineage)
8. rDo-rje-gsum-gyi-bsnyen-sgrub or O-rgyan-bsnyen-sgrub (Practice and Accomplishment of the Three Vajras Instruction Lineage [of O-rgyan-pa])

1. Rang-byung-rdo-rje from childhood onwards received many transmissions of the rNying-ma lineage from his father sTon-pa Chos-dpal (d. u.), as well as from the contemporary holders of that lineage, such as Kumārāja (Rigs-'dzin Ku-mā-rā-dza) (1266–1343), the principal teacher of the well-known master Klong-chen-pa (1308–1363) etc., as well as in several visions. Following a meditative vision of Vimalamitra (8th century C.E.), he came to be regarded as the founder of an additional integrated bKa'-brgyud/rNying-ma transmission lineage called Karma sNying-thig. Consequently, his spiritual biography as a treasure revealer appeared in the *gTer ston brgya rtsa*, a compilation of biographies of treasure revealers by the First Kong-sprul.<sup>527</sup>

2. In terms of the bKa'-gdams-pa lineage the Third Karmapa, from the age of eighteen onwards studied for about two years at the institute of the bKa'-gdams-pa monastery of gSang-phu-ne'u-thog. He received the core teachings of that tradition, e.g. the bLo sbyong (Mind Training) and the tantric transmissions, from the abbot bLa-chos-ba 'Jam-dbyang Shā-kya-gzhon-nu (flourished in the early 1300s) and other masters.<sup>528</sup>

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The eight great vehicles of the practice lineages in Tibet are:  
 The rNying-ma, bKa'-gdams, Lam-'bras, bKa'-brgyud,  
 Shangs-pa, Zhi-byed, sByor-drug and the bsNyen-sgrub.

<sup>527</sup> See *Rin chen gter mdzod*, B, vol. 1, fols. 413.6–414.3. The Tibetan text and English translation of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's biography in this work has been provided in SEEGER 2009: 123.

<sup>528</sup> Shā-kya-gzhon-nu, according to the *Deb ther dmar po*, was the seventh abbot of the Gling-smad (Lower College), whereas according to the *Deb ther sngon po*, he was the fifth abbot of the Gling-smad, see also NISHIZAWA 2012: 352. Either in 1308 or in 1320, he founded a seminary of the gSang-phu tradition at the monastery of Tshal Gung-thang (*ibid.*, p. 354; JACKSON 1994: 66, fn. 152). This period of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's life appears, for example, in the summarized hagiography of the First Zhwa-dmar mKhas-grub-grags-pa-seng-ge (1283–1349), who met his main teacher Rang-byung-rdo-rje while he studied for six years at this institute, published in *HDT*: 268. See also *Deb ther dmar po* (*Red Annals*), pp. 66–73: *gSang phu dgon pa'i gdan rabs*; *Re'u-mig*: 90.

The studies of Buddhist Philosophy at this institute were mainly based on the treatises of Śāntideva and Maitreya/Asaṅga, as well as the progressive stages (*lam rim*) of the path to enlightenment as expounded in Atīśa's *Bodhipathapradipapañjikā* (Tib. *Byang chub lam gyis gron ma'i dka' 'grel*, Engl. *Commentary on the Difficult Points in the Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*).

3. The Lam-'bras (Path and Result) or Sa-skya teachings including the *Hevajratantra* (*dGyes-pa-rdo-rje* or *dKyes-rdo-rje*) were passed on to Rang-byung-rdo-rje by the master sNye-mdo Kun-dga'-don-grub (b. 1268).<sup>529</sup> 'Brog-mi Lo-tsā-ba, Shā-kya-ye-shes (993–1073), after having received and practiced the transmissions of Virūpa (ca. 837–909) and Gayadhara (d. 1103), translated them into Tibetan and became the first Tibetan lineage holder of the Sa-skya tradition. The scholar and abbot Tshul-khrim-rin-chen (1297–1368) handed down the complete set of his teachings to the Third Karmapa.<sup>530</sup> Later in his life, Rang-byung-rdo-rje as a holder of this lineage transmitted the teachings to the Sa-skya scholar g.Yag-sde paṇ-chen, brTson-'grus-dar-rgyas (1299–1378).

4. Holding the position as head of the Karma (or Mar-pa) bKa'-brgyud lineage, Rang-byung-rdo-rje naturally treated the principal transmissions of that lineage, the Oral Instruction Lineage of Mar-pa, as of utmost importance. Between 1288 and 1292, and again in 1303, he received the principal transmissions, such as the Six Doctrines of Nāropa (*Nā ro chos drug*) and the Great Seal (*phyag-rgya-chen-po*, *mahāmudrā*) together with many empowerments from his root teacher O-rgyan-pa (1230–1309). In 1292 he studied all the profound teachings of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud lineage with the two masters gNyan-ras dGe-'dun-'bum (d. u.), the head of mTshur-phu, and Khro-phu-ba Shes-rab-dpal (d. u.) of Zhwa-lu Monastery.<sup>531</sup>

5. Another independent branch of the Indian transmissions of the bKa'-brgyud teachings originated from Ni-gu-ma, Nāropa's wife or sister, one of the 84 *mahāsiddhas*. This lineage is called the Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud lineage. The Tibetan founder of the first monastery in the valley of Shangs was Khyung-po-rnal-'byor (ca. 990–1135), who passed on the essential instructions, the Six Doctrines of Niguma (*Ni gu'i chos drug*), to his main

<sup>529</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, B, p. 369, partly translated in KARMA THINLEY 1980: 56. For a more detailed account of the transmissions Rang-byung-rdo-rje had received at that time, refer to SEEGER 2009: 86–93.

<sup>530</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, B, p. 370.

<sup>531</sup> See *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, A, p. 929. 8–11.

student rMog-lcog-pa Rin-chen-brtson-'grus (1110–1170).<sup>532</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje received the transmission of the *Ni gu'i chos drug* from the above-mentioned master Kumārāja (Rigs-'dzin Ku-mā-rā-dza) and from Ri-khrod-ras-pa 'Jam-dbyangs-lhun-grub (d. u.).

6. The Third Karmapa was born in the neighborhood of Ding-ri-glang-'khor in the South-West of Tibet, close to Mount Everest.<sup>533</sup> Thus, from the beginning of his life a symbolic connection existed to the Pacifying [Suffering] (Zhi-byed) and Severence (gCod) lineages, because Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (d. 1117), in 1097, made Ding-ri-glang-'khor his residence. He was the founding father of the Zhi-byed lineage and principal teacher of Ma-gcig-lab-sgron (ca. 1055–1149), the lady *siddha*, who founded the gCod lineage in Tibet.<sup>534</sup> Consequently, the Third Karmapa received the complete set of teachings of this combined lineage from his father sTon-pa Chos-dpal, from Kun-dga'-don-grub, and from gNam-mtsho-ba Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (d. u.).<sup>535</sup>

7. From Kun-dga'-don-grub and from his main teacher O-rgyan-pa, the Third Karmapa also received the rDo-rje-rnal-'byor (Vajra Yoga Instruction lineage). This lineage is closely connected to the practice of Kālacakra (Dus-'khor, Wheel of Time). When emphasizing the completion phase of the practice, the lineage is often also referred to as *sByor-drug* (the Six Yogas, lit. the Six Applications or the Six-Branched Practice of Kālacakra). Rang-byung-rdo-rje became lineage holder of all five major Kālacakra lineages existing in Tibet at the time, in short called Ra, Dro, Chak, Tsami, and Vibhutichandra.<sup>536</sup> This particular lineage also played an important role in his life, because during the practice of these instructions he had a profound vision which caused him to compose the astrological treatise *rTsis kun las bsdu pa* as basis of the mTsur-phu Calendar.

8. Finally, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Third Karmapa became a holder of the rDor-rje-gsum-gyi-bsnyen-sgrub or O-rgyan-bsnyen-sgrub (Practice and Accomplishment of the Three Vajras Instruction lineage [of O-rgyan-pa]),

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<sup>532</sup> See KAPSTEIN 1980: 139–144.

<sup>533</sup> The exact birth place was called Tsa-phu near Gang-zhur-mo, which again is situated close to Mang-yul Ding-ri-glang-'khor.

<sup>534</sup> See FERRARI 1958, p. 154, fn. 544.

<sup>535</sup> See *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 426.6. English translation in ROERICH 1949: 490. Rang-byung-rdo-rje is mentioned as a lineage holder of these teachings also in EDOU 1995: 90–92; RINGU 2006: 149–150; LODÖ 2007: 15–16; GYATSO 1985: 335–336, especially fn. 75. The association of the gCod lineage with the Karmapas has been investigated further in SORENSEN 2013: 234–235.

<sup>536</sup> See RINGU 2006: 92.

started by his main teacher mKhas-grub O-rgyan-pa (1230–1309). This master is said to have travelled to Dhumatala in Uḍḍiyana, where he was able to receive these special teachings based on the *Kālacakratantra* from Vajrayoginī and other ḍākinīs. He composed the so-called *Vajra Verses* as a summary of the main instructions of that lineage. According to the *Deb ther sngon po*<sup>537</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje became one of the few students who obtained the complete instructions from O-rgyan-pa personally.<sup>538</sup>

This completes the brief survey of the eight practice lineages transmitted to and held by the Third Karmapa. In his previous research the author has shown that Rang-byung-rdo-rje played an important role in other lineages as well. Examples are the combined rNying-ma/bKa'-brgyud transmission lineage called Karma sNying-thig<sup>539</sup> mentioned above, and his function as a lineage holder of the Medicine Buddha (*sMan-lha*) teaching cycle.<sup>540</sup> After having received all these transmissions, he practiced them, composed important clarifying commentaries and passed the teachings on to his various students. The author has analyzed the connection of his *gSung 'bum* to these lineages in his M.Phil. thesis.<sup>541</sup> More details concerning the relationship between the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and these instruction lineages will be explored in the following two chapters.

#### 4.4 The bKa'-brgyud Viewpoint in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Time

At the very beginning the bKa'-brgyud tradition more or less followed the system applied in the early translation period. One of the first masters to reclassify the viewpoint according to the needs of his students was the above-mentioned founder of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud school within the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud Practice Instruction lineage: sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen.

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<sup>537</sup> The Tibetan lines in *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 613.7 read: *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub zhus pa'i slob ma'i gtso bo ni | rin po che mkhar chu ba | chos rje rang 'byung ba* | – English translation in ROERICH 1949: 703: “His chief disciples who obtained the Sevasādhana of the Trivajra (rDo-rJe gsum) were: Rin-po-che mkhar-chu-ba, the Dharmāsvamin Rang-byung-ba ...”

<sup>538</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself referred to this transmission when concluding his commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* as follows: “Rang-byung-rdo-rje has composed [this commentary] in accordance with the thoughts of the accomplished scholar and meditation master U-rgyan-pa Rin-chen-dpal at mTshur-phu Monastery.” (| *mkhas la grub pa thob pa u rgan pa rin chen dpal gyi dgongs pa dang mthun par | rang byung rdo rje yis mtshur phu'i gtsug lag khang du sbyar ba'o* |), in the colophon of *Dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i mngon par rtogs pa rnam dag snang ba*, p. 315.5–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 281–315.

<sup>539</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 123–125.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, 88, fn. 255, and p. 90.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 157–173.

In the context of the assignment of the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*)<sup>542</sup> to the “great vehicle” (*theg pa chen po*) he provided the following outline:<sup>543</sup>

A The Perfections [Vehicle], the Path of Preparatory Accumulation  
(*pha rol tu phyin pa tshogs kyi lam*)

1. Mind-Only (*sems tsam*)
  - a. The scriptural tradition maintaining that the cognitive image is true  
(*rnam par bden pa'i gzhung lugs*)
  - b. The scriptural tradition maintaining that the cognitive image is false  
(*rnam par rdzun par 'dod pa'i gzhung lugs*)<sup>544</sup>
2. Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*)
  - a. “Like an illusion” (*sgyu ma lta bu*)
  - b. “Not stationed anywhere” (*rab tu mi gnas pa*)

B The Mantra [Vehicle], a Path of Means (*gsang sngags thabs kyi lam*)<sup>545</sup>

sGam-po-pa elucidated the progressive stages of the general Mahāyāna practice in his well-known *Dwags-po thar rgyan* (*Jewel Ornament of Liberation*). In the context of the seventeenth chapter on the Perfection of Wisdom or Awareness, he mentioned the practice of the Great Seal and recommended proceeding according to the preliminaries of Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po'i sngon 'gro*) and the actual instruction of Mahāmudrā

<sup>542</sup> In his previous study, SEEGER 2009: 73–78, the author has provided a survey of the essential teachings of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, including a brief discussion of the various methods of teaching the Great Seal by Mar-pa, Mid-la, and sGam-po-pa, the three founding fathers of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud tradition. Andrew Quintman under the title of “Mahāmudrā” has summarized the key points of these instructions in QUINTMAN 2004.

<sup>543</sup> The Third Karmapa presented exactly the same two levels of the Mahāyāna in his *bKa'-brgyud gser phreng*, fol. 2b.2–5 (| *theg pa chen po la gnyis te* | ...). For this English translation, refer to JACKSON 1994: 15. The Tibetan *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma* (*Collected Writings*, vol. 1), pp. 335.3–336.2 reads: | *theg pa chen po'i sgor zhugs nas sgrub pa nyams su len pa'i thabs shig ston* | *de la yang dbye na gzhung lugs mang du yod de* | *sems tsam rnam pa bden pa'i gzhung lugs dang* | *rnam pa rdzun par 'dod pa'i gzhung lugs dang gnyis* | *dbu ma la sgyu ma lta bu dang rab tu mi gnas pa'o* | ... | *gsang sngags thabs kyi lam mo* ||.

<sup>544</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of these subschools of the Cittamātra or Vijñaptimātra, the Satyākāravāda (*rnam bden par smra ba*), and the Alīkāravāda (*rnam brdzun par smra ba*), refer to ALMOGI 2009: 34–38.

<sup>545</sup> See JACKSON 1994: 15. The list has been slightly abbreviated here in order to focus on the main points. sGam-po-pa in this standard outline of Buddhist systems actually presented more subschools under 2.b. and B. In terms of the tantric path (p. 16) Jackson again quoted from the *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma* (*Collected Writings*, vol. 1, p. 336.4–5: “the tantric path of means that makes one realize through direct cognition the innate simultaneously arisen gnosis, having identified the correct gnosis on the basis of the ‘warmth’ of the guru’s sustaining spiritual impulse.” The Tibetan reads: | *bla ma'i byin brlabs kyi drod la rten nas* | *yang dag pa'i ye shes ngos zin te* | *lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes mngon sum du rtogs par byed pa'i gsang sngags thabs kyi lam*.

(*phyag rgya chen po'i khrid lugs*).<sup>546</sup> Then, as David Jackson has rightly noticed,<sup>547</sup> “he makes a significant shift away from the normal Mahāyāna standpoint. ... he sets forth a radically transformed view. ... he then goes on to teach that all religious practices are included within just seeing the nature of mind. ... If a person possesses the insight into Emptiness, there is not a single thing not included within this factor.”<sup>548</sup>

Nevertheless, for the students of different capacities he provided a threefold classification of spiritual paths.<sup>549</sup> It demonstrates clearly how the distinction between the deluded state of mind (perception) and the state free from delusion (gnosis) has determined the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint at least from sGam-po-pa's time (the early twelfth century) onwards. In accordance with David Jackson's analysis, these three levels are paraphrased in the following way:<sup>550</sup>

1) The first level is the “path that eliminates the basis” (*gzhi spong ba'i lam*) referring to the Paramita (Perfections) vehicle (*phar phyin*). The basis here are the defilements (*nyon mongs: kleśa*). The method is to let the antidote of gnosis arise in the mindstream (*gnyen po ye shes rgyud la skye ba*).

2) The second level is the path “that transforms the basis” (*gzhi bsgyur ba*), said to be the Mantra vehicle (*gsang sngags*). The method for this change or transformation of the basis is to develop the pure view of seeing sentient beings as male or female buddha aspects (often translated as deities) (*lha dang lha mo*) in a buddha palace (*gzhal yas khang*).

3) The third level is the path “that knows the defilements as the basis of the highest gnosis” (*nyon mongs pa ye shes chen po'i gzhi shes pa*). It refers to the Great Seal of the unsurpassable Mantra (*gsang sngags bla na med pa phyag rgya chen po*) or the Great

<sup>546</sup> *Dwags-po thar rgyan*, p. 265.6 (133a), rendered into English in KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 247.

<sup>547</sup> See JACKSON 1994: 21–22. Jackson here included a discussion among various scholars concerning the sources intended to substantiate this practice instruction (pp. 21–24).

<sup>548</sup> *Dwags-po thar rgyan*, p. 260.4 (130b), rendered into English in KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 253. This teaching provides the name for Jackson's book title: *Enlightenment by a Single Means: Tibetan Controversies on the “Self-sufficient White Remedy”* (*dkar po chig thub*).

<sup>549</sup> Trungram Gyaltrul Rinpoche, Sherpa, dedicated a longer section of his Ph.D. thesis to the topic of the “three paths” as taught by sGam-po-pa in GYALTRUL 2004: 129–136.

<sup>550</sup> See *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, pp. 527.2–528.1. The Tibetan reads: | *lam rnam pa gsum yin gsung* | *de la rnam pa gsum ni* | *gzhi spong ba'i lam ni nyon mongs pa spong bar 'dod* | *gnyen po ye shes rgyud la skye bar 'dod pa ni* | *pha rol tu phyin pa'i gdams pa'o* || *gzhi bsgyur ba ni gsang sngags te* | *ji ltar bsgyur na* | *phyi snod kyi 'jig rten gzhal yas khang du blta* | *nang bcud kyi sems can lha dang lha mor blta* | *bza' btung thams cad bdud rtsir blta* | *nyon mongs pa ye shes chen po'i gzhi shes pa ni gsang sngags bla na med pa phyags rgya chen po'i don nam* | *rdzogs pa chen po'i don te* | *de yang ngo sprod nas chos thams cad la spang rgyu yang med* | *thams cad sems kyi rnam 'phrul yin* | *'od gsal bar shes pa ni* | *gzhi shes pa yin gsung ngo* ||. This quotation has been rendered into English and commented upon in JACKSON 1994: 27.

Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po*). After an introduction, the method is to realize the basis as being clear light (*'od gsal ba*), where all phenomena don't have to be given up, since they are just projections of the mind. This last level of directly recognizing the basis can also be designated as the essential approach (*snying po'i lam*) to the Great Seal.<sup>551</sup> It corresponds closely to the above-mentioned fourth of the *Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa* (*Dwags-po chos bzhi*): Delusion arises as gnosis – *'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba*. The realization of the essence is said to be superior to the sūtric and mantric paths.

sGam-po-pa's method of teaching, besides integrating the progressive practice of the bKa'-gdams-pa school, combined the Great Seal of the bKa'-brgyud tradition and the Great Perfection of the rNying-ma tradition in a new way.<sup>552</sup> His particular Mahāmudrā instructions, which had also been closely followed by Lama Zhang Tshal-pa (1123–1193),<sup>553</sup> became the starting point of countless debates among scholars of various lineages throughout the centuries.<sup>554</sup> The author in his previous research has provided a concise overview with respect to the disputed topics.<sup>555</sup> In the context of defining the Indian sources for sGam-po-pa's approach, Klaus-Dieter Mathes has dedicated a considerable amount of research towards showing that “two controversial currents within Kagyü mahāmudrā, namely the ones later classified as sūtra-based mahāmudrā and essence mahāmudrā, stem from Indian traditions and are not Chinese Ch'an Buddhism in disguise, a charge mainly leveled by the Sakyapas....”<sup>556</sup>

Dwags-rams-pa Chos-rgyal-bstan-pa (1449–1524), one of the main students of the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506), incorporated an elaborate discussion of this topic into his very extensive commentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don* by the Third Karmapa.<sup>557</sup> The title of the sixth chapter within the main part of his treatise is: “The Sixth Section Explaining the Way How the Perception of the Four States and Gnosis are Connected.”<sup>558</sup> In the context of the extensive explanation (starting from p.

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<sup>551</sup> The designation has been given to these teachings among others by the above-mentioned master Yang-dgon-pa rGyal-mtshan-dpal at the beginning of his *Phyag chen snying po*, A, p. 244.3–7.

<sup>552</sup> See JACKSON 1994: 28–30, 42–43.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 55–58, 155–158.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, 67–137, 161–188.

<sup>555</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 75–76.

<sup>556</sup> See MATHES 2008: 420.

<sup>557</sup> The short title of this commentary is *Zab nang 'grel bshad*. For further details, see the bibliography.

<sup>558</sup> *Zab nang 'grel bshad*, B, pp. 443.5–517.4. | *dum bu drug pa gnas skabs bzhi'i rnam par shes pa dang ye shes 'brel ba'i tshul bshad pa*. A concise outline of this chapter is given right at the beginning: “The inner connection is shown at the time of the basis between the eightfold group of perception (*rnam shes*

444.5), the author expounded on the Mahāmudrā view and practice in the bKa'-brgyud lineage.<sup>559</sup> Besides showing the identity of the topics of Mahāmudrā and “the connection between perception and gnosis,” he presented a wealth of reasoning and quotations from scriptures in order to support the bKa'-brgyud view as propounded by sGam-po-pa and other masters.

From this presentation of the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint and the refutation of the criticism against sGam-po-pa's method of teaching in the sixth chapter of the *Zab nang 'grel bshad* we have to conclude the following important points:

1. Up to the fifteenth century, the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint had been characterized to a high degree by Mar-pa's, Mi-la-ras-pa's, and sGam-po-pa's teachings.
2. The debate concerning several key topics related to the Mahāmudrā presentation in the bKa'-brgyud lineage continued for at least 150 years after the Third Karmapa's lifetime.
3. By means of his commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* Dwags-rams-pa Chos-rgyal-bstan-pa connected his discussion of the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint closely to the teachings of the Third Karmapa, obviously regarding him as an authority in this respect.
4. The sixth chapter of this commentary in several shorter and longer sections deals with the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, e.g. pp. 508.1–514.5, showing evidence that this discourse is a cornerstone within the spiritual practice of the bKa'-brgyud tradition, centered around the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) and the Six Doctrines of Nāropa (*NA ro chos drug*). In a very direct way, we thus arrive at an understanding of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as bridging these two major topics.

We can now summarize the philosophical viewpoint in the bKa'-brgyud tradition in the following way: The Cittamātra (*sems tsam*) school of thought is also designated as Vijñānavāda, Vijñaptimātra, Vijñapti(vāda) (Tib. *rnam par rig pa tsam du smra ba* or

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*tshogs brgyad*) which supports the four states (deep sleep, dream, sexual union and the waking state) and its nature, the four kinds of gnosis (*ye shes bzhi*), at the level of the path the four mudras (*phyag rgya bzhi*) and at the level of the fruition the four bodies (*sku bzhi*) etc., because in terms of all phenomena of basis, path and fruition there is nothing which is not included (*gzhi lam 'bras bu'i chos thams cad ma 'dus pa med pa'i phyir ....*)."

<sup>559</sup> After a general exposition on this topic, from page 456.5 until 482.2 (B) Dwags-rams-pa, Chos-rgyal-bstan-pa particularly quoted, analyzed and answered Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta's (1182–1251) critique related to sGam-po-pa's Great Seal presentation. He referred to sGam-po-pa's teachings on pp. 463.5–464.5, 476.1–478.4.

*rnam rig*) or Yogācāra (*rnal 'byor spyod pa*). When regarded as identical to Cittamātra, the Yogācāra system, according to sGam-po-pa's presentation, automatically falls under the Pāramitāyāna (the Perfections Vehicle). But, as was shown above, at the beginning of Buddhist philosophy in Tibet the scholar Śāntarakṣita synthesized the views of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka by introducing the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school (*rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma*) primarily based on his *Mādhyamakālaṃkāra*. In this case, the Yogācāra as a subschool falls under the Madhyamaka tradition. Both the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka (*mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma*) are then regarded as subschools of the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka (*rang rgyud pa'i dbu ma*) system. As shown in the second chapter, their difference refers exclusively to the presentation of the conventional level (*kun rdzob*). Their ultimate level (*don dam*) is identical.

At the time of their introduction, the superordinate denominations Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka (*thal 'gyur ba'i dbu ma*) were not in use.<sup>560</sup> Although frequently applied in modern secondary literature, they are not clearly evidenced in Indian works. By establishing the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka school in Tibet, the translator Pa-tshab Lo-tsā-ba Nyi-ma-grags-pa (1055–1145) made this distinction popular.<sup>561</sup> The First Karmapa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (1110–1193) had been a direct student of Pa-tshab Nyi-ma-grags and studied the *Six Treatises of Ārya Nāgārjuna* (*Rigs tshogs drug*) with him.<sup>562</sup> This was one important way of integration of these teachings into the Karma bKa'-brgyud school and explains how they were passed on to the Third Karmapa.

Furthermore, in Tibet many scholars following the rNying-ma, bKa'-brgyud, and Jo-nang schools understood the Yogācāra philosophy as not only belonging to Madhyamaka in the context of the Svātantrika system, but in combination with the Tathāgatagarbha theory even as “Great Madhyamaka” or “Profound Madhyamaka” (*dbu ma chen po* or *zab mo'i dbu ma*).<sup>563</sup> As was shown above (4.2), “Great Madhyamaka” officially became

<sup>560</sup> See SEYFORD RUEGG 1981: 59.

<sup>561</sup> See TILLEMANS 1998. Retrieved January 08, 2014, from <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/F003SECT2>.

<sup>562</sup> See *Deb ther sngon po*, B, *nya*, fol. 32b, English translation in ROERICH 1949: 475.

<sup>563</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied the term “Great Madhyamaka” (*dbu ma chen po*) in his *Phyag chen smon lam*, A, p. 621.5, verse 19:

*yid byed bral ba 'di ni phyag rgya che ||*  
*mtha' dang bral ba dbu ma chen po yin ||*  
*'di ni kun 'dus rdzogs chen zhes kyang bya ||*  
*Gcig shes kun don rtogs pa'i gdeng thob shog ||* – rendered as:

known in the fourteenth century under the Tibetan label of gZhan stong. The scholars adhering to the gZhan stong school of thought<sup>564</sup> considered this view even more profound than the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka system belonging to the Rang stong viewpoint, because of the former's closeness to the Vajrayāna. Another reason was that the followers of the Rang stong view could easily fall into the extreme of nihilism, even disregarding cause and effect. The proponents of the Rang stong view, on the other hand, criticized the gZhan stong pas as falling into the extreme of existentialism.<sup>565</sup>

To sum up, with respect to the philosophical viewpoint in the bKa'-brgyud tradition at Rang-byung-rdo-rje's time, it can be said that from its conception onwards the bKa'-brgyud tradition was strongly practice-oriented. Philosophical viewpoints mainly served as background for the two core practices transmitted in this lineage: the Six Doctrines of Nāropa and the Great Seal. The Third Karmapa closely followed this basic pattern. As was shown above and in the previous research by the author, from among the different Karmapa incarnations he was one of the most influential.<sup>566</sup> As holder of many practice lineages and founder of several retreat centers he was of particular importance for the continuation and enrichment of the meditative tradition. At the same time, he introduced a high level of intellectual understanding as part of the practice. As a result, the impact of his philosophical treatises on the practice-oriented lineages within Tibetan Buddhism cannot be overestimated.

## 4.5 The Sources of the Third Karmapa's View

In order to analyze the philosophical viewpoint expounded by Rang-byung-rdo-rje more closely, the sources for his view should be first clarified. Thus, a brief survey of his

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Free from mental fabrication, this is Mahāmudrā.  
 Free from extremes, it is Great Madhyamaka.  
 All encompassing, it is also called the Great Perfection.  
 Through knowing one, may we attain certainty in the realization of the meaning of all.

<sup>564</sup> Dorji Wangchuk in WANGCHUK 2013: 1323–1324 characterized the scholars presenting this viewpoint as expressing a “positivistic” attitude or approach towards Yogācāra. Examples are Tāranātha (1575–1634) in *gZhan stong snying po* (p. 180, lines 6–7), and the First Kong-sprul in *Shes bya mdzod* (p. 550, lines 5–8).

<sup>565</sup> Dorji Wangchuk in WANGCHUK 2013: 1323–1324 designated the scholars of this view as expressing a “negativistic” attitude or approach towards Yogācāra. Examples are the Sa-skya master Red-mda'-ba and most dGe-lugs scholars.

<sup>566</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 180–182.

extensive studies and qualities of learning is indispensable. This is then followed by a discussion of his own viewpoint as outlined in his *gSung 'bum*.

According to his autobiography in verse,<sup>567</sup> at the age of five, when he met his principal teacher O-rgyan-pa, he started to receive ritual empowerments and the related instructions from this master. At the age of seven, he studied the *Pratimoksha* teachings on correct conduct with Khro-phu-pa Kun-ldan-shes-rab (d. u.). When he arrived at mTshur-phu, the main seat of the Karmapas in Tibet, the actual period dedicated to his studies began. gNyan-ras dGe-'dun 'Bum, the head of mTshur-phu at that time, passed on to him the main practice instructions of the old and new tantras (*gsar rnying gi rgyud sgrub thab*), especially the essential bKa'-brgyud teachings mentioned above in the context of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud lineage.<sup>568</sup> Furthermore, he studied many minor teachings with one hundred teachers, such as the complete explanation on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Entering the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*) by Śāntideva.

In this way, Karmapa devoted his complete early life up to the age of 20 (in 1303) to detailed studies including a two-year-long stay at the famous gSang-phu-ne'u-thog Institute mentioned in the context of the bKa'-gdams-pa instruction lineage. According to his autobiography and other biographical sources, the Third Karmapa studied epistemology (*tsad-ma*) and Buddhist philosophy, such as the Five Treatises ascribed to Maitreya, under the abbot bLa-chos-ba Shākya-gzhon-nu.<sup>569</sup> An example for applying the

<sup>567</sup> *Rang byung rdo rje'i rnam thar tshigs bcad ma*, pp. 379.5–381.4.

<sup>568</sup> See *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 929. 8–11. The Tibetan reads: *gtso bor grub chen gnyan ras la kam tshang gi zab chos thams cad dang | mar mi dwags gsum gyi gdams pa'i tshogs dang | rngog mtshur mes ras chung ba khro phu ba sogs nas brgyud pa'i chos dang gter kha gong 'og sogs gsar rnying gi chos mtha' dag gzan ||* – rendered as: He mainly studied with the Master gNyan-ras all profound teachings of the Kam-tshang (tradition) and with Khro-phu-ba (Shes-rab-dpal) the excellent instructions of the three (masters) Mar-pa, Mi-la, and Dwags-po (sGam-po-pa), as well as of rNgog (chos-sku-rdo-rje), mTshur (ston-dbang-gi-rdo-rje), Mes (ston-tson-po) and Ras-chung-ba, etc., all teachings of the tantras, and the teachings of the higher and lower Hidden Treasuries and Oral Transmissions, all teachings of the New and Old (schools).

<sup>569</sup> The *Kam tshang gser phreng*, book ed., vol. 1, pp. 365–366 provides an extensive list of subjects studied by Rang-byung-rdo-rje: *gsang phu'i gdan sa pa slob dpon chen po shAkya gzhon pa la byams pa'i chos lnga 'grel pa dang bcas pa dang | dbu ma rtsa shes 'grel pa ga las 'jigs med dang | rang rgyud shar gsum dang | de rnams kyi 'grel pa lnga dang | dgongs 'grel dang | sA lu ljang pa'i mdo 'grel dang | rnam par mi rtog pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa dang | dbu ma sgom rim rnam pa gsum dang | jo bo'i chos 'byung brgya rtsa dang | mngon pa gong 'og gnyis 'grel bshad dang bcas pa dang | bslab btus dang | mdo sde kun las btus dang | tshad ma kun las btus rtsa 'grel dang bcas pa dang | rig pa'i sgo dang rtog ge sde bdun dang | dmigs pa brtag pa dang | 'dul ba 'od ldan dang | chos mchog chung ngu dang | nyi khrid snang ba dang | sher snying 'grel pa dang bcas pa de rnams gzan no ||* – rendered as: With the great master Shākya Gzhon-nu, the abbot of gSang-phu, he studied the *Five Treatises of Maitreya* together with its commentaries, the *Mūlāmadhyamakakārikā* together with its commentary, the *Mūlāmadhyamakavṛtīyakutobhayā*, the three eastern Svātantrika-Madhyamaka masters Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, Jñānagarbha's *Satyadvayaivibhaṅga*, Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka* and their five commentaries, the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* and its commentaries, the *Śālistambasūtra* and its commentaries, the commentary on the

classical rules of logic is to be found in *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 7. Here, Rang-byung-rdo-rje follows the standard presentation of a logical reasoning or syllogism (*gtan tshigs*) including a subject (*chos can*), a predicate (*bsgrub bya'i chos*), a reason (*rtags*), and, (often but not always) a corresponding example (*dpe mthun*).<sup>570</sup>

In the *Shes bya'i gter mdzod*, a collection of spiritual biographies of eminent Tibetan Buddhist masters, the range of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's studies is described in an even more striking way:<sup>571</sup> “[Karmapa] studied the whole bKa’-’gyur and bsTan-’gyur translated in Tibet from the teachers Shes-rab-dpal, rGya-sgom-ye-shes, sNye-mdo Kun-dga’-don-grub and others.” The *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng* expresses this in more or less the same way: “In short, he studied everything in terms of the direct teachings, the commentaries and the instructions translated in the country of Tibet.”<sup>572</sup> Jim Rheingans in his study of the Eighth Karmapa's life and teachings stated:<sup>573</sup> “This thesis provides the historical context of the Eighth Karmapa's life, demonstrating that he was one of the most significant scholars of his school, next to the Third Karmapa ...”

According to Karma Thinley,<sup>574</sup> “the Third Karmapa was an omnivorous student. Although he retained understanding from his previous lives, he researched all aspects of both contemporary and traditional learning.” What Karma Thinley calls “understanding from his previous life” by tradition is said to refer to one extraordinary ability that helped

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*Āryāvikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī*, the three parts of the *Madhyamaka Bhāvanākrama*, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, and Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* together with their commentaries, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Nāgārjuna's *Sūtrasamuccaya*, Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* together with its commentaries, the \**Vidyāmukha* (*Door to Knowledge*) and the seven sections of the *Madhyamakahrdayavṛtti-Tarkajvālā*, Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra-vṛttiyabhidhānasavyākhyānam*, Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, Vimuktisena's *Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti*, the *Prajñāpāramitāhrdayasūtra* and its commentaries.

<sup>570</sup> See the translation of the *rNam shes ye shes* in chapter 7, verse 7, including fn. 1124.

<sup>571</sup> *Shes bya gter mdzod*, p. 2.9–11: *slob dpon shes rab dpal | rgya sgom ye shes | snye mdo kun dga' don grub sogs las bod kyi yul du bka' bstan 'gyur ro 'tshal thams cad gsan par mdzad ||*. Even if the official compilation and revision of the complete set of the bKa’-’gyur and bsTan-’gyur was conducted by Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) close to the end of the Third Karmapa's life, still Karmapa had already commissioned the production of the whole set of translated teachings, as far as it existed at his time (most probably in the year 1334), see NGAG-DBANG-NOR-BU 2004: 4–5; chapter 1, fn. 48. This expression could also be understood as a metaphor for all classical teachings available in Tibet at that time.

<sup>572</sup> *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, p. 371: *mdor na bod kyi yul du bka' bstan man ngag 'gyur ro cog thams cad gsan par mdzad ste |*.

<sup>573</sup> See RHEINGANS 2008: 4.

<sup>574</sup> See KARMA THINLEY 1980: 56.

Karmapa in his extensive studies: His fully developed awareness enabled him to remember any text word by word from beginning to end, after having read it only once.<sup>575</sup>

His extensive erudition found its expression in his ability to clarify, structure and reformulate the key concepts of several lineages of spiritual instruction, especially of the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage, and is also manifest in the tremendous literary output that he left behind—according to the latest research conducted by the author, more than 300 works.<sup>576</sup> After having received a vast number of teachings and transmissions, Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed many commentaries in order to elucidate this material and to facilitate the understanding and practice of the contents for his followers. The period of translation of works from India had come to an end. It was obviously the right time to collect all available written and oral transmissions, to assess their authenticity and to reorganize them for easy access. Only the most capable scholars and meditation masters of an inspiring time, endowed with encyclopaedic minds, could perform such an enormous task.

#### 4.6 Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Balanced Approach

Tibetan and Western scholars mostly designate Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan (1292–1361) as the principal promulgator of the gZhan stong philosophy in Tibet.<sup>577</sup> Fortunately, in recent years some scholars have studied the viewpoint of the Third Karmapa in his own right, but limited by the respective number of available works.<sup>578</sup> The author in his previous study provided evidence for the master Yu-mo-ba Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje's (eleventh/twelfth century) having started the gZhan stong tradition in Tibet on the basis

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<sup>575</sup> mKhan-po Chos-grags-bstan-'phel: oral teachings on the Third Karmapa, Karmapa International Buddhist Institute, New Delhi, 1992–1993.

<sup>576</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 221–232, and chapters 1, 5, and Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>577</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 25–36, KAPSTEIN 2000: 110–119. Nevertheless, Kapstein admitted: “The fourteenth century, however, was a period of distinctive doctrinal synthesis. Dol-po-pa's contemporaries—including Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1284–1339), Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364), and Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308–1363)—all merit comparison in this regard (p. 107, fn. 107).”

<sup>578</sup> In this respect Klaus-Dieter Mathes, in his analysis concerning the view of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, wrote in MATHES 2008: 62: “If we follow Kongtrul or the Sakya master Mangtö Ludrub (Mang thos Klu sgrub), who claims that Rangjung Dorje held a zhentong view before Dölpopa, we have to add for clarity's sake that it was a different one.” The actual statement by Mang-thos Klu-sgrub-rgya-mtsho (1523–1596) in his *Bstan rtsis*, B, p. 454.4, reads: | *spyir gzhan stong pa'i lugs thog mar karma rang byung rdo rje bzung bar sems* |. Cyrus Stearns translated this statement in STEARNS 1995: 842 as follows: “In general I think the system of the *gzhan-stong* was first upheld by Karma Rang-byung rdo-rje.”

of his *Kālacakra* commentaries, long before Rang-byung-rdo-rje and Dol-po-pa.<sup>579</sup> The label “gZhan stong” was just not widely known before Dol-po-pa.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje was, as shown above, a holder of all “eight original practice lineages” in Tibet. This implies that he received all oral and written instructions connected to their respective viewpoints. According to Stearns and Ringu Tulku<sup>580</sup> the gZhan stong teachings were handed down in the form of a special exegesis of the sūtras belonging to the second and third turning of the *dharma* wheel, the tantras, especially the *Kālacakratāntra*, as in Tibet, for example, propounded by bTsan-kha’-’o-che (b. 1021) and Yu-mo-ba Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, respectively, as well as the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) teachings of the Indian master Saraha as taught in his Songs of Spiritual Accomplishment (*doha*). In terms of the commentaries on Saraha’s teachings, Kurtis Schaeffer referred to the Kar[ma-pa] Approach,<sup>581</sup> which goes back to the commentaries by the Third Karmapa. Thus, Rang-byung-rdo-rje definitely played a major role in promulgating the gZhan stong viewpoint.

The eight practice lineages consist mainly of tantric teachings and specific instructions related to the respective lineage. The viewpoint (*lta ba: darśana*) connected to the practice has mostly been expounded in philosophical treatises on the sūtra level. The viewpoint of a master, when serving as background for the meditation practice, is connected to his function as a holder and teacher of specific transmissions (*sgrub brgyud*). A teacher holding several lineages might even teach different views or different levels of instruction connected to the view according to the needs of the students of the respective lineage.

The same applies when discussing the philosophical viewpoint as expounded in the works of the Third Karmapa. General presentations of his philosophical teachings exist which can be used by all students in all lineages. They often serve as introductory instructions and form a solid basis for Buddhist studies. The more specific philosophical teachings related to one or other of these practice lineages build upon the general ones. They progressively guide the respective students on their way to more profound levels of understanding, experience, and realization.

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<sup>579</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 135–136.

<sup>580</sup> See STEARNS 1995: 42–45; RINGU 2006: 214–218.

<sup>581</sup> Kurtis Rice Schaeffer provided a concise outline of the Kar or Karmapa Approach including the transmission lineage in SCHAEFFER 2005: 72, 145. He further academically explored the commentary by Karma ’phrin-las-pa (1456–1539) *Do ha skor gsum ſi ka* in SCHAEFFER 2005: 71–75. For Saraha’s approach, refer to MARTIN 2006.

The viewpoint of the Third Karmapa represented a balanced approach.<sup>582</sup> He avoided falling into the extreme views of existentialism or nihilism.<sup>583</sup> When explaining that the self of the person as well as the self of phenomena do not truly or independently exist (*pudgalanairātmya* and *dharmanairātmya*), his teachings functioned as an antidote against attachment to existentialism.<sup>584</sup> When pointing out the qualities inherent in the nature of mind, the Buddha nature, his teachings functioned as an antidote against attachment to nihilism.<sup>585</sup> Since Karmapa applied philosophical viewpoints in his works in order to guide his students beyond all conceptual fixations, they complement rather than contradict one another. He just used different pedagogical methods to guide his students towards a direct experience of the nature of mind.<sup>586</sup>

The followers of the Madhyamaka school assert this direct experience to be beyond all conceptual elaborations. For this purpose, the Rang stong view applies a thorough analysis; the gZhan stong view, when teaching the buddha nature as being empty of or free from adventitious defilements, supports the identification with the qualities inherent in mind. For example, when teaching on compassion or buddha gnosis, this is supposed to be done without falling into the extreme of existentialism. As background for tantric practice, this approach is known as the “pure view.”<sup>587</sup> Whether or not this view has to be regarded as distinct from the Madhyamaka view is a disputed topic. The Third Karmapa himself commented on that as follows:<sup>588</sup>

In specific traditions the philosophical system of the mantras in terms of its particular methods is asserted as superior to the Madhyamaka school. ... There are some people who

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<sup>582</sup> See WANGCHUK 2013: 1323–1324. Wangchuk categorized the scholars of this view as belonging to an “inclusivistic” group concerning their attitude or approach towards Yogācāra. He stated that “the Yogācāra school is neither antithetical to Madhyamaka nor part of its foundation; rather, the two schools both represent independent poles that admit of a synthesis.” Examples are again various scholars of the Jo-nang, bKa’-brgyud, and rNying-ma schools.

<sup>583</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje has expressed this directly in several of his works, for example, in vol. 5, p. 222.4: “Do not abide in any extreme” (*mtha’ la gnas mi bya*).

<sup>584</sup> Such as for example in *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 4–10.

<sup>585</sup> Such as for example in *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 22–36, especially verse 33, line 4.

<sup>586</sup> In chapters 5, 7, and 8 the exact contents of his *rNam shes ye shes* teachings will be discussed.

<sup>587</sup> See MATHES 2008: 68–69.

<sup>588</sup> See *dGyes par do rje’i rnam bshad*, pp. 299.6–300.1, 300.3, in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 8, pp. 275–489. The Tibetan lines read: | *rang gzhung sngags kyi grub mtha’ ni lta ba dbu ma la thabs khyad par ’phags par ’dod de* | ... | *kha cig ni thabs bzhin du lta ba yang lhag go zhes zer te dpyad dgos so* |.

say that corresponding to the methods even the view is understood as superior, this is what has to be analyzed.

Obviously, he was not satisfied with this position, but at this point he did not want to refute it. He did not present any position of his own concerning this question. The ultimate view of Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself, like that of the followers of the Madhyamaka school in general, went beyond all conceptual fixations. In his commentary on the *bKa' tshoms chen mo*, related to the gCod practice, he provided a summary of the most grave mistaken views of non-Buddhist and Buddhist schools. He concluded this section as follows:<sup>589</sup>

Furthermore, all those having assertions of these and other philosophical tenets do not realize the meaning of selflessness, because they adhere to philosophical positions.

Several scholars have explored the viewpoint of Rang-byung-rdo-rje in detail. Some of them started from the mistaken assumption that any master could be designated a gZhan stong pa, if his view were concordant with that of Dol-po-pa, who made these teachings popular in Tibet.<sup>590</sup> Since the works of the Third Karmapa presenting his viewpoint differ in many ways from those of Dol-po-pa, this would automatically disqualify Karmapa from being a promulgator of the gZhan stong teachings.

Klaus-Dieter Mathes analyzed the view of Rang-byung-rdo-rje from both perspectives, in comparison to that of Dol-po-pa, as well as independently from this master.<sup>591</sup> In terms of the view of Karmapa in its own right, Mathes provided the following sources: “Based on the autocommentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don*, I will show that Rangjung Dorjé’s so-called *zhentong* is mainly based on Asaṅga’s distinction between the *ālayavijñāna* and a supramundane mind in the *Mahāyānasamgraha* and on a combination of his Yogācāra explanation with mahāmudrā and dzogchen.”<sup>592</sup> Mathes concluded this section as follows: “The description of the buddha qualities in terms of a momentary continuum or dependent arising reflects Rangjung Dorjé’s mahāmudrā background and constitutes the main difference between his interpretation of buddha

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<sup>589</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *gCod kyi tlkka*, p. 291.6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 270–298, read: | *gzhan yang de la sogs pa grub mtha'i 'dod pa yod pa thams cad kyis bdag med kyi don mthong bar mi 'gyur te* | *grub mtha'i 'dzin pa dang bcas pa'i phyir ro* |.

<sup>590</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 25–36; STEARNS 1999: 47–49, and fn. 22–25.

<sup>591</sup> See MATHES 2008: 51–75 “*The position of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé*,” and pp. 75–84 “*The Position of Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen*.”

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.* 56. Mathes further summarized the position of Rang-byung-rdo-rje on the basis of rJe bKra-shis-'od-zer's *rGyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*, see MATHES 2011: 212–219.

nature and Dölpopa's *zhentong*.”<sup>593</sup>

We can regard the extensive list of classical Indian sources incorporated or cited in the works dealing with the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as a proof for the integrated Yogācāra and Madhyamaka position of the Third Karmapa.<sup>594</sup> Important Indian forerunners for Rang-byung-rdo-rje's balanced approach among others were Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrīmitra, and Abhayākara-gupta.

In the works of Western scholars we sometimes read that the Third Karmapa did not use the term “*gzhan stong*.” As Mathes writes in the above passage “... even though he himself did not call it that.” Nevertheless, in the same section Mathes quotes (p. 445, fn. 332) and translates (p. 62) from the auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don*, where Karmapa applied the term *gzhan las rnam par grol ba* (short: *gzhan grol*) (“completely liberated from [all] else”)<sup>595</sup> instead of *gzhan gyis stong pa* (lit. “empty by something else” or “empty of other”). On top of that, Karmapa provided exactly the same expression in his *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, and in the *Phyag chen khrid mdzod* in the context of detailed Mahāmudrā instructions.<sup>596</sup> He thus connected this view to both of the core practices in the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the tantric approach, such as the Six Doctrines of Nāropa, as well as the Great Seal.

Another way of expressing the same content also appears in the *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*: “Under the aspect of abandonment [the *dharmadhātu*] is taught as “peace by nature,” and “peace from adventitious [defilements]”” In the same work under the heading of “The Way in which [the *dharmadhātu*] is not Empty of Gnosis”<sup>597</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje quotes from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, 13.18: “Mind is said to be

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<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>594</sup> See *rGyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*, p. 128.2: | *klu grub thogs med gnyis kyi dgongs pa'i gnad* | *mi 'gal gcig tu dril nas rgyal ba dang rgyal tshab byams pa'i dgongs pa 'grel mdzad pa* || *chos rje rang byung rdo rje la phyag 'tshal* || – rendered as: I bow down in front of the Lord of Teachings, Rang-byung-rdo-rje, who has commented on the thoughts of the victor (the buddha) and his representative Maitreya, combining into one the essential points of both Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga without any contradiction.

<sup>595</sup> *Zab nang rang 'grel*, A, 547.5–6: ...*bden pa gnyis po 'di yang chos rnam dang chos nyid ji lta ba bzhin du de nyid dang gzhan las rnam par grol ba yin pas* | – rendered as: “These “two truths” again correspond to the phenomena and the true nature of phenomena which is the reality (or suchness) completely liberated from [all] else.”

<sup>596</sup> *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, p. 8.6: | *de nyid dang gzhan las rnam par grol ba yin no* |, and *Phyag chen khrid mdzod*, A, p. 61.4–5: ...*gang du yang snang zhing gang du yang brjod du btub pas de nyid dang gzhan las rnam par grol ba'o* |. Critical editions and translations of major sections of these works will be presented in chapter 8.

<sup>597</sup> See *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, p. 36.4: | *gsum pa ye shes kyi mi stong pa'i tshul bstan pa ni* |.

always clear light by nature, it is [only] obscured by adventitious faults.”<sup>598</sup> Furthermore, in the context of a letter to rGyal-ba-ye-shes (d. u.),<sup>599</sup> we find the following two verses on the root of cyclic existence:

These conceptual constructs which are mental events (lit. originate from the mind)  
 Are the root of the cycle of existence.  
 With respect to that the understanding of past and future  
 Is the basis which gives rise to all distorted views.  
 Because it is like that, this itself is to be known, and  
 That [basis] itself is not different from emptiness.  
 That which is [shown] through examples [such as] illusion and so on  
 Should consequently be studied in accordance with the words [of the Buddha].

Here, the expression ‘*de nyid stong las gzhan min*’ (that [basis] itself is not different from emptiness) refers to the gZhan stong viewpoint, because this basis is the understanding of past and future, which gives rise to the impure concepts. These illusory impurities, the root of the cycle of existence, are not different from emptiness, they are temporary or accidental. Rang-byung-rdo-rje here simply emphasized the defiled side. This statement implies that the true nature of phenomena is pure, is empty of something else (*gzhan stong*). As the Third Karmapa explains in his auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang don*: “With respect to that, the buddha nature is simply the delusion of the above-mentioned eightfold group [of perceptions] free from defilements.”<sup>600</sup>

<sup>598</sup> See *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, p. 19.5–6: | *spangs pa'i cha nas rang bzhin gyis zhi ba dang* | *glo bur gyis zhi ba zhes bstan gyi* | and p. 37.2: | *sems ni rtag tu rang bzhin 'od gsal 'dod* | *de ni glo bur nyes pas ma rungs byas* || see P 5521, vol. 108, fol. 20b3–4. The Sanskrit lines appear in LÉVI 1907: 88:

*yathaiva toyē lutiṭṭe prasādite na jāyate sā punar acchatānyataḥ |*  
*malāpakarṣas tu sa tatra kevalaḥ svacittaśuddhau vidhir eṣa eva hi ||*

<sup>599</sup> See *rGyal ba ye shes la spring yig* in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, p. 75.3–4. The Tibetan reads:

*sems byung rnam par rtogs pa 'dis* ||  
*srid 'di 'khor ba'i rtsar gyur par* ||  
*'das dang ma 'ong la rtogs pa* ||  
*kun nas 'jig tshogs bskyed pa'i gzhi* ||  
*yin phyir 'di nyid rig bya zhing* ||  
*de nyid stong las gzhan min pa* ||  
*sgyu ma la sogs dpe yis ni* ||  
*gsung bzhin rjes su blta bar bya* ||.

<sup>600</sup> See *Zab nang rang 'grel*, A, 544.5–6: | *de la sangs rgyas kyi snying po ni sngar smos pa'i tshogs brgyad kyi 'khrul pa dri ma med pa kho na yin* |.

If we define a holder of the Rang stong or gZhan stong position on the basis of the contents of these views and not just on the basis of the usage of these labels, these are clear gZhan stong statements. By emphasizing the emptiness of the adventitious defilements, Rang-byung-rdo-rje in a very skillful way avoided the trap of falling into the extremes of existentialism or nihilism concerning the true nature of phenomena. Furthermore, in his commentary on the Six Doctrines of Nāropa (*Nāro chos drug*)<sup>601</sup> he called the practitioner who realizes gnosis “the one who is endowed with the *yoga*, which is devoid of a single and a multiple nature.” He thus alluded to one of the five Mādhyamaka reasonings and, in particular, to the Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka school of thought, because the seminal work of its founder, Śāntarakṣita, expounded in great detail on this specific Madhyamaka reasoning.

Interestingly, the following statement by the Lord Poripa, mentioned by Cyrus Stearns, summarized Karmapa’s way of teaching: “Relative truth is empty of self nature [*rang gis stong pa*] and absolute truth is empty of other [*gzhan gyi stong pa*].”<sup>602</sup> This way of teaching at the same time corresponds exactly to the formulation of the gZhan stong position by the Sa-skya master gSer-mdog Paṇ-chen Śākya-mchog-ldan (1428–1507):<sup>603</sup>

Who were the establishing founders of these [systems]? The two: the venerable Nāgārjuna and the venerable Asaṅga. In what way were these established? As twofold: as the Rangtong system, which determines that both [conventional and ultimate] realities are empty of an essence; and as the Shentong system, which determines that only the nature of conventional [phenomena] is intrinsically empty (*rang stong*), and thereby eliminates conceptual elaborations concerning the ultimate.

In her article on the diversity of Rang stong and gZhan stong interpretations, Anne Buchardi provided an analysis of the range of meanings of these terms based on a study

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<sup>601</sup> See *Zab lam nA ro chos drug gi gsal byed chings khrid yig dang bcas pa*, p. 553.5–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 537–562: | ... *gcig dang du ma'i ngo bo dang bral ba nyid du rnal 'byor can gyis rtogs pas ye shes mthong bar 'gyur* ...|. For more details concerning this statement, refer to the following chapter.

<sup>602</sup> Cyrus Stearns in STEARNS 1999: 50 (and fn. 33) explained that Dol-po-pa himself quoted a master called Lord Poripa or Phoripa. Stearns identified this master as Po-ri-ba dKon-cog-rgyal-mtshan (d. u.), a student of the bKa'-brgyud master rGod-tshang mGon-po-rdo-rje (1189–1258).

<sup>603</sup> English translation quoted from CALLAHAN 2007: 263. The Tibetan in *Stong nyid bdud rtsi*: fol. 173.3–4 reads: | *de dag gang gis gtan la 'bebs pa'i srol 'byed ni gnyis te | glu sgrub zhabs dang | thogs med zhabs so | ji ltar gtan la phab pa'i tshul ni gnyis te | bden pa gnyis ka'i ngo bo stong par gtan la 'bebs pa rang stong gi lugs dang | kun rdzob kyi ngo bo tsam zhig rang stong du gtan la phab pas don dam la spros pa chod pa gzhan stong gi lugs gnyis so* ||. Also quoted in *Shes bya mdzod*: 554.

by the Tibetan Buddhist scholar Zur-mang Padma-bi-dza, alias Pad-ma-rnam-rgyal (twentieth century). This scholar identifies seven main divisions concerning the meaning of the terms (*Rang stong* and *gZhan stong*).<sup>604</sup> In this context, the presentation by Śākya-mchog-ldan is the second after Dol-po-pa's. There is only a slight difference in the formulation which most probably originates from a tantric context: "The supreme *shākya*, Gser mdog paṇ chen (1428–1507), considers the appearance of phenomena to be *Rang stong* and the luminous, true nature of phenomena (*dharmatā*) to be *gZhan stong*." Later in her article (p. 9) Buchardi also mentions a possible tantric context for the *gZhan stong* presentation: "Finally, many – such as Padma bi dza – argue that *Rang stong* and *gZhan stong* represent Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna, respectively."

The summary of these seven positions yields the result that the meaning of the *Rang stong/gZhan stong* distinction by Rang-byung-rdo-rje mentioned above closely corresponds to the one applied by four from among the seven masters: "The first four of these masters hold that various relative phenomena are *Rang stong* while ultimate phenomena are *gZhan stong*."<sup>605</sup> A further concept belonging to the *gZhan stong* view is that of the "three natures" (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*), applied by the Third Karmapa in several of his commentaries, such as on the *Abhidharma* (vol. 5, p. 455.3–4), on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* (vol. 6, p. 501.6–502.2), on the *Dharmadhātustava* (vol. 7, p. 16.4–5), as well as in the form of the underlying structure of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. A more detailed discussion on this topic appears in chapter 3 (3.2.), the specific interpretation of the Third Karmapa will be discussed in chapter 5 (5.4).

Finally, one subtlety in the *gZhan stong* view which especially concerns the bKa'-brgyud interpretation of this view in the works of the Third Karmapa remains to be discussed. In the bKa'-brgyud lineage a further distinction is made within the "extrinsic emptiness" school. Here we find the "gnosis-" or "awareness-" extrinsic emptiness view (*ye shes* or *rig pa gzhan stong*) and the "sphere [of reality]-" or "expanse-" extrinsic emptiness view (*dbyings gzhan stong*).<sup>606</sup>

<sup>604</sup> See BUCHARDI 2007: 3–4.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*: 8. These four masters are Dol-po-pa-shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan, Shākya mchog-ldan, Sa-bzang-ma-ti-paṇ-chen (1294–1376), and the Thirteenth Karmapa bDud-'dul-rdo-rje (1733–1797).

<sup>606</sup> See *Dris lan tshes pa'i zla ba*, 61.4–61.5: *bdun pa de'ang bsdu na | jo nang pa gtso bor ye shes gzhan stong | shāka [read shākya] mchog pa dbyings gzhan stong | gzhan rnams dbyings ye gnyis ka'i gzhan stong ste gsum du 'du'o* | – quoted and translated in BUCHARDI 2007: 3–4 (and fn. 8): "If you summarize the seven, they can be condensed into three: [1] the main Jo nang pa [assertion that] pristine awareness is *gzhan stong*; [2] Shākya mchog [ldan's assertion that] the sphere [of reality] is *gzhan stong*; and [the assertions of] the others [3-7] that both the sphere [of reality] and pristine [awareness] (*dbyings ye gnyis ka*) are *gzhan stong*."

The first emphasizes the gnosis that is empty of adventitious defilements as the quality of highest awareness. From the perspective of the tantras it is also called “clear light-“ or “clarity-“ extrinsic emptiness” (*gsal ba gzhan stong*). Dol-po-pa, Tāranātha, and the First Kong-sprul were typical representatives of this interpretation. The second view emphasizes the aspect of gnosis that accomplishes the fundamental truth sphere (*chos dbyings: dharmadhātu*) free from duality or free from reference points. This view held—among other masters—by the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554), and the Sixth Zhwa-dmar Gar-dbang-chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (1584–1630), is more suitable for a philosophical approach.

Besides the Rang stong view the Third Karmapa actually taught both of these approaches.<sup>607</sup> The “awareness-“ or “clarity-“ extrinsic emptiness view in particular forms the basis of his tantric masterwork *Zab mo nang don* together with the appendix *rNam shes ye shes*. The “sphere-“ extrinsic emptiness view is contained in his treatises on buddha nature, especially in the work *sNying po bstan pa*.<sup>608</sup> The three works together thus make up a cycle, which presents the complete spectrum of the philosophical views in the bKa'-brgyud lineage.

At the same time, the Third Karmapa taught the two approaches in accordance with the Great Seal (*phyag chen: mahāmudrā*). He himself and his later commentators have shown the accordance through the gnosis aspect of these teachings<sup>609</sup> and the recurring references to the *Phyag chen smon lam*, his second so-called masterpiece.<sup>610</sup> In this sense the “extrinsic emptiness” view may be designated as the “sūtra mahāmudrā” approach, as

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<sup>607</sup> Karmapa mostly treated them separately while adhering to both of them. Nevertheless, in his above-mentioned commentary on the gCod practice, *gCod kyi tlkka, Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, volume 11, he formulated a combination of both, even twice in one expression, respectively: *thams cad ye shes kyi rol pa'i dbyings*, p. 286.3 – rendered as: “the sphere of the play of the all-knowing gnosis,” and: *'od gsal chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes*, 292.3 – rendered as: “the gnosis of the *dharmadhātu* of clear light.” This leaves the context for the gCod practice open. The *Zab nang rang 'grel* offers this kind of combined explanation in a longer section in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 389.2–390.2. The masters [3–7] in the above presentation by Zur-mang mKhan-po Padma-bi-dza, or Padma-rnam-rgyal, always combined the sphere and the awareness inseparably (*dbyings rig dbyer med*).

<sup>608</sup> bDud-'joms Rinpoche has commented on the pure view of the Third Karmapa as presented in the *Zab nang rang 'grel* in his *rNying ma'i bstan pa'i rnam gzhag*, fols. 99a.6–99b.3 (pp. 227.6–228.3), thus supporting this evaluation. The shortened Tibetan lines read: | ... *rang bzhin gnas rigs chos dbyings dang | rgyas 'gyur rtshogs brgyad dag pa'i ye shes de dbyings dang ye shes gnyis su gsal bar bstan nas ...* | The English translation of this section has been given in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 202: “In such ways he clearly reveals [the family] to comprise both the expanse [of reality] and pristine cognition. That is, the expanse of reality is the enlightened family which naturally abides, and the pristine cognition, pure in respect of the eight aggregates [of consciousness], is the enlightened family of inner growth.”

<sup>609</sup> Examples for this correspondence appear earlier in this chapter, section 4.1.2.

<sup>610</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 177–178.

taught by the Indian master Maitrīpa (ca. 1007–1085)<sup>611</sup> and later by sGam-po-pa bSod-nam-rin-chen,<sup>612</sup> as well as related to the viewpoint applied in tantric teachings. Thus, the Third Karmapa elucidated and systematized the view and practice, which was previously taught by Indian and Tibetan masters, to the effective form applied in the Karma bKa’-brgyud lineage right up to the present day.

## 4.7 Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the early Tibetan sources of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse has revealed the close connection between this discourse in the works of the Third Karmapa and several important treatises composed right at the beginning of Tibetan Buddhism such as the *Bar do thos grol chen mo* including the *Rig pa gcer mthong*, the *Byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa*, and particularly the *lTa ba’i khyad par*. The latter seems to be a direct progenitor of the *rNam shes ye shes* written from the perspective of the rNying-ma tradition.

In the context of the later propagation, Rong-zom-pa’s philosophical discourses expounded on various aspects of this topic, especially on the gnosis of a buddha. The forefathers of the strongly practice-oriented bKa’-brgyud lineage, Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa, defined to a high degree the viewpoint in this tradition, especially by means of their pointing-out instruction (*ngo sprod*) contained in songs of spiritual realization and essential teachings, such as the *Dwags-po thar rgyan* and the *Dwags-po chos bzhi* (*Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa*), supported by the commentaries composed by Rang-byung-rdo-rje, the Fourth Zhwa-dmar Chos-grags-ye-shes, and Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa Dri-med-'od-zer.

The 'Bri-gung bKa’-brgyud master Yang-dgon-pa rGyal-mtshan-dpal clearly showed the close connection between the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and the Mahāmudrā practice, which only a few decades after his lifetime became one of the key topics elucidated by the Third Karmapa.<sup>613</sup> Later, the Second rGyal-dbang-'Brug-pa, Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor connected the afore-mentioned presentation of Mi-la-ras-pa's and sGam-po-pa's well-known teachings to the three (or four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel.

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<sup>611</sup> See MATHES 2006.

<sup>612</sup> See GYALTRUL 2004: 171–172.

<sup>613</sup> See, for example, the Third Karmapa's explanations in his *Phyag chen khrid yig*, critically edited and translated in chapter 8.

He particularly mentioned the “Glorious Rang-byung-rdo-rje” as applying “only this way of commenting on the [Buddha’s] thought.” Consequently he recommended emulating the examples of these masters in order to follow the authentic intent of the bKa’-brgyud lineage.

With respect to the Third Karmapa’s own viewpoint, it is important to understand the relationship between the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools of thought in Tibet. The identification of Yogācāra with Cittamātra automatically treats the Yogācāra as a step on the way to the highest view of the Madhyamaka school. When regarding the Yogācāra as subschool within the Madhyamaka system, together with the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka it falls under the category of the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka as contrasted with the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. Finally, in combination with the Tathāgatagarbha theory the Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka is identified with the gZhan stong system or Great Madhyamaka.<sup>614</sup> This distinguishes it from Rang stong and sets its “pure view” in the highest position, functioning rather as a practice instruction on the basis of the Buddhist tantras.

As a holder of the eight practice lineages (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*) and other transmissions, the Third Karmapa took on the enormous task to properly receive, practice and transmit all these instructions. Thus, his contribution to the preservation and propagation of these lineage teachings cannot be overestimated. With respect to the Karma bKa’-brgyud school, his principal tradition, Rang-byung-rdo-rje followed more or less the mainstream bKa’-brgyud view as propounded by sGam-po-pa and other masters. Specifically by means of his instructions on the Great Seal and the Six Doctrines of Nāropa, based on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, he was able to combine the practice-oriented approach in the bKa’-brgyud lineage with a high level of intellectual understanding.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s own viewpoint was based on his studies and the practice of a great wealth of Buddhist teachings. The compilation of two bsTan-’gyur catalogues before Busto Rin-chen-grub (1294–1364) clearly proves his vast scholarship, which enabled him to accomplish a balanced approach without falling into any of the extreme views. He formulated this balanced philosophical approach in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in accord with the needs of his respective students. The reason why and the exact manner he expressed this discourse in his *gSung ’bum* will be explored in the following chapter.

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<sup>614</sup> As was shown above (4.4), the Third Karmapa used this term, for example, in his *Phyag chen mon lam*, verse 19.

## Chapter 5: The *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse in the *gSung 'bum*

Chapter 5 studies the occurrences, the appearances and the respective role of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in *Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Collected Works*. It starts out with a concise survey of the contents and structure of the *gSung 'bum* as background for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. This is followed by an investigation of the interrelation between the *rNam shes ye shes* and the two other treatises of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, the *sNying po bstan pa* and the actual *Zab mo nang don*. The third and most extensive section presents a detailed study of the role the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse plays in the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*. This includes the analysis of the major occurrences while focusing on their various functions. The last section of this chapter then deals with the Third Karmapa's specific interpretation of the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction.

### 5.1 The Contents and Structure of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *gSung 'bum*

Since almost the whole of the *gSung 'bum* of the Third Karmapa was not extant until the year 2006, when this collection was republished for the first time, until that point only a few of his works had received academic treatment. Research clearly shows that even now the studies on his life and works are still in a stage of infancy, even more so the studies on any specific subject within his *gSung 'bum*. From among the more than 200 extant works, and the additional 103 where just the title is known (= more than 300 works), so far (up to 2018) only six have been fully academically explored (SCHUH 1973; SCHAEFFER 1995; SORENSEN 2013; GAMBLE 2014 – three works), and only 17 have been completely translated, plus two partially.<sup>615</sup>

With the appearance of the first new edition, published in 2006, the three web-based catalogues published by the TBRC and the Tsadra Foundation, as well as the possibility of buying the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum* as xylographic or digital print, the research and translation activity started to increase significantly. It still focuses on the most

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<sup>615</sup> A list of the modern published works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, including their commentaries and translations, has been provided in SEEGER 2009, Appendix Three: 238–242. The various categories comprise modern Tibetan works in *dpe cha* format, modern Tibetan books, and modern translations up to 2009. The development since that time is shown in an updated list in Appendix 3.

important works of the Third Karmapa in the sense of exerting a strong influence on various lineages of spiritual instruction. This again has to be concluded among other kinds of evidence from the enlarged number of editions of the Tibetan works. But slowly the research also extends towards other topics in his *gSung 'bum*.<sup>616</sup>

When analyzing the contents and structure of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, the four major categories of extant, nonextant, newly identified and commentarial works were outlined in the first chapter under “Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s Works.” Appendix 1 provides a related chart of newly identified extant works. A few works of other authors have been included in this collection because of their closeness to, or replacement of, certain works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. One example is the *Jātakamāla* by Āryaśūra, entitled *sLob dpon dpa' bo'i mdzad pa'i skyes rabs so bzhi pa*, since the Third Karmapa commented on this work<sup>617</sup> and enlarged it significantly.<sup>618</sup>

In terms of further examples Shes-rab-rin-chen, a student of the Third Karmapa, composed a commentary on Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s *Dran pa nyer bar bzhaḡ pa'i bstan bcos*.<sup>619</sup> Another work is the *rGyud bla ma'i bstan bcos* by bKra-shis-'od-zer (fifteenth/sixteenth century) replacing Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s own nonextant commentary.<sup>620</sup> Karmapa’s commentary on part 2 of the *Hevajratāntra* entitled *dGyes par do rje'i rnam bshad* in volume 8 is not complete (consisting of pp. 490–528; 590–629), therefore, Karma Phrin-le’s (1456–1539) commentary on the same work, entitled *Rang-byung dgongs rgyan (The Ornament of the Thoughts of Rang-byung)* (pp. 528–590), completes the missing part. Other works might appear twice because of slightly different wordings in the title.

In chapter 6 of his M.Phil. thesis the author has already conducted detailed research concerning the three principal perspectives on the *gSung 'bum*: the distinctions according

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<sup>616</sup> As one of the first examples for other topics Ruth Gamble conducted an extensive study related to the Third Karmapa. In 2013 she completed her Ph.D. thesis on one of the two autobiographies and the spiritual songs of Rang-byung-rdo-rje at the Australian National University, Canberra. According to email communication with the present author, she incorporated his earlier research on the life and works of the Third Karmapa (SEEGERS 2009). In terms of the number of works it is a question of counting the two collections of spiritual songs by Rang-byung-rdo-rje as one work each, or as many works. The same goes for the autobiographies. The various parts can also be understood as separate works, see GAMBLE 2014: 149.

<sup>617</sup> See SEEGERS 2009: 221; chapter 2 (2.1), particularly fn. 116.

<sup>618</sup> See *sKyes rabs brgya pa*.

<sup>619</sup> The full title of this commentary is *Dran pa nyer bar bzhaḡ pa'i bstan bcos kyi 'grel pa*, vol. 6, pp. 1–219.

<sup>620</sup> See SEEGERS 2009: 132–134. This work has been removed in the 2013 edition and replaced by the newly discovered *rGyud bla ma'i 'sdus don*.

to the genres, the transmission lineages, and the most important works.<sup>621</sup> Thus, the previous research provides a solid starting point for investigating the more specific theme of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in relation to the *gSung 'bum*. The previous chapter here under “The Later Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet” lends a further perspective related to the contents of the *gSung 'bum*: the grouping according to the three (or four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel. Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed all his treatises known so far by following this structure. This fourth perspective was discussed at length in the previous chapter (4.1.2).

Rang-byung-rdo-rje's seven most important compositions can be grouped around the two key topics for the spiritual practice in the bKa'-brgyud tradition, the Mahāmudrā (Great Seal) teaching and the *Nā ro chos drug* (Six Doctrines of Nāropa).<sup>622</sup> The first topic is represented, for example, by the *Phyag chen smon lam* and the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, the second by the *Zab mo nang don* including its two appendices, the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*. As a preliminary remark on the categorization of the *rNam shes ye shes*, which will be discussed later in this chapter, it should be understood as incorporating elements of both and thus bridging these two principal topics.

The First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas provided evidence for a connecting source for most of these major treatises: the four principal chapters of the *Kālacakratantra*.<sup>623</sup> He explained that the *rTsis kun las bsdus pa* (*Compendium of Astrological Calculations*), regarded as the basis of the mTshur-phu calendar, summarizes the *Kālacakra* chapter on Cosmology. The *Zab mo nang don* (*Profound Inner Meaning, Reality or Principle*) comments on the meaning of the inner chapter of this tantra. Once again, this includes the two appendices to this work, the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*. Two works on the empowerments and practices (*dbang dang sgrub thabs*)<sup>624</sup> deal with the chapter on the *Kālacakra* empowerments and practices. The Third Karmapa's *Rnal 'byor gsum gyi snying po gsal ba*<sup>625</sup> (*Clear Essence of the Three Yogas*) elucidates the gnosis chapter of this tantra.

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<sup>621</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 150–173.

<sup>622</sup> These two core teachings of the bKa'-brgyud tradition have been discussed in greater detail under the title “The Essential Teachings” in SEEGER 2009: 73–80.

<sup>623</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod*, volume 1, commentary, fol. 168.1. A translation of this section has been offered in RINGU 2006: 92.

<sup>624</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 225. Most probably this refers to the works no. 128 *dus kyi 'khor lo 'i dbang gi cho ga gsal bar byed pa*, and no. 131 *dus kyi 'khor lo nas btus pa 'i dngos sbyor re'u mig* in this composite list.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 226. No. 143.

Another important treatise, the *Nyams len lag khrid ma*, became the principal source for the establishment of an independent lineage of spiritual instruction, the Karma-snying-thig tradition, a fusion of essential rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud teachings. Since several sections of this work are philosophical teachings on the nature of mind, in parts directly based on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse presented according to the rNying-ma view, this work is also closely connected to the other important works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, notably the Mahāmudrā works and the *Zab mo nang don*.

This perspective on the most important compositions is of special significance for the evaluation of the position of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and related works in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. The reason for this is that the *rNam shes ye shes* has to be regarded as essential for the understanding of five of the other six works. The only exception, the *rTsis kun las bsdus pa*, is indirectly connected through the *Kālacakratantra*, as shown above. Therefore, even if in terms of structure the *rNam shes ye shes* belongs as an appendix to the *Zab mo nang don*, and as a trilogy the three works even have a combined name,<sup>626</sup> they can also be evaluated as major works in their own right. Their central position in the *gSung 'bum* has to be understood on the basis of the analysis of their contents in relation to many other works in the *gSung 'bum*.<sup>627</sup> This will be the topic of the following sections of this chapter.

## 5.2 The *rNam shes ye shes* in the *Zab mo nang don* Trilogy

The *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum* in the version newly published in 2006 comprises 16 volumes, including five volumes of commentaries to the *Zab mo nang don*. Just the fact that these five volumes have been included in the *gSung 'bum* underlines the importance of that specific work. It seems that the editors regarded it as the fundamental work among the whole collection of compositions. Otherwise they could also have included later commentaries on other works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, such as the *Phyag*

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<sup>626</sup> According to the *sPar gyi dkar chag* (*Rum-btegs Printing Catalogue*) these three treatises together are also known as: *Zab mo nang don rtsa ba dang sems dang ye shes snying po bstan pa* (short: *Zab nang sems ye shes snying po*). Here, Kurtis R. Schaeffer in SCHAEFFER 1995: 18 stated that “these three, all in seven syllable verse, seem to have been treated as something of a trilogy by the tradition, as can be seen by the groupings of the commentaries.”

<sup>627</sup> The present author has provided a concise presentation of the transmission history of the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum* in SEEGER 2009: 146–149. Further references to the influence of the *rNam shes ye shes* on later followers and other lineages will be given in chapter 6 in the context of the later treatment of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction.

*chen mon lam 'grel pa* by Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas, etc. But this and similar works are not included in the second part of the *Collected Works*.

In general, the *Zab mo nang don* and the *Phyag chen smon lam* are regarded as the two masterpieces of the Third Karmapa.<sup>628</sup> Together with several associated works, such as the *Nā ro chos drug* and the *rNam shes ye shes*, these two compositions—according to tradition—represent the path of skillful means (*thabs lam*) and the path of liberation (*grol lam*) as taught, for example, by Marpa, the Translator (1012–1097), the Tibetan founder of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, but also taught in the rNying-ma lineage.<sup>629</sup> Marpa is said to have received these instructions from his two principal teachers, Nāropa and Maitrīpa, and to have subsequently brought them to Tibet. They represent the viewpoint and meditation as practiced in the bKa'-brgyud lineage up to the present time.<sup>630</sup>

Karma Thinley supported this evaluation especially for the *Zab mo nang don*<sup>631</sup>: "... he communicated his vision in many important texts. Of the ones surviving, the foremost for the Kagyu sect is the Deep Inner Meaning (Tib.: zab.mo.snang.don), an invaluable commentary on the nature of tantra." Here we find a short and precise description of the contents of this work. Furthermore, previous research by the present author has shown that besides being a summary of tantric concepts it can also be understood as a medical treatise on tantric physiology.<sup>632</sup> Through the three aspects of outer, inner, and other (*phyi nang gzhan gsum*) in terms of the *Kālacakratantra*, there exists an underlying connection between the *Zab mo nang don*, as elucidating the inner aspect, and the outer aspect of Tibetan astrology.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 177–178.

<sup>629</sup> For the bKa'-brgyud view on these two paths, refer to *Shes bya mdzod*, A, p. 832.4: *Thabs lam chos drug | grol lam phyag rgya chen po 'i gdams pa 'o ||* For a more detailed explanation see *gDams ngag mdzod*, A, vol. 12, *dkar chag*, pp. 668.4–672.2. See also LARSSON 2012: 92. For the rNying-ma view, see *rNying ma 'i bstan pa 'i rnam gzhas*: 158a.5–158b.6, pp. 325.3–328.3, translated in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 277–279; also BGT: 1150.

<sup>630</sup> See, for example, the Namu Buddha Glossary of Buddhist Terminology by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche (<http://www.rinpoche.com/glossary.htm>, accessed June 2016), entry "Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339 C.E.):" "The Third Karmapa known for writing a series of texts widely used in the Kagyu school."

<sup>631</sup> See KARMA THINLEY 1980: 57.

<sup>632</sup> Zur-mkhar Blo-gros-rgyal-po (1509–1579) in his important sixteenth-century medical work, the *rGyud bzhi* (*Four Tantras*) commentary *rGyud bzhi 'i zhal lung*, (Engl. *Transmission of the Elders*: 116–117) treated the *Zab mo nang don* as a commonly cited source: "The *Profound Inner Meaning* (*zab mo nang don*), a Tibetan Buddhist text on yogic physiology and practice by Rangchung Dorje (rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339)." See GARRETT 2008: 111; SEEGER 2009: 179.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94: *phyi nang gzhan gsum gcig tu bkod* | – rendered as "I established the three aspects of outer, inner, and other as a unity ..." The exact connection of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's treatises to this tantra has been shown above. Furthermore, the educational system conducted by the Men-Tsee-Khang, the Tibetan

From the very beginning the *Zab mo nang don* received a place of honor in the history of thought in Tibet. The first occurrence of a praise of the *Zab mo nang don* by one of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's direct students seems to be the reference provided by G.yung-ston-rdo-rje-dpal-ba (1284–1365)<sup>634</sup> in a work entitled *sPyi lan ring mo* (*Lengthy General Responses*). G.yung-ston had addressed this work to G.yag-sde-paṅ-chen brTson-grus-dar-gyas (1299–1378),<sup>635</sup> one of his own students and at the same time student of the Third Karmapa, who seemed to have turned against his bKa'-brgyud teachers. Accordingly, the subtitle of this work is "A Defense of the bKa'-brgyud-pa Teachings Addressed to G.yag-sde Paṅ-chen." Surprisingly, it is contained as a second part in the autobiographical writings of the Second Karmapa Karma-pakshi (1204–1283).<sup>636</sup>

The Tibetan text reads: *lhag par | da lta'i bla ma'i tsi gu 'di mdzad pa'i | zab mo nang don | 'jig rten gsum sgron* | – rendered as: "Particularly, the *Zab mo nang don* (*Profound Inner Meaning or Reality*), this kernel of a fruit, composed by the present Lama, is the light of the three worlds."<sup>637</sup> Of course, "the present Lama" of both Tibetan masters was Rang-byung-rdo-rje. The designation "this kernel of a fruit" is not another name, as Schaeffer had assumed,<sup>638</sup> but a poetic expression for the essential teachings of the *Zab mo nang don* originating from the awakened state of realization or buddhahood.

The famous tantric work *Zab mo nang don* is praised as "the light [or lamp] of the three worlds," referring in a poetic way to its liberating qualities and its potential influence in all Tibetan Buddhist traditions and beyond. G.yung-ston obviously addressed the high level of this composition as a pivotal argument for the qualities of the bKa'-brgyud teachings beyond the confines of a sectarian attitude. This can be one among the various functions of these teachings. Whether or not this "defense" was actually justified is not

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Medical & Astrological Institute, with its ca. 50 branch clinics in India and Nepal, provides evidence for the close connection of the two subjects of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology throughout the centuries.

<sup>634</sup> His hagiographies are presented in the *Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 134.1–135.2; English rendering in ROERICH 1949: 148–150; in the *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 274.5–321.5, as well as in GARSON 2004: 222–223.

<sup>635</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, p. 277.1. His hagiographies appear in *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 271.6–274.5, in *Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 463.7–466.3; English rendering in ROERICH 1949: 532–536, as well as in *Shes bya'i gter mdzod*, vol. 3 (*smad cha*), pp. 306–307.

<sup>636</sup> See *sPyi lan ring mo*: p. 152.3–4.

<sup>637</sup> The three worlds (*'jig rten gsum*) mostly are the world of the gods above the earth, the world of the men on the earth and the world of animals below the earth (see JÄSCHKE 1881: 175: heaven, earth, and hades or nether world). Sometimes the three worlds are identified with the three realms (*kham*s *gsum*), the desire realm (*'dod kham*s), the form realm (*gzugs kham*s) and the formless realm (*gzugs med kham*s), see RIGDZIN 1986: 86 in the context of the seven worlds (*'jig rten bdun*).

<sup>638</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 25, fn. 2.

really clear, since G.yag-sde-pan-chen composed a work entitled “*Praise of the Dharma Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje and the Methods of Practice (sādhana)*,”<sup>639</sup> contained in his *Collected Works*.<sup>640</sup>

When analyzing the relationship between the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *Zab mo nang don*, it is fascinating to see how closely interconnected these two works are. The *rNam shes ye shes* not only represents an independent treatise, appearing together with the *sNying po bstan pa* as one of the two appendices to the *Zab mo nang don*, but functions at the same time as an underlying theme winding like a connecting thread through the other two works of the trilogy.<sup>641</sup> In this way, concerning their contents, all three works are very closely connected, and at crucial points even refer to one another.<sup>642</sup>

According to Kong-sprul’s commentary, the *Zab mo nang don* was composed in 1322 (a Water Male Dog year) at the retreat place of bDe-chen-steng, and the *rNam shes ye shes* in the following year 1323 (a Water Female Pig year) at the same place. For the *sNying po bstan pa* no date and no place are given. Since Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang don*, the *Zab nang rang ’grel*, was composed in 1325 and refers back to both the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*, the latter must have been written between 1322 and 1325.

The *Zab mo nang don* in eight of its eleven chapters—particularly in its first, second and sixth chapters—is based to a great extent on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. After a brief introduction on the buddha nature in all sentient beings,<sup>643</sup> which in a short form already incorporates the teachings of the *sNying po bstan pa*, the first chapter of the *Zab mo nang don* presents the causes and conditions for the emergence of the world as we experience it in daily life.<sup>644</sup> In this context, the treatise provides a detailed presentation of the distinction between the eight aspects of perception or cognition and the various kinds of buddha gnosis.

The second chapter expounds on the beginning of a human existence: conception, embryology, the development of body and mind during pregnancy and after birth. This

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<sup>639</sup> The Tibetan title of this work is: *Chos rje rang byung rdo rje’i bstod pa dang sgrub thabs*.

<sup>640</sup> See *gYag sde pan chen brtson ’grus dar rgyas kyi gsung ’bum*. In *Shes bya’i gter mdzod*, vol. 3 (*smad cha*), p. 305.

<sup>641</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 7, pp. 269–276, 282–290, 308–360, 361–634.

<sup>642</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 19.

<sup>643</sup> See *Zab mo nang don*, p. 310.1–2.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311.1–312.3: (*rgyu rkyen bstan pa*), and 313.6–314.2.

involves the explanation of the functions of the eight aspects of perception in these processes. The same goes for the subsequent chapters on *rtsa*, *rlung* and *thig le* (mostly rendered as channels, winds and drops or essential points).<sup>645</sup> Chapter 6 then explains the impure and pure aspects of *rnam shes* and *ye shes* in connection with the various states of daily life, such as the waking state.<sup>646</sup> The eighth and ninth chapters deal with the methods of purification of the impure states of mind, both again based in part on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>647</sup>

The second appendix to this work, the *sNying po bstan pa*, also provides references to the *Zab mo nang don*, e.g., the first reference already in the introduction to this work, as shown above. Furthermore, when teaching the tantric concepts of the purified *rtsa*, *rlung* and *thig le* as being the pure [enlightened] form bodies,<sup>648</sup> this appendix outlines the fundamental theme of the *Zab mo nang don*. In the colophon, Rang-byung-rdo-rje again alludes to the *Zab mo nang don* by designating the *sNying po bstan pa* as “the essence of the Vajrayāna” (*rdo rje theg pa'i snying po*),<sup>649</sup> because the *Zab mo nang don* summarizes the principal concepts of the *niruttara-yoga* (*bla na med pa'i rnal 'byor gyi rgyud*) tantras, which are major sources of the Vajrayāna.<sup>650</sup> The First Kong-sprul goes even one step further by stating in his commentary: “From among all his (Rang-byung-rdo-rje's) scriptures, the *De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa'i bstan bcos* represents the essence.”<sup>651</sup>

Finally, the *sNying po bstan pa* also refers to the *rNam shes ye shes* as its underlying subject. In lines 25–39 the *sNying po bstan pa* explains the causes and conditions of

<sup>645</sup> Examples for these occurrences in *Zab mo nang don* are: 4b.1–4: *rgyu ni bar do'i rnam shes te | bag chags nyon mongs can gyi yid | ...*, – rendered as: “The cause is the consciousness of the intermediate state. The habitual tendencies [color] the defiled mind.” 10a.1: *sems nyid 'od gsal ye shes rlung | kun gzhi mkha'ste nyon yid bcas |* – rendered as: “The true clear light [nature of] mind is the gnosis wind. The space-[like] all-base together with the defiled mind ...” etc.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 335.6–336.6: *rnam shes la sogs'brel ba'i don*, “The meaning connected to perception ...” with references to the practice of Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya che*) on pp. 336.5 and 337.6, but not explained here in detail (*'dir ni rgyas par ma bstan to*). Furthermore, the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse continues on pp. 338.1–3, and 339.4–340.3 (end of chapter 6).

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.3–4: *bskyed pa'i lha rnam gang yin dang* “Whatever [concerning] the deities (or buddha aspects) is built up [in the mind]” and 344.2–6: *chos kyi sbyang gzhi bstan pa* “Teaching as the basis for the purification of phenomena.”

<sup>648</sup> See *sNying po bstan pa*, A, p. 287.1

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.3.

<sup>650</sup> A precise evaluation of the Sanskrit terminology applied for this group of tantras has been provided in DALTON 2005: 152, fn. 84 (confirmed by Harunaga Isaacson).

<sup>651</sup> See *sNying bstan rnam 'grel*, B, p. 131.8–10. The Tibetan reads: *| de nyid kyi gsung rab kun gyi snying por gyur pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa'i bstan bcos zhes bya ba ... ||*.

mistaken mental states, as well as the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in terms of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>652</sup> In the middle part, lines 104–106, Rang-byung-rdo-rje even paraphrased lines 5–11 and 45 of the *rNam shes ye shes*,<sup>653</sup> when stating that “the body is not produced by a self, by *Jha*, or *Īśvara*, or *Brahmā*, by truly existent external particles, or a hidden substance.” In a later section the *sNying po bstan pa* refers to three of the four buddha bodies and four of the five kinds of gnosis taught in the *rNam shes ye shes*.<sup>654</sup>

Of course, the *sNying po bstan pa* theme is also contained in the *rNam shes ye shes*, in verse 33, lines 167–170: “*sems yid rnam par shes pa yi | dri mar ldan gang kun gzhi yin | dri med rgyal ba 'i snying por bjod*” – rendered as: “What possesses the stains of the [dualistic] mind (*citta*), the mental cognition (*manas*), and the [sense] perceptions (*viññāna*), is the fundamental mind (*ālāya*) (or [cognition of] the all-base). Free from stains it is called the buddha nature.”<sup>655</sup>

In sum, even if the three works lay out a certain variety of topics with an emphasis on the Abhidharma, the Tathāgatagarbha teachings and the tantras, by connecting and incorporating the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse into the other two treatises Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided a solid foundation of general Mahāyāna concepts and in particular a connection to the practice of Mahāmudrā. This is supported in the two works by additional sections alluding to Mahāmudrā, examples of which have already been shown above (fn. 646). This must also have influenced George N. Roerich in his translation of the *Deb ther sngon po*, because when the author 'Gos-lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal mentioned the transmission of the *Zab mo nang don* from Rang-byung-rdo-rje to gYag-sde-pan-chen, Roerich added for clarification: “name of a Tibetan text belonging to the Cycle of Mahāmudrā.”<sup>656</sup>

For the purpose of developing a better understanding of the tremendous impact the *Zab mo nang don* (together with its two appendices) had on the history of thought in Tibetan

<sup>652</sup> See *sNying po bstan pa*, pp. 284.2–285.1.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 286.6–287.1. See *rNam shes ye shes*, pp. 270.3, and 272.2. At the same time these lines refer to a quotation from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 1.1.ab. The Sanskrit verse and the English translation have been discussed in chapter 2, 2.2.1, especially fn. 250, as well as in chapter 7.5, fn. 1090.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288.1–289.3. See also SCHAEFFER 1995: 56–62.

<sup>655</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, p. 275.5. The supplementation of “cognition of” (*kun gzhi 'i rnam shes*) originates from *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 457.

<sup>656</sup> See ROERICH 1949: 533.

Buddhism, it would be very helpful to investigate in detail all occurrences where in the historical records the oral transmission and study of these works is mentioned. It is obvious that, whenever the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, here mostly entitled *Rang-byung-ba'i bka'-'bum* (the *Collection of Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje*), has been passed on or received, the *Zab mo nang don* must have been transmitted as a part of it. And whenever the *Zab mo nang don* was transmitted, the *rNam shes ye shes* (and the *sNying po bstan pa*) must also have been included.

The author has already provided a concise transmission history of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* in his previous study.<sup>657</sup> A few further important occasions will be recounted below, here and in chapter 6. The number of occurrences of the transmission of the *Zab mo nang don* is too vast to be recorded here in detail. The listed transmissions took place from the time of the Third Karmapa himself until the early twentieth century. More or less all bKa'-brgyud masters received these teachings and passed them on to their respective students.

The fact that these transmissions have been mentioned in nearly every hagiography is truly extraordinary. Any such transmission must have been regarded as an event of immense impact on the life of a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner affiliated with the bKa'-brgyud lineage and sometimes with other lineages. Often the *Rang-byung-ba'i bka'-'bum* is mentioned along with the *Zab mo nang don* and its commentary. For example, at the early age of three the Sixth Karmapa mThong-ba-don-ldan (1416–1453) received this transmission at the Karma Lha-steng Monastery from bKa'-bzhi-pa Rig-pa'i Ral-gri (b. late 14th c.).<sup>658</sup> In the *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng* it is reported: “From Sog-dbon bKa'-bzhi-pa he heard the oral transmissions of ...the complete *Collected Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje* ... and the [*Zab mo*] *nang don* together with the auto-commentary.”<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>657</sup> See SEEGERs 2009: 146–149.

<sup>658</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 435.6–7, p. 477.3–4. BARRON 2003: 309, fn. 213: He is said to have been a bKa'-brgyud master who tutored the Sixth Karmapa mThong-ba-don-ldan (1416–1453); see also *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 474.1–2: *bka' bzhi pa rigs pa'i ral gri mtshan rin chen bzang po*, ROERICH 1949: 544: “bKa'-bzhi-pa Rig-pa'i ral-gri, whose name was Rin-chen bzang-po.” His title bKa'-bzhi-pa refers to someone who has mastered four of the five major sciences. In his case these were Madhyamaka, Prajñāpāramitā, Vinaya, and Abhidharma, all of which he had studied at the Gsang-phu-ne'u-thog College. He became lineage holder of the Karma bKa'-brgyud transmissions between the Fifth and the Sixth Karmapa. Short hagiographies of this master are contained in *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 512.3–515.5, and *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* A, vol. 2, pp. 1022–1023.

<sup>659</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 517.6–518.5: *Sog-dbon bka'-bzhi-pa las ... Rang-byung-rdo-rje'i bka'-'bum tshang ma* | ... | *nang don rang 'grel bcas* | ... *lung rnams gsan* |.

In this case the separately listed works of the Third Karmapa were the *Zab mo nang don* root text and the [auto-]commentary (*nang don rtsa 'grel*). The astonishing fact here is that this transmission is mentioned additionally, even though the *Zab mo nang don* actually is part of the *Rang-byung-ba'i bka'-'bum*. This is a clear hint that, at the time of composing this hagiography in the *Kam tshang gser phreng*, the beginning of the eighteenth century, these teachings were regarded as of particular importance.

The same can be said about the separate listing of the *Zab mo nang don* and its two appendices. In the compilation of life stories of masters of the combined rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud monastery of dPal-yul, situated in the lower Tibetan province of mDo-Khams, it is mentioned that the young master (*sprul sku*) rGyal-sprul Padma-mdo-ngags-bstan-'dzin (1830–1891) studied for two years with the First Kong-sprul at the dPal-sprungs retreat center.<sup>660</sup> Among all works studied at that time, there is special mention of the *Zab mo nang don* together with the *rje rang byung pa'i gzhung chung gnyis*.<sup>661</sup> These “two small treatises of the Lord Rang-byung-pa” definitely refer to the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*, respectively, the two appendices being “together” with the *Zab mo nang don*.<sup>662</sup> Again, the separate listing for these works, even if they are included within the *Zab mo nang don*, provides evidence for their tremendous importance within Tibetan Buddhism.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje's auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* was mentioned. The fact that it was his only auto-commentary also gives particular prominence to the principal work, the root-text. The *Zab nang rang 'grel* reappeared before the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* and exists now in at least three editions.<sup>663</sup> The author was able to acquire a microfilm copy of the Nepal edition of the Tibetan text from the National Archives in Kathmandu. This specific edition shows several characteristics which are not visible on the edition of this auto-commentary integrated in the newly published *gSung 'bum*.

In 2013, Matthew Kapstein provided an interesting hint when discussing with the present author<sup>664</sup> the origin of the *Zab nang rang 'grel* published by the NGMCP (former

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<sup>660</sup> See *Dpal yul gdan rabs*, fol. 44b.4: 'Jam mgon thams cad mkhyen pa blo gros mtha' yas mdun dpal sprungs ri khrod du lo gnyis bzhugs ring |.

<sup>661</sup> See the *Dpal-yul gdan rabs*: fol. 48a.5.

<sup>662</sup> These two treatises are designated as such, for example, in DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991, vol. 2: p. 285.

<sup>663</sup> For exact details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>664</sup> This discussion took place at a conference on “Manuscript and Xylograph Traditions in the Tibetan Cultural Sphere,” Hamburg, May 15–18, 2013.

NGMPP) in 1993.<sup>665</sup> At first he pointed to the left margin of the Tibetan text, marked by the letter *kha* and suggested that, since this work carries the second letter of the Tibetan alphabet, it definitely belongs to a series of works starting with the first letter *ka*. Then he pointed to the right margin marked by Chinese characters and explained that these typical characters clearly showed the origin as deriving from the Ming Dynasty in China (1368–1644). Thus, this edition was most probably published in China shortly after the lifetime of the Third Karmapa.

The conclusion seems to be that the Chinese at that time had produced a collection of works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, starting from the *Zab mo nang don*, one of his major treatises. Kapstein even remembered that he had seen two copies of a Chinese edition of the *sKyes rabs brgya pa*, Rang-byung-rdo-rje's commentary on Āryaśūra's *Jātakamāla*, one at the library of the Columbia University, another at a Tibetan monastery in Eastern Tibet. Whether or not the edition of this work is identical to the one mentioned above, which is also contained in the *gsung thor bu* collection published by TBRC, is not clear, since it does not show Chinese characters on the right margin. Nevertheless, being marked by the letter *ah* on the left margin, it also seems to be part of a longer series edited in China. Possibly these Chinese prints could even have been contained in separate sets of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*.

### 5.3 The Various Functions of the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Other Works

When investigating the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, we find a great variety of occurrences besides the *Zab mo nang don* and its appendices. In the edition of 2006, except for the first two volumes, this discourse appears in all volumes of the *gSung 'bum*, even several times in most volumes. Appearances differ in length: there could be a complete treatise, a major part or a chapter of a treatise, a larger or smaller section or a few sentences, sometimes only one sentence.

In order to qualify as a major occurrence, this has to contain the complete theme, i.e. the distinction between perception and gnosis, in one section. A minor occurrence either expresses the same subject in slightly different terminology, or it elaborates on the deluded state of mind or the state of mind free from delusion by applying the terminology

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<sup>665</sup> See *Zab nang rang 'grel*, C.

of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and by referring to the missing part in a different section, still in the same work. A minor occurrence can also be the explanation of one of the key concepts, such as the distinction between the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi rnam shes: ālayavijñāna*) and the buddha nature (*rgyal ba'i snying po*), or the nature of one's own mind (*sems nyid*) being in essence the four buddha bodies (*sku bzhi*) and the five kinds of gnosis (*ye shes lnga*).

The major occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse within the *gSung 'bum* are analyzed from the perspective of their respective function. In general, in his works the Third Karmapa explained the operation of perception and cognition as well as their change of state into the five buddha gnoses at the time of purification in a manner that seemed most appropriate to him. It is, therefore, fascinating how consistently and at the same time how flexibly Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied this subject with the intention of benefiting his students in various lineages in the context of different genres, in verse as well as in prose.

For this purpose, he combined mostly a variety of philosophical and epistemological elements from classical sources with effective practical advice for a certain given situation. Often he expressed this topic in poetic form, especially in the collections of his songs. Furthermore, he provided many illustrative examples, thus rendering the various aspects of the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction more easily accessible. As this whole discourse is very profound, a full explanation of all levels goes beyond the scope of the present research. The investigation can only provide a solid foundation for future research and for a variety of applications.<sup>666</sup> Karmapa's specific interpretation of the theme will be discussed in greater detail below.

The following section starts from the third volume and progressively investigates the various functions of this discourse by means of brief examples from the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. Here, only the most characteristic passages are cited, translated and commented upon. Analysis of every detail goes beyond the scope of this research, particularly since several occurrences, e.g. those in the tantric commentaries, are repeated many times. Whenever critical editions of the Tibetan works under investigation already

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<sup>666</sup> For example, in September 2015, following an invitation to Vélez-Málaga, Spain, by the Consciousness, Mindfulness, Compassion, Int. Association (CMC), the author held a lecture entitled: "From Perception (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) to Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*): The Third Karmapa's (1284–1339) Teachings as Reference for Structures in Meditation Research."

exist, this is mentioned. Otherwise, possible errors or alternative readings in the available editions, which might influence the meaning of the translation, are pointed out.<sup>667</sup>

The third volume focuses on Rang-byung-rdo-rje's collection of Mi-la-ras-pa's songs, including his concise life story under the short title of *mDzod nag ma*.<sup>668</sup> Several early examples of *vajra* songs (*mdo rje mgur*) expressing Mi-la-re-pa's realization incorporate the *rNam shes ye shes* theme, for example, in the following way.<sup>669</sup>

I found confidence in [the state] free from duality.

I purified the clinging to the duality of body and mind.

It follows that the appearance of the six groups [of perception] is deluded.

I cut away misconceptions concerning apprehending things as real.

A further example from the same collection appears in a song to the followers:<sup>670</sup>

After knowing the conduct free from activity, the yogi, whose six groups [of perception] are liberated in their own nature, [experiences] joy.

After the five doors [of perception] arise as the five [sense] objects, the practitioner who produces the conduct of the ego-clinging has purified this.

After knowing the result as being unborn, the yogi who is beyond the appearance of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, [experiences] joy.

After the result had been defiled by ignorance, the practitioner, who continually wanders in the cycle of existence, has purified this.

And a brief excerpt from a similar *vajra* song by Mi-la-ras-pa:<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> For a comparative table of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works, refer to SEEGER 2009: 233–237.

<sup>668</sup> Further bibliographical details of this work appear in the bibliography.

<sup>669</sup> *mDzod nag ma*, p. 115.1. This translation and all others within this section are the author's own, unless otherwise indicated. The Tibetan reads:

*gnyis su med pa'i gdings shig rnyed ||*  
*lus sems gnyis kyi 'dzin pa dag ||*  
*tshogs drug gi snang ba rdzun du thal ||*  
*dngos por 'dzin pa'i sgro 'dogs chod ||.*

<sup>670</sup> *mDzod nag ma*, p. 152.4–6. The Tibetan reads:

*spyod pa byar med shes nas tshogs drug rang sar grol ba'i rnal 'byor pa bde ste ||*  
*sgo lnga yul lngar shar nas bdag 'dzin gyi spyod pa byed pa'i chos pa 'di sbyangs ||*  
*'bras bu skye med du shes nas 'khor 'das snang ba la 'das pa'i rnal 'byor pa bde ste ||*  
*'bras bu ma rig pas bsgrigs nas gtan du 'khor bar 'khyams pa'i chos pa 'di sbyangs ||.*

<sup>671</sup> *mDzod nag ma*, p. 285.5. The Tibetan reads:

*nyon mongs ye shes khyad med na ||*  
*rtogs tshad klong du gyur pa yin ||*  
*rang sems dang sangs rgyas khyad med na ||*  
*'bras bu klong du gyur pa yin ||.*

If there is no difference between afflictive emotions and gnosis,  
This means to have mastered the pinnacle of realization.  
If there is no difference between one's own mind and the awakened state,  
This means to have attained mastery over the result.

Finally, a major occurrence appears in Mi-la-ras-pa's song of realization addressed to Tshe-ring-ma and her retinue, which was quoted, translated and commented upon in the previous chapter under "The Later Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet." The most important statement here is: "Thus, those skilled in realization do not see perception, they see gnosis."<sup>672</sup> Even if this is a very brief part of a song, it fully qualifies as a major occurrence in that it applies the literal terminology of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in a complete form.

These two lines clearly prove that at the time of the Third Karmapa, about 150 years before gTsang-smyon He-ru-ka (1452–1507) completed Mi-la-ras-pa's well-known hagiography and song collection (in 1488), Mi-la-ras-pa had applied the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as a way of stating his and others' realization. One major function of this topic is thus to express full realization of the nature of mind in the context of a *vajra* song. Furthermore, as we have seen in the previous chapter, according to the Second rGyal-dbang-'Brug-pa Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor, the Third Karmapa followed the same structure of teaching in four levels as Mi-la-ras-pa. Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor regards this way of commenting on Buddha's thought as expressing "the authentic intent of the bKa'-brgyud [lineage]."

In the first part of the fourth volume of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* the Third Karmapa outlines the *bKa'-brgyud gser phreng* (*Golden bKa'-brgyud Garland*) from the Indian forefathers of the bKa'-brgyud school up to Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself. The complete collection of these hagiographies appears in the 2013 edition as volume 3, while *Mi-la-re-pa's Collected Songs* (*mDzod nag ma*) make up volume 13, the last volume in this edition. The hagiography of Mar-pa, which is missing in the 2006 edition, has been inserted in the *bKa'-brgyud gser phreng* of the 2013 edition and thus appears in volume

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<sup>672</sup> *mDzod nag ma*, pp. 531.6–532.6. The two crucial Tibetan lines read:

*de ltar rtogs pa'i mkhas pa yis ||*  
*rnam shes ma mthong ye shes mthong ||.*

3 of that edition.<sup>673</sup> As was shown in the previous chapter (4.1.2), Mar-pa expressed his realization here by referring to the *rNam shes ye shes* theme in one of his *vajra* songs.

Volume 5 contains many shorter works such as praises, letters of advice, songs of realization, and brief commentaries. Here we find a great variety of occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. It is impossible to mention all minor occurrences, but the very clear major ones are presented, at least in brief excerpts, together with an explanation of their respective function. For the two largest sections that present songs of realization, two Tibetan editions exist. Ruth Gamble has compared nearly all songs in GAMBLE 2014: 410–453 (see below). If a certain variation significantly changes the meaning, this is mentioned in the present author’s translation. The first occurrence is part of a praise to the wisdom (*shes rab*) of rDo-rje Phag-mo (Skt. *Vajravārāhī*).<sup>674</sup> The verse reads:

I bow down in front of you,  
Who is in the center of the lotus, which is completely pure and free from blemishes,  
[Who stands on] the seat of the sun, free from the veils of complete distraction,  
[Who is] on top of a large corpse which is the realm of concepts,  
Who changes the state of perception into gnosis.

The following praise to the activity of the Protector Mañjuśrī offers a different way of expressing the same topic, which is nevertheless essential in the *rNam shes ye shes*:<sup>675</sup>

This wind of what is improper  
Is said to be difficult to pacify. Not having said this (myself),  
I pray that the *vajra*-like *samādhi* may overcome  
The movement of the karmic formations.

<sup>673</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, vol. 3 (*ga pa*), *bKa'-brgyud gser phreng*, pp. 101–182.

<sup>674</sup> The Tibetan verse in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 10.3–12.1, according to the colophon entitled “*Phag mo shes rab gsal byed la bstod cing gsol ba blo yis mun sel*” (p. 10.5–6, “*chu*” as part of the term “*chu skyes*” = “lotus” should be written without the suffix “s”), reads:

*rnam dag nyes pa'i skyon bral chus* (sic!) *skyes dbus* ||  
*rnam g.yeng sgrib sel nyi ma'i gdan* ||  
*rnam rtog dbyings dang ro gcig bam chen steng* ||  
*rnam shes ye shes gnas gyur khyod la 'dud* ||.

<sup>675</sup> The Tibetan verse in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 12.1–19.6, entitled “*Bcom ldan 'das mgon po 'jam dpal dbyangs kyi 'phrin las phyogs cig la bstod pa*” (p. 18.1–2), reads:

*tshul bzhin ma yin rlung 'di ni* ||  
*zhi bar bka' zhes mi gsung par* ||  
*rdo rje lta bu'i ting 'dzin gyis* ||  
*'du byed g.yo ba gzhom du gsol* ||.

As a further example the following praise is directed towards just a fraction of the qualities of the Mighty Avalokiteśvara:<sup>676</sup>

Even though your fundamental mind, cognition, and perception have been abandoned,  
you engage in the minds of all sentient beings.  
Even though your space-like conceptual elaborations are purified,  
You directly and clearly know all conceptual elaborations.  
Therefore, even though there is nothing to be expressed by me,  
I venerate and praise you out of respect.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje here applied the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as part of praising several buddha aspects. Even though the topic is again presented in songs of realization, here its function is to point out the enlightened qualities of several important buddha forms or deities, such as Vajravārāhī, Mañjuśrī, and Avalokiteśvara. Karmapa also composed several letters of advice to his students containing this theme. One of them was directed to the Sa-skyā scholar Lha-steng-pa gZhon-nu-'bum (b. end of the thirteenth century). In this letter he expressed profound teachings on the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction in a poetic form. To quote the complete letter would be too extensive, but a few lines might serve as examples for this special presentation of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>677</sup>

At the time of realization of the mental activity through the instructions of an authentic Lama,  
By looking to the outside it (mental activity) is seen as the root, the sixfold group [of perception].  
By looking to the inside, [it is seen as] moving [away] from the sphere of the all-base.

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<sup>676</sup> The Tibetan verse in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 19.6–26.1, entitled “‘Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi yon tan gyi cha shas la bstod pa” (p. 25.3–4), reads:

*sems yid rnam shes spangs par gyur kyang sems can kun gyi sems la 'jug ||*  
*spros pa mkha' ltar dag par gyur kyang spros pa thams cad mngon gsum mkhyen ||*  
*de phyir bdag gis brjod bya min kyang khyod la gus pas mchod cing bstod ||.*

<sup>677</sup> The Tibetan verses in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 78.6–81.4, entitled *Lha steng pa gzhon nu 'bum la spring yig* (pp. 80.2–3 and 80.4) read:

*bla ma'i gdams pas 'du byed rtogs pa'i tshe ||*  
*phyi ru bltas pas tshogs drug rtsa bar mthong ||*  
*nang du bltas pas kun gzhi dbyings nas g.yo ||*  
*bden zhen skyes na bdag dang ci ma mnyam ||*  
...  
*de la nyon mongs skyon dang bral ba'i tshe ||*  
*zag pa med pa'i las zhes rgyal bas gsungs ||*  
*'di yang rdo rje lta bus gzhom bya yin ||*  
*de nyid dag pas bdag gis pha rol phyin ||.*

If attachment to reality arises, the self and whatever [else] is not [seen as] equal.

...

With respect to that, when being free from the faults of the disturbing feelings,

There is the undefiled karma; thus it has been taught by the Victor.<sup>678</sup>

This [undefiled karma] will also be overcome by the *vajra*-like *samādhi*,

Because that itself is pure, it has gone beyond a self.

In this and in the following sections the Third Karmapa addressed special aspects of this discourse, which he could not explain in detail in the rather concise *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. At the same time, he set this particular advice in the context of the general theme. The next work containing several verses related to the *rNam shes ye shes* topic is entitled “Verses Expressing Realization.” Rang-byung-rdo-rje first expounded on the ultimate nature of phenomena and mind, then on the way they appear on the relative level and finally on the view free from extremes (*mtha’ bral lta ba*). Again a few lines must serve as examples for the complete composition:<sup>679</sup>

At the time when the actual arising of all phenomena is completely purified,

Cessation is not observable, like for an entity that has never arisen.

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<sup>678</sup> The expression “undefiled karma” (Tib. *zag pa med pa’i las*) originates from the *Abhidharmasamuccayaḥ*, chapter 2, § 74 (1). The Sanskrit lines TATIA 1976: 70,7–8, Tibetan D 88.b5–6; P 105.b1–2, and English BAYER 2010: 240, including notes 325–327, provide the following definition:

| *akṛṣṇaśuklāvipākam karma karmakṣayāya samvartate katamat prayogānantaryamārgeṣv*  
*anāsravaṃ karma* |

*mi gnag cing dkar la rnam par smin par mi ’gyur zhing las zad par ’gyur ba’i las gang zhe na | sbyor*  
*ba dang bar chad med pa’i lam rnams la zag pa med pa’i las so |*

What is not black but white *karman* without ripening [that] is conducive to the extinction of *karman*?  
It is the *karman* without inflow on the paths of preparation and immediacy.

<sup>679</sup> The Tibetan verses in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 5, pp. 89.4–92.6, entitled “*rTogs pa brjod pa’i tshigs gcad*” (pp. 89.5–6, 90.4 and 90.5–6), read:

*gang tshe chos rnams thams cad kun ||*  
*rab tu skye ba rnam dag pa ||*  
*’gag pa dmigs par gyur ma yin ||*  
*ma skyes pa’i dngos bzhin no ||*

*gang tshe sems dang sems ’byung dag ||*  
*dmigs pa med par rab gyur pa ||*  
*de tshe gzugs sogs rang bzhin rnams ||*  
*snang ba ci ltar ’thad par ’gyur ||*

...

*yang dag ma yin kun rtog pa ||*  
*’du byed rab tu g.yo med pa ||*  
*de tshe rnam shes ci ltar ’gyur ||*

...

*gang zhig kun gzhi’i rnam par shes ||*  
*len pa’i cha dang bcas pa ’di ||*  
*chu dang gser dang nam mkha’ ltar ||*  
*ye nas dag cing ’od gsal ba ||.*

At the time when mind and mental events have become completely unobservable,  
How could it be justified that the natures of form and so on appear?

...

At the time when there is absolutely no movement  
Of the mental activity of mistaken conceptualization,  
What occurs to perception (*rnam shes*)?

...

This fundamental mind (*ālaya* consciousness) together with the part that is receiving  
[impressions],  
Just as water, gold, and the sky,  
Is originally pure and [by nature] clear light.

By means of the first two verses in terms of form and contents the Third Karmapa at the same time alluded to the famous verse no. 35 and similar verses of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, chapter 9, by the Indian master Śāntideva (Skt. MINAYEFF 1889: 210, 21–22, and BHATTACHARYA 1960: 194; Tib. P 5272, vol. 99, p. 258, fol. 36.b3; English translation originating from WALLACE 1997: 123):

*yadā na bhāvo nābhāvo mateḥ saṃtiṣṭhate puraḥ |*  
*tadānyagatyabhāvena nirālambā praśāmyati ||35||*

*gang tse dngos dang dngos med dag | blo yi mdun na mi gnas pa |*  
*de tshe rnam pa gzhan med pas | dmigs pa med par rab tu zhi || 35*

When neither an entity nor a nonentity remains before the mind,  
Then since there is no other possibility, having no objects, it becomes calm. (34)

The examples of the purity of water, gold, and the sky (or space) in the third verse originate from the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, 1.16 cd. They illustrate how the buddha nature is obscured by adventitious defilements and can be purified, because in essence it has always been pure.<sup>680</sup>

Two significant lines from a short but very profound advice, composed at the mTshur-phu Monastery, provide the direct link between the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and the Mahāmudrā practice:<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>680</sup> The Sanskrit line appears in NAGAO 1964: 6, *abdhātukanakākāśasuddhivac chuddhir iṣyate*// 1.16 // Tibetan lines in P 5522, p. 19, fol. 44.a7–8. For an English translation including Sthiramati's commentary, refer to STANLEY 1988: 64–65.

<sup>681</sup> The Tibetan lines (119.4–5) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 119.4–120.3, read:

*rgyal ba'i bka' thams cad ni ||*  
*sems nyid ye shes phyag rgya che ||*

All oral instructions of the victors (buddhas) teach

That this very mind (or nature of mind) is the gnosis of the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*).

A few pages further in this volume, in a small work entitled “Teaching the Definitions of the Four Bodies,” the Third Karmapa expounds on the four buddha bodies.<sup>682</sup> In correspondence to “the great nondual gnosis” (*gnyis med ye shes chen po*), he designates the fourth buddha body beyond the usual three bodies here as “the nondual body” (*gnyis su med pa'i sku*). As a minor occurrence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, this teaching belongs to the gnosis (*ye shes*) part of this discourse.

After several praises there follow two extensive collections of songs (*mgur 'bum* and *gsung mgur thor bu*)<sup>683</sup> which contain many occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. One brief section of a much longer song without a specific title is the following:<sup>684</sup>

Absolute truth is not the field of experience of the intellect.

The intellect is taught to be relative truth.

The essence of the apprehending subject and the objects of knowledge

Is inconceivable by the concepts of good or bad.

Different from the intellect of the cycle of existence

Is the perfect gnosis which by nature has not arisen.

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The Indian master Śrī Jñānakīrti (Tib. dPal Ye-shes-grags-pa, (892–975)) provided a similar statement in his *Tattvāvatārākhyā* (Tib. *De kho na nyid la 'jug pa*), P 4532, fol. 46a.2–3: | *Yum shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid kyi mtshan gzhan na phyag rgya chen po ste | de ni gnyis su med pa'i ye shes kyi ngo bo nyid yin pa'i phyir ro* |. English rendering: “Another name of the very Mother *Prajñāpāramitā* is *Mahāmudrā*, because that is the nature of nondual gnosis itself.”

<sup>682</sup> The Tibetan title of the work in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, p. 125.2–6, is *sKu bzhi'i gtan tshigs bstan pa* (p. 125.6).

<sup>683</sup> As stated above, Ruth Gamble in GAMBLE 2014: 410–453, appendix 4, part B, has collated the two surviving versions of the Tibetan texts of most of these songs, the *mGur 'bum*, also entitled *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung mgur phyogs sdebs* (pp. 185.2–358.6), plus the *gSung mgur thor bu* (pp. 359–416.5) in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, volume 5, with the *Rang byung rdo rje'i mgur rnam* as a separate work. In nearly all cases, the variations in the latter collection do not make more sense, which implies that the *mgur 'bum* and the *gsung mgur thor bu* as part of the 2006 edition of the *gSung 'bum* have gone through a thorough editing process before publication. For a detailed survey concerning Tibetan poetry, refer to JACKSON 1996.

<sup>684</sup> The Tibetan lines in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 200.2–201.3, read:

*don dam blo'i spyod yul min ||*  
*blo ni kun rdzob yin par bshad ||*  
*'dzin dang shes bya ngo bo nyid ||*  
*bzang ngan rnam rtog bsam yas pa ||*  
*'khor ba'i blo'i khyad par las ||*  
*ma byung rang bzhin ye shes rdzogs ||.*

In this case, the Third Karmapa, by means of his songs, provides various aspects of practical advice to his students based on the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction. The following is again just one verse as example:<sup>685</sup>

With respect to the emptiness and clarity of your own mind  
Engage into the essence of the stains of the analyzing mind.  
Do not defile the root which is the fundamental mind  
With conceptual phenomena.

Near the beginning of the following song, we find a reference to the methods of meditative concentration that accomplish the various aspects of gnosis. The framework here is the Mahāmudrā approach combined with tantric practice. This song once again provides evidence that the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse bridges Mahāmudrā instructions and the tantric practice of working with the inner energies like in the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy. Later in this song, Rang-byung-rdo-rje additionally incorporated the third major soteriological approach applied in the bKa'-brgyud lineage, which is the practice of *guru yoga* (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*).<sup>686</sup> Together with the first two lines venerating the Lamas of the lineage, it teaches the meditative context in which the *rNam shes ye shes* instructions are to be practiced in the lineage. The designation as red and white mentioned in the first line refers to the right and left side channels in the body:<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>685</sup> The Tibetan lines (221.6–222.1) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 221.3–222.3, read:

*stong zhing gsal ba'i rang sems la ||*  
*yid dpyod kyi dri ma dangs su chug ||*  
*rtsa ba kun gzhi'i rnam shes la ||*  
*rtog pa'i chos kyis slad mi bya ||*

<sup>686</sup> One of the earliest sources for this practice is a work composed by the Indian master Tilopa under the title of *Gurusādhana* (Tib. *bLa ma'i sgrub thabs*), translated by Vibhūticandra (for further details, see bibliography). The Third Karmapa expounded on this practice in greater detail in his “Practice Manual of the Co-emergent Union of Mahāmudrā” (*Phyag chen khrid yig*) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 54.3–4, 55.2–56.5.

<sup>687</sup> The Tibetan lines (222.3–4, 5–6) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 222.3–223.3, read:

*da ltar snang ba dkar dmar 'di ||*  
*snang stong sgyu ma'i rang bzhin can ||*  
*'di nyid phyogs med rtogs byed pa ||*  
*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin ||*  
*yin phyir de la 'bad par bya ||*  
  
*'dzin byed shes pa rig tur 'di ||*  
*spros bral lam du 'char byed pa ||*  
*dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ||*  
*yin phyir mtha' la gnas mi bya ||*  
...  
*ma nor thar pa'i lam ston pa ||*  
*dge ba'i bshes dang mi 'bral bya ||*  
*dad pa'i sa bon rab dangs pas ||*

Right now this red and white appearance  
 Has the nature of the illusion of appearance and emptiness.  
 What realizes this nature without any conceptual position  
 Is the illusion-like meditative concentration (*samādhi*).<sup>688</sup>  
 Therefore, you should strive for that.

The apprehending cognition (*'dzin byed shes pa*) lets appear this spontaneous awareness  
 As the path free from elaborations.<sup>689</sup>  
 This is the heroic meditative concentration (*samādhi*),<sup>690</sup>  
 Therefore, do not abide in any extreme.

...

May you never be separated from the spiritual friend,  
 Who shows the unmistakable path of liberation.  
 By means of the completely pure seed of faith  
 You should continuously open up [to the spiritual friend].

Then, in a clearly tantric context, Rang-byung-rdo-rje wrote about his own practice:<sup>691</sup>

Even though I did not train in the conduct of ascetic practices,  
 The attachment to the aggregates appeared as the buddha aspect (*lha*).  
 The concepts of the basis of purification dissolved into the expanse [of reality],  
 And the undefiled gnosis manifested.

In a song entitled “The Song of the Vajrayāna of the Secret Mantra,” summarizing the teachings of the *Zab mo nang don*, Rang-byung-rdo-rje again built his tantric teachings on the solid basis of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>692</sup>

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*rgyun chad med par gsol ba gdab ||*.

<sup>688</sup> For further explanations of the illusion-like *samādhi*, refer to chapter 7, *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 25.a.

<sup>689</sup> The expression “free from elaborations” (*spros bral*) hints to the second of the four Mahāmudrā levels (see chapter 4 (4.1)). This is said to be purified by the illusion-like *samādhi* (*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*). Nevertheless, the practice of this path leads to the third level of “one taste” (*ro gcig*) produced by the heroic *samādhi* (*dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin*).

<sup>690</sup> For the further explanation of the heroic *samādhi*, refer to chapter 7, *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 24.

<sup>691</sup> The Tibetan lines (234.3–4) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 232.5–235.5, read:

*bdag brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa ma spyad kyang ||*  
*phung po'i zhen pa lha ru snang ||*  
*sbyang gzhi'i rtog pa dbyings su thim ||*  
*'dzag med ye shes mngon gyur pa ||*.

<sup>692</sup> The Tibetan lines (238.2–3) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 235.5–238.6, read:

*dag cing rtogs par gyur pa yis ||*  
*rnam rtog ye shes rol pa rgyu ||*  
*tshogs drug rang sar sbyangs pa las ||*

By means of the purity [from disturbing feelings] and its realization  
 The concepts move as the [free] play of gnosis.  
 After having purified the sixfold group of perception in its own place,  
 The activities of the form body become manifest.  
 The *vajra* of the mind is completely pure,  
 Thus, the activities of the truth body are excellent.  
 This is the complete purity of the gnoses.

As in the *sNying po bstan pa*, in the next song Karmapa combines the buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) doctrine with the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. A brief excerpt:<sup>693</sup>

When the root of the mind is realized,  
 One's own mind is the buddha essence,  
 Like the essence of the pure sky.  
 The conditional cognition is similar to [a reflection in] a mirror.  
 The sixfold group of perception in its [true] nature is gnosis.  
 How wonderful is it to recognize that!

The advice given to the master Dar-ma and his attendant focused on the all-base (*ālaya*). The song is entitled “The Song Ascertaining the All-base.” In its emphasis on the all-base it seems to be taught from the perspective of the rNying-ma lineage. We will deal with this topic in greater detail at the end of this chapter and in the following chapter. The crucial part of this song reads as follows:<sup>694</sup>

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*gzugs sku'i 'phrin las mngon gyur zhing ||*  
*sems kyi rdo rje rab dag pas ||*  
*chos sku'i 'phrin las phun sum tshogs ||*  
*ye shes rnam par dag pa yin ||.*

<sup>693</sup> The Tibetan lines (258.1–2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 257.6–260.2, read:

*sems gyi rtsa ba rtogs lags na ||*  
*rang sems sangs rgyas ngo bo yin ||*  
*dag pa'i nam mkha' ngo bo 'dra ||*  
*rkyen gyi shes pa me long mtshungs ||*  
*tshogs drug rang ngo ye shes yin ||*  
*de ngo shes pa a re mtshar ||.*

<sup>694</sup> The Tibetan lines (262.4–6) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 262.3–263.2, read:

*kun gzhi 'khor 'das kun gyi gzhi ||*  
*ma rtogs dus na 'khor ba ste ||*  
*rtogs na de bzhin gshegs pa'i thugs ||*  
  
*kun gzhi'i ngo bo brjod pa la ||*  
*dper na me long gya' dag la ||*  
*gzugs brnyan 'char ba ci lta bar ||*  
*rang sems dri med dbyings nyid la ||*  
*sna tshogs bag chags ldang zhing 'gag ||*  
  
*yul dang yul can gnyis 'dzin 'di ||*

The all-base is the basis of all of the cycle of existence (saṃsāra) and liberation (nirvāṇa).  
When not realized, this is the cycle of existence,  
When realized, it is the mind of the Tathāgata.

With respect to expressing the essence of the all-base,  
For example, in a mirror pure of stains  
There appear reflections. In a similar way,  
In the actual expanse of your own stainless mind  
Various habitual tendencies appear and dissolve.

Since this clinging to the duality of object and subject  
Arises and appears from its own expanse,  
The single nature of the nondual saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,  
If not realized, is delusion, and if realized is liberation.

The duality of what is to be realized and the one realizing does not exist.  
Their perception as two is the basis of the cycle of existence.  
If you perceive the nondual essence,  
The buddha nature manifests.

The following song also treats an important aspect of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse: dependent origination (*pratityasamutpāda*). By employing the simile of a tree, Rang-byung-rdo-rje expounds on outer and inner dependent origination, the causes and conditions of the appearance of perceived objects and the inner mental functions. The inner conceptual mind (*nang du rnam stog*) is said to be eliminated by displaying keen higher knowledge (*shes rab rnon po 'i mtshon gyis bcad*), and the burning flames of gnosis completely dry up the leaves of saṃsāra from the root (*'khor ba 'i lo 'dab rtsad nas skams || ye shes me lce rab 'bar bas ||* p. 263.6).

Rang-byung-rdo-rje under the title *Nyam len gnad kun bsdus pa*<sup>695</sup> provided a summary of the key instructions for the practice of meditation based on the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction. These instructions are very similar to the ones given in the *Phyag chen*

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*rang gi dbyings las snang ldang phyir ||*  
*'khor 'das gnyis med ngo bor gcig ||*  
*ma rtogs 'khrul zhing rtogs na grol ||*  
  
*rtogs bya rtogs byed gnyis kyang med ||*  
*gnyis su bzung bas 'khor ba 'i gzhi ||*  
*gnyis med ngo bo mthong ba na ||*  
*rgyal ba 'i snying po mngon du gyur ||.*

<sup>695</sup> The Tibetan lines of *Nyam len gnad kun bsdus pa* appear in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 282.1–283.2.

*khrid yig*, which for the most part will be critically edited and translated in the eighth chapter. Therefore, there is no need for a separate treatment of this song. The last two lines of the following song just summarize the key topic:<sup>696</sup>

Alas! These concepts of delusion  
May be liberated as gnosis itself!

In the next song Karmapa once more demonstrated that, in order to express this topic in a poetic way and to enable easier comprehension, he considered illustrating examples most suitable:<sup>697</sup>

I venerate the supreme authentic Lama.  
  
The mind (all-base) together with concepts is the cause of the cycle of existence.  
The basis for displaying habitual tendencies is like an ocean.  
The condition of the movement of mental activity is similar to wind.  
The mental activity of holding on to characteristics is like the moon on water.  
  
Possessing the combination of the sixfold group [of perception] is like an illusion.  
The three aspects of disturbing feelings are similar to a fire burning wood.  
The concepts of craving are like drinking salt water.  
These causes and conditions establish the cycle of existence.  
  
After understanding this reality we train in the power of concentration and insight.  
This means having attained the instructions of the bodhisattvas.

Some special explanations concerning the arising of the delusion of sentient beings and concerning their qualities at the time of realization appear in a song entitled *Sems can*

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<sup>696</sup> The Tibetan lines, p. 285.5–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 284.5–285.6, read:

*k ye ma 'khrul pa'i rnam rtog 'di ||*  
*ye shes nyid du grol bar shog ||.*

<sup>697</sup> The Tibetan lines (286.5–287.2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 286.5–287.2, read:

*bla ma dam pa mchog la phyag 'tshal lo ||*  
*sems kyi kun rtog bcas pa'i 'khor ba'i rgyu ||*  
*bag chags bstan pa'i gzhi ni rgya mtsho 'dra ||*  
*g.yo ba 'du byed rkyen ni rlung dang mtshungs ||*  
*yul la mtshan 'dzin 'du byed chu zla bzhin ||*  
  
*tshogs drug 'tshams sbyor ldan pa sgyu ma bzhin ||*  
*tshor ba rnam gsum shing la me 'bar mtshungs ||*  
*sred pa'i rnam rtog tsha chu 'thung ba ltar ||*  
*rgyu dang rkyen des 'khor bar 'grub pa yin ||*  
  
*de don shes nas zhi lhag rtsal sbyangs nas ||*  
*rgyal sras rnams kyi gdams ngag thob pa yin ||.*

*rnams kyi thog mar 'khrul pa'i tshul*.<sup>698</sup> The relevant sections of this song will be treated separately in chapter 8. Another significant illustrating example is a magical illusion as presented in the following verse:<sup>699</sup>

This essence of perception  
Is like the essence of a magical illusion, a mirage.  
Even though it appears, it is not established as truly [existent].  
Therefore, let go and be devoted only to the one aim of self-liberation.

In order to expound on ultimate realization, Rang-byung-rdo-rje then composed the following verse in a song on the practice of the Vajrayāna:<sup>700</sup>

On the ultimate level in terms of the own nature of mind,  
Being undefiled by the veils of knowledge,  
This development of the bodies and gnoses,  
Is taught to be given the name “buddha.”

The next section in this volume, presenting an important function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, is entitled *A Treatise Completely Analyzing the Five Aggregates (skandhās) of the Abhidharma*.<sup>701</sup> This commentary on the “five aggregates” (*phung po lnga: pañca skandhāḥ*) contains quite a detailed section on the aggregate of perception or consciousness.<sup>702</sup> This section comprises 14 verses, displaying more or less the same length as the perception part of the *rNam shes ye shes* (16 verses) without the philosophical introduction.

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<sup>698</sup> The Tibetan lines of this song appear in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 348.2–353.1.

<sup>699</sup> The Tibetan lines (362.4–5) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 362.3–363.2, read:

*rnām par shes pa'i ngo bo de ||*  
*sgyu ma smig rgyu'i ngo bo ltar ||*  
*snang yang bden par ma grub pas ||*  
*rang grol gcig tu klod la zhog ||.*

<sup>700</sup> The Tibetan lines (406.2–3) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 405.4–407.4, read:

*mthar thug rang gi sems nyid la ||*  
*rtogs pa'i dri mas ma gos par ||*  
*sku dang ye shes rgyas pa de ||*  
*sangs rgyas zhes byar gsungs pa yin ||.*

<sup>701</sup> The Tibetan title is *Chos mngon pa'i phung po lnga'i rab tu byed pa'i bzhung*, in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 443–455. It is composed in verse form of seven syllables per line, except for the last two verses with eleven syllables per line, in the style of a song of accomplishment. In the colophon (p. 455.4–6) Rang-byung-rdo-rje called this commentary a “complete summary on the contents (or meaning) of the authentic Abhidharma” (*dam pa'i chos mngon pa'i don rnām par bsdu ba*).

<sup>702</sup> The relevant section is entitled: *rNam par shes pa'i phung po ni*, pp. 452.5–454.3.

While in this commentary on the five aggregates the Third Karmapa strictly confined himself to the Abhidharma material, he taught eight aspects of perception or cognition (452.6) and applied the Yogācāra terminology of the “three natures” (*trisvabhāva*), “*kun brtags gzhan dbang yongs grub*”, thus emphasizing the Mahāyāna approach to the Abhidharma doctrine. He obviously based this work at least in large part on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ascribed to Asaṅga.<sup>703</sup> Since the explanation of the aggregate of perception or consciousness (*rnam par shes pa'i phung po*) corresponds more or less to the first part of the *rNam shes ye shes*, only the additional verse on the “three natures” is presented here:<sup>704</sup>

The complete ripening of the corresponding cause  
 And the results produced by a person free from veils [means that]  
 The engagement into these phenomena  
 Produces the imputed, the dependent and the thoroughly established nature.  
 In this way the delusion and the reality are realized.  
 For this the term “suchness” (or “true nature”) is applied.

The Third Karmapa dedicated the last two works contained in volume 5 to the *Āryasaddharmānusmṛtyupasthānasūtra* (Tib. *Dam pa'i chos dran pa nyer bar bzhang pa'i mdo*). The first is a brief summary of this sūtra, the second a very detailed commentary on the actual contents.<sup>705</sup> The *rNam shes ye shes* discourse appears in the latter treatise in the first and tenth chapters. Some verses serve to represent the particular perspective on this subject that Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied in this commentary, while strictly following the meaning of the original Indian work. The first chapter presents an introductory outline

<sup>703</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, at the beginning of the section on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, also quoted from this source (D 4049, fol. 53.a5), in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, p. 382.3–4. The Indian references in the *rNam shes ye shes* have been discussed in chapter 2 (2.2).

<sup>704</sup> The Tibetan lines (455.3–4) read:

*rgyu mthun rnam par smin pa dang ||*  
*dri med skyed bu'i byed 'bras rnams ||*  
*chos 'di rnams la zhugs gyur pas ||*  
*kun brtags gzhan dbang yongs grub kyes ||*  
*dbyed bas 'khrul dang yang dag rtogs ||*  
*de bzhin nyid ces tha snyad byas ||.*

<sup>705</sup> The two Tibetan titles are: *Dran pa nye bar bzhang pa'i bsdus don*, in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 456–470, and *Dam pa'i chos dran pa nyer bzhang pa'i mdo yi don snang bar byed pa'i bstan bcos*, in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 471–568. The commonly applied translation of the title of this sūtra is “*The Sūtra of the Close Application of Mindfulness*.” For further details, refer to the bibliography under the Sanskrit title *ārya-saddharmānusmṛtyupasthānasūtram*. Shes-rab-rin-chen offered a brief summary of the contents of all ten chapters at the beginning of his commentary, entitled *Dran pa nyer bzhang 'grel*, incorporated into vol. 6, pp. 9.6–11.2.

to the principal topic. It contains a short explanation of cause and effect [of the cycle of existence and liberation] (*rgyu 'bras kyi mdor bstan pa ste dang po'o*) and the role of mindfulness (*dran pa*). The other nine chapters provide detailed explanations of the same topic:<sup>706</sup>

The perception of appearances

Arises from incorrect conceptualization.

Apprehended and apprehender (object and subject)

Do not exist, while they are mistaken as “self” and “other”.

This is the root of the [cycle of] existence.

Whatever clarifies this meaning,

In an appropriate manner concerning what is right and what is wrong,

By the higher knowledge of studying, reflecting, and meditating

Should be intended, realized, and made manifest.

With respect to that [higher knowledge] at the beginning we should examine with mindfulness

[Whether or not] we possess the causes and effects which connect to

What is worldly and what transcends the world [being]

The defiled and the undefiled nature respectively.

A longer section follows on how positive and negative actions should be analyzed (*dge dang mi dge yi tshul la rab tu brtag par bya*, pp. 474.1–477.5). Several verses then present a discussion of the combined essential workings of the five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) and the process of perception, as well as how a realized yogic practitioner should look at this process. Concerning this expression “yogic practitioner” Rang-byung-rdo-rje made use of a play of words, since *rnal 'byor spyod pa* (in Sanskrit *yogācārin*) also refers to

<sup>706</sup> The Tibetan lines (473.2–4,) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 471–568, read:

*snang ba'i rnam par shes pa ni ||*  
*yang dag ma yin kun rtog las ||*  
*byung ste gzung dang 'dzin pa ni ||*  
*med bzhin bdag dang gzhan du 'khrul ||*  
*'di ni srid pa'i rtsa ba yin ||*  
  
*don 'di gsal bar byed pa gang ||*  
*chos dang chos min tshul bzhin du ||*  
*thos bsam bsgom pa'i shes rab kyis ||*  
*mos bya rtogs bya mngon du bya ||*  
  
*de la thog mar dran pa yis ||*  
*'jig rten 'jig rten 'das pa yi ||*  
*rgyu dang 'bras bu rab ldan pa ||*  
*brtag bya zag bcad zag med nyid ||.*

the name of the philosophical school discussed before. These verses simultaneously expound on the first links from among the twelve links of dependent origination, the beginning of the cycle of existence:<sup>707</sup>

Due to the condition of mental formations, perception,  
 Discrimination, and feelings fully manifest.  
 We perceive that they arise and cease moment by moment.  
 Like that these mental formations when connected with name and form,  
 Should be known [to arise] due to the condition of unawareness.  
 Thus, we experience all three realms.  
 And depending on that we realize as manifesting  
 All actions of mental formations.  
 Since perception [appears] from the condition of the all-base,

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<sup>707</sup> The Tibetan lines (478.3–6, 479.1–2, 480.1–2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 5, pp. 471–568, read:

'du byed rkyen gyis rnam par shes ||  
 'du shes tshor ba rab snang ba ||  
 skas cig skye 'gag byed mthong 'gyur ||  
 de ltar ming gzugs bcas pa 'di ||  
 ma rig rkyen gyis 'du byed ces ||  
 kham gsum pa kun mthong gyur nas ||  
 de la brten nas 'dus byas kyi ||  
 las kun mngon du rtogs 'gyur te ||  
 kun gzhi rkyen gyi rnams shes te ||  
 yid ni nye bar spyod pa can ||  
 de las nyer spyod tshor ba ste ||  
 yongs gcod 'du shes nyid yin no ||  
 rnam shes 'jug pa'i rkyen byed gang ||  
 'du byed sems 'byung bcas pa yin ||  
 kun gzhi la gnas ma rig pas ||  
 yang dag mthong la sgrib par byed ||  
 'du byed las kyi bag chags rnams ||  
 'jog byed de bzhin rnam shes kyis ||  
 kham gsum skye ba'i gnas phyin byed ||  
 ming gzugs 'brel pas lus 'dzin no ||  
 ...  
 rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor spyod pa ni ||  
 kham gsum sems dang sems 'byung kun ||  
 dper na ri mo mkhan bzhin du ||  
 kham gsum snang ba'i bri gzhi la ||  
 sems nyid ... ||  
 ...  
 nyon mongs dbang du mi 'gro zhing ||  
 ye shes dbang du 'gro bya ste ||  
 ye shes ldan pa tshe 'di dang ||  
 pha rol dag tu bde ba 'thob |

The defiled mind has [the function of] experience (or enjoyment).  
Experiences [arising] from that are feelings,  
And the complete determination [of feelings] is the actual discrimination.

Whatever produces the condition of the engaging perception,  
Is connected to the formation of the mental factors.  
The unawareness abiding on the all-base,  
Defiles the experience of the true [nature].

The formations establish the habitual tendencies of actions,  
Likewise the perceptions  
Let us arrive at the three realms as places of birth.  
We hold on to the body through the connection of name and form.

...

The realized yogic practitioner [understands] that the [basis of the] three realms,  
The mental continuum and all mental formations,  
Is the nature of mind, in the same way as, for example, a painter  
Painted the appearances of the three realms.<sup>708</sup>

...

We should not act under the influence of defilements,  
We should act under the influence of gnosis.  
Those endowed with gnosis will obtain bliss  
in this life and in all [lives] to come.

The final section from the tenth chapter of this sūtra on mindfulness, explaining the inner body and the path (*nang gi lus dang lam bstan pa'i le'u*), can be understood as a conclusion of the whole work, again built on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Shes-rab-rin-chen elaborated on these rather condensed verses in prose in his *Dran pa nyer bzhag 'grel*, vol. 6, pp. 34.6–43.1, particularly on the essence of the five aggregates (*phung po lnga'i ngo bo ni*), pp. 38.1–40.1.

<sup>709</sup> The Tibetan lines (566.5–567.2) read:

*kye ma kham ssum sems can rnams ||*  
*nga med nga ru rtog pa dang ||*  
*gzhan med yul du 'dzin pa gang ||*  
*yang dag ma yin kun rtog las ||*  
*byung ba rtogs par ma gyur to ||*  
  
*bdag gis 'di kun don bya zhes ||*  
*byang chub spyod la 'jug par bya ||*  
*thabs mkhas mon lam ldan pa yis ||*  
*srid zhi mnyam pa nyid sbyangs nas ||*  
  
*stobs bcu mthar phyin ye shes kyis ||*  
*ji lta ji snyed thams cad kyang ||*

Alas! The sentient beings in the three realms  
Conceptualize as an ego what does not exist as an ego.  
And they apprehend as objects what does not exist as “other.”  
They do not realize the arising from mistaken conceptualizations.

I shall act for the benefit of all of them,  
I shall engage into the enlightened conduct,  
By being endowed with wishes as skillful means.

After having trained in the equality of existence and peace (saṃsāra and nirvāṇa)  
The gnoses have perfected the ten powers.  
And the complete [gnosis realizes] phenomena as they are and as many as there are,  
The meaning of defiled states and those free from defilements,  
The utterly stainless sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*).

When realizing its profound corresponding cause,  
Which is the realization of the arising from one’s own mind,  
We should attain the unsurpassable state of  
Knowledge in terms of all aspects.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje by means of his advice in the second verse when stating that “I should engage into the enlightened conduct” (*byang chub spyod la ’jug par bya*) in the same way as shown above alluded to the well-known *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of the Indian master Śāntideva, the Tibetan title of which is *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa*. This treatise obviously seemed to be important to him.

Volume 6 begins with a commentary on the above-mentioned *Dran pa nyer bar bzhag pa’i mdo yi don snang bar byed pa’i bstan bcos* by Rang-byung-rdo-rje, composed by his student Shes-rab-rin-chen.<sup>710</sup> Near the beginning of this *Dran pa nyer bzhag* commentary he already incorporated a short explanation on the four gnoses. He also provided a brief summary on the *rnam shes* part of the *rNam shes ye shes*, as well as a detailed explanation

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*dri bcas dri ma med pa’i don ||*  
*chos dbyings shin du dri med dang ||*  
*de yi rgyu mthun zab pa rnams ||*  
*rang gi sems la byung rtogs te ||*  
*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa yi ||*  
*go ’phang bla na med thob bya ||.*

<sup>710</sup> The Tibetan title in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 6, pp. 1–219, is *Dran pa nye bar bzhag pa’i bstan bcos kyi ’grel ba*, short title *Dran pa nyer bzhag ’grel*.

of the five aggregates and the process of perception. His contribution will be further discussed at the end of this chapter and at the beginning of the following chapter.

The most extensive part of the sixth volume consists of several works related to the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures in different versions: the *Ratnagaṇasamcaya* (Tib. short title *sDud pa*), the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, (Tib. short title *mNgon rtogs rgyan*), as well as the *Āṣṭasāhasrikā* (Tib. short title *brGyad stong pa*). After providing a brief outline of the *sDud pa* (pp. 220–235), Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed a detailed commentary on the same work, mostly in prose. As the result of the practice of the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*), bodhisattvas develop certainty in terms of profound phenomena (*chos zab mo nges pa ni*). These phenomena can be classified into two categories: 1. Those difficult to realize (*rtogs par dka' ba*) and 2. Those inconsistent with worldly beings (*'jig rten pa dang mi mthun pa*). Under this second heading we find a brief explanation of the *rNam shes ye shes* theme from the perspective of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Besides the presentation of this topic in the context of the teachings on emptiness, its further function seems to be to elucidate the distinction between conventional and ultimate reality.<sup>711</sup>

In this context the sentient beings possessing the view of a self [conceptualize] the self on the all-base as the place. Some assert that the group of six objects of form and so on [truly] exists, and that the one perceiving the objects would abide in the eye etc. These lack discernment, are foolish, and deluded, like, for example, being in the darkness. In terms of the emptiness of phenomena which has to be realized and achieved, the all-base does not exist as the place, and the objects forms as well as the perceiver possessing the objects do not exist. As a consequence there [easily] arises dispute, because these two kinds of phenomena are not in accordance with worldly beings.

The last treatise in this volume is a commentary on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* (Tib. *Chos dang chos nyid rnam par 'byed pa*) ascribed to Maitreya. At the beginning Rang-byung-rdo-rje explains the function of this treatise on the basis of the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction, which will be further discussed in chapter 8.<sup>712</sup>

<sup>711</sup> The Tibetan lines (306.4–307.1) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 235–376, in *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa tshigs su bcad pa'i tīkā yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che lta bu pha rol tu phyin pa rgya mtsho'i sde* read: | *sems can bdag tu lta ba rnams ni gnas kun gzhi la bdag go zhes dga' zhig gzugs sogs kyi yul drug po rnams la 'dug go zhes 'dod cing | yul can 'dzin pa mig sogs la gnas pa de mi mkhas shing blun zhing rmongs pa yin dper na mun pa bzhin du 'dug la | rtogs pa dang thob par bya ba'i chos stong pa nyid la ni gnas kun gzhi med yul gzugs dang yul can 'dzin pa med de | de nas 'jig rten pa dag chos gnyis kyi mi mthun pas na rtsod pa 'byung ba yin no ||.*

<sup>712</sup> The Tibetan lines (492.1–2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 488–613, in *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*, read: | *khyad par du chos dang chos nyid rnam par 'byed pa 'di ni | bden pa gnyis kyi tshul*

This *Complete Distinction Between Phenomena and Their True Nature* especially clarifies the path together with its result of engaging into the five dharmas and the three natures. Moreover, it clarifies the mode of the “two truths,” as well as the suchness of the eight aspects of perception, the completely nonconceptual gnosis, which is well-known for a complete change of state, the buddha nature, the *dharmakāya*.

The following occurrence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in this treatise is quite a detailed presentation. The first part, which is very important for the understanding of the whole structure of this discourse, sets the theme in the context of the three natures (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*). The section in fact provides a summary of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. Here only the main lines can be cited:<sup>713</sup>

In general, these three [natures] are called “all-base” (*kun gzhi: ālaya*). The first two [natures] are called “fundamental mind” (*kun gzhi rnam shes: ālayavijñāna*). Nevertheless, as the other perceptions, the defiled mind and the sixfold group [of perceptions] are in a mutual relation of having dependently arisen, the eight aspects of perception are explained as being defilements, while the four gnoses are the undefiled perception, thus being the perfect nature. And the *dharmadhātu* gnosis is said to be like the domain of all of these. For this reason, [the eight aspects of perception and the gnoses] are what has to be given up and the antidote, [respectively].

The larger part of this section treats the distinction between the impure aspect of the “fundamental mind” as a causal condition for perception (*rgyu'i rkyen*) and its relation to the purified aspect, the *dharmakāya* (*chos sku*). This part will be summarized below under “The Specific Interpretation of the *vijñāna–jñāna* Distinction by the Third Karmapa.” A further explanation concerning the change of state (*gnas gyur pa*) of the deluded state into the state free from delusion will be treated separately in the eighth chapter. Nevertheless, the Third Karmapa recommended looking at the detailed explanations of these topics in both the *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*Theg bsdus*) and the *Yogācārabhūmi* (*rNal 'byor spyod pa'i sa*). Here, he insistently (*nan tan du*) pointed out some verses from these works in

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*gsal bar byed pa chos lnga dang rang bzhin gsum dang | rnam par shes pa brgyad kyi de kho na nyid rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes gnas yongs su gyur pa'i ming can | sangs rgyas kyi snying po chos kyi sku la 'jug pa'i tshul lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa gsal bar byed ...|.*

<sup>713</sup> The Tibetan lines (501.6–502.2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 488–613, read: | 'di gsum gyi spyi la ni kun gzhi zhes bya | snga ma gnyis la ni kun gzhi'i rnam shes zhes bya | rnam shes gzhan nyon yid dang tshogs drug kyang phan (502) tshun rten cing 'byung bas | rnam shes brgyad ni sgrub par bshad la | ye shes bzhi ni rnam par shes pa'i dri ma med pa yin pas yongs grub ste | chos kyi dbyings ye shes ni thams cad kyi gnas lta bur gsungs pas spang bya dang gnyen por 'gyur ro |.

summarized form and thus finished his exposition on the meaning of the “distinction” [between phenomena and their true nature].

The seventh volume starts with a detailed commentary in prose on the *Dharmadhātustava*, ascribed to the Indian master Nāgārjuna.<sup>714</sup> This work teaches the distinction between the impure and pure aspect of the sphere of reality or basic space of phenomena (*chos kyi dbyings*: *dharmadhātu*) in a general way. This topic, like the previous one, is very close to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, sometimes even identical. For example, in the context of the explanation on the way in which the sphere of reality abides in sentient beings and how it becomes purified, the Third Karmapa commented as follows:<sup>715</sup>

What moves everywhere [in the cycle of existence] is the mental continuum (*sems*), the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*), which is completely infused with all the seeds of the habitual tendencies of psycho-physical constituents (or aggregates) (*skandhas*), elements (*dhātus*), and sense-sources (*āyatana*s). After the very nature [of that fundamental mind] has been completely purified by means of the teachings of the Buddha, which is the outcome of completely nonconceptual gnosis, that very nature progressively becomes pure and [ultimately] is called “nonabiding nirvāṇa.” That very nature is also the *dharmakāya* of all buddhas.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje in this work again set his explanations of the impure and pure states of mind in the context of the three natures. In order to answer the question how the thoroughly established or perfect nature expresses the mind (*sems*), he stated:<sup>716</sup>

Since it is also taught in this way in the Yogācāra scriptures, at the time when all concepts of object and subject (lit. perceived and perceiver) of mind and mental events have become pure and are at peace, what is called “the gnosis of a buddha” is made to manifest.

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<sup>714</sup> The (short) Tibetan title is: *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, pp. 1–125.

<sup>715</sup> The Tibetan lines (6.1–3) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read: | gang zhi gang du 'khor ba ni | sems phung po dang | khams dang | r(s)kye mched kyi bag chags thams cad kyi yongs su bsgos pas sa bon thams cad pa'i kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa'o | de nyid rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyi rgyu mthun pa'i sangs rgyas kyi chos kyi rnam par sbyangs pa las | rim gyis dag par gyur pa de nyid la mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa zhes bya ste | sangs rgyas thams cad kyi chos kyi sku yang de nyid yin no ||.

<sup>716</sup> The Tibetan lines (16.4–5) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read: | zhes rnal 'byor spyod pa'i gzhung las kyang bstan pas | gang gi tshes sems dang sems las byung ba'i bzung 'dzin gyi rnam par rtog pa thams cad dag cing zhi na sangs rgyas kyi ye shes zhes bya ba snang bar mdzad do |.

Furthermore, a quotation from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* 14.45 explains how the state of buddha gnosis is attained:<sup>717</sup>

After having attained the *vajra*-like *samādhi*,  
Which is indestructible by concepts,  
The ultimate change of state means  
To be undefiled by all obscurations.

The cause for attaining this state free from obscurations is said to be the habitual tendencies to listen or to study (*thos pa'i bag chags*, 29.5). “They are not the [nature of the] fundamental mind, since they are the very seeds of its remedy. They develop from small seeds into middle and large ones [by means of reflecting and meditating (*bsam pa dang bsgom pa*)], finally becoming the seeds of the *dharmakāya*.”<sup>718</sup> “This change of state implies that the ripening perception is free from all seeds and has been abandoned in all aspects.”<sup>719</sup>

A longer section (pp. 40.4–42.4) explains what defiles the *dharmadhātu*, and in which way gnosis realizes it. Since this section can be understood as a summary and auto-commentary on the whole *rNam shes ye shes* discourse from the perspective of the *dharmadhātu*, the passage will be treated in chapter 8, along with other relevant sections from the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*. The following very detailed section on how to practice will only be summarized here, because it closely corresponds to the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, the “The Practice Manual of the Co-emergent Union of Mahāmudrā,” which is critically edited and translated in large part at the beginning of the eighth chapter.

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<sup>717</sup> The Tibetan lines (20.6) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read:

*rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin ||*  
*rtog pas mi shig thob nas ni ||*  
*gnas gzhan gyur pa mthar thug pa ||*  
*sgrib pa kun gyi dri med dang ||.*

The Sanskrit lines in LÉVI 1907: 96 read:

*vajropamaṃ samādhānaṃ vikalpābhedyam etya ca |*  
*niṣṭhāśrayaparāvṛttiṃ sarvāvaraṇanirmalāṃ ||*

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.2: | *de ni kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa ma yin te | de'i gnyen po'i sa bon nyid yin pa'i phyir ro | de la bag chags chung ngu la brten nas 'bring dang chen por 'gyur bas | chos kyi sku'i sa bon du blta ste |.*

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.2: | *rnam par smin pa'i rnam par shes pa sa bon thams cad pa yang sa bon med par gyur pa dang rnam pa thams cad du spangs pa yang yin no |* These explanations are in accordance with several lines from a longer section dedicated to this topic in the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.45–48, quoted from P 5549, vol. 112, p. 220, fols. 11b.2–12a.4.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje concluded this section in a way that clearly demonstrates the identical contents of the topics commented upon, while directly or indirectly referring to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse:<sup>720</sup>

When covered by the net of disturbing feelings,  
It is expressed by the term “mind.”  
Once that itself becomes free from disturbing feelings,  
It should be expressed as “buddha.”

Expressions such as “sentient beings and buddhas,” “saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,” “mind and gnosis,” “phenomena (*dharmā*) and the nature of phenomena (*dharmatā*),” “relative truth and absolute truth,” should be understood as synonyms, respectively.

There follows a detailed explanation on how to practice (*bsgom pa'i tshul bstan pa*) in order to actualize the nature of mind or *dharmadhātu*. In this context, Rang-byung-rdo-rje discussed precisely how by means of meditation practice the pure nature of mind is found within the eight aspects of perception. He also explained the development on the path and the change of state of perception into the gnosis and other qualities of a buddha.<sup>721</sup> Even if the exposition centers on the *dharmadhātu*, still—as was mentioned above—this whole section of the commentary performs the function of some kind of detailed auto-commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise.

To highlight the particular function of these passages, Rang-byung-rdo-rje explained the first part on perception in considerable detail (pp. 51.1–61.4). Besides the general explanations on the process of perception from the epistemological perspective, he also expounded on the nature or essence of perception as being free from the three [aspects of] arising, ceasing, and abiding (*skye 'gag gnas gsum dang bral ba*), being clarity and emptiness by nature (*rang gsal stong*), thus pointing out the ontological perspective. The second part on the purified aspect focuses on the realization of the *dharmadhātu*. This includes the gnosis of a buddha, since for the Third Karmapa there is no difference

<sup>720</sup> The Tibetan lines (49.4–50.1) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read:

*nyon mongs dra bas g.yog pa na |*  
*sems zhes bya bar brjod pa yin |*  
*de nyid nyon mongs bral gyur na |*  
*sangs rgyas zhes ni brjod par bya | (37) zhes gsungs te |*

*| sangs rgyas dang sems can dang | 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa dang | sems dang ye shes*  
*dang | chos dang chos nyid dang | kun rdzob dang don dam pa zhes brjod pa rnam ni | ming gi rnam*  
*grangs su rig par bya'o ||.*

<sup>721</sup> See *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, pp. 51.1–64.3.

between the *dharmadhātu* and gnosis.<sup>722</sup> He concluded this first part of the section by commenting on the root verse (50) as follows:<sup>723</sup>

[This verse] teaches the way in which the light of gnosis widely arises and manifests from abiding in such completely nonconceptual gnosis, therefore, that is what has to be expressed.

The second part of this section deals with the way in which the Three Jewels appear as a condition for realizing the *dharmadhātu*. In this context, Rang-byung-rdo-rje elaborated on not seeing buddhas, or seeing buddhas, the inconceivable buddha activities, as well as on the meaning of enlightenment including the buddha bodies. He commented on the last point explaining that, through having attained realization, enlightenment is neither near nor far, as follows:<sup>724</sup>

Highest enlightenment is the realization of the nature of the cycle of existence. Therefore, don't think it to be far away. Enlightenment is completely nonexistent in those who possess object and subject (lit. perceived and perceiver). Therefore, don't think it to be close. If there are no appearances of characteristics of the six objects in actual reality, they just don't exist. If there are no appearances of the six perceiving consciousnesses, since they are free from arising and ceasing, the seventh defiled mind [also] does not exist. If all these do not exist, the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*), being produced by them, does not arise. Therefore, mind does not exist. The direct clear realization originating from a correct awareness and realization in accordance with that is buddhahood.

After substantiating his explanations by means of several quotations from classical treatises, such as those ascribed to Nāgārjuna, Chandrakīrti, and Maitreya or Asaṅga, he summarized and concluded the whole section on how to practice by setting it once again in the context of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>725</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.1. The Tibetan reads: | *don la chos kyi dbyings dang ye shes tha dad du gyur pa ni ma yin no* |.

<sup>723</sup> The Tibetan lines (64.2–3) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read: | *'di ltar rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes la gnas nas | ye shes kyi snang ba rgya cher skye zhing mngon du gyur ba'i tshul ston par byed pas de brjod par bya'o* |.

<sup>724</sup> The Tibetan lines (73.1–3) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, read: | *bla na med pa'i byang chub ni 'khor ba'i rang bzhin rtogs pa yin pas ring bar mi bsam mo | gzung 'dzin can la byang chub pa gtan med pa'i phyir nye bar mi bsam mo | don du yul drug gi mtshan ma snang ba med na med do | 'dzin pa'i rnam par shes pa drug snang ba med na skye 'gag med pas bdun pa yid med do | de rnams med na de rnams kyi bskyed pa'i kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa skye ba med pas sems med do | de ltar yang dag par rig cing rtogs nas mngon sum du rtogs pa ni sangs rgyas te* |.

<sup>725</sup> The Tibetan lines (74.2–3) read: | *zhes gsungs pa thams cad don gcig ste | rnam par shes pa'i tshogs brgyad po dag cing spang ba'i tshe sangs rgyas kyi ye shes kyi mngon sum du snang ngo | zhes bya ba yin gyi | ye shes kyi sku 'phrin las dang bcad pa yang med do zhes pa yang ma yin no* |.

All those citations have a single meaning: At the time when the eightfold group of perception has become pure and is given up, it appears as the direct perception of the gnosis of a buddha.

In order to prevent misunderstanding of this statement, he added:

But it is also not said that the gnosis body together with its activities do not exist either.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje in this sentence, in the same way as in his choice of quotations, demonstrated once more his balanced approach in terms of the viewpoint underlying the practice of meditation. In a very skillful way he taught how to avoid falling into any of the extremes of attachment to true existence or nonexistence. This statement closely corresponds to the previous section entitled “The Way in Which [the *dharmadhātu*] is Not Empty of Gnosis,” already mentioned at the end of the fourth chapter, when discussing the Rang stong or gZhan stong affiliation of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

Together with other topics such as the three natures, this commentary is clearly set in the context of a practice-oriented gZhan stong presentation. While not excluding the philosophical basis of the Rang stong view, its principal function is to provide a solid background for tantric practice and the Great Seal, the two core instructions of the bKa’-brgyud lineage. This is reflected also in the structure of the *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum* as compiled by the editors, since the next three volumes (8–10) treat tantric topics exclusively and the eleventh and last volume contains mainly works on Mahāmudrā practice.

The next work in the seventh volume is a commentary on the *rGyud bla ma* composed by La-ma bKra-shis-’od-zer,<sup>726</sup> already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Since it was not composed directly by the Third Karmapa, it will not be discussed here. After a very short work entitled *rLung sems gnad kyi lde mig*, the principal treatise of this study follows, the *rNam shes ye shes ’byed pa’i bstan bcos*.<sup>727</sup> It will be critically edited and translated in the seventh chapter. Its connection to the other two works of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy – the *sNying po bstan pa* and the *Zab mo nang don* itself, including its auto-commentary which make up the second part of this volume<sup>728</sup> – has been explored at the beginning of this chapter. Thus the works of this seventh volume within the complete *gSung ’bum* are at least to a great extent dedicated to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. Therefore, the seventh volume can be regarded as pivotal for this theme. Its

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<sup>726</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 7, pp. 126–262.

<sup>727</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 7, pp. 269–276.

<sup>728</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 7, pp. 282–290, 308–360, 361–634.

function is to cover the essential points and as many aspects of this discourse on the level of the sūtras as possible.

The eighth volume presents several commentaries on tantric works. It starts by expounding on the various kinds of commitments of *vajrayāna* (*rdo rje theg pa*) practitioners on the path to buddhahood.<sup>729</sup> Directly following the beginning statement on the main topic, the Third Karmapa explains what “buddha” (*sang rgyas*) means in this tantric context, based on his previous *rNam shes ye shes* teachings:<sup>730</sup>

In terms of buddhahood, the mind at the ultimate level is progressively [expressed through] Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhī, the completely pure gnosis, the *dharmathātu* [gnosis], the mirror-like [gnosis], the [gnosis of] equality, the discriminating [gnosis], and the all-accomplishing [gnosis]. With respect to that, furthermore, the defiled state at the time of sentient beings consists of form, perception, feelings, discrimination, and mental formation. Here, again at the state of the imputed [nature], we speak of the shape and so on of those [sentient beings] together with their branches, and, even the brave persons who likewise are progressively pure and impure, having six objects [of perception] together with six perceptions possessing objects, at the ultimate level of mind are said to be Samantabhadra and so on.

Later in this work, Rang-byung-rdo-rje elucidated the tantric perspective on this discourse by setting it in the context of the ultimate level of teachings:<sup>731</sup>

As has been said in the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya*, after Maitreya and other bodhisattvas had asked, the Conqueror taught as follows: “Whatever perception has arisen from clear light that is called “mind,” “cognition” and “perception,” that itself is the root of all

<sup>729</sup> The title of the first work in this volume is: | *dam tshig rgya mtsho mtha' yas pa rnam par snang bar byed pa dri ma med pa'i snying po* |, pp. 1–114.

<sup>730</sup> The Tibetan lines (3.1–4.1) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 1–114, read: | *sangs rgyas ni dpal rnam par snang mdzad dang | mi bskyod pa dang | rin chen 'byung ldan dang | 'od dpag med dang | don yod grub pa rnams don dam par sems rnam par dag pa'i ye shes chos kyi dbyings dang me long lta bu dang mnyam pa nyid dang so sor rtog pa dang bya ba grub pa rnams rim pa ltar yin la | de yang dri ma dang bcad pa'i gnas skabs sems can gyi dus na ni gzugs dang rnam par shes pa dang tshor ba dang 'du shes dang 'du byed rnams yin la | kun brtags kyi gnas skabs na'ang de rnams kyi dbyibs la sogs pa yan lag dang bcas te gsungs pa dang | sems dpa' yang de bzhin du dag pa dang (4) | ma dag pa'i rim pas yul drug dang yul can rnam par shes pa drug dang bcas pa rnams kun tu bzang po la sogs pa yid kyi mthar thug par gsungs pa rnams so |.*

<sup>731</sup> The Tibetan lines (53.6–54.2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 1–114, read: | *ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa'i rgyud las gsungs pa byams pa (54) | la sogs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyis zhus nas | bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa | gang 'od gsal ba las byung ba'i rnam par shes pa de nyid | sems dang yid dang rnam par shes pa zhes bya ba chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba ste | zhes bya ba la sogs pas rten dang brien pa dang thabs dang shes rab kyi gzhi lam mthar thug pa gsungs pa rnam ni mthar thug gi bshad pa yin no |.*

phenomena.”<sup>732</sup> These statements on what is called like that and so on from among the basis, path and ultimate level of the support and what is supported, of methods and insight, are the ultimate explanation.

The next occurrence of the *rNam shes ye shes* theme appears in a commentary on the *Yoginīsañcāryatantra*.<sup>733</sup> Even though the name of this tantra is written as *mKha' 'gro ma kun tu spyod pa'i rgyud*, in the beginning (p. 127.4) and in the colophon (249.5) the exact title is given as *rNal 'byor ma'i kun tu spyod pa*. This is also the name of this tantra provided in the summary of this work (*bsdus don*), just before this commentary in volume 8. In his commentary on the ninth chapter of this tantra Rang-byung-rdo-rje elaborated on the various enlightened qualities that appear as a result of practice.<sup>734</sup>

[In terms of the tantra of the basis, path and result] the ultimate result is the result of being endowed with the four [buddha] bodies and the five [buddha] gnoses. With respect to this, when training the perception which engages into entities, the development phase of any circle of a buddha aspect whatsoever through educating whomever accomplishes the benefit of sentient beings. This is the *nirmāṇakāya*. Having trained the defiled mind abiding on the all-base (*kun gzhi, ālaya*), the coemergent gnosis of great bliss accomplishes the close enjoyment of the Mahāyāna. This is the *sambhogakāya*. The fundamental mind (*kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa, ālayavijñāna*) free from all accidental defilements is the *dharmakāya*. The nature of the three bodies inseparable is the essential body (*svābhāvikakāya*).

In his commentary on the *Hevajratantra*<sup>735</sup> the Third Karmapa summarized the *rNam shes ye shes* by expounding on nondual gnosis, and in a subsequent statement he provided

<sup>732</sup> This citation originates from D 450, vol. 81, fol. 282b.2–3, p. 564. The complete work exists only in Tibetan, and is to be found in the sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, vol. 81, fols. 282a.1–286a.5, pp. 563–571.

<sup>733</sup> The slightly mistaken Tibetan title of this commentary is: *mKha' 'gro ma kun tu spyod pa'i rgyud kyi 'grel pa*, vol. 8, pp. 126–250. The correct Tibetan work *rNal 'byor ma'i kun tu spyod pa*, in Sanskrit *Yoginīsañcārya*, is contained in P 23, vol. 2, pp. 237–242, fols. 223b.6–235a.2.

<sup>734</sup> The Tibetan lines (148.6–149.2) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 126–250, read: | *mthar thug gi 'bras bu ni sku bzhi ye shes lnga dang ldan pa'i 'bras bu ste | 'di la dngos po la 'jug pa'i rnam par shes pa sbyong byed bskyed rims lha'i 'khor lo gang la gang 'dul gyis sems can gyi don byed pa grub pa ni sprul pa'i sku'o | kun gzhi la gnas pa'i yid bde ba chen po lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes kyi sbyangs pa theg pa chen po nye bar longs spyod pa grub pa ni longs sku'o | kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa glo bur gyi dri ma thams cad dang bral ba ni chos kyi sku'o | sku gsum dbyer med pa'i rang bzhin ngo bo nyid kyi sku'o* || In his commentary on the *Hevajratantra* under the title of *dGyes par do rje'i rnam bshad*, later in the same volume (pp. 275–489), Rang-byung-rdo-rje explained this topic in a slightly shorter form (p. 306.2–3).

<sup>735</sup> The short Tibetan title of this commentary is *dGyes par do rje'i rnam bshad*, part 1, vol. 8, pp. 275–489. Since Karmapa's commentary on part 2 is not complete (consisting of pp. 490–528, 590–629), the editors of the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* inserted a large part of Karma Phrin-le's (1456–1539) commentary on the same work, entitled “*The Ornament of the Thoughts of Rang-byung*” (*Rang-byung dgongs rgyan*), pp. 528–590. The context of this incorporated commentary has already been discussed at the beginning of this chapter (5.1).

an important definition for gnosis:<sup>736</sup>

Concerning the outer object, even though it is imputed [to exist] by the deluded mind, since in ultimate reality it does not exist, there is nothing to be perceived. Since that does not exist, a perceiver, who depends on that, also does not exist. That kind of gnosis abides in the way that the embodiment of all phenomena is free from all limitations, even though it is unborn being not produced from a body. The aggregates (*skandhas*) and so on appearing as a body are obstructed, nevertheless, when [having changed their state into] gnosis this is unobstructed, because all conceptual elaborations have been thoroughly pacified. ... Gnosis is the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) which has made manifest the light of space and so on.

In the following explanation of the name “the Glorious Heruka,” which in this case signifies the central male buddha aspect of this tantra, Rang-byung-rdo-rje shows how closely the sūtra and tantra levels of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse are interconnected. Included in this explanation is a reference to the three natures (1. free from duality, 2. empty of causes and conditions, 3. free from concepts):<sup>737</sup>

Well, if one asks of what nature is that Śrī Heruka itself, “Śrī” expresses the mirror-like gnosis free from the duality of perceived and perceiver. “He” stands for the gnosis of equality, the emptiness of causes and conditions and so on. “Ru” symbolizes the discriminating gnosis by means of the knowledge of the whole variety of phenomena free from the accumulation of concepts. “Ka” means the all-accomplishing gnosis because of not even abiding in whatever extreme of peace. Through the realization of the corresponding inseparability [of these four kinds of gnosis] the meaning of “Heruka” becomes evident.

The title of the ninth chapter of this work is “Complete Purification” (*rnam par dag pa*).<sup>738</sup> According to his commentary, Rang-byung-rdo-rje slightly expanded this title: “The

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<sup>736</sup> The Tibetan lines (334.6–335.2, 349.1) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 275–489, read: | *phyi rol gyi yul ni sems 'khrul pas sgro btags pa yin gyis don la yod pa ma yin pas gzung ba med de* | *de med pas de la brten pa'i* | *'dzin pa yang med de* | *de lta bu'i ye shes de ni* | *dngos po thams cad kyi lus la mtha' dang bral ba'i tshul du gnas kyang lus las skyes pa ma yin ma skyes pas* | *phung po la sogs pa lus su snang ba 'gags kyang ye shes na 'gags pa med de* | *spros pa thams cad nye bar zhi ba'i phyir ro* |...| *ye shes ni mkha' snang sogs pa mngon du byas pa'i phyag rgya chen po'o* |.

<sup>737</sup> The Tibetan lines (429.2–4) in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 275–489, read: | *'o na dpal he ru ka de rang ci lta bu zhe na* | *shri ni gzung 'dzin gnyis su med pa'i ye shes me long lta bu'o* | *he ni rgyu dang rkyen la sogs pas tong pa nyid mnyam pa nyid do* | *ru ni rnam par rtog pa'i tshogs pa dang bral ba nyid du ci snyed pa mkhyen pas na so sor rtog pa'o* | *ka ni zhi ba'i mtha' gang du'ang mi gnas pas bya ba grub pa'o* | *de ltar dbyer med par rtogs pas don gyi he ru ka mngon du 'gyur ro* |.

<sup>738</sup> The Tibetan work *Kye'i rdo rje shes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po*, in Sanskrit *Śrīhevajramahātantrarāja*, is contained in P 10, vol. 1, pp. 210–222; fols. 230a.3–262a.4. On page 214, fol. 240a.3, we find the title of the ninth chapter, Skt. edition in TRIPATHI & NEGI 2001.

highest purity and the purity which is not the highest express what has to be taught in this chapter.” In his summary he explained this title as “Gnosis and Perception” or “the purity of gnosis and perception and so on.” Thus, he referred gnosis to the highest purity and perception to the purity that is not the highest. This chapter explains that all entities are completely pure by nature.<sup>739</sup>

Nevertheless, “in order to practice the completely perfect *buddha dharma*, the disturbing feelings, which arise from dualistic perception, have to be given up by means of the realization of selflessness.” Furthermore, “the practitioner, who [realizes] that all those entities of the experience of any object and subject are completely pure, [realizes] in this way that all sentient beings have the nature of a buddha. This is the buddha nature.”<sup>740</sup> In his commentary, the Third Karmapa clearly expressed what in a tantric context is meant with the so-called “pure view.” This has been discussed in chapter 2 under The Tathāgatagarbha Sources and The Tantric Sources, and in the fourth chapter under Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s Balanced Approach.

The ninth volume again sets the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in a tantric context. In the first commentary, Rang-byung-rdo-rje introduces this topic in order to clarify the meaning of the expression “the three yogas” in the title.<sup>741</sup>

What is called the three [aspects of] “appearance,” “increase,” and “attainment,” arisen from the darkness of ignorance, since the acquisition of the perceived and perceiver of the sixfold group [of perception] has subsided, is the first yoga. The subsiding development of the concepts and the defiled mind is the second yoga. [The third yoga refers to the following:] And since the appearances of the deluded mind stream, the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*), have ceased, the veils of the disturbing feelings, of knowledge, and of the

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 8, lines 457.2–4: | *le’u ’di yi brjod par bya ba ni | mchog dang mchog ma yin pa’i dag pa brjod byed...* | *ye shes rnam shes zhes pa ye shes dang rnam par shes pa’i dag pa la sogs pa* | and line 458.3: | *dngos po ’di dag thams cad rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pa ste* |.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 8, lines 459.3–4: | *gzung ’dzin las gyur pa’i nyon mongs pa bdag med par rtogs pas spang par bya ba dang | sangs rgyas kyi chos yongs su rdzogs par byed pa la ...* | and line 459.4: | *...rnal ’byor pas yul dang yul can du gang mthong ba’i dngos po de kun rnam par dag pas ni ’di ltar ’gro ba rnam sangs rgyas kyi bdag nyid do | ’di ni de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po ste* |.

<sup>741</sup> The Tibetan lines in *rNal ’byor gsum gyi snying po gsal ba’i ’grel pa*, pp. 5.6–6.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 9, pp. 1–121, read: | *ma rig pa’i mun pa las byung ba’i snang mched thog! gsum zhes bya ba’i tshogs drug gi gzung ’dzin thob pa de nub pas rnal ’byor dang po dang | rtog pa dang nyon yid mched pa nub pa rnal ’byor gnyis pa dang | sems kun gzhi’i rnam shes ’khrul pa’i snang ba ’gags pas nyon mongs pa dang shes bya dang snyoms ’jug lam gyi sgrib pa dag pa ni rdo rje sems dpa’ bde ba chen po ye shes kyi sku ste* |.

path of meditative absorption, are purified. This is the gnosis body of great bliss of Vajrasattva (rDo-rje-sems-dpa').

After that, we find several occurrences that closely resemble the first occurrence in volume 8 cited above. They show the relationship between the impure aspects: the five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) including the aggregate of consciousness or perception, or the five elements (*'byung ba lnga*), the five kinds of disturbing feelings and their change of state into the pure aspects: the five kinds of gnosis, the five corresponding buddha aspects or deities; as well as the four buddha bodies.<sup>742</sup>

In several places the tenth volume also includes the combined sūtric and tantric presentation of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.<sup>743</sup> In fact, the Third Karmapa once commented upon the direct connection between the *rNam shes ye shes* and the tantric symbolism of the Buddha Kālacakra in the context of the empowerment ritual.<sup>744</sup>

Furthermore, the Vajra master expresses: “Please grant me dorje and bell, the nondual essence of method and higher knowledge, the nature of perception and gnosis.”

Later in this volume there are several sections where Rang-byung-rdo rje returned to the previous subject. For example, in his commentary on the Six Doctrines of Nāropa (*Nā ro chos drug*) he again contrasted the impure state of sentient beings with the pure state of the five gnoses etc.<sup>745</sup> After elaborating on the natural state of the entity body (*lus dngos po'i gnas lugs*), he even provided a brief summary of the *rNam shes ye shes*, when

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<sup>742</sup> See the Tibetan lines in the *rNal 'byor gsum gyi snying po gsal ba'i 'grel pa*, pp. 47.5–48.4, 114.1–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 9, pp. 1–121; in a similar way, the Tibetan lines in *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i mngon rtogs*, pp. 131.5–132.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 9, pp. 122–152; the Tibetan lines in *rGyal ba rgya mtsho'i mngon rtogs*, pp. 330.1–334.4, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 9, pp. 275–358; and the Tibetan lines in *Shes rab snang ba'i sgrub thabs phag mo dkar mo*, p. 516.2–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 9, pp. 472–534.

<sup>743</sup> See the Tibetan lines in the *Dgyes pa rdo rje'i mngon rtogs tshigs bcad ma*, pp. 122.3–123.2, 114.1–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 111–125; furthermore, the Tibetan lines in *Dgyes pa rdo rje lha dgu'i mngon rtogs tshigs lhug ma*, pp. 138.5–139.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 125–142; and the Tibetan lines in *Dgyes pa rdo rje'i lus dkyil 'kyil*, pp. 143.1–145.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 142–146. Then, the Tibetan lines in *Dgyes pa rdo rje'i dbang chog*, pp. 197.5–200.4, 204.1–205.1, present the same topic in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 169–210; in *Dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i mngon par rtogs pa rnam dag snang ba*, 313.1–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 281–315, also in *Dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang gi cho ga gsal bar byed pa*, pp. 424.3–425.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 363–438.

<sup>744</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang gi cho ga gsal bar byed pa*, p. 428.4–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 363–438, read: | yang slob dpon gyis | rnam shes ye shes kyi rang bzhin thabs shes rab gnyis su med pa'i bdag nyid rdo rje dril bu stsal du gsol zhes brjod la |.

<sup>745</sup> See the Tibetan lines in *Zab lam nA ro chos drug gi gsal byed chings khrid yig dang bcas pa*, p. 541.2–4, pp. 541.5–543.3, pp. 551.2–552.3, pp. 552.5–553.6, p. 562.1–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 537–562.

explaining the state of mind (*sems kyi gnas lugs*), pp. 552.5–553.6. For a further reference he added: “There exists an extensive explanation in my *Clarifying the Meaning (or Contents) of the Five Aggregates*.”<sup>746</sup>

Immediately after these lines he continued by enumerating possible mistaken philosophical concepts in the same way as in the beginning of the *rNam shes ye shes*.<sup>747</sup> The last two lines of this section are particularly interesting, since Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided a wealth of information in condensed form:<sup>748</sup>

Even though there exist explanations concerning the philosophical assertions ... , they are not explained here. Why? Here, through the realization by the one who is endowed with the *yoga*, which is devoid of a single and a multiple nature, the perceptions of the mind of relative truth and its nature are seen as gnosis, while mistaken understanding, destructive views, and extreme views never bring about liberation. Therefore, the conceptual fabrications [mentioned before] are sufficient.

Since this work is a commentary on the Six Doctrines of Nāropa, the emphasis lies on the meditative practices of these instructions, not on philosophical teachings. Nevertheless, in order to guide his students beyond the clinging to conceptual states of mind, Karmapa outlined the possible mistaken concepts and concluded that a practitioner of “the *yoga* devoid of a single and multiple nature” sees gnosis which implies that he is able to distinguish between perception and gnosis. In general, the expression “the *yoga* devoid of a single and multiple nature” alludes to a Madhyamaka reasoning. More specifically, it refers to the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school of thought and to its founder Śāntarakṣita, whose seminal work *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* builds exclusively on this reasoning of all phenomena being devoid of a single and multiple nature.<sup>749</sup> Thus, by applying the two terms “endowed with the *yoga*” and “devoid of a single and a multiple nature,” Karmapa

<sup>746</sup> The Tibetan line reads: | *rgyas par kho bo 'i phung po lnga 'i don gsal bar byed par bshad pa yin no* |.

<sup>747</sup> Karmapa provided a rather detailed discussion of the possibly mistaken philosophical viewpoints in the ninth chapter of his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, A, pp. 551.1–556.2. In between, p. 552.5, he stated: “They have been taught again and again in the Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa treatises. But here, I do not write down what otherwise would become too many letters.” Tibetan: | *dbu ma dang tshad ma 'i bstan bcos rnams su yang dang yang du gsungs shing* | *'dir yi ge mangs bar 'gyur ba 'i phyir ma bkod do* |.

<sup>748</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Zab lam nA ro chos drug gi gsal byed chings khrid yig dang bcas pa*, p. 553.4–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje 'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 10, pp. 537–562, read: ... *'dod pa rnams bshad du yod kyang 'dir ma bshad do* | *de ci 'i phyir zhe na* | *'dir kun rdzob kyi sems kyi rnam par shes shing de nyid gcig dang du ma 'i ngo bo dang bral ba nyid du rnal 'byor can gyis rtogs pas ye shes mthong bar 'gyur gyi log par rtog pa dang 'jigs tshogs dang mthar 'dzin pas ni nam du yang mi grol ba 'i phyir ro* | *de na spros pas chog go* |.

<sup>749</sup> For further explanations on this work, see the second chapter of this thesis in the context of the Madhyamaka sources (2.1.3) and in the perception part of the *rNam shes ye shes* (2.2.1).

again set the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the context of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka presentation.

A further topic in this short section is the distinction between relative and ultimate truth. Rang-byung-rdo-rje connected the “perceptions of the mind” with relative truth (*kun rdzob kyi sems kyi rnam par shes*), and “this and its nature” (*de nyid*) with gnosis (*ye shes*), logically representing ultimate truth. He then contrasted the correct view with several deluded states of mind, here expressed by a set of three possible incorrect views. The three mistaken views mentioned here can be understood as a summary of the five wrong views (*lta ba nyon mongs can: dṛṣṭi*) contained in the Abhidharma literature.<sup>750</sup>

The eleventh and last volume (except for the five volumes of *Zab mo nang don* commentaries) mainly focuses on the Great Seal instructions (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*). The first occurrence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse explains the realms of the three buddha bodies as the pure aspects of the mind.<sup>751</sup>

If one asks what the realms of the three [buddha] bodies are,  
The all-base free from limitations, the meaning of *Madhyamaka*,  
Is the realm of the *dharmakāya*.  
This great bliss of the unchanging mind  
Is the realm of the *sambhogakāya*.  
That mind of uninterrupted clear light  
Is the realm of the *nirmāṇakāya*.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje then turned back to the five aggregates and their change of state into the pure aspects, the five kinds of gnosis, as well as the five corresponding buddha

<sup>750</sup> The standard presentation of these five wrong views regards them as one of the six root afflictions (*rtsa nyon drug*). They consist of 1. “wrong views,” here translated as “mistaken understanding,” (*log par rtog pa* or *log lta*), 2. the view considering “an accumulation of perishable things” (*jigs tshogs la lta ba*) as a self, here translated as “destructive views;” 3. clinging to extremes, such as true existence or nonexistence (*mthar ’dzin pa’i lta ba*), here called “extreme views;” 4. the view holding philosophical views as supreme (*lta ba mchog ’dzin*), and 5. the view holding ethics or rituals to be supreme (*tshul khrims dang brtul zhugs mchog ’dzin*). Rang-byung-rdo-rje commented on these views in his *Chos mngon pa’i phung po lnga’i rab tu ’byed pa*, p. 450.3–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 5, pp. 443–455.

<sup>751</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Gnas lugs gsal byed ye shes sgron med*, p. 38.3–4, in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 11, pp. 21–44, read:

*sku gsum zhing khams gang zhe na ||*  
*kun gzhi mtha’ bral dbu ma’i don ||*  
*chos kyi sku yi zhing khams yin ||*  
*sems ’gyur med bde ba chen po ’di ||*  
*longs spyod rdzogs pa’i zhing khams yin ||*  
*sems ’od gsal rgyun chad med pa de ||*  
*sprul pa’i sku’i zhing khams yin ||.*

aspects, in this case represented by their respective buddha realms or fields (*zhing khams*).<sup>752</sup> Karmapa in his concluding wish found a concise, poetic way of expressing this subject: “May there be blazing glory of goodness and our own mind be [realized] as buddhahood itself.”<sup>753</sup>

The following work entitled “The Practice Manual of the Co-emergent Union of Mahāmudrā,”<sup>754</sup> provides profound meditation instructions, which in large parts are based on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. The relevant sections (pp. 57.1–62.3, 66.1–70.2) will be critically edited and translated in chapter 8. This work is very important for the understanding of the functions of this discourse, because here the Third Karmapa clearly applies these instructions as a cornerstone of his Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) teachings, as the introduction to the “co-emergent gnosis of self-awareness” (*rang rig pa'i ye shes lhan cig skyes pa*, p. 54.2).

A further occurrence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse appears in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's commentary on Saraha's *Dohākośagīti*.<sup>755</sup> The example of space here illustrates the nature of mind, and Karmapa pointed out how unsurpassable enlightenment is obtained by purifying the sixth and seventh aspect of perception or cognition.<sup>756</sup>

Concerning what has to be purified in terms of the movement of the (defiled) mind itself, in the four lines where the mind is said to be like space and so on, if one further asks how that mind itself is becoming the cause of liberation from the fetters, [the answer is:] that which is to be perceived is similar to space. The nature of space again is that it is empty in essence, has the nature of clarity and the characteristics of being unhindered. It completely pervades

<sup>752</sup> See the Tibetan lines in the *Gnas lugs gsal byed ye shes sgron med*, pp. 38.5–40.1, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 21–44.

<sup>753</sup> The Tibetan line in the *Gnas lugs gsal byed ye shes sgron med*, p. 41.4 in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 21–44, reads: | *bkra shis dpal 'bar rang sems sangs rgyas nyid du shog* |.

<sup>754</sup> The full Tibetan title is *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig*, in short *Phyag chen khrid yig*, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 53–72.

<sup>755</sup> The Tibetan title of Saraha's work is *Do ha mdzod kyi glu* (for further details, refer to the bibliography), the relevant lines 175–178 are to be found in P 3068, vol. 68, fol. 77a.3–4. Kurtis Rice Schaeffer has provided a comparative edition of the Tibetan text in SCHAEFFER 2004: 405–448. The Tibetan title of the commentary is *Do ha mdzod kyi glu'i don gsal bar byed pa tshig gi rgyan dri ma med pa'i sgron me*, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 193–264.

<sup>756</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Do ha mdzod kyi glu'i don gsal bar byed pa tshig gi rgyan dri ma med pa'i sgron me*, p. 224.3–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 193–264, read: | *yid kyi 'g.yu ba rang dag par bya ba ni* | *sems ni nam mkha' 'dra bar ces pa la sogs pa tshig bzhi las* | *de yang 'ching grol gyi rgyu sems nyid de rang ji ltar bya zhe na* | *nam mkha' dang 'dra bar gzung bar bya ste* | *nam mkha'i rang bzhin yang ngo bos stong* | *rang bzhin gsal* | *mtshan nyid 'gag pa med* | *dbying kun tu khyab* | *mtshon pa'i dpe dang bral ba bzhin du* | *sems nyid kyang de ltar gzung bar byas la 'dzin byed kyi yid de'ang yid kyi rnam shes dang* | *nyon mongs can gyi yid ma yin par grol bar byas par gyur na rgyu mtshan des na byed pa po de nyid bla na med pa de thob par 'gyur te ...* |.

the sphere [of phenomena]. In a similar way, even though the nature of mind is free from an illustrating example, when that perceiving mind, in terms of what has been perceived like that, has become liberated, being neither the mental cognition nor the defiled mind, for that reason that unsurpassable, which is that agent itself, will be obtained.

Another sentence in this commentary refers to the activities of body and speech after having realized selflessness:<sup>757</sup>

Furthermore, after the yogi, who has realized selflessness, understands the seeing of form and so on, as many aspects of the activities of body and speech as there are, as the gnosis of the illusion-like *samādhi*, from resting in meditational equipoise he is unshakeable.

In the following statement Rang-byung-rdo-rje even more clearly expressed the liberating factor in the whole process of distinguishing between perception and gnosis. It appears as some kind of continuation of the previous quotation on the liberation of the perceiving mind being neither the mental cognition nor the defiled mind (*'dzin byed kyi yid de 'ang yid kyi rnam shes dang | nyon mongs can gyi yid ma yin par grol bar byas par gyur*):<sup>758</sup>

Because of the function that has been explained above, after one has understood that the mind that is deluded like that does not realize the [nature of ] concepts and that one also realizes that one is holding on to mistaken beliefs, one is liberated from the inner fetters. If one asks why? Because what exists in the own reality will remain unstained by dualistic perception.

The subsequent extensive commentary elucidates the practice of *gCod* (cutting through). Here, Karmapa takes up the same line of thought related to the change of state of the conceptual aspect of cognition:<sup>759</sup>

Furthermore, as it has been explained concerning the time when [the negative forces appearing] as pride [are] conceptual states, by understanding the concepts as being without

<sup>757</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Do ha mdzod kyi glu'i don gsal bar byed pa tshig gi rgyan dri ma med pa'i sgron me*, p. 233.4–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 193–264, read: | *de 'ang bdag med rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor pas gzugs mthong ba la sogs pa lus ngag gi spyod lam gyi rnam pa ji snyed pa la sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyi ye shes su shes nas mnyam bzhag las mi skyod pa yin te* |.

<sup>758</sup> The Tibetan lines in *Do ha mdzod kyi glu'i don gsal bar byed pa tshig gi rgyan dri ma med pa'i sgron me*, p. 256.4–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 193–264, read: | *gong du brjod pa'i tshul de lta bas na de ltar rmongs pa'i sems kyis rnam rtog ma rtogs dang | grub mthar 'dzin pa'ang rtogs pas shes nas nang gi 'ching ba las grol lo | de ci'i phyir zhe na | don rang la yod pas gzung 'dzin gyis ma gos pa la gnas par bya'o* |.

<sup>759</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *gCod kyi tlka*, pp. 280.6–281.2, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 270–298, read: | *de yang thog bcas snyems byed du 'dus pa'i skabs su bshad pa ltar | rnam rtog gzhi med du shes pas | nyon mongs pa lnga rang sar grol shing | rigs drug gi sdug bsngal rang sar dag nas nyon mongs pa lnga ye shes lngar 'gyur ba yin te* |.

any basis, the five disturbing feelings are liberated at their own place, and after the sufferings of the six classes [of sentient beings] are purified at their own place, the five disturbing feelings become the five gnoses.

There follows a detailed explanation on each disturbing feeling and each class of sentient beings, where gods and humans are taken together. By realizing that the concepts are without any basis, each of these turns into one of the five gnoses respectively.<sup>760</sup>

The next commentary in this volume, the *Nyams len lag khrid ma*,<sup>761</sup> expounds on the teachings transmitted to Rang-byung-rdo-rje in a vision by Vimalamitra. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this work is to be counted among the most important treatises composed by the Third Karmapa, because it laid the foundation for the establishment of an independent lineage of spiritual instruction, the Karma-snying-thig tradition. This is a fusion of essential rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud teachings. Several sections of this work are philosophical teachings on the nature of mind, in parts directly based on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse presented according to the combined bKa'-brgyud and rNying-ma views. A discussion of the rNying-ma view appears in the following chapter (6.2). The detailed academic treatment of these extensive sections is left for future research.

As a last occurrence in this eleventh volume, in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's famous *Great Seal Wishes* verses 9 and 18 offer an essential summary on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. They explain how the mistaken duality of subject and object arises, and how to realize the nature of mind on the basis of this understanding:<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>760</sup> See *gCod kyi tlkka*, pp. 281.2–4. According to SORENSEN 2013: 237, 522–523, providing a critical edition and a complete English translation of this work, the section comments on 22 lines from the *bKa' tshoms chen mo*, 11/460.

<sup>761</sup> See *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 395–440.3.

<sup>762</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *rJe rang byung rdo rjes mdzad pa'i nges don phyag rgya chen po'i smon lam*, pp. 620.2–3, 621.4–5, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 617–622, read: |

*yod ma myong ba'i rang snang yul du 'khrul ||*  
*ma rig dbang gis rang rig bdag tu 'khrul ||*  
*gnyis 'dzin dbang gis srid pa'i klong du 'khyams ||*  
*ma rig 'khrul pa'i rtsad dar chod par shog || 9*

*yul la bltas pas yul med sems su mthong ||*  
*sems la bltas pas sems med ngo bo stong ||*  
*gnyis la bltas pas gnyis 'dzin rang sar grol ||*  
*'od gsal sems kyi gnas lugs rtogs par shog || 18.*

The Tibetan commentary *Phyag chen mon lam 'grel pa*, A, by Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas expounds on these two verses in detail on pp. 32.6–39.6, 62.4–65.1. For an English translation, refer to SI TU CHOS KYI 'BYUNG GNAS 1995: 62–79, 95–97. This section of the commentary will be further discussed in the following chapter, pp. 244–246.

9. The self-manifestation [of mind], which is not experienced as [truly] existent, is mistaken for an object.

Due to the power of ignorance, self-awareness is mistaken for a “Self.”

Under the influence of clinging to this duality one wanders the expanse of the conditioned world.

May we cut away ignorance, the spreading root of delusion.

...

18. Observing objects, objects do not exist, they are seen as mind.

Looking at mind, mind does not exist, it is empty in essence.

Through looking at both, dualistic clinging is liberated at its own place.

May we realize the nature of mind, which is clear light.

In the first chapter at the end of the section on the newly identified extant works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1.2.4) the present author has already briefly discussed the second new edition published in 2013. The hagiography of Mar-pa, the Translator, newly edited in the 2013 edition, was already investigated above (volume 4). Now, the other works not contained in the 2006 edition will be analyzed concerning further occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.

In the eleventh volume, in the context of several rNying-ma treatises, we find a short work entitled “The Utterly Unelaborated Empowerment.”<sup>763</sup> The function of this teaching is to show to the student the characteristics of the mind directly (*sems kyi mtshan nyid mngon sum du ston pa*) by means of rDzogs-chen practice instructions. When introducing the student to the pure aspect of mind, the Third Karmapa stressed the realization of buddha nature in all sentient beings. Then he continued:<sup>764</sup>

The nature of mind is truly uncompounded, the eightfold group [of perception] having changed its state is an extremely pure phenomenon. The place, the teacher, the surrounding, and all phenomena at that time are understood as being the same. Like that the reality of the perfected mind and gnosis is explained.

This concludes the analysis of the various functions of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*.

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<sup>763</sup> The Tibetan title is *Rab tu spros med kyi dbang*, pp. 367–378, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, volume 11.

<sup>764</sup> The Tibetan lines in the *Rab tu spros med kyi dbang*, p. 375.5–6, in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* 2, volume 11, pp. 367–378, read: | *sems nyid mngon par 'dus ma byas pa ni tshogs brgyad gnas su gyur pa shin tu rnam par dag pa'i chos te* | *gnas dang ston pa dang 'khor dang chos thams cad gcig tu rtog pa ni dus te* | *de ltar sems dang ye shes mthar phyir (!) pa'i don bshad pa'o* |.

## 5.4 The Specific Interpretation of the *vijñāna-jñāna* Distinction by the Third Karmapa

Rang-byung-rdo-rje presented the *rNam shes ye shes* theme with due reference to classical Indian and early Tibetan sources. At the same time his interpretation was very individual and flexible, depending on the needs of his followers. As he had a great variety of students, some belonging to different instruction lineages, he explained the operation of perception and cognition, as well as their change of state into the five buddha gnoses at the time of purification, in different genres – in verse as well as in prose, whichever seemed most appropriate to him. This flexibility in terms of a broad range of applications together with great reliability is one of the hallmarks of his interpretation. The typical genres will be briefly summarized here based on the selected examples.

The principal treatise was composed as an appendix to a tantric work, the *Zab mo nang don*, and forms a trilogy together with the second appendix, the *sNying po bstan pa*. As shown above, it also pervades the other two works like a connecting thread. The topic further appears in several hagiographies of the masters of Karmapa's principal transmission lineage as well as in his own songs of realization, often supported by illustrating examples. It is contained in praises of buddha aspects or deities (*lha*), in the form of practical advice given to students, sometimes in letters, often in songs. Furthermore, it appears in his major commentaries on classical sūtras and tantras, in the context of his instructions on the gCod practice, in a few rNying-ma works, and as a cornerstone of his Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) teachings.

Since the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse itself is a classical Buddhist theme, that is, the highpoint of the Four Reliances, Karmapa throughout his presentations of this topic referred back to classical Indian and early Tibetan sources. This was not only a method for substantiating and giving authority to his own teachings, but also a way of meaningfully repeating the material in order to implant it into the long-term memory of his students and to remind the scholars among them of what they had studied previously and learned by heart.

The *rNam shes ye shes* (*'byed pa'i bstan bcos*) itself is a very condensed composition in 36 verses. In this short form it can only provide the essential points of the theme. Therefore, all other occurrences of this discourse in the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum* can be regarded as a vast auto-commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* spread out in a variety of smaller or larger works. It appears in nine of the eleven volumes, starting from

volume 3 through to volume 11.<sup>765</sup> Except for a few repeated sūtric and tantric occurrences, each discussion of this topic is different from the others. Sometimes Karmapa provided a summary of the fundamental theme, but mostly he presented further details or different perspectives.

It seems that, in his choice of sūtric and tantric works on which to comment, Rang-byung-rdo-rje particularly decided on those incorporating the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. Among the commentaries on the sūtra level he especially elaborated on this topic in the *Chos mngon pa'i phung po lnga'i rab tu byed pa*, the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*, the *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, as well as the *Nyam len gnad kun bsdus pa*. As shown above, one obvious reason was that he regarded the topics of “mind and gnosis,” “phenomena (*dharmā*) and the nature of phenomena (*dharmatā*),” “relative truth and absolute truth,” [ultimately] as synonyms.<sup>766</sup>

The central work on the level of the tantras is, of course, his *Zab mo nang don* including its auto-commentary, the *Zab nang rang 'grel*. Finally, in terms of the Mahāmudrā exposition the *Phyag chen khrid yig* contains the most detailed exposition of this discourse.<sup>767</sup> On the level of the philosophical viewpoint and with respect to their emphasis on the qualities inherent in mind, all of these works propound a synthesis of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka thought,<sup>768</sup> which among the Tibetans later became known as the gZhan stong school of thought.

Nevertheless, Rang-byung-rdo-rje's interpretation, particularly whether or not following the gZhan stong view concerning the philosophical context for this topic, seems to be disputed, at least to a certain degree. The evaluation of his viewpoint very much depends on whether or not this discourse is regarded as ontological, psychological, or epistemological, as a philosophical teaching or as a practice instruction. It obviously

<sup>765</sup> For example, the Third Karmapa in his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, p. 390.1–2, after designating the defiled state of mind as perception (*rnam par shes pa*) and the pure state as gnosis (*ye shes*), stated: “In detail, I have taught this in the *Treatise which Analyzes Perception and Gnosis*. And I will also explain [more] below in the chapter (6), which expounds on the connection between perception [and gnosis in the four states].” The Tibetan lines read: | *rgyas par ni kho bos rnam par shes pa dang ye shes brtag pa'i bstan bcos su bshad cing* | 'og nas rnam par shes pa dang 'brel ba bstan pa'i skabs nas kyang ston par byed do ||.

<sup>766</sup> See *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, pp. 49.4–50.1.

<sup>767</sup> For further details, refer to the previous section and those parts treated separately in chapter 8.

<sup>768</sup> The Third Karmapa in his introduction to the *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, pp. 3.3–4.2, classified the works of Nāgārjuna into three major categories (*rigs gsum*). In this context he described the collection of praises as belonging to the highest category, which according to his presentation means the third turning of the wheel of *dharmā*, the teachings on the buddha nature etc. Unfortunately, only the description of the first category is still complete in this commentary, the other two are largely missing in the basic *dbu med* manuscript, and more so in all later copies. Nevertheless, Karmapa returned to this topic at the end of his commentary, p. 124.3–4.

contains elements of all of these themes. The study of the reception of his discourse by his followers and by masters of other lineages will be presented in the following chapter.

The function of these teachings definitely was always soteriological in the broadest sense. Showing the clear-cut distinction between ordinary and enlightened states of mind according to tradition has a strong liberating power and leads the practitioner beyond conceptual states of mind. In this respect, the Third Karmapa's specific interpretation was a balanced approach, not falling into any of the extremes (see chapter 4.6).

Sometimes in his interpretation of this theme Rang-byung-rdo-rje even combined several perspectives in one occurrence. A typical example for this approach appears in volume 5. In his commentary on the *Dran pa nyer bzhag pa'i mdo* (473.2–4) he expounded on the process of perception in the context of the five aggregates (*pañca skandha*), relative and ultimate, as well as the twelve links of dependent origination (*rten 'brel yan lag bcu gnyis; dvādaśāṅga-pratītyasamutpāda*). He illustrated how the unawareness (of dualistic clinging) abiding on the all-base, the fundamental mind, produces the defilements, which in connection with the habitual tendencies of the formation of actions and the perceptions lead to a rebirth in the cycle of existence.<sup>769</sup>

The specific contents of the principal treatise clearly show a threefold distinction corresponding to the “three natures” (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*) mentioned above. The “imaginary” or “imputed” (*kun brtags: parikalpita*) nature here refers to the first part dealing with possible mistaken views.<sup>770</sup> The “other dependent” (*gzhan dbang: paratantra*) nature is characterized by a detailed explanation of the causes and conditions for delusion and their empty nature.<sup>771</sup> Here, Karmapa taught the four conditions—the causal, dominant, immediate, and objective conditions—in the process of perception. In the context of the Yogācāra presentation the other dependent nature is also referred to as the unmistaken perfect nature (*phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs grub: aviparyāsa pariniṣpanna*). The unchanging perfect or absolute nature (*'gyur ba med pa'i yongs grub: nirvikāra pariniṣpanna*) is the theme underlying the whole second part of the treatise

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<sup>769</sup> In terms of the secondary literature, as mentioned in chapter 1, Lambert Schmithausen has conducted a vast amount of research on this topic in his seminal works SCHMITHAUSEN 1987 and SCHMITHAUSEN 2014.

<sup>770</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 2–11. Similar explanations appear also in Karmapa's above-mentioned commentary on the Six Doctrines of Nāropa in volume 10, and in chapter 9 of his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, A, pp. 551.1–556.2.

<sup>771</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 12–21. The *Zab nang rang 'grel* in its first chapter elucidates the dependent origination of causes and conditions in a general way, pp. 381.3–392.1, later followed by a very detailed and specific presentation of the four conditions mentioned above, pp. 401.3–406.1.

related to the five kinds of gnosis and the four buddha bodies.<sup>772</sup> This attribution was presented above in Karmapa's commentary on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* (Tib. *Chos dang chos nyid rnam par 'byed pa*).<sup>773</sup>

A more detailed analysis of Karmapa's specific interpretation of the actual contents of the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction yields the result that the occurrences can be discussions of the epistemological workings of perception or emphasize the ontological perspective, e.g. when looking at the nature of the perception process: "The sixfold group of perception in its true nature is gnosis" (volume 5, p. 258.1–2). In terms of the epistemological perspective, he elaborated several times in great detail on the perception process and its change of state at the time of purification. He obviously relied on sources, such as the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, and the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, that to a high degree are practice-oriented and present detailed explanations on the functions of perception.

At the same time, Karmapa's explanations differ in several respects from those appearing in a variety of general Abhidharma works. For example, in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* the six aspects of perception and the *manas* (mental organ) are taught, together called the "seven *dhātus*."<sup>774</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje, however, teaches eight aspects, thus following the Mahāyāna Abhidharma (as shown in chapter 2). The term *manas* in the *Abhidharmakośa* designates the function of the ceasing of perception (1.17a–b) and supporting the sixth perception or cognition (1.17c–d). Obviously, this corresponds closely to the immediate mind (*de ma thag pa'i yid*), which had an important role in the presentation of the Third Karmapa.<sup>775</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that several Theravādins before his time had already separated the first part of this verse from the second part, thus understanding *manas* exclusively as some kind of cessation.

Rang-byung-rdo-rje refuted this understanding, namely that "the immediate [mind] would be the cessation of each [moment] ... since logically cessation is not suitable as a

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<sup>772</sup> The Third Karmapa also elaborated on this theme in his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, chapter 6, pp. 518.6–523.5, as well as in the chapter 10, pp. 586.6–587.4. Here, each of the *skandhas* changes its state into one buddha gnosis. This tantric explanation corresponds to the one given in the *mKha' 'gro ma kun tu spyod pa'i rgyud kyi 'grel pa* in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 159.4–161.4.

<sup>773</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 488–613.

<sup>774</sup> See *Abhidharmakośa*, chapter 1, 16a–d. For an English translation, refer to LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1923–31: 75.

<sup>775</sup> In the context of his Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) instructions, given in the *Phyag chen thrid yig* (see chapter 8.1+2C.), Karmapa emphasized the importance of the examination of the immediate mind for the realization of the nondual state of mind. The Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje provided the same kind of instruction in his *Kam-tshang phyag chen khrid* (fōl. 17a, p. 988) with reference to sGam-po-pa and to the Third Karmapa (see chapter 8, footnote 1276).

cause.”<sup>776</sup> He continued to explain the immediate mind as transporting the impressions or seeds coming from the senses into the fundamental mind and back from it, thus making the six perceptions arise. In the *rNam shes ye shes* he expressed this as follows:<sup>777</sup> “It is “immediate,” because it is the condition for the arising and ceasing of the sixfold group [of perceptions].” For him the immediate mind is mainly located in the seventh aspect of perception together with the defiled mind.

Even though Karmapa regarded the immediate mind, the connecting power between the moments of perception, as an important function, still he followed Sthiramati (late fourth century C.E.), when labeling the seventh from among the eight aspects of perception as the “defiled mind.”<sup>778</sup> Sthiramati argued that the immediate mind as the seventh aspect is regarded as the location or basis for the arising of the sixth aspect, the mental perception (*yid kyi rnam shes: manovijñāna*), thus being synonymous with the mental faculty (*yid kyi dbang po: mana indriyam*). Different from the defiled mind, the term *manas* or *yid* is not given to this function, because it would have to apprehend the fundamental mind as an object and misperceive it as a self.

The name “defiled mind” as applied to the seventh aspect has obviously influenced several later Tibetan scholars to neglect the immediate mind to the extent that it has not even been mentioned in their commentaries. The First Karma-’phrin-las Phyogs-las-nam-rgyal (1456–1539), in his commentary on the *Zab mo nang don*,<sup>779</sup> complained about this and wrote that at his time “most followers of the Abhidharma in their presentations of the eight aspects of perception only list the defiled mind as the seventh aspect and do not mention the immediate mind the slightest.” As against that, “Rang-byung-mdo-rje regarded the seventh aspect as the immediate mind. The defiled mind is just ignorant in terms of the own essence of that [immediate mind]. As a part of it, when

<sup>776</sup> See *Zab nang rang ’grel*, p. 404.1–4. The Tibetan lines read: | gang gang ’gags pa de ma thag | yin te zhes bya ba ste | ’di la bye brag smra ba dag ni | tshogs drug po so so ’gags pa nyid phyi ma’i de ma thag par ’dod kyang | ’gags pa rgyu nyid du mi rung ba’i rigs pas |.

<sup>777</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 17, lines 76–77: | drug po skye dang ’gag pa yi | rkyen phyir de ma thag pa yin ||.

<sup>778</sup> See *Pañcaskandhavaibhāṣā* (Tib. *Phung po lnga’i rab tu byed pa bye brag tu bshad pa*), P 5567, fol. 202a.6–202b.8; D 4066, fol. 239a.7–239b.3. For an English translation of the complete section, refer to ENGLE 2009: 344–345.

<sup>779</sup> See the *Zab nang rnam bshad*, pp. 66.4–67.1. The Tibetan lines read: | deng sang gangs can gyi ljongs kyi chos mngon pa ba phal che bas rnam shes tshogs brgyad kyi ya gyal du nyon yid kho na bgrangs nas de ma thag yid la bdun yid du ’jog pa’i rnam gzhag zur tsam yang ma mdzad ... mod kyi | dpal rang byung gi zhal nga nas rnam shes tshogs brgyad kyi ya gyal bdun pa ni de ma thag yid dang de’i rang gi ngo bo ma rig par bdag tu rtog pas kham gsum du ’khor ba’i ’khrul pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba byed pa’i cha nas nyon yid du bzhed de |.

conceptualizing it as a self, it acts as the root of all delusions of the cycle of the three realms.”

Rang-byung-rdo-rje, in the context of his auto-commentary on the *Zab mo nang don*, also expounded on a particular interpretation of the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi rnam shes: ālayavijñāna*):<sup>780</sup> “Concerning this, if the expression “perception” (or “consciousness”), is not applied for what is called “ground” (or “all-base”), since it is also suitable to express “suchness” as “ground” (or “all-base”), it should be called a perception (or consciousness).” He continued to explain that the seventh and eighth aspects are causes and conditions for each other, thus perceiving objects (*don mthong ba*) and therefore being called “perception” or “consciousness.”<sup>781</sup> He reminded the reader to carefully consider the fitting context for the terms “ground” (or “all-base”) and “fundamental mind” (*ālayavijñāna*). This is also the topic of the following citation.

The First Karma-'phrin-las-pa mentioned further differences between the presentation of the Third Karmapa and those of many scholars at his time:<sup>782</sup>

Even though in comparison to those adhering to just six collections of perception the majority assert eight collections, still they hold the “ground” (or “all-base”) to be the “fundamental mind” (*ālayavijñāna*) only. ... This [ground or all-base] according to the *Mahāyānasamgraha* depending on buddhahood becomes the habitual tendencies of listening (or studying). ... This is not the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*), because it is the seed of the very remedy for that.<sup>783</sup> ... Having applied scriptural authority and logic, it is much better understood through the extensive explanations provided in the *Zab nang rang 'grel* (by the Third Karmapa).

As part of his detailed explanations, Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided a specific interpretation of the change of state of the first five, the sixth, and seventh functions of perception into the corresponding three aspects of gnosis and two buddha bodies. Starting

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<sup>780</sup> See *Zab nang rang 'grel*, p. 383.2–3. The Tibetan lines read: | 'di yang kun ghzi zhes bya ba la rnam par shes pa'i sgra ma smos na de bzhin nyid la yang kun gzhis brjod du rung ba'i phyir rnam par shes pa smos so |.

<sup>781</sup> For further details, refer to the second chapter, 2.2.1. – and to the seventh chapter, verse 21.

<sup>782</sup> See the *Zab nang rnam bshad*, pp. 60.4–61.2. The Tibetan lines read: | 'ga' zhig gis | rnam shes tshogs drug kho nar smras la | tshogs brgyad du 'dod pa phal che bas kyang | kun gzhi ni kun gzhi'i rnam shes kho na'o | ... | de ni theg bsdus las | sangs rgyas kyi byang chub la brten nas thos pa'i bag chags su gyur pa ste | ... | de ni kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa ma yin te | de'i gnyen po'i sa bon nyid yin pa'i phyir ro | ... | de'i rnam par gzhag pa ni | rang 'grel nyid du | lung rigs dang sbyar nas rgyas par bshad pa klags pa tsam gyis shes par 'gyur ro |.

<sup>783</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje also quoted and commented extensively upon this section in the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*, pp. 502.5–504.1.

from the seventh aspect, he stated that the defiled mind changes its state into the gnosis of equality (verse 24). The immediate mind together with the conceptual function or inside-oriented facet of the sixth perception becomes the discriminating gnosis (verses 25a/b). Both together are designated as the *sambhogakāya* (verse 26). The five sense perceptions together with the outside-oriented facet of the sixth perception (*vid kyi cha gcig*) change the state into the all accomplishing gnosis (verses 27–29) and the *nirmāṇakāya*.<sup>784</sup> This interpretation implies a close connection of the immediate mind to mental perception, which in turn expresses its dynamic function, the underlying power of the continuous process of perception. Thus, the immediate mind functions as mental faculty, rendering this presentation especially suitable for Mahāmudrā practice with the instruction that subject, object and action are understood as parts of the same totality.

## 5.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter investigated the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the context of the *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum* in its two editions from 2006 and 2013. In his M.Phil. thesis the author has previously discussed its structure and contents, especially concerning the genres, the transmission lineages and the most important compositions. Here, he has added a new perspective, the grouping according to the three (or four) turnings of the *dharma* wheel (*chos kyi 'khor lo rim pa gsum: dharmacakrapravartana*). This structure applies to the complete *Rang-byung-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, to the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, and at least to a certain degree to the structure of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise itself.

The study of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy reveals a close interrelation between the *rNam shes ye shes* and the two other treatises, the *sNying po bstan pa* and the actual *Zab mo nang don*, including its auto-commentary. The *rNam shes ye shes* winds like a pervading thread through the other works. The same can be said about the further commentaries to the *Zab mo nang don*, making up volumes 12–16, the appendices to the *gSung 'bum* edition of 2006. The analysis of the major occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *gSung 'bum* shows that in this edition, except for the first two volumes, the discourse appears in all volumes, often even several times. This chapter investigated only the shorter occurrences with a focus on the variety of functions

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<sup>784</sup> In general, Rang-byung-rdo-rje here followed the presentation of the *Āryatrikāyasūtra*, P 949, fol. 60b.4–6. He just went slightly more into detail.

expressed through the different genres and levels of teachings. Several of the longer sections will be critically edited and translated in the eighth chapter.

The role of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the works of the *gSung 'bum*, which are different from the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, seemed at first to be mainly that of a vast auto-commentary. Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied the perspective of each major topic spread out in his commentaries to present further details of this discourse and enriching the contents by means of his specific interpretation. This auto-commentary expresses more clearly the actual intent of the author than any other master could possibly accomplish. As a vastly learned scholar, the Third Karmapa was able to substantiate his interpretation by a wealth of citations from classical Indian and early Tibetan sources.

Nevertheless, in the course of the analysis it became clear that the principal function of this discourse on the level of the sūtras was to provide a solid basis for the two core instructions of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the Nā ro chos drug (Six Doctrines of Nāropa), and the Phyag rgya chen po, (Mahāmudrā, Great Seal). Thus, Rang-byung-rdo-rje established the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings in his *gSung 'bum* as a bridge between the practice of its major tantras and the Great Seal. Obviously, this is the principal reason that this theme became so important in many of his works and finally also in his *gSung 'bum*. The far-reaching impact on the later teachings of the bKa'-brgyud tradition and other schools of Tibetan Buddhism up to the present provide further evidence for this important function. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6: The Treatment of the *viñāna-jñāna* Distinction in the later bKa'-brgyud Lineage and in Other Tibetan Buddhist Traditions

The investigation in the previous chapter of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* yielded the result that in terms of quantity and quality it represents one of the key portions of this collection. The logical outcome of this result is to discuss the influence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse on later bKa'-brgyud masters. This then naturally extends to the understanding of its role in other Buddhist traditions up to the present. Since it is impossible to cover its impact exhaustively over the complete time span of about 700 years, several significant examples related to each tradition will represent the general view concerning this topic in the respective lineage.

First, we will examine how Rang-byung-rdo-rje passed on these instructions to his direct students and how other selected bKa'-brgyud masters after the Third Karmapa commented on his view. Of special note are several masters of the 15th and 16th centuries, such as the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506) and his students. Furthermore, the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554) and his principal student, the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag (1525–1583), as well as the Second dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba (1504–1566) played a major role in the transmission of the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings.

Later, the Eighth Si-tu-paṇ-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas (1699/1700–1774) and the *Ris-med* masters such as the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas (1813–1899) and the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje (1871–1922) commented on the *rNam shes ye shes* and related topics. The latter part of this chapter presents an analysis of the interpretation of the distinction between *rnam shes* and *ye shes* as followed in various Tibetan Buddhist traditions such as the rNying-ma, Jo-nang, and dGe-lugs lineages.

### 6.1 Selected bKa'-brgyud Masters Following the Third Karmapa: Their Comments on his View as Presented in the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

As holder of the “eight practice lineages” (*sgrub brgyud brgyad*) and other transmissions, the Third Karmapa took on the enormous task of properly receiving, practicing and

transmitting all these instructions to his followers. Thus, his contribution to the preservation and propagation of these various lineage teachings cannot be overestimated. Jim Rheingans formulated the tremendous impact of his written teachings as follows:<sup>785</sup> “The writings of the Third Karmapa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339), created a milestone in the tradition and remain significant until today.” Among the innumerable instructions transmitted in the eight lineages, the investigation specifically concerns Karmapa’s influence by means of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. Here we can discern a short-term and a long-term impact on later masters of Tibetan Buddhism. The former relates to his direct students,<sup>786</sup> the latter to the masters of the bKa’-brgyud and other lineages throughout the following centuries.

As shown in the previous chapter, the Third Karmapa passed on these teachings to his direct students several times. G.yung-ston-rdo-rje-dpal (1284–1365), who besides becoming Karmapa’s successor or lineage holder in the bKa’-brgyud lineage played an important role in the rNying-ma tradition,<sup>787</sup> and G.yag-sde-paN-chen brTson-’grus-dar-rgyas (1299–1378),<sup>788</sup> a famous Sa-skya scholar, deserve special mention. Furthermore, the First Zhwa-dmar Grag-pa-seng-ge (1283–1349), the second principal student of Rang-byung-rdo-rje,<sup>789</sup> in the context of an impressive list of teachings, received the complete spiritual instructions relating to the *Zab mo nang don* from him.<sup>790</sup>

It is noteworthy that as part of the latter transmission “four volumes of the *Zab mo [nang don]*” (*zab mo’i pod bzhi*) are mentioned. The actual *Zab mo nang don* including its two appendices and its autocommentary comprise only one volume in each of the latest editions of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung ’bum*. There are four possible solutions to this contradiction: either Karmapa himself or his students composed more material on this

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<sup>785</sup> See RHEINGANS 2008: 33.

<sup>786</sup> The *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, pp. 402–403, before elaborating on the life stories of the most important students, provides a list of more than 60 direct students of the Third Karmapa.

<sup>787</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 297.4–7: *chos rje rang byung rdo rje’i zhabs pad la || ... | nang don rtsa ’grel ... thos* | – rendered as: “At [the lotus feet of] the Dharma Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje ... he studied the [*Zab mo*] *nang don* root [text and auto]-commentary.”

<sup>788</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 272.2–4: *chos rje rang byung rdo rje la | ... | zab mo nang don | ... la sogs zhus* | – rendered as: “He requested from the Dharma Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje ... the *Zab mo nang don* ... and so on.”

<sup>789</sup> The life story of the First Zhwa-dmar-pa was presented in the *Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 456.7–463.7, *Blue Annals*, pp. 523–532.

<sup>790</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 249.6–250.4: *Chos rje rin po che rang byung rdo rje la | ... | zab mo’i pod bzhi khrid ka dang bcas pa | ... mang du zhus* | – rendered as: “He requested many [teachings] from the precious Dharma Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje ... the four volumes of the *Zab mo [nang don]* together with the complete explanations.”

topic, or the volumes were much smaller at that time – which is very unlikely. A fourth solution could be that the additional material is related to the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*. They have been mentioned several times in the historical records. Further commentaries of later masters cannot be included here, since they did not exist at that time. We do not know the exact contents of these four volumes, as many works from the *gSung 'bum* are still missing, but because of the close connection between these works we can be sure that the *rNam shes ye shes* was a core text and a part of this transmission.

While discussing the impact of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse on the students of the Third Karmapa, we find an impressive example of the way Rang-byung-rdo-rje transmitted these teachings to another of his principal students, Shes-rab-rin-chen (early 14th c.). This transmission demonstrates an important function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum* in addition to those mentioned in the previous chapter: to work as an antidote to the lack of confidence on the path to liberation.

The *Kam tshang gser phreng* by Si-tu-paṇ-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas & 'Be-lo Tshe-dbang-kun-khyab, also quoted in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* and extended by the last sentence, refers to Shes-rab-rin-chen as follows.<sup>791</sup>

Then about the scholar Shes-rab-rin-chen: He met the Venerable Lord Rang-byung-ba at Kong-po and later stayed at Lha-steng. After that he became the author of the biography of the Lord. Having said this, the extensive life story [of the Third Karmapa] has not been found.

Shes-rab-rin-chen received the *rNam shes ye shes* teaching directly from the Third Karmapa. This transmission is even mentioned in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* by dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, compiled between 1545 and 1564:<sup>792</sup>

<sup>791</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 41–44; *Kam tshang gser phreng*, book edition p. 445 and *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum dkar chag*, p. 21, gong gi cha: *mkhas pa shes rab rin chen ni kong por rje rang byung ba'i zhabs la thug cing phyis lha steng du bzugs nas rje'i rnam thar mdzad pa po de'o zhes pa las rnam thar rgyas pa ni ma rnyed* |.

<sup>792</sup> *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, pp. 84.5–85.2. The Tibetan text reads: *mkhas pa shes rin pa de la yid che ma skyes ... rje phebs nas sum 'gyur du 'phel sngar bas ches grang zhing nus pa che bar 'dug zer ba gsan | zhal nas ngas de skad byas te dge bshes 'di nga'i tshig la yid mi ches par 'dug gsung bas zhum zhing dad ste* |

*shin du lkog gyur thams cad mkhyen pa'i yul ||*  
*mngon sum nyid du 'jal ba'i blo ldan la ||*  
*byol song phyugs kyi phyugs dang rab mtshungs pa ||*  
*bdag blos nongs par gyur ba 'thol zhing bshags ||*  
*slan chad khyod kyi rnam shes tshogs drug 'di ||*  
*bya ba sgrub dang so sor rtogs pa yi ||*  
*ye shes dag pa dri med yin min gyi ||*  
*the tshom gcod mdzad khyod la phyag 'tshal lo ||*  
*zhes ched du brjod pa byas ||.*

The scholar Shes-rab-rin-chen did not give rise to confidence.... After the Lord arrived, he told him to develop his previous confidence and increase his capacity. Then he listened to what he said about what he had told him: he felt disheartened through his lack of confidence towards the words of these [other] spiritual friends. Because he [wanted to regain] trust, [Rang-byung-rdo-rje gave the following teaching:]

The object of omniscience is extremely hidden.

To the mind which meets with direct clear perception itself

Going astray is very much like being a totally stupid animal.

The self-mind, which has gone wrong, reveals it and confesses it.

I ask you that from now on you cut the doubts

Concerning what are and what are not your group of six kinds of ordinary perception

And the pure all accomplishing and discriminating gnoses free from stains.

This is what he expressed for this purpose.

Here, Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied the *rNam shes ye shes* teaching as spiritual advice in order to instill confidence in one of his close students. He taught that the lack of confidence came about because of being distracted from direct clear perception based on the concept of a truly existing self. To “cut the doubts” concerning the distinction between deluded states of mind (perception) and states free from delusion (gnosis) would reveal the extremely hidden object of omniscience, the awakened state of a buddha. Obviously, encouragement towards attaining the state of a buddha can be essential among the many different functions of this discourse.

In chapter 1, section 1.2.5, Shes-rab-rin-chen was mentioned as having composed the earliest *rNam shes ye shes* commentary. Unfortunately, this commentary has so far not come to light again.<sup>793</sup> According to the *Kam tshang gser phreng*, as mentioned above, he composed the first extensive hagiography of Rang-byun-rdo-rje. Furthermore, his commentary on the *Dran pa nyer bar bzahag pa'i mdo yi don snang bar byed pa'i bstan bcos* by Rang-byung-rdo-rje was mentioned briefly in the previous chapter in connection with the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse at the beginning of the sixth chapter of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*.<sup>794</sup>

Beyond the fact that Shes-rab-rin-chen had been especially entrusted with the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings and composed a commentary on them, he also incorporated several

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<sup>793</sup> The Tsadra Foundation based in New York some years ago had announced the publication of a Tibetan edition of this commentary, but as of yet (2018) neither the Tibetan text nor any translation are available.

<sup>794</sup> See vol. 6, pp. 1–219, Shes-rab-rin-chen's commentary is entitled *Dran pa nye bar bzahag pa'i bstan bcos kyi 'grel ba*, short title *Dran pa nyer bzahag 'grel*.

primary elements of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in his *Dran pa nyer bzhag 'grel*. Near the beginning, he explained the four gnoses. Furthermore, he provided a brief summary on the *rnam shes* part of the *rNam shes ye shes* and a slightly more detailed presentation of the antidote (*gnyen po*) against the delusion of the cycle of existence: the three kinds of higher knowledge of listening, reflecting, and meditating (*thos bsam sgom gsum*).<sup>795</sup> Later in his commentary he elaborated on the process of perception, consisting of object, faculty and perception (*yul, dbang po, shes pa*), the links of dependent origination (*rten 'brel gyi yan lag*), the essence of the five aggregates (*phung po lnga'i ngo bo*), as well as on completely nonconceptual gnosis (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*).<sup>796</sup> His presentation clearly built on the one provided by Rang-byung-rdo-rje, in some points going more into detail while referring to the main topic of this commentary on how to develop mindfulness.

When investigating the reception of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by later masters of the bKa'-brgyud and other lineages, one obvious method for determining the number and significance of the transmission of the *rNam shes ye shes* is to analyze the historical records<sup>797</sup> in terms of the occurrences of the *Zab mo nang don* transmission including its two smaller appendices (*gzhung chung gnyis*). At the beginning of the previous chapter (5.2) we discussed a praise of the *Zab mo nang don* as well as the close connection between the two appendices as part of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy and the *Zab mo nang don* itself. Since the transmission of the *Zab mo nang don* was mentioned in nearly every life story of a bKa'-brgyud master, only a few selected occurrences can be highlighted here. The wider perspective is always to investigate the influence of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse on important masters of the bKa'-brgyud lineage.

A case similar to that of Shes-rab-rin-chen was 'Jam-dbyangs-chen-po Don-grub-'od-zer (14th–15th century), a student of the Fifth Karmapa De-bzhin-gshegs-pa (1384–1415). This master became famous within the mTshur-phu tradition of Tibetan astrology (*mtshur lugs su grags pa*), as, most probably in the year 1447, he composed a treatise elucidating the *Kālacakratantra* calculations, thus devising the full system of the mTshur-phu tradition of calendar calculation. He acted as abbot of mTshur-phu Monastery from

<sup>795</sup> See *Dran pa nyer bzhag 'grel*, pp. 14.6–15.3, 17.1–5, 17.5–18.6.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34.6–36.6, 38.1–40.1.

<sup>797</sup> See the historical records mentioned in the context of the literature review (1.2) in the first chapter. Further important sources are the hagiographies and collected works of various Tibetan masters.

1407 until 1447.<sup>798</sup> For some time he had a problem with pride (*nga rgyal ches lta ba*), which often appears as a sign of insecurity or lack of confidence. He turned towards his teacher for advice.<sup>799</sup>

After he expressed his wish for teachings, he immediately heard the explanations of the *Zab mo nang don* [from the Fifth Karmapa] applying them as extremely advanced, in the context of the six limits and four modes [of tantric teachings]. Don-grub-'od-zer produced written notes for creating a tantric tradition and a commentary, a *Nang don ũkā* etc, which later let [these teachings] appear as particularly sublime. With his quick understanding he received practice explanations as spiritual instructions, and an extraordinary faith was even born [in him].

In this case the teachings again fulfilled the function of encouragement. The context here is slightly different from the previous case, consisting of the tantric level of teachings, the practice related to the inner energies. Don-grub-'od-zer is described in *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 713.5, *Blue Annals*: 810, as having transmitted the “Ocean of the dPal Karmapa Doctrine (*karma pa'i chos kyi rgya mtsho*)” to the translator and scholar Lo-chen bSod-nams-rgya-mtsho'i-sde (1424–1482). After having especially requested and received the *Zab mo nang don*, the great translator (*lo chen*) also composed written notes (*zin bris*) on this work.<sup>800</sup>

At the end of the hagiography of the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506) we find an interesting evaluation of the accuracy of composing an auto-commentary in the context of discussing the well-known commentary of the Seventh Karmapa, entitled in short *Rigs gzhung rgya mtsho*, on the major *pramāṇa* works (*mtshad ma'i bstan bcos*) of the Indian master Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660 C.E.). After discussing in prose and verse that this work is one of the few commentaries free from error (*phyin ci log med par*), the statement reads as follows:<sup>801</sup>

<sup>798</sup> See *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, vol. 2, pp. 170.5–172.7.

<sup>799</sup> See *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, vol. 2, pp. 171.4–172.1: ... 'o chos 'dod pa bya ba de ltar byed dgos pa yin gsung nas de ma thag zab mo nang don gyi dbu gtsugs mtha' drug tshul bzhi dang sbyar ba'i bshad pa rgyud lugs su mdzad pa la kong gis zin bris mdzad snang ba nang don gyi ũkā byed sog 'grel sogs phyi ma thams cad las khyad par du 'phags par snang zhing thugs rings pa bzhag ste gdams ngag nyams khrid tu gsan | thun mong ma yin pa'i dad pa yang skyes |.

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 637.2–5: lo chen bsod nams rgya mtsho'i sde ni | ... 'jam dbyangs don grub 'od zer las ... zab mo nang don sogs zab chos thams cad zhus pas nang don la zin bris mdzad |.

<sup>801</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 588.7–589.2: ... rang gzhung 'grel pa'i tshul du mdzad kyi des na dpal chos kyi grags pa yang rje 'di nyid kyi sku'i bkod par bstan pa rje rang byung rdo rjes zhal gyis 'ches pa dang rje nyid nas kyang zhal bzhes gnang ba de lta nyid do |.

Therefore, having produced this approach of commenting on his own treatise, this very Lord [Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho] has shown how to arrange the body of [the work of] the Glorious Chos-kyi-grags-pa (Dharmakīrti). [The autocommentary] from the Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje is accepted and it is accepted also from this Lord himself as being correct [free from mistakes].

The reason for speaking of “his own treatise” by the Seventh Karmapa is that, as the first part of his name Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho Chos-grags (short for Chos-kyi-grags-pa, Skt. Dharmakīrti) suggests, he is regarded by tradition as a Tibetan reincarnation of Dharmakīrti. Thus it is implied that he commented upon his own previous root treatises. For this study the reference to the Third Karmapa is of great interest, since as far as we know today, except for several summaries (*bsdus don* and *sa bcad*) he composed only one auto-commentary, the one on the *Zab mo nang don*, the *Zab nang rang 'grel* or *Nang don rang 'grel*, as it is also called. Since at the same time this is one of his most well-known compositions, it is definitely meant to be correct or precise (*de lta nyid*) according to the above statement; one could also say “authoritative.” Only a few lines further in the same historical record, the Seventh Karmapa is said “to have taught in a way that showed the strength of [the view of] Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, Nāropa and Maitrīpa, Marpa and Gampopa, as well as the Glorious Venerable Karmapa Rang-byung[-rdo-rje].”<sup>802</sup>

In addition to his own expositions, Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho had several students who composed commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don*, such as the Fourth Zhwa-dmar Chos-grags-ye-shes.<sup>803</sup> We also find an important hint in the life story of the master Bya 'Jam-dbyangs bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1490–1518), another close student of the Seventh Karmapa: Among many other treatises he is reported to have written a commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* in four volumes.<sup>804</sup> Unfortunately, this extensive composition and the above-mentioned notes on the *Zab mo nang don* are not included among those commentaries collected in the 2006 edition of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 589.4–5: *klu sgrub .. thogs med ... nā ro dang mai trī ... rje lo tsā chen po ... ching zla 'od gzhon nu dang dpal karma pa rang byung zhabs kyis rtsal du bton pa'i bzhed pa ltar* |.

<sup>803</sup> The short title of this commentary is *Zab nang dogs dpyod* (see bibliography). It does not appear in the newly published *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* 2.

<sup>804</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 643.2–3: *Bya 'Jam-dbyangs bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal ni gtso bor rje bdun pa'i dngos slob yin la* |... *nang don gyi 'grel pa pod chen bzhi la sogs pa bstan bcas mang du mdzad* |; see *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, vol. 2, p. 312.4–5. This master is not to be confused with Dwags-po bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1512/13–1587) who lived too late to be a student of the Seventh Karmapa, nor with the Sa-skyā scholar mKan-chen bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (b. 15th c.).

Dwags-po Rab-'byam-pa Chos-rgyal-bstan-pa (1449–1524) was another well-known student of the Seventh Karmapa and obviously a great scholar and teacher. His commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* is included as the first in the last five volumes of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. According to its colophon the commentary was completed in the Wood Female Hare Year of 1495.<sup>805</sup> In the context of describing his studies in terms of the classical sciences, he created a play of words concerning the so-called “science of inner meaning” (*nang don rig pa*) covering Buddhist doctrine and practice: *nang don zab mo'i gnas lugs lta ba'i tshe* | – rendered as “When [developing] the view of the profound nature of inner reality, ...” Here he inverted the title of the Third Karmapa's famous composition.<sup>806</sup> Later, his commentary is also mentioned: “His composition of the supreme commentary on the [*Zab mo*] *nang don* reached highest perfection. The Eighth Lord (Karmapa) praised it greatly.”<sup>807</sup>

rJe Karma Phrin-las Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal, one of the most famous students of the Seventh Karmapa, was presented in the previous chapter as having received the oral transmission of the *Rang byung pa'i bka' 'bum*, plus the explanations on the *Zab mo nang don*, the *sNying po bstan pa*, and the *rNam shes ye shes*.<sup>808</sup> His commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* is included in the last five volumes of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. It served as one of the main sources for later explanations on this topic, notably the commentary composed by the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas. Several sections in Kong-sprul's work are literal copies from Karma Phrin-las-pa's composition. The reason for this seems to be that the latter work, among all *Zab mo nang don* commentaries, most closely follows the *Zab nang rang 'grel* by Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

The *Kam tshang gser phreng* concerning this transmission mentions a further student of the Seventh Karmapa: “rJe (bDud-mo) bKra-shis-'od-zer (b. 1474) met the Seventh Karmapa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho and requested practice explanations from him. ... After

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<sup>805</sup> See *Zab nang 'grel bshad*, p. 802.4.

<sup>806</sup> See *Kam tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 654.6 and *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, vol. 2, p. 327.4.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 655.2–3: *nang don 'grel pa mchog rab phul du son pa mdzad par | rje brgyad pas sngags brjod che bar gnang* |. In *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, B, vol. 2, p. 328.3 the corresponding statement reads: *nang don gyi 'grel pa shin tu ngo mtshar che ba mdzad ste rje na rim brgyad pa'ang nang don gyi 'grel pa 'di kho na legs par 'dug gsung* | – rendered as: “He composed an extremely wonderful commentary on the *Nang don*. The Eighth Lord (Karmapa) even said that this commentary on the *Nang don* is the only excellent one.”

<sup>808</sup> For the life story of rJe Karma Phrin-las-pa, refer to *Kam tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 649.3–654.4. The same work also presents his teaching activity in detail in the section on the Seventh Karmapa and his students. In terms of secondary literature on the life and works of rJe Karma Phrin-las-pa, refer to RHEINGANS 2004: 1–10.

receiving the *Zab mo nang don* root treatise and the auto-commentary, ... he became an expert in terms of the complete scriptural tradition.”<sup>809</sup> Later, “after meeting Lord Mi-bskyod[-rdo-rje] (the Eighth Karmapa, 1507–1554), he offered the explanations of the [*Zab mo*] *nang don* to him. Then he went to Zur-mang ... and gave the instructions of the *sNying po bstan pa* and so on.”<sup>810</sup> It is quite unusual that the *sNying po bstan pa* is mentioned as a single treatise, but under “and so on” the *rNam shes ye shes* could also be included. For this, however, there is no clear evidence so far.

Here we first read about the transmission of these teachings to the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje. This master, who by tradition is regarded as one of the greatest scholars among the various incarnations of the Karmapas, relied to a great extent on the teachings of the Third Karmapa, as had his previous incarnation. At least three times he imparted the explanations of the *Zab mo nang don* to his students. The first occurrence took place quite early in his life: “At ‘O-lung-yang-dgon, some time after rGyal-tshab had performed the hair cutting ceremony, ... he (the Eighth Karmapa) gave practice instructions of the *Nang don* and Mahāmudrā.”<sup>811</sup> Later, at a place called lKog-’phrang, he met the Master Padma[sambhava], Rang-byung-rdo-rje, and the bKa’-brgyud lamas face to face.<sup>812</sup> Furthermore, “people from gLo-mang (Mustang) met with him, who [in their previous lives] had been benefactors of Rang-byung-rdo-rje.... He taught the *Zab mo nang don* to the great scholar Thub-chen and others.”<sup>813</sup> He granted a third transmission to the Second dPa’-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba:<sup>814</sup> “He explained the *Rig gter* and the *Nang don*, and so on.”<sup>815</sup>

<sup>809</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, p. 656.3–4: *rje chos grags rgya mtsho mjal | ... nyams khrid zhus | ... nang don rtsa ’grel | gzhung lugs kun la mkhas par mdzad* |. Dul-mo bKra-shis-’od-zer also composed an important commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* entitled *rGyud bla ma’i bstan bcos*, based to a great extent on Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s commentary on this subject. See BUCHARDI 2002: 67, 70.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 656.6–7: *rje mi bskyod zhabs dang mjal | ... nang don gyi bshad pa | ... phul | ... de nas zur mang du phebs | ... snying po bstan pa sogs kyi ljags bshad mdzad* |.

<sup>811</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 14.1–4: ‘O-lung-dgon du ... rgyal tshab nas rje yi dbu lo bsil | ... nang don dang phyag chen gyi khrid gngang |. Obviously, the *Nang don* and Mahāmudrā here are regarded as representing the two essential doctrines of the bKa’-brgyud lineage.

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 24.7–25.1: *lkog ’phrang du slob dpon padma dang rang byung rdo rje dang bka’ brgyud bla ma rnams zhal gzigs* |.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 28.7: *Rang byung ba’i sbyin bdag glo mang pos mjal | ... thub chen mkhan chen pa sogs la zab mo nang don gsungs* |.

<sup>814</sup> For the life story of the Second dPa’-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, refer to the *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, pp. 55.2–63.2.

<sup>815</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 59.2: *gzhan yang rig gter dang | nang don sogs kyi ljags bshad gngang* |.

David Higgins, in the context of the teachings of “The Eighth Karma pa on Buddhist Differentiation and Unity Models of Reality” investigated the Eighth Karmapa’s presentation of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by means of the question: “How is Consciousness (*rnam shes*) Related to Wisdom (*ye shes*)?” Under the subtitle: “2. Karma Bka’ brgyud assimilations of the differentiation model” Higgins stated:<sup>816</sup>

The Eighth Karma pa’s views regarding wisdom (*ye shes*) and the nature of mind (*sems nyid*, *sems kyi rang bzhin*) and how they differ from consciousness (*rnam shes*) and dualistic mind (*sems*) are indebted to the works of his Karma kam tshang predecessors, particularly the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje. ... Mi bskyod rdo rje accorded considerable importance to the distinction between pure mind and impure mind introduced by Karma pa III Rang byung rdo rje on the basis of the Mahāmudrā and the Maitreya texts.

According to Higgins, the Eighth Karmapa in a short written answer to Lama Khams-pa, one of his students, quoted from the *Zab mo nang don* auto-commentary by Rang-byung-rdo-rje as follows: “The pure mode refers to self-aware wisdom free from obscurations (*sgrib bral rang rig pa’i ye shes*), whereas the “impure” refers to mundane consciousness that is deluded ignorance along with its obscurations (*sgrib bcas rmongs pa ma rig pa’i rnam par shes pa*).” With respect to the significance the Eighth Karmapa attributed to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, Higgins stated:<sup>817</sup>

For Mi bskyod rdo rje, the distinction between wisdom and consciousness is not only a cornerstone of Buddhist thought and practice in general, but also an indispensable key point in his own Bka’ brgyud Mahāmudrā tradition’s instructions on recognizing the nature of mind.

This evaluation corresponds exactly to the one provided by the present author for the Third Karmapa in the conclusion of the previous chapter, when discussing the overarching function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as basis for the core instructions of the bKa’-brgyud lineage.

The above-mentioned Second dPa’-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba later became the main secretary of the Eighth Karmapa. This master was, nevertheless, a capable scholar and meditation expert in his own right. Among other historical figures, he met the Third

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<sup>816</sup> See HIGGINS 2015: 345–346, 352.

<sup>817</sup> See HIGGINS 2015: 355.

Karmapa face to face in a vision.<sup>818</sup> He composed an important commentary on the famous astrological treatise of Rang-byung-rdo-rje;<sup>819</sup> and in his commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva he integrated explanations related to the complete second part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. In the context of a section on the “kāyas and gnoses in the lineages of profound view and vast activity” he elucidated in detail the change of state of the eight aspects of perception into the four gnoses and three *kāyas*.<sup>820</sup>

The principal student of the Eighth Karmapa was the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag. His connection to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse will be further elaborated on here, because his annotated commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* serves as the earliest available reference for the critical edition. This master obviously had a very close connection to the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy. At the age of four he is said to have already known several works by heart without any difficulty, such as the *Kā ri kā lnga bcu pa* (*Fifty Stanzas* by Nāgārjuna), the *Zab mo nang don* root-text, as well as the two principal treatises on Tibetan grammar, the *Sum cu pa* and the *rTags gi 'jug pa*.<sup>821</sup> “At the age of twenty-two, when staying at a place called Rin-phug, [the understanding of] many profound and secret essential points of Buddha’s scriptures was born in his mind and from the certainty of the blessing [of being in accordance with] the intention of the ocean of the Three Roots he composed ... [most probably three] commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* of the Lord Rang-byung-rdo-rje.”<sup>822</sup>

Furthermore, “when he arrived at lower Tre-bo (in Khams) ... he spent the winter at Lhun-rtse and ... he presided every day over the assembly of master and students. And

<sup>818</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 57.7–58.1: | *phrin las pa dang jo bo rje dang tham cad mkhyen pa rang byung ba dang rong ston shes bya kun rig sogs rtsa brgyud kyi bla ma mang po dang yid dam chos skyong sogs dpag tu med pa gzigs shing mjal* |.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 62.5: *rang byung ba'i rtsi kun bsdu pa'i 'grel pa rin chen gter mdzod* |.

<sup>820</sup> See *sPyod 'jug rnam bshad*, pp. 757.1–769.1. While in general following the exposition of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba mainly based his presentation of the nature of the gnoses on two further classical sources: the *Buddhabhūmisūtra* and the *Āryatrikāyasūtra* (for bibliographical details, see bibliography).

<sup>821</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, vol. 2, p. 71.7: *dgung lo bzhi pa la kA ri ka lnga bcu pa | zab mo nang don gzhung | sum cu pa dang rtags 'jug gi gzhung rnams thugs la bzung pas tshegs med du zin pa* |. This special ability of dKon-mchog-yan-lag has been confirmed in the *dkar chag* of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 31.1–2.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 71.7: *de nas dgung lo nyer gnyid pa la ... rin phug tu bzhugs pa na rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi gnad gsang zab mo du ma zhig thugs la 'khrungs shing | de yang rtsa gsum rgya mtshos dgongs pa byin gyis brlabs pa'i nges pa las brtsams te |... | rje rang byung rdo rje'i zab mo nang don gyi 'grel pa* | ... The three commentaries comprise the major part of volume 15 in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, pp. 1–101, 103–211, 213–441. Here the foremost is the third and most extensive commentary: *Zab nang stong thun*. The first will be mentioned separately below.

having left the congregation of monks for lunch, during each session he granted the explanation of the *Zab mo nang don* to the members of the Sangha.”<sup>823</sup> “At the Sman-'ji Monastery the Dharma Lord ... delighted the ascetic from Sman-'ji, who many times asked his collected questions on the *Zab mo nang don*. He made extensive efforts to grant answers to the questions and thus was called the Victor, the actual Vajradhāra, the excellent Unshakable One, and so on.”<sup>824</sup>

The next occurrence probably refers directly to his annotated commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes*, which serves as the principal source for the critical edition. “At the bDe-chen-stengs Hermitage ... he gave many practice instructions and oral transmissions. When the master and great scholar rNam-rgyal-grags-pa joined the teacher and students there, he delighted him by offering to him the study of [his] commentary (or commentaries) [composed] by means of annotations to the root treatise, the instructions of the Lord Rang-byung.”<sup>825</sup>

This entry can only allude to the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa's three annotated commentaries on the whole trilogy of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works, the *Zab nang mchan bu*, the *sNying bstan la dbab pa*, and the *rNam ye brtag pa*. Whether one, two or all three of them are meant here is an open question. If he treated this set as a trilogy, he also taught the two appendices at that time, naturally following the main treatise. As opposed to what Kurtis Schaeffer stated,<sup>826</sup> the writing of the two works, the *sNying bstan la dbab pa* and the *rNam ye brtag pa*, is not explicitly mentioned in this passage. Only if this statement applies to all three annotated commentaries would these two be included. Nevertheless, Schaeffer is right that this occurrence can be dated to the year 1566, since it happened in the year when the Second dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba passed away. According to the *Tibetan Chronological Tables* this must be the male Fire Tiger (*me pho stag*) year of 1566.<sup>827</sup> But this occurrence does not apply to the composition, it refers to the study of

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<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 95.7–96.2: *kre shod du phebs pa na | ... lhun rtser dgun bzhugs mdzad te | ... nyin re bzhin yab sras tshogs dbur phebs shing | gung tshigs thon pa dang dge 'dun rnams la zab mo nang don bshad pa thun re yang stsal |*.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 99.2–3: *'ja' mo lar sman 'ji dgon nas chos rje ... | sman 'ji kun spangs pas zab mo nang don las brtsams pa'i dri ba'i zhu phrin snga phyir phul ba la | rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang dngos mi bskyod bzang | zhes sogs kyi dri lan rgyas par stsal bas thugs rangs par mdzad |*.

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 105.5–7: *bde chen nas ... khrid lung mang du gnang | der slob dpon mkhas chen rnam rgyal grags pa yab sras mjal phyag tu byon nas rang byung rje'i bslabs bzhung mchan bus 'grel pa gzigs phul bas thugs rangs mdzad |*.

<sup>826</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 19.

<sup>827</sup> See CHATTOPADHYAYA 1993: 199.

these works. The composition must have taken place earlier (at the age of twenty-two, in 1547) as shown above.

The next relevant entry reads as follows: “He again went to sTod (most probably sTod-lung in Central Tibet) and granted mainly to the rGyal-tshab sprul-sku and the community of practitioners ... in the middle of clouds of offerings to a small group of followers, in accordance with their respective inclinations, his notes (*zin thun*), the commentary on the *Zab mo nang don*, and so on, the kindness of whatever teachings of the Three Vehicles.”<sup>828</sup> Furthermore, “having been invited to the Byams-pa-gling Monastery and to Dol, ... he explained to the native and foreign members, the great assembly of the community, the *Zab mo nang don*, and he taught the Six Doctrines (of Nāropa) together with the stages of visualization.”<sup>829</sup>

Finally, as a kind of summary of the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa’s compositions, Si-tu-pa’s hagiography mentions the *Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa’s Collected Works* as consisting of about eight volumes (*glegs bam brgyad tsam*). The text says:<sup>830</sup> “There remain a great number of works composed as his own scriptures and the commentaries on others, the nectar of the enlightened speech written in letters, the superior medicine, the healing of the teachings of scripture and realization: ... the essential exposition of the [*Zab mo*] *nang don* and many appendices.” Here a few of his most important works are listed separately. “The essential exposition” refers to the *Zab nang stong thun*, the many appendices (*zur bkol mang po*) obviously to the annotated commentaries such as the *sNying bstan la dbab pa* and the *rNam ye brtag pa*. This passage shows that even two centuries later these commentaries on the whole trilogy were still regarded as outstanding in the Karma bKa’-brgyud lineage.

The principal student of the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa was the Ninth Karmapa dBang-phyug-rdo-rje (1556–1603). At an early time in his life—the exact date is not given, but

<sup>828</sup> See *Kam tshang gser phreng*, A, vol. 2, p. 112.3–5: *slar yang stod du phebs | rgyal tshab sprul skus gtsos gzhi byes kyi dge ’dun nyis stong tsam la ’dul ba lung sde bzhi’i lung dang | ... nang so mchod sprin pa sogs drung ’khor rags bsdu la zab mo nang don gyi ’grel pa zin thun du gnang ba sogs so so’i mos pa dang ’tshams pa’i theg gsum chos kyi bka’ drin ci yang tsal |*.

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 128.7–129.1: *Byam gling dang dol du spyang drangs te | ... tshogs dge ’dun sgang gi mkhan por gnas brten rin shes pa ’khod par legs ja shis brjod dang | gzhi byes kyi dge ’dun tshogs cher zab mo nang don gyi bshad pa | chos drug gi dmigs rim dang bcas pa’i bka’ chos gnang |*.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 137.7–138.2: *| lung rtogs kyi bstan pa’i gsos sman dam pa gsung gi bdud rtsi yi ger ’khod pa rang gzhang dang gzhan ’grel du mdzad pa ches mang du bzhugs pa | ... | nang don gyi stong thun dang zur bkol mang po |*.

it happened before he was eleven years old—at bKra-shis-sgo-mang<sup>831</sup> this master granted the [transmission of the] *Zab mo nang don* together with teachings on Mahāmudrā.<sup>832</sup> “The Dharma Lord was invited to bKra-shis-sgo-mang; and through pacifying [controversies he brought about] the attainment of uncontrived faith. He imparted the *Phyag chen lnga ldan*<sup>833</sup> and the *Zab mo nang don*, and so on, whatever was asked for.” Thus, according to the *Kaṃ-tshang gser phreng*, he once more confirmed the tradition followed by his two predecessors as lineage holders to apply the *Zab mo nang don* and the Mahāmudrā instructions as the two essential doctrines of the bKa’-brgyud lineage.

The Sixth Zhwa-dmar Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (1584–1630) was the principal student of the Ninth Karmapa dBang-phyug-rdo-rje. At the age of six he received from the Karmapa the transmission of the *Rang byung (rdo rje) bka’ ’bum*.<sup>834</sup> He was mentioned in the last section of chapter 4 when discussing subtle aspects of the philosophical gZhan stong viewpoint advocated by the Third Karmapa. Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug held this master in high esteem because of his balanced approach in terms of the Rang stong and gZhan stong views. He composed a song on the view, meditation, conduct, and result by referring back to the Third Karmapa in the following way:<sup>835</sup>

Even though what is known as Rang stong and gZhan stong  
Are merely systems established by scholars,  
The Great Glorious Rang-byung rGyal-ba has taught  
That these two (systems) do not contradict each other.

<sup>831</sup> This place is actually the famous *stūpa* at rGyal-rtse in Tsang province of Central Tibet, founded around 1425.

<sup>832</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, vol. 2, p. 158.3–4: | *bkra shis sgo mang du chos rjes mjal ’jom mdzad pas bcos min gyi dad pa thob ste rim par phyag chen lnga ldan dang zab mo nang don sogs kyi chos ’brel zhus bzhin gnang* |.

<sup>833</sup> According to tradition the master sGam-po-pa created a particular cycle of Mahāmudrā instructions, for which his student Phag-mo-gru-pa rDo-rje-rgyal-po (1110–1170) formulated the title: *Zab lam lnga ldan gyi phyag rgya chen po*, rendered as “The Mahāmudrā of the Profound Fivefold Path.” See SOBISCH 2003: 141–143. For further bibliographical details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>834</sup> See *Kaṃ tshang gser phreng*, A, vol. 2, pp. 198.7–199.6, particularly p. 199.5–6. Lavina Lamminger in her Ph.D. thesis studied a travel report composed by the Sixth Zhwa-dmar-pa, which includes this particular transmission of the *Collected Works of the Third Karmapa* in LAMMINGER 2013: 26.

<sup>835</sup> See the Sixth Zhwa-dmar Gar-dbang-chos-kyi-dbang-phyug: *rTogs brjod lta sgom spyod ’bras kyi glu*, pp. 5–6:

*rang stong dang gzhan stong zhes pa yi ||*  
*rnam bzhas tsam mkhas pas mdzad mod kyang ||*  
*dpal rang ’byung rgyal ba chen po yis ||*  
*’di gnyis ’gal med du bzhes pa yin ||.*

The song shows that in this respect he regarded the Third Karmapa as a reliable authority. The same can be said about the Thirteenth Karmapa bDud-'dul-rdo-rje (1733–1797).<sup>836</sup>

Throughout the following three centuries (17th – 19th centuries) the transmission of the *Zab mo nang don*, including its appendices, was again part of nearly every life story of a bKa'-brgyud master. The various occurrences need not be mentioned here in detail; just one important example suffices to demonstrate the impact of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse on these masters. In the eighteenth century the Eighth Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas played an important role in the bKa'-brgyud lineage. Not only was he a universal scholar and artist, co-author of the well-known collection of life stories, the *Kam tshang gser phreng*, as well as author of the catalogue to the Tibetan sDe-dge canon. He was also mentioned earlier as commenting on the *Phyag chen mon lam*, the influential Mahāmudrā work of the Third Karmapa, and composed the *Phyag chen mon lam 'grel pa*.

In his commentary on verse 7 of the *Phyag chen mon lam* in the context of explaining the result of purification, Si-tu-pan-chen expounded on the two aspects of the *dharmakāya*, the “dharmakāya of abandonment possessing twofold purity, also known as *svabhāvikakāya*”<sup>837</sup> and “the dharmakāya of realization, also known as *jñānakāya*.” The latter is the result of purification of the eight aspects of perception. Then he stated: “The purified consciousnesses ... are divided into four wisdoms: (1) mirror, (2) impartial, (3) discerning and (4) effective, of which impartial would be *saṃbhogakāya*, effective wisdom would be *nirmāṇakāya* and discerning wisdom would be included in both.”<sup>838</sup> Si-tu-pan-chen here more or less followed the interpretation of the Third Karmapa, who combined the wisdom of equality and the discriminating wisdom into the

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<sup>836</sup> See RHEINGANS 2008: 150, especially notes 4 and 5; book edition: p. 111, fn. 210, 211 on the Third Karmapa “as a role model and the starting point of the Karma bKa' brgyud scholastic systematisation,” also p. 120, book ed. pp. 89–90; and referring directly to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse: pp. 220–223, book ed. pp. 165–168.

<sup>837</sup> According to dKon-mchog-yan-lag, in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 456, the *svābhāvikakāya* corresponds to the *dharmadhātujñāna* (*chos dbyings kyi ye shes*: the gnosis of the sphere of phenomena).

<sup>838</sup> See *Phyag chen mon lam 'grel pa*, A, p. 31.3–6: | *chos kyi dbyings bde ba chen po rang bzhin gyis dri ma med pa de nyid la glo bur gyi dri ma rnams kyang dag pas dag pa gnyis ldan du gyur pa spangs pa chos sku'am ngo bo nyid kyi skur grags pa dang | kun gzhi'i rnam shes dang | nyon mongs pa can gyi yid dang | drug pa yid kyi rnam shes dang | dngos po la 'jug pa'i rnam shes rnams yongs su dag cing gnas gyur pa | ji lta ba mkhyen pa dang ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes rtogs pa chos sku'am ye shes kyi skur grags pa ste | ... | de las rtogs pa chos sku la ... me long | mnyam nyid | sor rtog bya sgrub ste ye shes bzhir phye ba'i | mnyam nyid ye shes longs spyod rdzogs sku dang | bya grub ye shes sprul pa'i skur snang ba yin la | sor rtog ye shes ni de gnyi gar gtogs pa yin no |. The English translation appears in SI TU CHOS KYI 'BYUNG GNAS 1995: 59–60.*

*saṃbhogakāya*.<sup>839</sup> Si-tu-ṇa-chen did not, however, explicitly distinguish the inside- and outside-oriented facets of the sixth perception or cognition. As sources he mentioned the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and the *Zab nang rang 'grel*.<sup>840</sup>

Shortly after commenting on this seventh verse of the *Mahāmudrā Wishes*, closely related to the gnosis part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, Si-tu-ṇa-chen elaborated on the perception part. The tenth verse by Rang-byung-rdo-rje explains how “the power of dualistic clinging causes us to wander the vastness of conditioned existence.”<sup>841</sup> In his detailed commentary Si-tu-ṇa-chen first referred back to the *Zab mo nang don* followed by an exposition on the eight aspects of perception in prose exactly corresponding to the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise in verse.<sup>842</sup> Secondly, in terms of how confusion causes us to circulate in the cycle of existence (*gnyis pa des 'khor bar 'khor tshul ni*), he explained the function of the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi*) and the twelve links of dependent origination (*rten 'brel bcu gnyis*).<sup>843</sup>

Finally, Si-tu-ṇa-chen, while still following the structure of the *rNam shes ye shes*, elucidated phenomena of complete purity (*rnam byang gi chos rnam*):<sup>844</sup> “While the nature of mind, as long as it is defiled, is classified into the three (aspects of) fundamental mind, cognition, and perception, when it is free of defilements, it is even classified into the three *kāyas*. ... The gnosis of complete omniscience is also not different from the *dharmadātu*, therefore, it is totally beyond the phenomena of impure mind.” He then provided various citations from sūtras and tantras substantiating the claim that all phenomena subsumed under saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are one’s own mind.<sup>845</sup> This corresponds to the essential topic of verses 4–8 in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, and it connects this discourse to verse 10 of the *Phyag chen mon lam* by the Third Karmapa.

This commentary by the Eighth Si-tu-pa further proves what was ascertained in the course of the analysis at the end of the previous chapter: The principal function of this

<sup>839</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 26.

<sup>840</sup> See *Phyag chen mon lam 'grel pa*, A, p. 31.5–6, | 'di dag gi tshul rgyas par shes 'dod na | mdo sde rgyan dang | rje nyid kyi nang don rang 'grel sogs su blta bar bya.

<sup>841</sup> See *Phyag chen mon lam*, verse 10, line 3: | gnyis 'dzin dbang gis srid pa'i klong du 'khyams |.

<sup>842</sup> See *Phyag chen mon lam 'grel pa*, A, pp. 32.6–36.3.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36.3–37.4.

<sup>844</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.1–5: | sems nyid la dri ma dang bcas pa'i skabs sems yid rnam shes gsum du bzhas pa ltar | dri ma dang bral ba'i tshe na 'ang sku gsum du rnam par 'jog pa yin no || ... || rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyang chos kyi dbyings las tha dad pa med pas ma dag pa'i sems kyi chos las rab tu 'das pa yin no ||.

<sup>845</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.6: | 'khor 'das kyi bsdu pa'i chos thams cad rang sems su gtan la 'bebs pa'i tshul |.

discourse was to provide a solid basis for the two core instructions of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the *Nā ro chos drug*, and the Mahāmudrā. Within his commentary on the Third Karmapa's primary Mahāmudrā instructions, the Eighth Si-tu-pa placed the *rNam shes ye shes* explanations in the context of the tantric masterwork of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. He quoted several times from the *Zab mo nang don* including its auto-commentary. At the same time, by closely following Rang-byung-rdo-rje as expounding on the *rNam shes ye shes*, Si-tu-pa demonstrated that the specific interpretation of the Third Karmapa rendered this topic most suitable for Mahāmudrā practice.<sup>846</sup>

Si-tu-pan-chen also transmitted all other works composed by the Third Karmapa to his students. For example, in the Iron Hare year (*lcags yos lor*) 1771 (at the age of 72), he invited the Thirteenth Karmapa bDud-'dul-rdo-rje (1733–1797) to the dPal-spungs Monastery Thub-bstan-chos-'khor-gling and passed on to him and other students—among several major collections of teachings—the oral transmission (*lung*) of the *Rang byung rdo rje'i bka' 'bum*.<sup>847</sup>

Next to be discussed are the two masters of the nineteenth century nonsectarian (*ris-med*) movement, the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas (1813–1899) and the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje (1871–1922). Both masters composed commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* as well as separate commentaries on the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*.<sup>848</sup> In the case of the First Kong-sprul these three commentaries together with those on the *Hevajra Tantra* and the *rGyud bla ma* made up the appendix to one of his so-called *Five Great Treasuries* (*mdzod chen lnga*), the *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod* (*Treasury of bKa'-brgyud Mantras*). The separate position of these commentaries in the appendix does not mean that they are less important than the main compilation; instead that these teachings do not derive directly from Mar-pa or his student rNgog-ston-chos-sku-rdo-rje (1036–1102), but mainly from the Third Karmapa.<sup>849</sup>

<sup>846</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself has demonstrated this by incorporating the most detailed exposition of this discourse on the Mahāmudrā level into his *Phyag chen khrid yig* which will be further explored in the eighth chapter.

<sup>847</sup> See *gSer phreng kha skong*: 19.13–18: *lo de'i zla ba brgyad pa'i nang rol sogs ... dpal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling du zhabs sor 'khod | 'du khang du chos kyi khrid 'phang mthon por zhabs pad 'god par mdzad cing | kun mkhyen si tu nyid nas manDal phyag bstar gnang ba dang bcas | ... de nyid kyi drung nas | karma pa sku phreng gsum pa rang byung rdo rje'i bka' 'bum gyi lung |*.

<sup>848</sup> Short life stories of the commentators on the *Zab mo nang don* are included in the *dkar chag* of the *Rang 'byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, pp. 22.1–43.5. More detailed hagiographies of these two masters particularly are contained in the *gSer phreng kha skong*, pp. 126–203, 205–266.

<sup>849</sup> All three works were later also printed separately by the Sixteenth Karmapa at Rum-btegs Monastery, Sikkim. See the catalogue *sPar gyi dkar chag*. The reason for this was that he regarded these works as

The three commentaries were written in the year 1869, when Kong-sprul was fifty-six years old, and served as the basis for the whole collection of essential bKa'-brgyud transmissions.<sup>850</sup> In terms of the practice instructions applied in the bKka'-brgyud lineage he stated: "The oral explanation for the *Zab mo nang don*, *dGyes pa rdo rje* (*Hevajra*) *Tantra* and *rGyud bla ma* is mainly given in our own tradition (bKa'-brgyud) by following the Omniscient Victorious Rang-byung."<sup>851</sup> He described the compositions of the three commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy in his autobiography as follows:<sup>852</sup>

Once I had satisfied requests for empowerments and rituals to promote prosperity, I returned home, where I began writing my commentary on *The Profound Inner Meaning* ... and several months later I completed my commentaries on *The Profound Inner Meaning*, *The Treatise Distinguishing Ordinary Consciousness from Timeless Awareness*, and *The Treatise on Buddha Nature*. Rangjung Dorje's own commentary to his *Profound Inner Meaning* is primarily a treatment of certain difficult points and is so deep as to be hard to understand. ... For the basis of my commentary, I selected the concise but clear text entitled *Illuminating Garlands of Light* by the First Thrinlépa.<sup>853</sup> I also included material from other sources, including a very special explanation by the great translator bSod-nam-rgya-mtsho,<sup>854</sup> in the form of notes written down by Tsewang Kunkhyap when Lord Chökyi Jungné was explaining this text.

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essential for Buddhist studies in the bKa'-brgyud tradition. mKhan-po Chos-grags-bstan-'phel explained in Dhagpo Kagyu Ling, Dordogne, France, 18 July 1999, that the *Zab mo nang don* was part of a study program designed by the Sixteenth Karmapa for students of all levels.

<sup>850</sup> See RINGU 2006: 36–37. Richard Barron actually related these compositions to the years 1870–71, see BARRON 2003: 156–157. The introduction to the *bKa'-brgyud sngags mdzod*, A, p. 1, mentions the three commentaries together with their root texts: "*nang brtag rgyud gsum rtsa 'grel bcas pa*" as being printed together with this collection. See also Kong-sprul's own comments on these compositions quoted below.

<sup>851</sup> See *Shes bya mdzod*, D, vol. 1, fol. 173:

*rang lugs kun mkhyen rang byung rgyal ba nas ||*  
*nang brtag rgyud bla'i bzhad bka' gtso bor mdzad |.*

<sup>852</sup> See Kong-sprul *rnam thar*, C, fols. 119b.2, 119b.5–220a.3 (pp. 297.2, 297.5–298.3): | *gyang skyabs dang dbang sogs bzhed skong grub nas slar phyin | zab mo nang don gyi 'grel pa 'bri ba dang | ... | zab mo nang don dang rnam ye 'byed pa snying po bstan pa'i gzhung rnams kyi 'grel pa brtsam grub par bgyis | nang don la rang 'grel ni dka' 'grel du song ba dang brling chi bas go dka' | ... | phrin las pa dang po'i nyin byed 'od phreng 'dus shing gsal bas de nyid gzhir bzhag pa la mtshur phu 'jam dbyangs chen po'i gsung sgros lo chen bsod nam rgya mtshos zin bris btab pa'i legs bshad khyad par can dang | rje chos kyi 'byung gnyas kyi gsung bshad gnang skabs tshe dbang kun khyab kyi zin bris bkod pa'i zab gnas sogs kyang 'thus par byas |.* For the English translation, refer to BARRON 2003: 156–157.

<sup>853</sup> The short title of this commentary is *Zab nang rnam bshad*.

<sup>854</sup> This source refers to Khriims-khang-lo-tsā-ba, the great translator (*lo chen*) bSod-nam-rgya-mtsho (1424–1482).

Later in his autobiography Kong-sprul wrote about his general motivation for composing these commentaries:<sup>855</sup>

To serve as background teachings for the collection, I composed... commentaries on the works of Lord Rangjung Dorjé—*The Profound Inner Meaning*, *The Treatise Distinguishing Ordinary Consciousness from Timeless Awareness*, and *The Treatise on Buddha Nature*. In all of these works I sought primarily to facilitate understanding.

Kong-sprul composed the most comprehensive commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* known so far.<sup>856</sup> He incorporated into this work many of the detailed explanations spread out in the *Rang 'byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. An example for this is the emphasis on the decisive role of the conceptual states for the mind's being either defiled, thus experiencing *saṃsāra*, or free from defilements and experiencing *nirvāṇa*.<sup>857</sup> “To label it either as *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa* is simply distinguishing the categories of whether the mind is defiled by concepts or free from the defilements of concepts. Therefore, if one understands this mode, the natural state of all phenomena is realized.” This content is identical, for example, to the first quotation from volume 7 (6.1–3) in the *Rang 'byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* discussed in the previous chapter. The same topic also appears in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's commentary on Saraha's *Dohākośagīti* (vol. 11, p. 256.4–5).

With respect to the Indian references, in the second chapter it was mentioned that Kong-sprul substantiated the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by means of 91 citations from about 50 different sūtric and tantric sources. At the end of the work he expressed his particular intention for composing the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* as to preserve the pure and uninterrupted transmission of these explanations:<sup>858</sup>

Since the oral transmission (*lung*) of the root text and the transmission of the explanation (*bshad rgyun*) with respect to the three big and small treatises of the Master Rang-byung-

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<sup>855</sup> See Kong-sprul *rnam thar*, C, fol. 196a.6–196b.1 (pp. 449.6–450.1): | *de dag gi rgyab chos lta bur theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i 'grel pa* | *dpal dgyes pa rdo rje'i rtsa rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa'i spyi don dang 'bru 'grel* | *rje rang byung ba'i zab mo nang don 'grel pa* | *rnam ye 'byed pa dang snying po bstan pa bcas kyi 'grel pa de dag go sla gtsor ston du dmigs nas gsar spel bgyis* |. English translation quoted from BARRON 2003: 265.

<sup>856</sup> The short title of this commentary is *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* (for details, refer to the bibliography).

<sup>857</sup> The Tibetan lines in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, A, fols. 2b.6–3a.1, read: *'khor 'das su sgro btags pa ni sems rnam par rtog pa'i dri bcas dang dri med la dbye bas phye ba tsam yin pas* | *tshul 'di rtogs na chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs rtogs par 'gyur ba yin no* ||.

<sup>858</sup> The Tibetan lines in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, A, fol. 41a.3–4, read: | *rang byung zhabs kyi gzhung che chung gsum la da lta'i bar rtsa ba'i lung dang bshad rgyun bar ma chad par bzugs pas* | *kun mkhyen rgyal ba gnyis pa de'i gsung rab la zhabs tog kho nar dmigs te mkhas pa khyad grags 'dod 'gran phyir ma yin par bshad rgyun rnam dag ma chad tsam byung na snyam pa'i lhag bsam gyis kun nas bsangs te* |.

rdo-rje remain uninterrupted until today, being focused only on rendering service to the scriptures of that Omniscient Second *Buddha*, and being free from the challenge of wishing to become an especially famous scholar, this is purely arisen through the high intention of thinking that there should just exist this uninterrupted completely pure transmission (lit. continuity) of the explanation.

In addition, he incorporated the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings in slightly summarized form and with different emphasis in his other four treasuries, as was shown in the first chapter in the context of the literature review concerning Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works, as well as in the fifth chapter.<sup>859</sup>

Because the Third Karmapa was holder of the “eight original practice lineages,” Kong-sprul obviously regarded him as having followed a nonsectarian approach. This was the main reason for incorporating twelve works attributed to Rang-byung-rdo-rje, such as the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, the *gSer shung ma* (commentary on the Six Doctrines of Nāropa), several works on the *gCod* practice, and so on, into the *gDams ngag mdzod*, the *Treasury of Precious Instructions*. In this treasury, according to Dan Martin completed in the year 1881,<sup>860</sup> Kong-sprul combined the encyclopaedic approach represented through the broad range of instructions from all major and several minor traditions, and the practice-oriented approach, offering practical methods for spiritual development suited for students with different inclinations. Thus, this collection fitted perfectly into the nonsectarian context and later even came to be regarded as the essential manifest of the *Ris-med* movement.<sup>861</sup>

The comprehensive reception of the Third Karmapa's teachings in the *Five Great Treasuries* is truly astonishing, because from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century Tibetan Buddhist history of thought produced an incredibly rich literary output. Virtually thousands of highly accomplished scholars and meditation masters left behind a vast heritage of religious scriptures. Any master of a comparatively early time in history, such as the fourteenth century, must have been extremely important to Kong-sprul in order to be incorporated to such a high degree into his scriptures. We have seen above that the Third Karmapa brought the essential doctrines of the bKa'-brgyud lineage into their most widely used shape. By incorporating these teachings—altogether about 23 works—Kong-

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<sup>859</sup> See, for example, *Shes bya mdzod*, D, vol. 2, fol. 198; vol. 3, fols. 35–36, 39, 42; vol. 4, fols. 52, 57, 226.

<sup>860</sup> See MARTIN 1993: 1.

<sup>861</sup> See SMITH 2001: 263–264; BUSWELL 2004: 442.

sprul built a strong connection to this formative period. He even placed the Third Karmapa on an equal level with his direct teacher, the Ninth Si-tu Pema-nyin-byed-dbang-po (1774–1853).<sup>862</sup>

Another reason that Kong-sprul was so strongly influenced by Rang-byung-rdo-rje is his own vast scholarship. Because of his unequaled scholarship the Tibetans called him “Gentle Protector (*’Jam mgon*),” a specific epithet of the Buddha Mañjuśrī. Having studied Sanskrit grammar, a special characteristic of his scholarship was his emphasis on original Indian treatises. He also favored those commentaries throughout the centuries of Tibetan Buddhism that were most closely related to the Indian sources. This definitely was an important reason for him to rely heavily on the works of the Third Karmapa, because—as was shown in the previous chapters—Rang-byung-rdo-rje incorporated many Indian sources and composed several very important commentaries on the essential teachings of the Indian masters; he specifically incorporated their teachings to a great extent into the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.

The complete set of the *Five Great Treasuries* was edited and printed at dPal-spungs at an early time, at the end of the 19th century,<sup>863</sup> and was later swiftly available outside Tibet when many Tibetans had to escape from their country in the middle of the 20th century. Tibetan Buddhist masters have granted the transmissions of the various collections of empowerments and spiritual instructions contained in these treasuries many times in the last decades in the East and in the West. In this way these treasuries not only became important contributions for the *Ris-med* movement, but also for the modern flourishing of Tibetan Buddhism around the world. The above-mentioned major works of the Third Karmapa were often part of these transmissions.

The Fifteenth Karmapa mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje (1871–1922) was the principal student and lineage holder of the First Kong-sprul. Being one of the most important masters of the *Ris-med* movement, the function of the compositions in his *gSung ’bum* was to a high

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<sup>862</sup> Kong-sprul emphasized his close connection to Rang-byung-rdo-rje in the introduction of his *rGyud bla ma’i ’grel chen*, A, 2a.4–2b.1:

*bstan ’dzin rnams las ’gran med bstan pa’i bdag ||*  
*gangs can thub dbang rang byung rgyal ba dang ||*  
*bstan pa’i nyin byed snying gi pad mtshor rol ||* – rendered as:

*May the Lord of Teachings, incomparable among the holders of the Doctrine,*  
*The Victorious Rang-byung, the Mighty Sage in the Land of Snows,*  
*And bsTan-pa’i-nyin-byed, enjoy the lotus lake of the heart!*

<sup>863</sup> See SMITH 2001: 337, fn. 883.

degree to defend the extensive writings of his principal teacher Kong-sprul against the criticism leveled at him because of his nonsectarian approach. It was most probably for this reason that mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje, in his three interlinear commentaries on the *Zab mo nang don* and its two appendices, relied heavily on Kong-sprul's commentaries.

In his commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes*<sup>864</sup> the Fifteenth Karmapa left out nearly all further citations from classical Indian treatises and extended and thus clarified the root text of the Third Karmapa by annotations, otherwise leaving the verses of the root text easily readable. In this way he created the impression of emphasizing the original intent of the author, his early predecessor in the lineage. At the same time he corrected many mistakes in the root text applied as a basis of the commentary by the First Kong-sprul, and as a consequence his composition became the most reliable source for all later commentators.

The son of the Fifteenth Karmapa, the Second Kong-sprul 'Jam-dbyangs-mkhyen-brtse'i-'od-zer (1904–1953), alias Kar-sras Kong-sprul, wrote about the transmission of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works passed on by his father at the beginning of the twentieth century. He composed a detailed biography of his father followed by a list of contents of the *mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, his *Collected Works*.<sup>865</sup> When the restoration of the Yangs-pa-can Monastery in Tibet (founded in 1490)<sup>866</sup> ended, the Fifteenth Karmapa transmitted an impressive list of empowerments and oral transmissions to many prominent students and a large general audience. Mkha'-khyab-rdo-rje passed on selected collected works, oral transmissions, empowerments and practice explanations (*lung*, *dbang*, *khrid*) of Mi-la-ras-pa, sGam-po-pa, the First, Third, Eighth, Ninth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Karmapas, as well as his own principal teacher, the First Kong-sprul.<sup>867</sup>

The line referring to the Third Karmapa reads: “From the *Collected Works of the Third Lord* [he transmitted] three volumes (*rje gsum pa'i bka' 'bum las pod gsum*).” At the end of his biography the Second Kong-sprul provided an impressive list of activities of the Fifteenth Karmapa for his own benefit (*rang don*) and for the benefit of others (*gzhan don*). In the latter context, Karmapa was said to have twice transmitted three

<sup>864</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel* (short title) in *mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje gsung 'bum*, volume 9 or 12, depending on the edition (for further details, refer to the bibliography).

<sup>865</sup> See *mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje gsung 'bum dkar chag*.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.2: *yangs can dgon pa nyams gso'i rim gro sogs la nan zhus ngor*.

<sup>867</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83.5–84.1: *mi la'i rnam mgur | dwags po'i bka' 'bum | dus mkhyen bka' 'bum | rje gsum pa'i bka' 'bum las pod gsum | rje brgyad pa'i khrid thung | 'dul Tika | dgu pa dang | bcu gsum pa | bcu bzhi pa rnams kyi bka' 'bum | 'jam mgon bka' 'bum sogs kyi lung dang dbang khrid sogs ...*].

volumes of the *Rang byung ba'i bka' 'bum*.<sup>868</sup> These transmissions took place before 1912, since mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje spent the last ten years of his life more or less continuously in retreat. Although we do not know the contents of these three volumes, in most cases a representative transmission of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works centered on the *Zab mo nang don* including its two smaller appendices. This seems to be the last occurrence of such a transmission mentioned in the historical records before the Communist Chinese take-over of Tibet in 1959.<sup>869</sup>

As a result of the analysis, we have to conclude that throughout the centuries after the Third Karmapa, his way of presenting the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse exerted a strong influence on the masters of the bKa'-brgyud lineage. This holds true even for the present time. For example, the contemporary Tibetan scholar Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, in the context of commenting on the *Song for the King* composed by Saraha (*Dohākośagīti*, verse 19), explained:<sup>870</sup> "The inability to recognize this basic nature of mind is called ignorance. It is the beginning of the eighth (*ālaya*) consciousness." In a footnote (39) he remarks: "Following the explanations of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, most Kagyü lamas follow a system of analyzing the mind into eight types of consciousness." Obviously, the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings today still belong to the essential doctrines of the bKa'-brgyud lineage in the form passed down from the Third Karmapa.

## 6.2 The *rNam shes ye shes* Interpretation in the rNying-ma Lineage

After discussing the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the bKa'-brgyud tradition, a further step toward understanding this discourse is to explore the interpretation of the subject in the rNying-ma lineage in order to determine possible similarities and differences. Chapter 4 treated the early Tibetan references, including those of the Indian ancestors of the rNying-ma lineage, the masters Mañjuśrīmitra, Padmasambhava, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla. We then discussed the contributions of the important translators sPa-gor Bē-ro-tsa-na, sKa-ba dpal-brtsegs, Cog-ro klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, and Zhang-sna-nam-ye-shes-sde.

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<sup>868</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.5: *rang byung ba'i bka' 'bum las pod gsum tshar gnyis* |.

<sup>869</sup> See SHAKABPA 1967: 299–325.

<sup>870</sup> See MARTIN, M. 2006: 71, fn. 39.

To analyze a typical example of an early rNying-ma work dealing with the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, we relied on the *lTa ba'i khyad par* by the translator Ye-shes-sde.<sup>871</sup> We already noticed that the order of topics in this work differs from the one in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Ye-shes-sde first explained the pure aspect, the four kinds of gnosis and the three buddha bodies, then the impure aspects, the eight kinds of perception – exactly opposite to the order given by Rang-byung-rdo-rje.

Ye-shes-sde also did not go into detail concerning the seventh aspect of perception and completely left out the immediate mind (*de ma thag pa'i yid*). As we have seen, expounding on this specific function renders the *rNam shes ye shes* more suitable as background for the essential bKa'-brgyud practices. At the same time, Ye-shes-sde emphasized the fundamental mind, the eighth aspect of perception or cognition. In this context he regarded the terms *kun gzhi* and *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa* more or less as synonyms.<sup>872</sup> We will investigate in the following sections whether or not this latter approach is Ye-shes-sde's personal method of presentation or is typical for the rNying-ma interpretation of this topic.

In general, in order to characterize the rNying-ma view, we find a general sūtric approach, such as that of Ye-shes-sde, and a tantric presentation related to the view of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) vehicle on the distinction between deluded states of mind and states free from delusion. In the Great Perfection (ordinary) mind (*sems: citta*) is contrasted with gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*), often designated as awareness (*rig pa: vidyā*),<sup>873</sup> and the all-base (*kun gzhi: ālaya*) is distinguished from the truth body (*chos sku: dharmakāya*). David F. Germano and William S. Waldron elucidated the exact relationship between these two pairs as follows:<sup>874</sup>

The universal ground and Reality Body form the basis for the operations and configuration of the mind and primordial cognition, respectively. The ordinary mind is the constellation of cognitive and emotive acts based upon the universal ground's unconscious substratum within ordinary beings, while primordial cognition is the constellation of cognitive and emotive acts based upon the Reality Body's non-manifest substratum in enlightened buddhas.

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<sup>871</sup> This work has been discussed in detail in chapter 4 (4.1.1), see especially fn. 455, line 622.

<sup>872</sup> See *lTa-ba'i khyad-par*, lines 638 and 640.

<sup>873</sup> For a detailed discussion of the “rDzogs chen Interpretations of *Rig pa* and *Rang rig*,” refer to HIGGINS 2012: 82–95.

<sup>874</sup> See GERMANO/WALDRON 2006: 53.

The eleventh century master Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po defined the (ordinary or dualistic) mind (*sems*) and the nature of mind (*sems kyi rang bzhin*) as follows:<sup>875</sup>

When again explaining in summarized form this system of the Great Perfection, the root of all phenomena is simply comprised in mind (*sems*) and the appearances of mind (*sems snang ba*). As the very nature of mind is enlightenment, it is called the mind of enlightenment.

In terms of the relation between self-occurring gnosis (*rang byung gi ye shes*) and self-cognition or self-awareness (*rang rig pa*) – two of the key concepts of the rNying-ma tradition – according to Orna Almogi Rong-zom-pa provided the following definition:<sup>876</sup>

Both mind and gnosis are primordially devoid of all object–subject dichotomy, their characteristic feature is that they are independent of something else; and even self-cognition is devoid of a cognitive element and is thus primordially luminous; and therefore it is referred to as self-occurring gnosis.

Dorji Wangchuk discussed the role of the mind (*sems: citta*) and the (clear light) nature of mind (*sems kyi rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal*) in an article on the philosophical foundations of rDzogs-chen meditation.<sup>877</sup> He summarized the teachings on the nature of mind given by the three great rNying-ma masters Rong-zom-pa, Klong-chen-pa and Mi-pham as follows: “In short, the actual nature of mind functions as the universal ground (*gzhi*) for both, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.” In this article he also elaborated on the term gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*) while applying the German term “Urerkenntnis.”<sup>878</sup> This term *ye shes*, which in the above-mentioned quotation was designated as “primordial cognition,” was discussed in detail in the third chapter.

From the above citations, it becomes obvious that the ground or basis (*gzhi*) plays a crucial role in the rDzogs-chen presentations.<sup>879</sup> On the other hand, the term “all-base

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<sup>875</sup> See *Theg tshul*, p. 175.4–5: | ... *rdzogs pa chen po'i tshul 'di yang mdor bsdus te bstan na | chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba ni sems dang sems snang ba tsam du 'dus la | sems kyi rang bzhin nyid byang chub yin pas byang chub kyi sems zhes bya'o* |.

<sup>876</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 216 (translation), 389 (critical edition); the Tibetan in *dKon cog 'grel*, fol. 139.b1–4, reads: | *sems dang ye shes kyang gdod ma nas gzung ba dang 'dzin pas stongs pas mtshan ma de yang gzhan la bltos pa med la | rang rig pa tsam de nyid kyang shes rig gi chos kyi stong pas gdod ma nas 'od gsal ba'i phyir rang byung gi ye shes zhes bya ste* |.

<sup>877</sup> See WANGCHUK 2003: 167–174: „Zusammengefasst, fungiert die eigentliche Natur des Geistes als die universelle Grundlage (*gzhi*) für beide, Saṃsāra und Nirvāṇa.“ (English translation by the present author).

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, 170, fn. 25.

<sup>879</sup> David F. Germano and William S. Waldron have analyzed the notion of the “Fundamental Consciousness” in the Great Perfection in GERMANO/WALDRON 2006: 52–64. In the context of “Great Perfection literature” (p. 53) they mostly refer to the literary corpus of Klong-chen-pa, but there also appears “Rangjung Dorjé’s (*Rang byung rdo rje*, 1284–1339) *A Treatise on the Differentiation of Consciousness and Primordial Cognition*.”

consciousness” (*kun gzhi rnam shes: ālayavijñāna*) does not appear among the opposite pairs mentioned before. Therefore, the question arises, how this function is to be understood in this context, especially in comparison to the all-base (*kun gzhi: ālaya*). Rong-zom-pa provides the answer in the same treatise as before:<sup>880</sup>

The all-base consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*) is the treasury of all defiled and undefiled phenomena, and it is the place of all objects of knowledge. Furthermore, the system of the Lower Vehicles defines the fundamental mind (*kun gzhi: ālaya*) as that which remains as the essence of the cause and effect of all defiled phenomena, and it ripens similarly to the ripening of fruits. It is even the place and the basis of the undefiled phenomena like a medicine which remains in a vase of poison. Thus it is explained. The system of the Higher Vehicles defines the fundamental mind as that which is pure from the very beginning in terms of the nature of the enlightened essence (or buddha nature). Therefore, it is called the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) of the all-base. The disturbing feelings and habitual tendencies of the bad migrations are adventitious defilements, like actual gold covered [with oxide] or a precious gem hidden in mud. Their qualities do not appear in the slightest, but their nature does not deteriorate.

Rong-zom-pa here clearly distinguishes the two perspectives on the *ālayavijñāna* of the lower and higher vehicles, implying the rDzogs-chen view belongs to the Higher Vehicle. In their study of the *ālayavijñāna* David F. Germano and William S. Waldron arrived at a similar distinction by “sketching out the development of this central notion from Indian Buddhism into Tibetan esoteric discourse.”<sup>881</sup> As was mentioned before, in terms of the origin and early development, Lambert Schmithausen conducted by far the most profound study of this concept in his seminal work in two plus one volumes.<sup>882</sup>

At the time of the Third Karmapa, it was predominantly the master Klong-chen-pa who expounded extensively on the rNying-ma view related to this theme. He was a key figure in the process of systematizing and clarifying the teachings of the Great Perfection.

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<sup>880</sup> See *Theg tshul*, pp. 314.5–315.4: | *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa ni zag pa dang bcad pa dang | zag pa myed pa'i chos thams cad kyi mdzod yin te || shes bya thams cad kyi gnas yin no || de yang theg pa 'og pa pa'i tshul gyis | kun gzhi'i mtshan nyid ni zag pa dang bcad pa'i chos thams cad kyi rgyu dang 'bras* [315] *bu'i ngo bor gnas shing smin pa yin pas | shing thog smin pa dang 'bra la || zag pa myed pa rnams kyi ni rten dang gnas tsam yin te || dug gi bum pa'i nang na sman gnas pa lta bu'o || zhes bshad || theg pa gong ma'i tshul las ni | kun gzhi'i mtshan nyid ni gdod ma nas byang chub kyi snying po'i rang bzhin du dag pa yin pas kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems zhes bya la | nyon mongs pa dang gnas ngan len kyi bag chags ni blo bur gyi dri ma ste | gzer g.yas g.yogs pa'am | nor bu rin po'i che 'dam du bsubs pa bzhin yon tan cung zad mi snang bar zad de | rang bzhin nyams par byas pa med do |. For a slightly different English rendering of this section and further discussions on the *kun gzhi*, refer to KARMAY 2007: 179–184.*

<sup>881</sup> See GERMANO/WALDRON 2006: 37.

<sup>882</sup> See SCHMITHAUSEN 1987A and SCHMITHAUSEN 2014.

In the following statement he provided a clear distinction between mind (*sems*) and the nature of mind or mind as such (*sems nyid*):<sup>883</sup>

Since “mind” involves conceptual and analytic factors of mind-streams belonging to the three realms, it is that which grasps erroneous superimposed aspects together with the all-ground [comprising] the eightfold cognitive ensemble. ... “Mind as such” is luminous primordial knowing, the *tathāgatagarbha*. Thus it is when mind ceases or no longer functions that Mind as such, luminous primordial knowing, shines forth as personally realized intuitive awareness.

The Tibetan expression *kun gzhi tshogs brgyad dang bcas pa* literally means “the all-base or all-ground together with the eightfold group [of perception].” Obviously, Klong-chen-pa explained the all-base (*kun gzhi*) as underlying both the eightfold group of perception including the fundamental consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) and the luminous primordial knowing (*’od gsal ba’i ye shes*), or saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, as was elucidated above by Dorji Wangchuk. Klong-chen-pa summarized this topic in one sentence in his *Grub mtha’ mdzod* as follows:<sup>884</sup> “Therefore, mind and mental factors subsumed under the all-ground and eightfold ensemble [of perceptions] are brought to cessation on the basis of primordial knowing, open awareness....” This formulation clearly delineates the rNying-ma presentation of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse.

In his *Theg mchog mdzod* Klong-chen-pa further elucidated in detail the second principal distinction in the rDzogs-chen school besides *sems* and *ye shes*, the distinction between the all-base (*kun gzhi*) and the truth body (*chos sku: dharmakāya*).<sup>885</sup> Furthermore, he provided the most detailed discussion of those topics related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in his *Tshig don mdzod* (lit. *The Treasury of Words and*

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<sup>883</sup> The Tibetan in *Sems dang ye shes kyi dri lan*, p. 383.2–6, reads: | *sems dang sems nyid so sor phyogs ma byed par snang ste* || *sems ni kham s gsum pa’i rgyud kyi rtog pa dang dpyod pa cha dang bcas pas sgro btags ’khrul pa’i rnam pa ’dzin byed kun gzhi tshogs brgyad dang bcas pa yin te* | ... | *sems nyid ni bde bar gshegs pa’i snying po ’od gsal ba’i ye shes te* | | *de’ang sems ’gags shing ma mchis pa’i tshe sems nyid ’od gsal ba’i ye shes so so rang gi rig pa la snang ba yin no* ||. For the English translation, refer to HIGGINS 2012: 274–275, and for a critical edition of the Tibetan text, see pp. 286–295. With respect to the central terms applied in this section, Higgins provided a detailed discussion of the distinction between mind (*sems*) and mind as such (*sems nyid*) in the rNying-ma school in HIGGINS 2012: 75–82. The critical edition and translation of this Tibetan work appeared also in a separate article HIGGINS 2011. The Work is also known under the title *Sems dang ye shes brtag pa’i man ngag*.

<sup>884</sup> See *Grub mtha’ mdzod*, p. 991.5: | *des na sems sems byung kun gzhi tshogs brgyad kyis bsdu pa rig pa ye shes kyi steng du ’gag par byed do* |. For the English translation, refer to HIGGINS 2012: 127.

<sup>885</sup> See *Theg mchog mdzod*, B, pp. 1187–1227.4. For an English translation, refer to HIGGINS 2012: 297–303.

*Meanings*).<sup>886</sup> This work expounds on the so-called “eleven adamantine topics” (*rdo rje gnas*). They are said to comprise all key teachings of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) tradition.<sup>887</sup>

(1) The Ground (*gzhi*), (2) the process of straying (*'khrul tshul*), (3) the way in which the nucleus (*gzhi*) of enlightened energy continues to pervade (*khyab tshul*), (4) the location or abode of this gnostic energy (*gnas*), (5) its path (*lam*), (6) its gateway (*sgo*), (7) its objective sphere (*yul*), (8) how you meditatively take it into your own experience (*nyams len*), (9) its optimal measures (*tshad*), (10) the intermediate state (*bar ma do*), and (11) the actual site of freedom (*grol sa nyid*) [comprise] the eleven [adamantine topics].

At the end of chapter four on “A Discussion of the Presence and Location of Primordial Gnosis” Klong-chen-pa elaborated in detail on the principal distinction between mind (*sems*, *citta*) and gnosis (*ye shes*, *jñāna*).<sup>888</sup> In this context, he expounded on “the classification of the mind into our eight-part consciousness aggregate,” as well as the various aspects of primordial gnosis, a subject he took up again in the last chapter. This corresponds to what David Higgins expressed on the basis of further sources as follows:<sup>889</sup>

My study of rNying ma path summaries such as the Klong chen pa’s *Sems nyid ngal gso* and *Yid bzhin mdzod*, ’Jigs med gling pa’s *Yon tan mdzod*, and their commentaries, confirmed the central place the *sems/ye shes* distinction occupies in classical rNying ma exegesis. What distinguished these path summaries from those of other traditions I was studying was their attempt to systematize the heterogenous doctrines and practices of the different idealized vehicles of Buddhism – Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, and rDzogs chen itself – within a fundamentally Mantrayāna-Tathāgatagarbha model of the path ... a disclosive process of directly recognizing and then becoming increasingly familiar with primordial knowing as the mind’s reifications and their obscuring effects subside.

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<sup>886</sup> For Klong-chen-pa’s elaborate discussion of this subject, refer to *Tshig don mdzod*, pp. 237.7–248.6, English translation provided in GERMANO 1992: 235–244.

<sup>887</sup> The Tibetan in *Tshig don mdzod*, p. 772.4, reads:

*gzhi dang 'khrul tshul khyab tshul dang ||*  
*gnas dang lam dang sgo dang yul ||*  
*nyams len tshad dang bar ma do ||*  
*grol sa nyid dang bcu gcig go ||.*

The English translation originates from GERMANO 1992: 140. For its characterization as “encapsulating the tradition in its entirety,” refer to GERMANO 1992: 1. David Francis Germano in his Ph.D. thesis offers extensive annotations to the first five chapters, pp. 276–806, a mini-encyclopedia of Great Perfection terminology, pp. 807–964, and a glossary of Tibetan terms with English translations, pp. 965–982.

<sup>888</sup> See GERMANO 1992: 244–260.

<sup>889</sup> See HIGGINS 2012: 10.

This model seems to be the typical rNying-ma approach leading to the order of first expounding on gnosis, the pure aspect of the mind, followed by ordinary mind (*sems*) or the eight kinds of perception, the impure aspects, as we have seen in Ye-shes-sde's treatise at the beginning of this section.

When analyzing the later interpretation of this discourse in the rNying-ma lineage, the great treasure revealer (*gter chen*) Rig-'dzin-gter-bdag-gling-pa (1646–1714), alias sMin-gling-gter-chen-'gyur-med-rdo-rje, the founding master of the sMin-grol-gling Monastery in Central Tibet (founded in 1676), is recorded to have mastered the transmission of the *Zab mo nang don* by the Third Karmapa:<sup>890</sup>

Later he mastered the scriptures of the Nup tradition, the Zur tradition and of Rongzom Paṇḍita; Sakya Paṇḍita's *Analysis of the Three Vows* (*sa-skya paṇḍi-ta'i rab-dbye*); Comden Rikpei Reldri's *Definitive Order of the Tantrapiṭaka* (*bcom-ldan ral-gri'i spyi-rnam*); and the *Profound Inner Meaning* by Karmapa III, Rangjung Dorje (*rang-byung-zhabs kyi nang-don*).

Furthermore, we may refer to the works of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1729–1798) as a significant example. He was an important treasure revealer and master of the rDzogs-chen teachings, who rediscovered a cycle of hidden teachings of Klong-chen-pa through a series of visions.<sup>891</sup> In the eleventh chapter of the *Yon tan mdzod*,<sup>892</sup> one of his principal compositions, he discussed the “Ground (*gzhi*) of the Great Perfection” extensively. This includes the “wisdom that brings the very ground to ripe fruition” (*gzhi nyid 'bras bur smin pa'i shes rab*), and the “four conditions of delusion” (*'khrul pa'i rkyen bzhi*).

The following, twelfth chapter explains the “Extraordinary Path of Practice of the Great Perfection” (*rdzogs pa chen po'i lam thun mong ma yin pa*). 'Jigs-med-gling-pa in this context expounded on the distinction between (ordinary or dualistic) mind (*sems*) and

<sup>890</sup> See *bDud 'joms chos 'byung*, p. 498. The Tibetan reads: | *phyis gnubs zur rong zom rnams kyi gsung rab dang* | *sa skya paNDi ta'i rab dbye* | *bcom ldan ral gri'i spyi rnam* | *rang byung zhabs kyi nang don rnams kyang thugs la btsud* |. The English rendering originates from DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 827.

<sup>891</sup> For a biography of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa, refer to *rDzogs chen chos 'byung*, pp. 426.4–456.5, English translation in NYOSHUL 2005: 198–215.

<sup>892</sup> See *Yon tan mdzod*, pp. 80.1–83.5. The English translation appears in PADMAKARA 2011: 298–320.

awareness (*rig pa*) which on the ultimate level has to be regarded as identical with gnosis (*ye shes*) as follows:<sup>893</sup>

Awareness that transcends discursive mind  
Is the Natural Great Perfection's special theme.  
Those who realize it find freedom  
In awareness that arises from the ground.  
Beings who have no such realization  
Circle in that very state [of *saṃsāra*].

'Jigs-med-gling-pa trained several important students of the rDzogs-chen and Kaḥ-thog Monasteries. Among them was Kaḥ-thog dGe-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbang-mchog-grub (1761–1829). He was a well-known rNying-ma scholar affiliated with the Kaḥ-thog Monastery. After the death of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa in 1798, he edited his collected works. In his own works dGe-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita emphasized the viewpoint of the Great Madhyamaka of Definitive Meaning (Tib. *nges don dbu ma chen po*). In this respect, he can be regarded as a progenitor of the *Ris-med* (nonsectarian) movement starting shortly after his lifetime. In his works he especially mentioned the Third Karmapa as holder of the transmission of the Madhyamaka of Definitive Meaning as follows:<sup>894</sup>

The two [masters] gZu dGa'-rab-rdo-rje and bTsan Kha-bo-che studied and spread the explanation of the teachings of Maitreya such as the *Uttaratantra* in accordance with the spiritual instructions from Kaśmīrī Ratnavajra and Sajjana, who held the instructions of Maitrīpa. Furthermore, the Omniscient Rang-byung-rdo-rje, having emphasized precisely these, composed the *rNam shes ye shes dbyes pa*, the *sNying po bstan pa*, and the *Zab mo nang don*, and so forth.

This statement shows clearly that dGe-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita regarded these works by the Third Karmapa as expounding on the works of Maitreya, thus expressing the viewpoint of the Madhyamaka of Extrinsic Emptiness (*gzhan stong dbu ma*).<sup>895</sup> He obviously

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<sup>893</sup> See *Yon tan mdzod*, pp. 84.4–5. For the English translation, refer to PADMAKARA 2011: 95. Kent Gregory Johnson offers an alternative rendering of this verse in JOHNSON 1988: 56. The Tibetan verse 9 reads:

*gang dag sems las 'das pa'i rig pa ni ||*  
*rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i khyad chos yin ||*  
*rtogs pa rnam ni gzhi las rig par grol ||*  
*ma rtogs sems can de nyid ngang du 'khor ||*

<sup>894</sup> See *Nges don dgongs gsal*, fols. 26a.6–26b.1, pp. 63.6–64.1. The Tibetan reads: | *gzu dga' rdor dang btsan kha bo che rnam gnyis kyis maitri pa'i brgyud 'dzin kha che rin rdor dang | sadzdzana las rgyud bla sogs byams chos man ngag ltar gyi bshad pa gsan nas spel zhing | kun mkhyen rang byung rdo rjes de nyid rtsal du bton nas | rnam shes ye shes dbye pa dang | snying po bstan pa | zab mo nang don sogs mdzad ||*.

<sup>895</sup> See chapter 4.6 on Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Balanced Approach.

presented the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy as the principal example for this kind of instruction. He even mentioned the *rNam shes ye shes* before the other two works of the trilogy. When understanding Kaḥ-thog dGe-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita as a rNying-ma scholar, we have to conclude from this statement that the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse by the Third Karmapa also exerted a strong and continuing influence on the rNying-ma lineage. Nevertheless, the following statement in a second work sets this transmission specifically in the context of the early Tibetan bKa'-brgyud masters and those belonging to the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage.<sup>896</sup>

The three [masters] Marpa, Mi-la-ras-pa, sGam-po-pa, and Phag-mo-gru-pa together with their followers,  
 Who arrived earlier here in Tibet,  
 Advocated only the Great Middle Way of Extrinsic Emptiness.  
 The Karma bKa'-brgyud-pas are also in accord with them.  
 Especially, the Venerable Rang-byung[-rdo-rje] emphasized and  
 Clarified exactly this (gZhan stong) by means of his good explanations.

Finally, we have to investigate the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the works of 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912). He was one of the most influential scholars and meditation masters in the rNying-ma lineage. After having mastered all major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, he became part of the *Ris-med* (nonsectarian) movement mainly located in the eastern region of Tibet. He collected a vast number of spiritual instructions and composed new ones for his students. His main Tibetan sources were the masters Rong-dzom-pa and Klong-chen-pa. He even compiled catalogues for the *Collected Works of Rong-dzom-pa* and the *Seven Treasuries (mdzod bdun)* of Klong-chen-pa.

Furthermore, he commented upon many classical treatises composed by Indian scholars and expounded on a variety of subjects, such as medicine, astrology, poetics and logic. In the third chapter we analyzed his detailed presentation of the “four reliances” in his two well-known works *Shes rab ral gri* and *mKhas 'jug*. In another work under the

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<sup>896</sup> See the *bDe gshegs snying po'i rgyan*, fol. 11b.6–7, p. 95.6–7. The Tibetan reads as follows:

... bod 'dir sngon byon pa'i ||  
 mar mi dwags gsum phag gru rjes 'brangs bcas ||  
 gzan stong dbu ma kho na bzhed par mdzad ||  
 karma 'i bka' brgyud rnams kyang de dang mtshungs ||  
 khyad par rang byung zhabs kyis rtsal bton nas ||  
 legs par bshad pas 'di nyid gsal mdzad ... ||.

short title of the “Analysis of Fundamental Mind” Mi-pham Rinpoche first elucidated the three buddha bodies (*kāya*), then he connected the essential body (*svābhāvikakāya*) or the corresponding awareness (*vidyā*) to the purification of the ground (*ālaya*) as follows:<sup>897</sup>

At the time of the ground (*gzhi dus*) this awareness (*rig pa*) of the three bodies inseparable is the essential body (*ngo bo nyid sku*), which in essence is primordially enlightened, because it does not move away from its own essence and is primordially unstained by adventitious defilements.

The next relevant section in the same work explains the process of dissolution of the eightfold group of perception into gnosis from the rNying-ma perspective. The English translation originates from Jeffrey Hopkins:<sup>898</sup>

Concerning this, when by means of the Path of Release you are introduced to and identify the noumenal basal clear light, or mode of abiding, you sustain its continuum whereby familiarization jells. At that time the consciousnesses of the five doors [of the senses] dissolve into mentality. Mentality dissolves into the mind-basis-of-all, which dissolves into the basis-of-all, which dissolves into the basal noumenal clear light emptiness. At this point, the consciousnesses of the eight collections have been entirely reversed and are nonexistent. Nevertheless, self-arisen clear light wisdom itself, the effulgence of noumenal intrinsic awareness (*chos nyid kyi rig gdangs*)—internal, manifestly enlightened clear light exemplified by space devoid of the three polluting conditions—is identified due to earlier familiarization.

In the same work Mi-pham Rinpoche expounded precisely on the distinction between perception and gnosis, the central topic of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. Jeffrey Hopkins again provided the English rendering of this slightly abbreviated passage:<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>897</sup> See *gNyug sems 'od gsal gyi don la dpyad pa*, p. 425.2–3. The Tibetan reads: | *gzhi dus kyi sku gsum dbyer med kyi rig pa 'di ngo bo nyid sku'i ngo bor ye nas byang chub pa ste* | *rang gi ngo bo de lta bu las med g.yo la* | *dri ma glo bur bas ye nas ma gos pa'i phyir ro* ||. Concerning this topic, Douglas S. Duckworth discussed the precise relationship between the buddha nature and the ground of the Great Perfection according to Mi-pham Rinpoche in DUCKWORTH 2008: 93–115.

<sup>898</sup> See HOPKINS 2015: 39. The Tibetan source *gNyug sems 'od gsal gyi don la dpyad pa*, pp. 431.4–432.1 reads: || *de la grol lam gyis chos nyid gzhi'i 'od gsal lam gnas lugs ngo 'phrad na de'i rgyun bskyang bas* | *goms pa chags pa'i tshe* | *sgo lnga'i rnam shes yid la thim* | *yid kun gzhi'i rnam shes dang* | *de kun gzhi* | *de gzhi chos nyid 'od gsal stong pa nyid la thim tshe tshogs brgyad kyi rnam shes gtan nas log ste med na'ang* | *chos nyid kyi rig gdangs rang byung 'od gsal gyi shes rab nyid* | [432] *sngar goms pa de'i dbang gis slong byed rkyen gsum bral ba'i nam mkha' dper byas pa lta bu'i nang gi mngon par byang chub pa 'od gsal ngos zin pa 'byung ngo* ||.

<sup>899</sup> See HOPKINS 2015: 55–57. The Tibetan source is *gNyug sems 'od gsal gyi don la dpyad pa*, pp. 440.5–442.5. The Tibetan reads: | *gzhan yang rnam shes dang ye shes kyi khyad par* | *'khor gsum du rnam par rtog pa shes sgrib yin pas* | *de spong byed rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes yin te* | *de slob lam gyi ye shes mthar thug pa rgyun mtha'i bar* [441] *chad med lam rdor ting gis* | *gnyis snang gi rnam par rtog pa'i bag chags rtsad nas bcom pas de phan sgrib gnyis kyi dri ma gtan nas mi mnga' ba'i sangs rgyas nyid du 'gyur*

Furthermore, with respect to the difference between consciousness and pristine wisdom, since conceptualization of the three spheres [of object, agent, and action] is the obstruction to omniscience, that which abandons it is nonconceptual pristine wisdom. The *vajra*-like meditative stabilization—the uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum [of being a sentient being] which is the final pristine wisdom on the paths of learning [the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, and meditation]—eradicates the predispositions of the conceptualization of dualistic appearance, whereby one becomes a buddha not at all having the defilements of the two obstructions from that point on. Therefore, since all minds and mental factors included within the three realms [of desire, form, and formlessness] do not pass beyond conceptuality, they are called “consciousness.” ... In brief, because conceptuality (*rnam rtog*) is consciousness (*rnam shes*), and nonconceptuality (*rnam par mi rtog pa*) is primordial consciousness (*ye shes*), these two are very different. On the occasion of the final pristine wisdom, the movement of minds and mental factors totally stops. ... There is nonconceptual pristine wisdom; it is the great pristine wisdom, the exalted mind of a buddha.

This concludes the discussion of the rNying-ma interpretation of the *vijñāna-jñāna* distinction on the basis of a few important examples. The selected masters were particularly influential in terms of providing the theoretical background for the practice of the Great Perfection.

### 6.3 The *rNam shes ye shes* Interpretation in the Jonang and dGe-lugs Lineages

The first monastery of the Jo-nang lineage, as we have seen in the fourth chapter (4.3), was founded by Kun-spangs Thugs-rje-brtson-'grus in 1294. This master meditated in several caves near Jo-mo-nang, which later gave the name to the Jo-nang lineage.<sup>900</sup> Nevertheless, until the master Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan became its abbot and started to proclaim his gZhan stong view in 1330,<sup>901</sup> it was regarded as an affiliate monastery of the Sa-skya tradition.<sup>902</sup> Together with the construction of the massive sKu-

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| *des na khams gsum gyis bsdu pa'i sems sems byung thams cad ni rnam par rtog pa las ma 'das pas rnam shes zhes bya ste* | ... | *mdor na rnam par rtog pa ni rnam shes | rnam par mi rtog pa ni ye shes yin pas 'di gnyis khyad par shin tu che* | *ye shes mthar thug pa'i skabs su sems sems byung gi rgyu ba gtan log pa yin te* | ... | *mi rtog ye shes ni yid de sangs rgyas kyi thugs ye shes chen po yin no* ||.

<sup>900</sup> See SCHEUERMANN 2010: 4.

<sup>901</sup> See STEARNS 1995: 833, 848.

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*, 836.

'bum chen-po *stūpa*, Dol-po-pa's teachings impressed many Tibetan scholars, who even came to Jo-nang in order to discuss their questions with Dol-po-pa and his close students. In this way the lineage became more and more popular in Tibet.

When investigating the contents of Dol-po-pa's teachings, we have to take into account that the origin of the gZhan stong tradition in Tibet was mostly based on the early *Kālacakra* commentaries and Saraha's songs of realization. These were discussed in the fourth chapter (4.6). On the basis of his own realization Dol-po-pa made this viewpoint well-known. He expressed his view in an unusual *dharma* language, which made it difficult for other scholars to follow his position. Many Sa-skyā scholars especially rejected his theories, since they contradicted the teachings of the founding fathers of Sa-skyā. Cyrus Stearns concluded:<sup>903</sup> "After establishing his viewpoint through discussion with many different scholars, Dol-po-pa composed his major works, such as the *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*."

On the basis of the above-mentioned work by Zur-mang Padma-bi-dza, alias Padma-rnam-rgyal, Anne Burchardi described Dol-po-pa's general definition of relative phenomena as being Rang stong (*chos can rang stong*) and their ultimate nature or *dharmatā* as being gZhan stong (*chos nyid gzhan stong*). In this way among the "two truths" he emphasized the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa: paramārthasatya*). The more specific definition Padma-bi-dza ascribed to Dol-po-pa in his work is: He "considers consciousness to be *Rang stong* and pristine awareness (*ye shes*) to be *gZhan stong*."<sup>904</sup> This distinction made him regard himself as a Jñānavādin, as we have seen in chapter 3 (3.2).

In the context of her analysis of "Rong-zom-pa's Discourses on Buddhology," Orna Almogi discussed Dol-po-pa's use of *dharma* terminology – especially related to the variants of "awareness" and "gnosis" – as follows:<sup>905</sup>

Dol-po-pa juxtaposes *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*, *rang rig* and *gzhan rig*, and *rang byung* and *gzhan byung*. He subdivides *rang rig* into *rnam shes rang rig* and *ye shes rang rig*, and further subdivides *ye shes rang rig* into *rang byung ye shes* and *gzhan byung ye shes*. Of these last two, the former is called by him, among other things *'gog bden ye shes* ("gnosis

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<sup>903</sup> *Ibid.*, 837.

<sup>904</sup> See BUCHARDI 2007: 3.

<sup>905</sup> See ALMOGI 2009: 198–199 including footnote 29 providing the respective sources, the *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*, pp. 616.2–620.7, etc.

pertaining to the Truth of Cessation”), and the latter *lam bden ye shes* (“gnosis pertaining to the Truth of the Path”); the former, unlike the latter, is considered by him to have no cause.

The above-mentioned formulation of considering “consciousness to be *Rang stong* and pristine awareness to be *gZhan stong*” refers directly to the principal subject of this thesis, the distinction between perception and gnosis. It clearly shows that the strict discrimination between *rnam shes* and *ye shes* is a cornerstone of the Jo-nang viewpoint and that the main Jo-nang-pa assertion refers to pristine awareness (mostly formulated as *rang byung ye shes*, literally “self-arisen gnosis”) being *gZhan stong*. This attribution originated to a high degree from the works of the Indian master Asaṅga and the *Kālacakratāntra*.<sup>906</sup> Dol-po-pa expressed this in his *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho* in the context of refuting mistaken philosophical viewpoints in relation to the Buddhist tantras as follows:<sup>907</sup>

Also, the assertion that profound tantras such as the *Kālachakra* and so forth are not beyond mind-only is extremely unreasonable, ... because all the final tantras such as the *Kālachakra*, mantras, deities, and maṇḍalas are self-arisen pristine wisdom beyond mind, mentality, and consciousness.

Even though Dol-po-pa in this statement clearly distinguished these tantras from “Mind-only,” at the same time he reinterpreted the existing classification of the philosophical schools of thought belonging to the Mahāyāna by propounding two levels of Cittamātra (Mind-only), the relative or conventional level (*kun rdzob pa'i sems tsam*) and the ultimate level (*don dam pa'i sems tsam*).<sup>908</sup> Tsering Wangchuk tried to explain the reason for the missing acceptance of Dol-po-pa's newly promulgated viewpoint in large circles of Tibetan Buddhist scholars:<sup>909</sup>

Dol po pa's Mahāyāna classification does not fit into any of these Mahāyāna taxonomies that are accepted as normative. Dol po pa reconfigures Mahāyāna doxography in the Tibetan scholastic tradition of the fourteenth century. Perhaps for this reason, Dol po pa's doctrinal

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<sup>906</sup> See HOPKINS 2006: 252.

<sup>907</sup> See *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*, p. 164. The Tibetan reads: | *de bzhin du dus 'khor la sogs pa rgyud sde zab mo rnams sems tsam las ma 'das par 'dod pa yang shin tu mi rigs te* | ... | *dus 'khor la sogs pa'i rgyud dang sngags dang lha dang dkyil 'khor mthar thug pa thams cad sems dang yid dang rnam shes las 'das pa'i rang byung ye shes yin pa'i phyir ro* ||. The English translation originates from HOPKINS 2006: 251–252.

<sup>908</sup> See WANGCHUK, T. 2011. Dol-po-pa offered a detailed explanation of this classification in his *Sher phyin mdo lugs ma*, a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

classification remained largely marginalized for various sectarian, political, and dogmatic reasons.

Nevertheless, many scholars rejected his position specifically for doctrinal reasons. Dol-po-pa's emphasis on ultimate truth also found its expression in his presentation of the "three natures" (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*). He held the ultimate states of a buddha, even the ultimate *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, to be completed in the unchangeable perfect nature (*yongs grub*), *dharmatā*, suchness, unconditioned and free from moments.<sup>910</sup> As a consequence buddhahood is said to be permanent, free from the three times or free from beginning, middle and end. This implies that the unchanging perfect nature was understood as being free from the imputed and other dependent natures.<sup>911</sup>

In contrast to this rather extreme position, the Third Karmapa argued that the manifestation of the two form bodies of a buddha, the *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, must be of a momentary nature, otherwise sentient beings would not be able to perceive them, formulated in other words:<sup>912</sup> "The continuum of the enlightened activities of the form bodies would be interrupted." Also we cannot deny appearance as such, free from the dualistic perception of perceived objects and a perceiving subject. Karmapa designated these "mere appearances" as the accountable, nominal or expressible ultimate truth (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam: paryāyaparamārtha*). He thus taught the way in which phenomena appear as being dependent origination, including possessing moments, the inseparability of appearance and emptiness (*snang stong zung 'jug*), and the unmistakable other-dependent aspect of perfect nature.<sup>913</sup> This presentation was strictly in accordance with the Yogācāra position of two aspects of the perfect nature, the unchangeable and unmistakable aspects.<sup>914</sup> At the same time it rendered this presentation more suitable for the practice of Mahāmudrā.

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<sup>910</sup> See *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*, p. 329,4.3–4. The Tibetan reads: | *don dam gyi longs spyod rdzogs pa dang sprul pa'i sku ni chos nyid yongs grub de bzhin nyid la tshang ste* | and p. 94.14–16: | *'dus ma byas shin lhun gyis grub | ces pa la sogs pas mthar thug gi sangs rgyas 'dus ma byas su gsungs pa yang skad cig dang bral ba la dgongs pa yin no* |.

<sup>911</sup> For a discussion of Dol-po-pa's relative and ultimate presentations, see DUCKWORTH 2015: 487–491, particularly on "Consciousness and Wisdom" see pp. 489–490.

<sup>912</sup> See *sNying po bstan pa*, A, lines 148–149, p. 288.1: | *gzugs sku'i phrin las rgyun chad 'gyur* |. English translation in SCHAEFFER 1995: 103.

<sup>913</sup> For a detailed discussion of this position, refer to MATHES 2004: 288–292, 323–324, summarized on p. 129.

<sup>914</sup> A more detailed explanation of the "three natures" appears in chapter 3 (3.2). See the *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, 7b.1–2; translated in MATHES 2004: 291; MATHES 2008: 68.

Regarding the viewpoint of Dol-po-pa, the Fourth Zhwa-dmar Chos-grags-ye-shes criticized his extreme position while following the balanced presentation of Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Martina Draszcyk quoted from the *Collected Writings* of the Fourth Zhwa-dmar-pa in DRASZCZYK 2015: 115 and elaborated on this point as follows:

Moreover, his explanation that delusion appears as wisdom found in his elaborations on the *Four Dharmas of sGam po pa* is a standpoint which would be unacceptable for Dol po pa. ... Zhwa dmar Chos grags ye she is therefore an example of a representative of the Bka' brgyud pa tradition in the 15th/16th century who taught a *gzhan stong* related type of *mahāmudrā* based on an affirming negation, following closely the lead of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje, but rejected the eternalist strain of *gzhan stong* that had become associated in the minds of many post-classical Bka' brgyud thinkers with the Jo nang tradition of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan.

Tāranātha Kun-dga'-snying-po (1575–1634) was another very influential master of the Jo-nang tradition. He lived at the time of the rise of dGe-lugs power in Tibet. The dGe-lugs-pas claimed to prevent the spread of the gZhan stong tradition. Nevertheless, it seems that they did not appreciate Tāranātha's close connection to the regent of gTsang, who supported the bKa'-brgyud-pas, and Tāranātha's popularity in Mongolia.<sup>915</sup> We have to conclude this from the fact that many dGe-lugs scholars first heavily criticized the promulgation of the gZhan stong doctrine and later, following the defeat of the regent of gTsang, the dGe-lugs-pa government forcefully converted most of the Jon-nang monasteries into dGe-lugs institutions. They banned Tāranātha's *Collected Works* until the 19th century, when Zhwa-lu Ri-sbug-sprul-sku Blo-gsal-bstan-skyong (1805–1865), a close friend of both the First Kong-sprul and 'Jam-dbyangs-mkhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (1820–1892), was able to unseal the printing blocks at Jo-nang Monastery and helped to republish these works.<sup>916</sup>

Under these special circumstances, Tāranātha dedicated a major part of his life to the extremely difficult task of upholding the Jo-nang teachings.<sup>917</sup> Since opposition against the gZhan stong doctrine grew stronger at this time, an important part of his work was to defend the position of Dol-po-pa against the attacks leveled at him by his opponents.<sup>918</sup> For example, in his *gZhan stong dbu ma'i rgyan* Tāranātha applied a combination of

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<sup>915</sup> See *DKT*, vol. 1, 905b; as well as SCHEUERMANN 2010: 2–3.

<sup>916</sup> See ZANGPO 2003: 345–346.

<sup>917</sup> See *DKT*, vol. 1, 906a.

<sup>918</sup> See SCHEUERMANN 2010: 8.

refuting other schools of thought and defending the gZhan stong doctrine.<sup>919</sup> In this context he also referred to the various presentations of the eight aspects of perception (*rnam shes brgyad*) and the all-base gnosis (*kun gzhi ye shes*).<sup>920</sup>

Dol-po-pa applied the latter term in his principal works. Thus, in order to defend the viewpoint of Dol-po-pa, Tāranātha often had to explain Dol-po-pa's unusual terminology. He advocated a clear distinction between the all-base gnosis (*kun gzhi ye shes*) and the all-base perception or consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) as follows:<sup>921</sup>

By this [suchness] the all-base gnosis is taught.

Because it is suchness, it is exclusively gnosis.

And because it was explained as being virtue, it is not the all-base consciousness.

It has been taught as being the all-base or the buddha nature (*sugatagarbha*).

With respect to Dol-po-pa's presentation of ultimate truth, Tāranātha explained his unusual terminology by providing the following definition:<sup>922</sup>

The *dhātu* (*dbyings*) and the nondual, self-aware, self-illuminating gnosis (*gnyis su med pa'i ye shes rang rig rang gsal*) is designated as ultimate truth, the uncompounded (or unconditioned) true nature (*chos nyid: dharmatā*). And this withstands the analysis by means of logic and is the only established truth.

The critique of the Jo-nang viewpoint mainly originated from the Sa-skyā and dGe-lugs schools. In general, the Sa-skyā tradition regarded the way in which phenomena appear as conventional truth and the union of appearance and emptiness as ultimate truth.<sup>923</sup> The treatment of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the Sa-skyā school was often characterized by an identification of "clear and knowing cognition," the subjective aspect of consciousness, with nondual gnosis. This mistaken assignment originated from connecting this mental function to the Cittamātra (*sems tsam pa*) viewpoint of a truly

<sup>919</sup> See *gZhan stong dbu ma'i rgyan*, 117.2–129.6. For a German translation, refer to SCHEUERMANN 2010: 62–144.

<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117.3, 120.5–6, 120.7, 128.1.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.1. German translation in SCHEUERMANN 2010: 135.

'dis ni kun gzhi ye shes bstan pa ste ||  
de bzhin nyid phyir ye shes kho na dang ||  
dge bar bshad pas kun gzhi rnam shes min ||  
kun gzhi dang ni bde gshegs snying por bstan ||.

<sup>922</sup> See *gZhan stong snying po*, p. 180.3–4. The Tibetan reads: | *dbyings dang gnyis su med pa'i ye shes rang rig rang gsal ni don dam bden pa chos nyid 'dus ma byas zhes bya ba ste* || 'di ni rigs pas dpyad bzod bden grub kho na yin no ||.

<sup>923</sup> See ROLOFF 2009: 16–25.

existing consciousness. Logically this implies the contradiction that the idea of a subject is already dualistic and excludes any kind of nondual gnosis. Or formulated the other way around: nondual gnosis “is fundamentally a wisdom in which both the objectifying (outward-looking) and the subjectivising (inward-looking) activities of cognition have ceased.”<sup>924</sup>

The Sa-skya scholar gSer-mdog Paṅ-chen Śākya-mchog-ldan (1428–1507) clearly corrected this mistaken presentation:<sup>925</sup>

Followers of Mahāyāna do not explain as their tenets an existence of pleasures and sufferings apart from cognition (*rnam rig*, *viññapti*), [that is] an appearance as worldly pleasures and sufferings to consciousness. In that context, there are two [types of] cognition: the factor of outward-looking apprehended-aspect (*kha phyir blta gzung rnam gyi cha*) and the factor of inward-looking apprehender-aspect (*kha nang blta 'dzin rnam gyi cha*). /121/ The acceptance of the first one as knowing and cognition [belongs] to Cittamātra tenets. This is like, [for example,] when explaining [the process of] seeing a form by the eye consciousness apprehending a form, [Cittamātra followers] accept that although there is no form, the seer [of form] is the mind itself. Starting from the False Aspectarian Madhyamikas (*rnam brdzun dbu ma pa*), [all Madhyamikas] have to explain the “non-duality of apprehended and apprehender” as [their own] tenets. Therefore, the apprehender is not accepted even as a functional thing (*dngos po*), how much less as consciousness.

For several decades, the dGe-lugs lineage was mostly regarded as a subschool of the Sa-skya, because their founder rJe Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa (1357–1419) had been a principal student of the Sa-skya scholar Red-mda'-ba Gzhon-nu-blo-gros (1349–1412). Thus, the viewpoint advocated in the dGe-lugs lineage for a long time resembled in many ways the one propounded in the Sa-skya tradition. For example, the scholar Red-mda'-ba was “an influential early opponent of the Jo-nang tradition and the Kālacakratantra.”<sup>926</sup> This position grew even stronger among the dGe-lugs-pas at the time when they became

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<sup>924</sup> See HIGGINS 2015: 308–309. Another way of expressing the same content would be to speak about “self-cognition free from the dichotomy of the subject – object distinction” – explained by Dorji Wangchuk in a seminary on the “Subschools of Yogācāra,” 29 June 2010, Hamburg University.

<sup>925</sup> See *Nges don sngon med nyi ma*, pp. 120.7–121.3. The Tibetan reads: | *theg pa chen po pa dag gis ni rnam shes la srid pa'i bde sdug tu snang pa'i rnam rig las ma gdogs pa'i bde sdug yod pa grub pa'i mthar mi 'chad la* | *de'i tshe rnam rig la gnyis te* | *kha phyir blta gzung* / 121 / *rnam gyi cha dang* | *nang blta 'zin rnam gyi cha'o* | *dang po de shes rig tu khas len pa sems tsam pa'i grub mtha' la yin te* || *gzugs 'zin mig shes kyis gzugs mthong bar 'chad pa'i tshe* | *gzugs med kyang mthong pa po sems nyid du khas len pa bzhin no* | *rnam brdzun dbu ma pa yan chad kyi ni* | *gzugs (sic !)* *gzung 'dzin gnyis med ces bya ba grub pa'i mthar 'chad dgos pas 'dzin pa po shes pa lta ci smos* | *dngos por 'dod pa ma yin no* | The English translation originates from KOMAROVSKI 2006: 563.

<sup>926</sup> For this quotation and further detailed information on this topic, refer to ROLOFF 2009: 25–28.

a more independent school, as we have seen above, when discussing Jo-nang Tāranātha's viewpoint.

This development is already reflected in the life and works of rJe Tsong-kha-pa, founder of the dGe-lugs school. Two of Tsong-kha-pa's direct teachers, Bo-dong-paN-chen Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1375–1451) and Nga-dbon Kun-dga'-dpal (1285–1379), had a strong affiliation with the Jo-nang school.<sup>927</sup> Additionally, he was influenced by the Sa-skya master Bu-ston-rin-chen-grub (1290–1364). This could be the reason that early in his life, in 1378, Tsong-kha-pa in one of his works commented extensively on the difficult points related to mentality (*yid*) and the all-base (*kun gzhi*). He explained these two functions simply by referring almost exclusively to Yogācāra sources. Nevertheless, in this work he left the ontological status of the fundamental mind unanswered.<sup>928</sup>

Only much later, in his mature compositions, such as in his *Legs bshad snying po* (*Essence of Good Explanation*) composed in 1407, did rJe Tsong-kha-pa clearly criticize the Jo-nang positions of Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan.<sup>929</sup> He and his later commentators expounded on the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka viewpoint, while consistently identifying the different presentations of Yogācāra doctrine with the extreme position of a truly existing mind or consciousness in the Cittamātra (Mind-only) school.<sup>930</sup> They summarized the explanations on the eight aspects of perception, the Yogācāra presentation, into six aspects of the non-Yogācāra traditions (see the discussion on this topic in chapter 3 (3.2)).

The dGe-lugs-pa scholar Thu'u-kwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma (1737–1802) dedicated the sixth chapter of his *Grub mtha' shel dkar me long*, completed in 1801, to the Jo-nang school.<sup>931</sup> According to David Seyfort Ruegg,<sup>932</sup> “this work contains a valuable if brief account of the history of the school ... followed by a short outline of their doctrines and a refutation of them according to the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika method

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<sup>927</sup> See SEYFORTH RUEGG 1963: 78.

<sup>928</sup> See *Yid dang kun gzhi dka' 'grel*, B, particularly verses 35–46. Joe Branford Wilson provided *A Translation of Tsong-kha-pa's Root Verses on Afflicted Mentality and Mind-Basis-of-All* in his Ph.D. thesis, WILSON 1984: 765–778. Gareth Sparham published a critical edition, introduction and translation of this work in SPARHAM 1993.

<sup>929</sup> See SPARHAM 1993: 25–26.

<sup>930</sup> See, for example, *Legs bshad snying po*, B, p. 105a.5–6, 124b.8–125a.2, etc.

<sup>931</sup> The translation of this work, entitled *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*, has been published in SOPA 2009, see also DORJE & KAPSTEIN 1991: 735.

<sup>932</sup> See SEYFORTH RUEGG 1963: 78.

of the dGe lugs pas.” Seyfort Ruegg then provided a translation of this chapter based on the Zhol-par-khang and sDe-dge editions.

His essay is definitely one of the first academic treatments of the Jo-nang school. Nevertheless, according to the designation in the title “The Jo nang pas: A School of Buddhist Ontologists ...” Seyfort Ruegg’s translation of Thu’u-kwan’s critical presentation and refutation of the Jo-nang doctrine<sup>933</sup> put his stamp on the reception of this lineage and its teachings for several decades inside and outside the dGe-lugs tradition.<sup>934</sup> Together with the negative image of the Jo-nang-pas, the gZhan stong viewpoint became regarded as a non-Buddhist doctrine of a truly existing self (*ātman*) closely related if not identical to buddha nature. This mainly happened because up to the end of the 1990s many relevant sources were missing, and the Sa-skya and dGe-lugs presentations were lacking to a great extent a differentiated treatment of various positions within the gZhan stong school of thought.<sup>935</sup>

Fortunately important sources reappeared in the meantime, allowing a more precise research to be conducted on the gZhan stong viewpoint. For example, it seems that a few among the early dGe-lugs scholars advocated philosophical views, which resembled those of Dol-po-pa or other gZhan stong proponents. At least, as Michael R. Sheehy has stated:<sup>936</sup> “... now that these rare works are available, it’s possible to gain a better sense of the tensions at play within fifteenth century Geluk exegetics.” He particularly referred to works of Gung-ru-rgyal-mtshan-bzang-po (1383–1450) and Kun-mkhyen Blo-gros-rin-chen-seng-ge (15th cent.), both students of Tsong-kha-pa.

With respect to the central topic of this thesis, Klaus-Dieter Mathes showed that the afore-mentioned Sa-skya and dGe-lugs presentations entailed several unfounded generalizations, particularly concerning the views of Rang-byung-rdo-rje and Dol-po-pa. In an article related to a work composed by Tāranātha, Mathes discussed various gZhan stong positions and in this context provided a short but profound analysis of Rang-byung-

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<sup>933</sup> For example, Thu’u-kwan in *Grub mtha’ shel dkar me long*, p. 239.12–14, stated: | *gzhan stong gi lta ba ni mkhas grub du mas mgrin gcig tu bkag pas bag la zha bar gyur na’ang* | – rendered by Seyfort Ruegg in SEYFORT RUEGG 1963: 82 as: “But the *gZhan stong* theory was unanimously refuted by numerous scholars and adepts, and it became weak.” See also MATHES 2011: 188.

<sup>934</sup> See GRUSCHKE 2001; SCHEUERMANN 2010: 9.

<sup>935</sup> See SCHAEFFER 1995: 14–36; BUCHARDI 2007; q.v. the section on Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s balanced approach in chapter 4 (4.6).

<sup>936</sup> See SHEEHY 2009, including the references in the footnotes.

rdo-rje's viewpoint, in contrast to that of the Jo-nang-pas in general.<sup>937</sup> Thus it became clear that adhering to the Rang stong ("intrinsic emptiness") view, as followed by most dGe-lugs-pa scholars, is only one of several options applied for a well-defined purpose. To this end, we have already discussed the balanced approach of the Third Karmapa in chapter 4 (4.6).

## 6.4 Concluding Remarks

For the later treatment of the *viññāna-jñāna* distinction in the bKa'-brgyud lineage, we investigated the functions of the *rNam shes ye shes* transmission from the Third Karmapa to his direct students. Besides the general function of forming a bridge between the essential instructions of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings had several more specific functions, such as providing spiritual advice for regaining lost confidence, or as encouragement towards attaining the state of a buddha. With respect to the long-term impact on the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the transmission of the *rNam shes ye shes* as part of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy was mentioned implicitly in nearly every life story of a bKa'-brgyud master, sometimes also in other traditions, such as the rNying-ma lineage and so on. Several of the students of the various Karmapas commented either on the *Zab mo nang don* or even on the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise directly.

The Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag, the principal student of the Eighth Karmapa, composed important commentaries on all three works of the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy. His *rNam shes ye shes* commentary serves as the main text witness for the critical edition in the following chapter; it also has been comprehensively applied for clarification of the verse lines in the annotations to the translation of this work. Later, in the eighteenth century, the Eighth Si-tu-pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas elucidated the eight aspects of perception as well as phenomena of complete purity, the three *kāyas* and the gnosis of omniscience in his detailed commentary on the *Phyag chen mon lam*. By quoting several times from the *Zab mo nang don*, including its auto-commentary, Si-tu-pan-chen placed his *rNam shes ye shes* explanations in the context of Rang-byung-rdo-rje's tantric masterwork. He thus utilized these instructions as a bridge between Karmapa's two most influential works, the *Zab mo nang don* and the *Phyag chen mon lam*.

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<sup>937</sup> See MATHES 2004: 288–292, particularly fn. 30.

The First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas wrote the most comprehensive commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* known so far, incorporating into his work many of the detailed explanations spread out in the *Rang 'byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. He included a vast number of citations from about 50 different sūtric and tantric Indian sources in his commentary and originally placed it together with the *Zab nang snang byed* as an appended treatise providing the background for his *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod* (*Treasury of bKa'-brgyud Mantras*). This in itself is a statement proving the great importance for the bKa'-brgyud lineage attributed to this discourse by the First Kong-sprul.

Differing from his teacher Kong-sprul, the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in his commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* extended the root text of the Third Karmapa by annotations, thus emphasizing the original intent of the author. His composition became regarded, by all later commentators, as the most reliable source text. According to the knowledge of the author, the son of the Fifteenth Karmapa, the Second Kong-sprul 'Jam-dbyangs-mkhyen-brtse'i-'od-zer (1904–1953), reported the last known transmission of works of the Third Karmapa before the Chinese take-over of Tibet.

The investigation of the *rNam shes ye shes* interpretation in the rNying-ma lineage yielded the result that, even though the Indian sources are more or less identical to those applied in the bKa'-brgyud lineage, there exist significant differences in the order of subtopics and the corresponding terminology. Furthermore, all rNying-ma masters emphasized the fundamental mind. As a cornerstone for the classical rNying-ma exegesis the *sems-ye shes* distinction, as the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse is entitled in this context, in general plays a central role.<sup>938</sup>

In his previous research the author has analyzed the relationship between the Third Karmapa and Klong-chen-pa, as well as Dol-po-pa.<sup>939</sup> Klong-chen-pa, in a similar fashion as Rang-byung-rdo-rje, systematized and clarified all available instructions in several lineages, particularly those of the Great Perfection vehicle of the rNying-ma tradition. In his treatises, such as the *Sems dang ye shes kyi dri lan*, *Grub mtha' mdzod*, *Theg mchog mdzod*, *Tshig don mdzod*, and *Yid bzhin mdzod*, he provided extensive explanations on the distinction between mind (*sems*) and gnosis (*ye shes*), as well as related topics.<sup>940</sup> In this context the term “mind” (*sems*) stands mostly for “perception” (*rnam shes*), and “awareness” (*rig pa*) as a key term often replaces “gnosis.” The later masters 'Jigs-med-

<sup>938</sup> See ALMOGI 2009; HIGGINS 2012.

<sup>939</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 129–141.

<sup>940</sup> See HIGGINS 2011: 35.

gling-pa and 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho also applied this particular terminology in their foremost compositions.

In the Jo-nang school the two prominent masters Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan and Tāranātha Kun-dga'-snying-po made the gZhan stong viewpoint well-known. Dol-po-pa expressed his view in his major works, such as the *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*, in an unusual *dharma* language. In terms of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse he spoke about self-arisen gnosis or pristine awareness (*rang byung ye shes*) beyond mind, mentality and perception (*sems dang yid dang rnam shes*). Buddhahood is said to be permanent, free from the three times or free from a momentary nature. Jo-nang Tāranātha often had to clarify the actual meaning of the Jo-nang doctrine for those who had difficulty following the ultimate level of teachings that Dol-po-pa tried to express.

The particular terminology applied by Dol-po-pa provoked the critique of many later scholars, notably of the Sa-skyā and dGe-lugs traditions. Most scholars of these schools strictly advocated the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka viewpoint. Following the Indian master Chandrakīrti, they identified the different presentations of Yogācāra doctrine with the extreme position of a truly existing mind or consciousness in the Cittamātra school.<sup>941</sup> The influential scholar of the dGe-lugs school, Thu'u-kwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma (1737–1802), dedicated the sixth chapter of his *Grub mtha' shel dkar me long* to the presentation and refutation of the Jo-nang viewpoint, as he had understood it. As a result, the gZhan stong doctrine became widely regarded as a non-Buddhist doctrine, later supported by the early academic treatment of this view by David Seyfort Ruegg and others.

In the meantime, Klaus-Dieter Mathes, Anne Burchardi and other scholars have conducted a considerable amount of research on the gZhan stong viewpoint and thus were able to amend many unfounded generalizations in terms of the original intent of the early proponents of this doctrine, including the Third Karmapa. In this way recent research has considerably changed the perspective on the historical and doctrinal context for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. This prepared the stage for further detailed academic treatment of this discourse itself as propounded by Rang-byung-rdo-rje in his *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and other related works contained in his *gSung 'bum*.

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<sup>941</sup> See *Madhyamakāvatāra*, chapter 6, verses 43–95.

## Part II – Editions and Translations of the Tibetan Works

### Chapter 7: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the *rNam shes ye shes*

Chapter 7 investigates the available manuscripts and editions of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, including a short survey of the relationship of the various redactions. This is followed by an introduction to the critical edition of the Tibetan text and the critical edition itself. A concise discussion of the structure of the treatise and the annotations to the translation serves as an introduction to the translation, followed by the actual annotated translation of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise.

#### 7.1 A Brief Overview of the Extant Manuscripts and Editions

The following comparative presentation provides a brief overview of the extant manuscripts and editions of the *rNam shes ye shes* root text from the earliest to the latest available text witnesses. On the basis of their respective authority an amended version will be generated in the following critical edition. Finally, by collating all the variants, the relationship of these versions will be discussed as precisely as possible.

The *rNam shes ye shes* is a comparatively short treatise consisting of 179 lines of seven-syllable verse. Two introductory lines of 12 syllables each contain the title and the veneration respectively. The colophon again presents the title in 12 lines, as well as place and time of the composition in a longer sentence of 25 syllables. This text in the various *dpe cha* versions runs three to four folios or six to eight pages excluding the title page. According to the colophon the text was composed in a Pig Year at the retreat place called bDe-chen-steng, located behind the Third Karmapa's principal monastery of mTshurphu, Tibet. The dating of the *rNam shes ye shes* has been discussed, along with the other treatises relevant for this thesis, in the fifth chapter (5.2). Just to mention the conclusion of this discussion here: it was most probably composed in the year 1323 C.E.

The treatise teaches in verse how the eight aspects of perception (*rnam shes*) through spiritual practice change their state into five aspects of gnosis (*ye shes*). These

are related to the awakened bodies (*sku: kāya*) of a buddha. The work is written in a condensed verse form; it therefore needs further explanations in several parts, in order to clarify the meaning based on the precise relationship between the syllables. Possible relationships can be understood to a certain degree from Rang-byung-rdo-rje's other works on the same topic and from the later extant commentaries on the basic text. The commentarial literature on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in general has been dealt with in chapters 1, 2 and 6.

The present state of research reveals 13 different published versions of the root text, three of which are embedded into the three Tibetan commentaries on it that are still available today. The colophon of Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas's commentary (fol. 40b.4–5) also lists, among the various sources for this commentary, those which are relevant to the root text: “The Venerable Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself wrote an outline to the *rNam shes ye shes* which is not extant today. Then the direct student of the Third Karmapa, Shes-rab-rin-chen,<sup>942</sup> composed a lengthy commentary (which most probably also contains a root text).” This commentary is announced to be published in the near future, but so far could not be accessed by the author.

Kong-sprul further mentions the summarizing notes by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag,<sup>943</sup> as well as an annotated commentary by the powerful scholar Lha-lung-pa,<sup>944</sup> based on his own independent analysis.<sup>945</sup> This latter commentary could also not be located so far. Of course, the important annotated commentary, including a root text, composed by the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje has not been mentioned here, because as a student of Kong-sprul he composed it after him. These are the early versions of the root text of the *rNam shes ye shes*. In the following section the 10 important extant versions of the root text will be discussed individually.

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<sup>942</sup> See chapter 6 (6.1) on Shes-rab-rin-chen (early 14th c.).

<sup>943</sup> See chapter 6 on dKon-mchog-yan-lag alias dKon-mchog-dbang-po, also next paragraph.

<sup>944</sup> This name refers to the very learned Zur-mang Lha-lung-pa Kar-ma-bstan-'phel (1569–1637), “the powerful scholar” (called “Lhalung Khewang Tenphel” or *mkhas dbang lha lung pa* in *Nor bu sna tshogs mdog can*, B, pp. 91–92, translated in BARRON 2003: 25), a student of the prominent teacher Lha-rtse-ba Ngag-dbang-dzang-po, 1546–1615, from whom Kong-sprul later received the commentaries on the trilogy of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, the *Zab mo nang don*, *rNam shes ye shes*, and *sNying po bstan pa*. The title of the three combined treatises is *Zab mo nang don rtsa ba dang sems dang ye shes snying po bstan pa* (see bibliography).

<sup>945</sup> The Tibetan lines in the colophon of *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 40b.4–5, read: *gzhung 'di la rang byung zhabs kyi sa bcad | de sras shes rab rin chen gyi rgyas 'grel | zhwa dmar lnga pas de don bsdu pa'i mchan bu | mkhad dbang lha lung pas rang stobs rnam dpyod kyi | chan tika sogs ...*

**(i) The Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag's *rNam shes ye shes* in His Handwritten, Annotated Commentary**

The Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag provided the earliest extant version of the *rNam shes ye shes* root text that is known up until now. It is contained in a handwritten, annotated commentary (*mchan bu*) on the *rNam shes ye shes* under the short title *rNam shes ye shes brtag pa*. The extant manuscript, written in *dbu med* script, has been reproduced from rare texts from the library of the late Zhwa-dmar Rinpoche.<sup>946</sup>

As to the time when this annotated commentary was composed, it is mentioned together with the composition of the *De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po gtan la dbab pa* in the Eighth Si-tu Chos-kyi-byung-gnas's (1700–1774) *Kam tshang gser phreng*, A, vol. 2, p. 105.7 (*dpe cha* edition) and B (book ed. 2005), book 2 (*bar cha*), p. 417.15. Since this happened in the year when the First dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba died (according to the *Tibetan Chronological Tables*, p. 199), it must be the male Fire Tiger (*me pho stag*) year 1566. Thus, this commentary by dKon-mchog-yan-lag actually contains the oldest version of the root text available so far and will serve as the primary source for the critical edition.

The physical text itself, according to the TBRC introduction, measures 37 x 8 cm. Nevertheless, the scanned pages have a comparatively large format of 44 x 9 cm on the outside and 37 x 6 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, the size is only 28 x 4 cm, displaying the title in one line and a seal with a double *vajra* in the center—most probably the seal of the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa. The back (1b) and the following page (2a) already have the large size print and display 4 lines respectively. From the fourth page (2b) onwards each page has 6 lines. Altogether the commentary has 12 pages plus one blank page. The Arabic pagination starts with page 445 and finishes with page 457 including the blank page 455, but fortunately no text is missing; the empty page is just a misprint. The Tibetan pagination starts with a handwritten “one” on the margin of the title page and is only readable up to “five” finishing on fol. 6b.

The annotations are mostly connected to the root text by shorter or longer lines of dots. Only in a few cases are the dots missing. This form allows the root verses to appear and be read together with or independently from the annotations. On the other hand there are many lines free of the root verses and used exclusively for the commentary. This implies that the writer already knew more or less how much space was needed for the

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<sup>946</sup> For exact details, refer to the bibliography.

annotations. Only in a few cases did the annotations not fit into the free lines and had to be written freely on top or below the root verses.

The overall impression is that the author kept his own additions as short and as clear as possible. He obviously wanted to respect and preserve the root text. In this way he made the direct words of Karmapa speak for themselves. This is a major reason that this commentary of dKon-mchog-yan-lag is the most suitable and the principal text witness for the critical edition and why it also serves as one of the major sources for the translation.

## **(ii) The First Kong-sprul's Xylograph *rNam shes ye shes* Contained in His Commentary**

The First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas (1813–1899) commented extensively on the Karmapa's *rNam shes ye shes* treatise under the short title of *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*.<sup>947</sup> This is so far the only extant full-fledged interlinear commentary (*mchan 'grel*) that also contains the root text. The first xylographic reprint was commissioned by the Sixteenth Karmapa Rang-byung-rig-pa'i-rdo-rje (1924–1981) at Rum-btegs Monastery, Dharma Chakra Centre, Sikkim, in 1972. It forms the second part to the *Zab mo nang don*, including its two appendices, the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*. That this commentary was chosen to be included here from among Kong-sprul's commentaries on the three well-known compositions of Rang-byung-rdo-rje emphasizes the special importance given by the Sixteenth Karmapa to the *rNam shes ye shes* teachings.

The physical text itself has been printed on Indian rice paper in *dbu can* script with a comparatively large format of 44 x 9 cm on the outside and 37 x 6 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, the size is only 28 x 4 cm, displaying the title in two lines. The back (1b) and the following page (2a) already have the large size print and display 4 lines respectively. From the fourth page (2b) onwards each page has 6 lines. Thus the text has exactly the same format as the afore-mentioned scanned text of the Zhwa-dmar-pa. The whole text runs 41 folios or 82 pages. The last page (41b) finishes after one and a half lines. The outer edge has been coated by a glue of red color which holds the whole text together for storage and transportation. This gluing falls apart as soon as the text is read. The left margin on every first page (*recto*) displays the Tibetan page number; the back (*verso*) provides the short functional title *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*.

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<sup>947</sup> For the complete title and the exact bibliographical details, see bibliography.

The *rNam shes ye shes* root text in Kong-sprul's commentary differs in several points from all other extant versions, even the one contained in the same volume. One reason for this is that in a running commentary any root text naturally displays some orthographic variants in order to fit into the flowing explanations, such as the change of the cases in connection with terms different from the ones in the verse.<sup>948</sup> Another reason for these textual variants is that Kong-sprul's commentary was obviously already older than the separate root text in this volume which seems to have been revised mostly on the basis of the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's version, to which it shows the closest affiliation.

Another point is that at the time of printing this *dpe cha* the Rum-btegs Monastery had only existed for a few years.<sup>949</sup> The Tibetans had carried out of Tibet whatever they could at that time. Their main concern was to preserve as much as possible of their heritage, in this case the important original teachings of the bKa'-brgyud lineage. Thus, they compiled these teachings into a few volumes without much change - resulting in several significant differences between the various redactions. The three other versions of the root text originating from the Rum-btegs Monastery will be discussed later.

### **(iii) The Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's *rNam shes ye shes* Contained in his Annotated Commentary**

The Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's annotated commentary (*mchan bu*) is called *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel* (short title). It has been published in several redactions. Three versions appear in the context of mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's *gSung 'bum*.<sup>950</sup> The first was published in Rum-btegs, Sikkim, in 12 volumes. The second version was reproduced from a set of prints from the dPal-spungs xylographs in Rum-btegs and later published by Lama Ngödrub at Paro, Bhutan, in 10 volumes.<sup>951</sup> The third redaction was printed and published at New Delhi, again in 10 volumes. This commentary has also been included in *Three Important Verse Treatises on Aspects of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism: By H.H. the 3<sup>rd</sup> Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, with Annotations*

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<sup>948</sup> Kurtis Rice Schaeffer called these changes “*sandhi* variants, so to speak” in SCHAEFFER 1995: 22.

<sup>949</sup> The Rum-btegs Monastery was inaugurated by the Sixteenth Karmapa on the day of the Tibetan New Year, 1966.

<sup>950</sup> For further details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>951</sup> See TBRC, work number W22081.

*Expanding the Text (mchan)* by H.H. the 15<sup>th</sup> Karma-pa Mkha-khyab-rdo-rje. New Delhi.<sup>952</sup>

The most widespread edition is the one of Konchok Lhadrepa, which was also reproduced from a print of the xylographs carved at dPal-spungs Monastery. It was printed in *dbu can* script on normal paper with a medium size format of 37,5 x 7,8 cm on the outside and 28,8 x 4,3 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, the size is only 25,3 x 3,4 cm, displaying the title in two lines. The back (1b) and the following page (2a) already have the large size print and display 4 lines respectively. From the fourth page (2b) onwards each page has 6 lines. The work has 11 folios or 22 pages both in Tibetan and Western pagination. The last page 11b or 436 has only 3 lines. The left margin on every front side of a folio (*recto*), beside the Tibetan number in the central position, shows the same functional title as the Kong-sprul commentary on every back: *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*. The left margin on the back (*verso*) reads: *dza ya śāstram*, a common designation for the whole *Collected Works*.

mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's annotated commentary is characterized by a special printing style. The words of the root text have been enlarged to more or less double the size of the annotations in which they are embedded. This helps to identify the words of the root text within the interlinear commentary, even if there are several cases where the wrong words have been enlarged.<sup>953</sup> Thus, if a deviant reading appears in this commentary, in several cases it is not an actual variant, but just a printing mistake. This way of printing also makes it much easier to identify the root text in Kong-sprul's commentary, which does not show any visual difference to the commentary. In a similar way to the approach of the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa, but applying a different technique, the edition of mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje with this printing style seems to respect and preserve the root text successfully. In this way it lets the primary composition of Rang-byung-rdo-rje speak for itself.

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<sup>952</sup> This redaction is mentioned as a Tibetan source for the root text of the *rNam shes ye shes* under [http://www.jonangfoundation.org/sites/default/files/jf\\_rangjung\\_1.pdf](http://www.jonangfoundation.org/sites/default/files/jf_rangjung_1.pdf), accessed 12 November 2017.

<sup>953</sup> All obvious cases are mentioned in the following critical edition of the *rNam shes ye shes*.

**(iv) The Rum-btegs Edition of the *rNam shes ye shes* Appended to the *Zab mo nang don***

Besides the *rNam shes ye shes* root text contained in the commentary of Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, the Rum-bstegs Monastery, the Sikkimese seat in exile of the Sixteenth Karmapa, produced three further versions of the *rNam shes ye shes* root text. The earliest edition was printed together with Kong-sprul's commentary in the appendix to the xylographic reprint of the *Zab mo nang gi don* by Rang-byung-rdo-rje, in 1970. It naturally displays the same physical characteristics as the above-mentioned commentary by Kong-sprul. This means that it was printed on Indian rice paper in *dbu can* script with a comparatively large format of 44 x 9 cm at the outside and 37 x 6 cm of the actual print inside. One difference is that there is no title page; the text starts on folio 32a.3 after a small gap, with its title written in smaller letters. There are only three more lines on the first folio page, and each further page has 6 lines except for the last page on folio 35a, where the text finishes with the fifth line. Thus the whole work runs four folios or seven pages.

The left margin bears the folio pagination on the front side and the short title "*nang don*" for "*Zab mo nang gi don*" on the back, because it belongs as an appendix to the *Zab mo nang gi don* root text. The reason that there is no title page seems to be that the three works are regarded as a coherent trilogy, known under the overall title: *Zab mo nang don rtsa ba dang sems dang ye shes snying po bstan pa* (in short: *Zab nang sems ye shes snying po*).

The source of this *rNam shes ye shes* root text is not easy to determine. The closest similarity seems to be to the root text contained in the commentary by mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje discussed above. Obviously the two different authors, Kong-sprul and the Fifteenth Karmapa, even though they were closely related as teacher and student respectively, were also responsible for several significant variants in the two root texts of the treatise contained in the same volume.

**(v) The Rum-btegs Edition of the *rNam shes ye shes* Published Together with the *sNying po bstan pa***

The third Rum-btegs redaction is an independent xylographic print of the *rNam shes ye shes* and the *sNying po bstan pa*, combined into one volume and published at Rum-btegs Monastery, Sikkim, in 1972 under the title of *rNnam shes ye shes 'byed pa'i bstan bcos*. In the printing list (*sPar gyi dkar chag*) of the Rum-btegs Monastery (dPal-karma'i-gdan-sa bShad-sgrub-chos-'khor-gling) this text appears as no. 9 under the title *rNam shes ye*

*shes 'byed pa dang snying po bstan pa'i rtsa ba*. A later version of the same combination into one *dpe cha* was published in 2002 under the title of *rNam shes ye shes 'byed pa dang de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa'i bstan bcos* by Dharma Kara Publications, Kathmandu, Boudha, Nepal.<sup>954</sup>

This Rum-btegs redaction originated from the same printing press as the other two Rum-btegs versions and thus in general displays the same physical characteristics. This means, it has been printed on Indian rice paper in *dbu can* script with a comparatively large format of 44 x 9 cm at the outside and 37 x 6 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, the size is only 25,3 x 3,4 cm displaying the title in one line. The *recto* (1b) and *verso* (2a) already have the large size print and display 4 lines respectively. From the fourth page (2b) onwards each page has 6 lines. The work has 5 folios or 9 pages in Tibetan pagination. The last page 5b or 9 has only 1 line. The left margin on every *recto* of a folio just shows the Tibetan number; on every *verso* the left margin is empty.

#### **(vi) The Rum-btegs *rNam shes ye shes* Published in a Tibetan Book Edition of the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute**

The fourth Rum-btegs redaction is a book entitled *A Collection of works on Shentong School of Madhyamaka Philosophy, Book One*. It was published by Acharya, the Senior-Most Class of the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute, Rum-btegs, in 1990, on the occasion of the students' graduation from the institute. The book was distributed through the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute (KIBI), New Delhi, and therefore is sometimes known as "the *rNam shes ye shes* book published in Delhi."

The format is 21 x 14 x 2 cm. Except for the English translation of the title, the dedication, the bibliographical data, the pagination, and a few life-span dates, it has been written in Tibetan, in *dbu can* script. Besides the *rNam shes ye shes* and *sNying po bstan pa* root texts, it also contains both commentaries by the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas on these texts (which previously were printed separately as nos. 10 and 11 in the Rum-btegs printing list) and a few other concise texts on the dBu ma gzhan stong tradition as transmitted in the bKa'-brgyud lineage. The title of the book suggests that these two works by Rang-byung-rdo-rje among others are regarded as important treatises on the gZhan stong view by the followers of the bKa'-brgyud tradition.

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<sup>954</sup> This combined treatise is also mentioned as a Tibetan source for the root text of the *rNam shes ye shes* under [http://www.jonangfoundation.org/sites/default/files/jf\\_rangjung\\_1.pdf](http://www.jonangfoundation.org/sites/default/files/jf_rangjung_1.pdf), accessed 12 November 2017.

The actual *rNam shes ye shes* root text starts on page 49 with 20 lines on each page. It ends with the 11<sup>th</sup> line on page 54, thus comprising five and a half pages. The work was composed in verse, as said before, but the lines are continuous, in this way saving a lot of space. Even though the paper is rather dark and thin, except for a few misprints the text is very clear and easily readable. This later edition has been reviewed and except for some typographical errors emended in several points before printing. The exact analysis of the strongest connection to earlier sources will be provided at the end of this survey. Of course, the book also contains a further root text contained in Kong-sprul's commentary; but this version does not deviate from the earlier Rum-btegs publication of this commentary, meaning that the two versions of the root text in the same book again differ in several significant points.

#### **(vii) The *rNam shes ye shes* in TCHEUDREUN 2007**

A further complete *rNam shes ye shes* root text in Tibetan letters was provided in the French version of one of Thrangu Rinpoche's books, entitled *Le Traité des 5 Sagesses et des 8 Consciences*.<sup>955</sup> This work consists of lectures on the *rNam shes ye shes* topic provided by Thrangu Rinpoche at Namo Buddha, Oxford 1989, and in Nepal 1990. The English translation of these lectures was published as ROBERTS 2001. Different from the French edition, this book only contains the English translation of the root text, but no Tibetan version. The French translation was executed by Tashi Tcheudreun and published as TCHEUDREUN 2007.

After the preface by Peter A. Roberts, the *rNam shes ye shes* root text starts on page 18 and finishes on page 31. The 36 Tibetan verses in *dbu can* script always appear on the left, the French translation directly opposite on the right side, which makes it easy to relate the translation to the original text for the readers who are able to read Tibetan and French. Later, the structure of the book follows the English version strictly, where the verses of the root text appear at the beginning of each section of Thrangu Rinpoche's commentary. The only major differences are that the French book dispenses with the Editor's Foreword by C. Johnson, the 43 notes and the short index given in the English book. Instead, in the middle it shows six colored pictures of the "five dhyani buddhas," together and separately, including short explanations. The more detailed analysis of the relationship of this root text to other versions will follow at the end of this section.

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<sup>955</sup> English rendering: "The Treatise on the 5 Wisdoms and 8 Consciousnesses."

**(viii) The *rNam shes ye shes* in the Tibetan Medical Book *Zab nang rtsa 'grel***

A Tibetan medical book under the short title of *Zab nang rtsa 'grel* (A and B) contains the *rNam shes ye shes* together with the *sNying po bstan pa* as appendices to the *Zab mo nang gi don* and Kong-sprul's *Zab nang snang byed*. The *rNam shes ye shes* comprises only 4 pages, from p. 43 to p. 46 in the book, where the lines of the verses in *dbu can* script are continuous, each page displaying 24 lines. The first page (43) starts a bit lower because of presenting the title in enlarged script followed by 19 lines; and the last page (46) has only 23 lines. The print is very clear and thus easily readable. The book presents the *rNam shes ye shes* as being strongly connected to the *Zab mo dang don* and all the compositions including Kong-sprul's *Zab mo nang gi don* commentary *Zab nang snang byed* as belonging to the field of Tibetan Medicine, precisely as no. 29 in a series of medical books. The role of the Third Karmapa as a lineage holder in the field of Tibetan medicine has already been discussed in the author's M.Phil. thesis<sup>956</sup> and in the first part of this study (for example, in the fourth chapter, 4.3). Here the relationship to the other sources is interesting and that again will be analyzed at the end of this section.

**(ix) The *rNam shes ye shes* in the *bKa' brgyud gsung rab***

In the *Bod kyi bcu phrag rig mdzod chen mo*, a compilation of scriptures from all major Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the most essential teachings of the *bKa'-brgyud* lineage were published under the short title *bKa' brgyud gsung rab*. Within this collection volume no. 16 is entitled *mDo sngags mtshams sbyor*. It was compiled in *dbu can* script by a *mKhan-po* Dam-chos-zla-ba. This volume is especially dedicated to the Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje and his works, visible from the insertion of his picture and a praise right at the beginning. At the end, on page 1171, more bibliographical data is given. Here we find as a kind of subtitle: *Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje sogs kyis mdzad*, which means that most of the works contained in this volume (exactly 6 of 8) have been ascribed to Rang-byung-rdo-rje as author, even if half of them are commentaries on Karmapa's works by Kong-sprul.

Obviously, this whole volume provides strong evidence for the argument of this thesis, that Rang-byung-rdo-rje and his works have been and still are regarded as pivotal and authoritative for the *bKa'-brgyud* lineage, at least by the editors of this collection. The chosen works connect the *sūtras* and the *tantras*, as the title *mDo sngags mtshams*

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<sup>956</sup> See SEEGER 2009: 177, particularly fn. 545.

*sbyor* suggests. Among Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works the *rNam shes ye shes* again figures prominently and is also represented here as root text (pp. 323–329) and commentary by the First Kong-sprul (pp. 331–385).

The title page (p. 323) only presents the title in large letters and the author in smaller letters. The actual text starts on page 325, displaying 20 lines, and finishes on page 329 with just 8 lines and smaller letters for the colophon in 2 lines, otherwise showing 21 lines per page. Even though the text is written in verse, the lines are continuous. Unlike the previous edition of the combined *rNam shes ye shes* and Kong-sprul's commentary, here the separate root text and the root text embedded in the commentary are in accordance as much as possible, which proves that a careful revision took place before the publication. Nevertheless, this edition still contains several misprints and problematic readings.

#### **(x) The *rNam shes ye shes* in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum***

The most recent version of the *rNam shes ye shes* root text was published in the context of the two new editions (2006 and 2013) of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* (short title).<sup>957</sup> The scanned TBRC version of 2006 (complete redaction in Core Text Collection 4),<sup>958</sup> the Rangjung Yeshe Wiki<sup>959</sup> version, organized by the TSADRA Foundation, and the author's personal paper copy from Lhasa/Tibet, acquired in 2006, are identical.

The work is an ink print copy on normal paper in *dbu can* script with a medium size format of 42 x 8,5 cm on the outside and 34,5 x 6 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, the size is only 31,5 x 4 cm displaying the title in one line. The back of the title page (1b) and the following page (2a) already have the large size print and contain 4 lines respectively. From the fourth page (2b) onwards each page has 6 lines. The text has 4 folios or 8 pages in Tibetan and Western pagination. The last page 4b or 8 has only one line. The left margin on every front side of a folio (*recto*) only shows the Tibetan number; on every back (*verso*) the left margin shows the title of the whole collection: *Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje 'i gsung 'bum*. The connection to earlier versions will be analyzed at the end of this section.

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<sup>957</sup> For further details, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>958</sup> See TBRC, work number W30541.

<sup>959</sup> See the RJW website under [http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/3rd\\_Karmapa](http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/3rd_Karmapa), accessed 12 November 2017.

## Summary on the Relationship of the Various Editions

In order to analyze the relationship of the 10 most important *rNam shes ye shes* text witnesses as precisely as possible on the basis of the critical edition, the following sigla have been assigned to these versions:

- A** The Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag's *rNam shes ye shes* in his handwritten annotated commentary<sup>960</sup>
- B** The First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas's xylograph *rNam shes ye shes* in his commentary<sup>961</sup>
- C** The Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's xylograph *rNam shes ye shes* in his annotated commentary<sup>962</sup>
- D** Rum-btegs xylograph *rNam shes ye shes* as appendix to *Zab mo nang don*<sup>963</sup>
- E** Rum-btegs xylograph *rNam shes ye shes* as separate edition with *sNying po bstan pa*<sup>964</sup>
- F** Rum-btegs *rNam shes ye shes* in a book edition of the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute<sup>965</sup>
- G** *rNam shes ye shes* in TCHEUDREUN 2007: 18–30
- H** *rNam shes ye shes* in the Tibetan medical book *Zab nang rtsa 'grel*<sup>966</sup>
- I** *rNam shes ye shes* in the *bKa' brgyud gsung rab*<sup>967</sup>
- J** *rNam shes ye shes* in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*<sup>968</sup>

As for the grouping, **ABC** represent the earliest text witnesses and commentaries containing the embedded *rNam shes ye shes*. **DEF** designate separate root texts originating from the Rum-btegs Monastery. **G** has been published in France. **HIJ** stand for the most recent redactions, all published in China.

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<sup>960</sup> For bibliographical details, refer to *rNam shes ye shes brtag pa*, pp. 445–457.

<sup>961</sup> See *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 1a–41b.

<sup>962</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, A = pp. 221–242; B = pp. 415–436.

<sup>963</sup> See *Zab mo nang don*, fols. 32a.3–35a.

<sup>964</sup> See *sNying po bstan pa*, fols. 1a–5b, listed in *sPar gyi dkar chag* as no. 9 under the title of *rNam shes ye shes 'byed pa dang snying po bstan pa'i rtsa ba*.

<sup>965</sup> For bibliographical details, see *rNam shes ye shes C*.

<sup>966</sup> See *Zab nang rtsa 'grel*, pp. 43–46.

<sup>967</sup> See *bKa' brgyud gsung rab*, vol. 16, pp. 325–329.

<sup>968</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 269–276.

When going more into detail, the connection between the various versions is as follows: **A** seems to be the oldest manuscript available until now, containing the *rNam shes ye shes* and thus serves as the primary source for the critical edition. The fact that it contains many mistakes, according to Dorji Wangchuk,<sup>969</sup> actually provides a clear hint that it has not been polished to the same degree as all later versions. In this case it is a sign of being more reliable and thus able to serve as a very early text witness. Even though **B** was published at Rum-btegs Monastery, it definitely goes back to an earlier source, because the separate root text in the same volume, which has been revised, shows many differences to the one embedded in Kong-sprul's commentary. According to his colophon, Kong-sprul has taken **A** into consideration when composing his commentary, but he did not just copy this *rNam shes ye shes* root text. Rather, he developed his independent reading, displaying markedly fewer mistakes than the older version.

**C** incorporates both **A** and **B** wherever possible, but since the first two versions contain many mistakes, **C** tries to amend these mistakes. Nevertheless, mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje's commentary is at least to a certain degree a reproduction or a redaction of Kong-sprul's, even if it clearly shows various significant amendments. It seems to be the version most later sources rely on heavily, except for its mistakes (other than those contained in **A** and **B**), which have often been amended in the later editions, sometimes in favour of **B**. **A**, **B**, and **C** show their individual readings, respectively, and all others follow **C** as much as possible. The reason might be that they trusted that the Fifteenth Karmapa incorporated the earlier readings wherever suitable; and being a later incarnation of the Third Karmapa, they seem to have regarded him as the authority most closely in accord with what the Third Karmapa had intended to express.

**DEF** originate from the Rum-btegs Monastery, initiated by the late Sixteenth Karmapa Rang-byung-rigs-pa'i-rdo-rje (1924–1981), where the book version **F**, printed in the late 1980s, contains slight emendations. All three versions rely mostly on **C**. The French version **G**, according to the Preface written by Peter A. Roberts, is primarily based on **B** (Kong-sprul's commentary), but the collation shows that it was considerably amended. **HIJ** are modern Tibetan book versions printed in China. They also mostly follow **C**. One important exception in this group is **I**, the root text in the *bKa' brgyud pa'i gsung rab*

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<sup>969</sup> Stated in a personal conversation, November 2010.

collection, where, as was shown above, a careful revision took place before publication. **J** is the latest *dpe cha* version also mostly following **C**.

mKhan-po Kanam (Kar-ma-rnam-rgyal) of the Karma Legs-bshad-gling Institute, Kathmandu, has published two digital versions of the *rNam shes ye shes* plus Kong-sprul's commentary (which, apropos the inherent root text, again differs considerably from these separate editions and thus has just been copied from the Rum-btegs edition without revision).<sup>970</sup> The root texts both follow **C** as closely as possible and thus there was no need to incorporate them into the critical edition. Except for very few variants they do not provide any additional information. One other version, published by the TSADRA Foundation, New York, could also be disregarded because of being identical to **J**.

## 7.2 Introduction to the Critical Edition of the Tibetan Text

As stated above, the critical edition is based primarily on the commentary by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag (1525–1583) entitled *rNam shes dang ye shes brtag pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos*. The Tibetan letters have been transcribed here into the Latin letters of the “Whylic” transliteration,<sup>971</sup> since this system is independent of specific Tibetan fonts and thus easily readable on any electronic device and easy to print. Except for the early Rum-btegs rice paper editions, the quality of the prints is sufficiently good. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish a *pa* from a *ba*. The sigla applied in this critical edition have already been mentioned above (capital letters of the Latin alphabet from A to J). All variants of the afore-mentioned sources are listed in the apparatus, except for the *tsheg* and *shad*. The variants in punctuation have not normally been recorded, since they are more or less identical in all editions.

The critical edition was generated on the basis of showing the preferred reading at the beginning of each footnote before the lemma sign “[ ]”. This is followed by the sigla of the manuscripts and books that attest it. In this way it is easy to discriminate at a glance which editions support the preferred reading. At the end of each footnote there follows the respective information on variant readings.

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<sup>970</sup> Posted in 2008 by the Legs-bshad-gling-dpe-skrun-khang.

<sup>971</sup> See WYLIE 1959.

The *rNam shes ye shes* root text in the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa's commentary functions as the principal source and earliest text witness. Of course, several orthographic variants in the commentaries only appear because of the necessities of a continuous text. Even if a long list of letters appears for each variant, when mentioning them all it seems to be easier to distinguish the differences. Furthermore, with the insertion of all variants contained in the extant text witnesses, the reader is able to follow the decisions made by the author that consequently affect the translation.

The page numbers of the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa's and the Fifteenth Karmapa's annotated commentaries have been inserted as subscripts and in angled brackets where a new page starts.<sup>972</sup> To insert the First Kong-sprul's pagination for the root text does not make much sense, because this is the most extensive commentary. The root text covers so many pages that too many numbers would appear in the basic Tibetan text. The line numbers of each verse have been added after the last lines, respectively. Those variants consisting of more than one syllable in the footnotes have not been explicitly marked as compounds in the main text, since too many special signs which are not absolutely necessary affect the readability of the original lines.

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<sup>972</sup> The Arabic numerals here are preferable in order to facilitate the identification of the respective treatise in the complete volume, since the folio numbers start anew with each work.

### 7.3 A Critical Edition of the Tibetan Text

{A, p. 446, C, p. 416, v.} || *rNam shes* {C, p. 417, r.} *ye shes 'byed pa 'i*<sup>973</sup> *bstan bcos* ||

#### Part I

1. sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa'<sup>974</sup> thams cad la phyag 'tshal lo ||
2. thos dang<sup>975</sup> bsam la<sup>976</sup> rab brten nas ||  
bsgom<sup>977</sup> pa'i tshul la sbyor ba'i phyir || {C, p. 418, v.}  
bdag nyid dben par 'dug pa na ||  
tshul 'di snang ba brjod par bya || [1–4]
3. khams gsum sems can thams cad ni ||  
bdag dang gzhan dang<sup>978</sup> gnyis ka dang ||  
rgyu med las ni byung bar<sup>979</sup> rtog<sup>980</sup> ||  
byed po phywa<sup>981</sup> dang dbang phyug dang ||  
tshangs {A, p. 447} dang khyab 'jug phyi rol rdul ||  
phag na mo yi rdzas bden pas<sup>982</sup> ||  
bdag dang 'jig rten bskyed ces smra || [5–11]
4. thams cad {C, p. 419} mkhyen pa nyag gcig ni<sup>983</sup> ||  
khams gsum 'di dag sems tsam ste ||  
bdag las ma yin gzhan las<sup>984</sup> min ||

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<sup>973</sup> 'byed pa'i] BCDEFGHIJ, rnam shes dang ye shes brtag pa zhes bya ba'i A

<sup>974</sup> dpa'] ABDEFGHIJ, pa C

<sup>975</sup> dang] ACDEFGHIJ, pa B

<sup>976</sup> la] ABCDEFGIJ, pa H

<sup>977</sup> bsgom] BDEFGHIJ, sgom AC

<sup>978</sup> dang] ACDEFGHIJ, pa B

<sup>979</sup> bar] ACDEFGHIJ, ba B

<sup>980</sup> rtog] A, 'dod B, rtogs CDEFGHIJ

<sup>981</sup> phywa] BCDFGHI, phyA AEJ

<sup>982</sup> rdzas bden pas] BDEFGHIJ, rdzas bden pa A, bden pa C

<sup>983</sup> pa nyag gcig ni] BCDEFGHIJ, pa nyag gcig go, pa nyag gcig gi ni] A

<sup>984</sup> las] BCDEFGHIJ, la A

- gnyis las ma yin<sup>985</sup> rgyu med min ||  
 chos rnam rten cing 'brel 'byung ste ||  
 de nyid rang gi ngo bos stong ||  
 gcig dang tha dad rnam bral ba ||  
 rdzun dang bden pa rnam spangs shing || {A, p. 448}  
 sgyu ma chu zla la sogs<sup>986</sup> ltar ||  
 mkhyen nas sems can rnam la gsungs | [12–21]
5. de ltar 'khrul dang ma 'khrul pa'i<sup>987</sup> ||  
 rtsa ba gang nas byung zhe na<sup>988</sup> ||  
 me long las ni rang gzugs dang ||  
 du ba las ni<sup>989</sup> me bzhin du<sup>990</sup> ||  
 rten cing 'brel 'byung tshul<sup>991</sup> bstan nas || {C, p. 420}  
 rtogs<sup>992</sup> pa 'dir<sup>993</sup> ni gsal brjod bya || [22–27]
6. sgo lnga'i rnam par shes pa ni ||  
 gzugs sgra dri ro reg bya la<sup>994</sup> ||  
 blang dor byas pas<sup>995</sup> nyon mongs bskyed ||  
 yul 'di dag ni gang yin zhes<sup>996</sup> ||  
 shes rab ldan pas legs brtags na ||  
 rnam rig shes pa las gzhan pa'i ||  
 rdul sogs phyi rol grub pa med || [28–34]
7. gang tshe yul gyi rdzas de dag ||

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<sup>985</sup> gnyis las ma yin] CDEFGHIJ, gnyis ka las min A, gnis las min ste B

<sup>986</sup> chu zla la sogs] ACDEFGHIJ, chu zla ba bzhin B

<sup>987</sup> pa'i] BCEFHIIJ, ba'i ADGJ

<sup>988</sup> byung zhe na] A, *conj.* byung yin zhes BCDEFGHIJ

<sup>989</sup> du ba las ni] ACDEFGHIJ, du ba byung las B

<sup>990</sup> du] ACDEFGHIJ, te B

<sup>991</sup> tshul] BCDGHIJ, la A, chos F, ches E

<sup>992</sup> rtogs] ABDGHJ, rtog EFL, rtags C

<sup>993</sup> 'dir] CDEFGHIJ, 'di AB

<sup>994</sup> la] ACDEFGHIJ, ste B

<sup>995</sup> blang dor byas pas] ACDEFGHIJ, 'dod cing blang pas B

<sup>996</sup> zhes] ACDEFGHIJ, ces B

- shes las gzhan na bdag gcig min ||  
 bstan med thogs pa med pa yi<sup>997</sup> ||  
 rig las<sup>998</sup> {C, p. 421} bem po'i rdzas mi skye || {A, p. 449}  
 de phyir de byung 'brel ba<sup>999</sup> med ||  
 de 'dod shes las<sup>1000</sup> yul rnams ni ||  
 snang bar mi rigs<sup>1001</sup> 'brel med phyir || [35–41]
8. de phyir ci ltar<sup>1002</sup> snang ba 'di ||  
 shes las gzhan pa'i yul med de ||  
 de byung rang rig nyams myong bzhin ||  
 cha med rdul<sup>1003</sup> dang phwya le ba<sup>1004</sup> ||  
 snang ba sems de de yi don ||  
 phyi rol gzhan du grub med phyir ||  
 tshangs sogs byed po {C, p. 422} min par rtogs || [42–48]
9. yid dang chos kyi 'brel ba<sup>1005</sup> yang ||  
 rmi lam nyams su myong ba<sup>1006</sup> bzhin ||  
 de nyid de la dmigs pa la ||  
 zhen par zad kyi dngos bden med<sup>1007</sup> || [49–52]
10. de ltar tshogs drug shes pa 'di ||  
 don dang sems can snang ba dang ||  
 bdag 'dzin dang ni<sup>1008</sup> nam rig dang<sup>1009</sup> ||

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<sup>997</sup> pa yi] ACDEFGHIJ, pa'i B

<sup>998</sup> las] BCDEFGHIJ, la A

<sup>999</sup> ba] HIJ, pa ABCEFGJL, unclear D

<sup>1000</sup> shes las] BDEFGHIJ, ces la A, shes la C

<sup>1001</sup> rigs] AC, rig BDEFGHIJ,

<sup>1002</sup> ci ltar] ACDEFGIJ, ji ltar BH

<sup>1003</sup> rdul] ABCDEFGIJ, rngul [rdul] H

<sup>1004</sup> phywa le ba] HIJ, phya le ba BCDEF, phya le bar A, phyal le ba G

<sup>1005</sup> ba] CGIJ, pa ABDEFH

<sup>1006</sup> nyams su myong ba] ACDEFGHIJ, nyams myong yin pa B

<sup>1007</sup> med] BCDEFGHIJ, min A

<sup>1008</sup> bdag 'dzin dang ni] BCDEFGHIJ, bdag tu 'dzin dang A

<sup>1009</sup> dang] ACDEFGHIJ, ste B

- snang ba'i rnam pa gang byung ba ||  
 'di ci gzhan gyis byas min na<sup>1010</sup> || {C, p. 423}  
 bdag gis byed pa<sup>1011</sup> 'gyur ma yin ||  
 gnyis kyis<sup>1012</sup> ma bskyed gnyis med min || [53–59]
11. de phyir rgyal bas gsungs pa ltar<sup>1013</sup> ||  
 'khor 'das thams cad sems tsam ste || [60–61]
12. 'di yi rgyu rkyen rten 'brel ni ||  
 tshogs drug yid dang kun gzhi zhes || [62–63] {A, p. 450}
13. gsungs te tshogs {C, p. 424} drug shes pa<sup>1014</sup> ni ||  
 dmigs rkyen la ltos de dag kyang ||  
 gzugs sogs<sup>1015</sup> yul ni drug po yin || [64–66]
14. bdag rkyen dbang po drug po ste ||  
 de yang<sup>1016</sup> gzugs can dwangs pa<sup>1017</sup>, o || [67–68]
15. gnyis ka<sup>1018</sup> sems las byung ba yin ||  
 yul dang dbang por rab snang ba ||  
 thog med khams la<sup>1019</sup> brten pa yin || [69–71]
16. don<sup>1020</sup> mthong rnam par shes yin kyang<sup>1021</sup> ||  
 khyad par sems byung 'du byed<sup>1022</sup> ni ||  
 yid kyi rnam shes la brten te || {C, p. 425}

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<sup>1010</sup> 'di ci gzhan gyis byas min na] ACDEFGHIJ, 'di gzhan gyis byas ma yin na B

<sup>1011</sup> pa] DEFGHIJ, par ABC

<sup>1012</sup> kyis] ACDEFGHIJ, kas B

<sup>1013</sup> ltar] ACDEFGHIJ, ste B

<sup>1014</sup> shes pa] BCDEFGHIJ, rnam shes A

<sup>1015</sup> sogs] ABDEFGHIJ, dang C

<sup>1016</sup> yang] ACDEFGHIJ, rnams B

<sup>1017</sup> dwangs pa] BH, bskyed pa C (*em.*, obviously a typo), dang ba ADEGJ, dang po F, dang pa I,

<sup>1018</sup> gnyis ka] ABCDEFGHIJ, gnyis ga F

<sup>1019</sup> la] BCDEFGHIJ, las A

<sup>1020</sup> don] BCDEFGHIJ, de A

<sup>1021</sup> rnam par shes yin kyang] CDEFGHIJ, rnam par shes pa yi A, rnam par shes pa kyang B

<sup>1022</sup> 'du byed] CDEFGHIJ, 'du shes AB

de ma thag dang nyon yid gnyis || [72–75]

17. drug po<sup>1023</sup> skye dang<sup>1024</sup> 'gag pa yi ||  
rkyen phyir de ma thag pa yin ||  
tshogs drug skad cig skye 'gag gi ||  
grangs bzhin de dang 'brel pa<sup>1025</sup> yin ||  
rnal 'byor {A, p. 451} ldan pa'i yid dang ni ||  
rgyal ba'i bka' las 'di shes 'gyur || [76–81]

18. 'di yi<sup>1026</sup> cha shas sems nyid la ||  
ngar sems nga rgyal 'dzin pa dang ||  
nga la chags shing ma rig bcas || {C, p. 426}  
'jigs tshogs thams cad bskyed pa'i phyir ||  
nyon mongs can gyi yid ces bya || [82–86]

19. drug po 'gag ma thag yid ni ||  
rnam shes skye ba'i gnas yin te<sup>1027</sup> ||  
nyon yid<sup>1028</sup> nyon mongs gnas su 'gyur ||  
bskyed dang<sup>1029</sup> sgrib pa'i nus par ldan ||  
de phyir yid de rnam pa gnyis || [87–91]

20. khyad par blo gros ldan rnams la ||  
kun gzhi'i rnam par shes gsungs te<sup>1030</sup> || {C, p. 427}  
'di ni rten dang gnas dang ni ||  
len pa'i rnam par shes<sup>1031</sup> kyang gsung ||  
tshogs bdun gyis bskyed las rnams kun ||

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<sup>1023</sup> po] ACDEFGHIJ, drug B

<sup>1024</sup> dang] ADEFGHIJ, ba'i B, phyir C (*em.*, obviously a misprint)

<sup>1025</sup> pa] ADEFGHI, ba BJ, ba de C

<sup>1026</sup> 'di yi] BCDEFGHIJ, yid 'di A

<sup>1027</sup> te] ACDEFGHIJ, la B

<sup>1028</sup> yid] ABDEFGHIJ, kyis C (*em.*, misprint).

<sup>1029</sup> bskyed dang] ACDEFGHIJ, bskyed B

<sup>1030</sup> rnam par shes gsungs te] BCDEFGHIJ, rnam shes zhes gsungs te A

<sup>1031</sup> par shes] BCDEFGHIJ, shes zhes A

ma 'dres<sup>1032</sup> lung du ma bstan par ||  
 bsags pas<sup>1033</sup> rnam par smin ces<sup>1034</sup> bya || {A, p. 452}  
 char chu rgya mtsho<sup>1035</sup> ji bzhin no || [92–99]

21. thams cad bskyed par byed pas na ||  
 sa bon kun ldang kun gzhi ste<sup>1036</sup> ||  
 rgyu yi rkyen shes brjod pa yin<sup>1037</sup> ||  
 tshogs bdun log na {C, p. 428} de ldog phyir ||  
 rkyen gyi rnam shes zhes kyang bya<sup>1038</sup> || [100–104]

## Part II

22. phyi dang nang gi bdag nyid can<sup>1039</sup> ||  
 kun gzhi'i rnam shes 'di nyid ni ||  
 spang bya kun gyi rtsa ba ste ||  
 rdo rje lta bu'i ting 'dzin gyis ||  
 bcom<sup>1040</sup> par bya bar gsungs pa yin || [105–109]
23. gang tshe sgrib bcas kun gzhi log ||  
 de tshe me long ye shes te ||  
 ye shes kun snang nga yir med ||  
 yongs su ma chad rtag tu ldan ||  
 shes bya {C, p. 429} rtogs shing der phyogs min || {A, p. 453}  
 ye shes kun gyi rgyu mtshan phyir ||  
 chos kyi sku zhes brjod pa yin || [110–116]
24. nyon mongs can gyi yid de ni ||

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<sup>1032</sup> ma 'dres] ABCEFHI, ma'dris DGJ, *conj.* ma sgrib lung ma bstan

<sup>1033</sup> bsags pas] BCDEFGHIJ bsag pa A,

<sup>1034</sup> ces] BCDEFGHIJ, zhes A, ces [zhes] H

<sup>1035</sup> rgya mtsho] ABDEFGHIJ, rgya mtshor C

<sup>1036</sup> ste] ACDEFGHIJ, yin B

<sup>1037</sup> yin] ABCDHIJ, yi EFG

<sup>1038</sup> bya] BCDEFGHIJ, gsungs A

<sup>1039</sup> can] CDGHIJ, kyi AB, na EF

<sup>1040</sup> bcom] BCEFGHIJ, gzhom A, bcoms D

- dpa' bar<sup>1041</sup> 'gro bas rab<sup>1042</sup> bcom<sup>1043</sup> nas ||  
 mthong bsgoms nyon mongs rab spangs nas<sup>1044</sup> ||  
 nyon mongs med cing srid zhi med ||  
 mnyam nyid ye shes zhes su brjod || [117–121]
- 25.a de ma thag pa'i yid de ni ||  
 drug po 'dzin pas 'dzin pa ste ||  
 rnam par rtog byed rnam rtog<sup>1045</sup> yin ||  
 de ni<sup>1046</sup> yang dag shes rab dang ||  
 sgyu ma lta bu'i ting 'dzin gyis || [122–126]
- 25.b bcom pas {C, p. 430} bzod pa che thob tshe ||  
 don bcas 'dzin pa gnas gyur pas ||  
 zhing ni<sup>1047</sup> dag pa<sup>1048</sup> ston pa dang || {A, p. 454}  
 dus rnams kun tu ye shes dang ||  
 las rnams kun tu<sup>1049</sup> thogs<sup>1050</sup> med pa'i ||  
 rnam rtog gnas yongs gyur pa ni ||  
 so sor rtog<sup>1051</sup> pa'i ye shes te<sup>1052</sup> || [127–133]
26. de ltar ye shes gnyis po 'di ||  
 bsgom pa dag pas<sup>1053</sup> srid zhi la ||  
 mi gnas zhi<sup>1054</sup> dang byams pa dang ||

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<sup>1041</sup> bar] ABCDEFHIJ, bor G

<sup>1042</sup> bas rab] ABDEFGHIJ, bas C (*em.*, obviously a misprint)

<sup>1043</sup> bcom] ABCHIJ, bcoms DEFG

<sup>1044</sup> nas] BCDEFGHIJ, pas A

<sup>1045</sup> rtog] ACDEFGIJ, rtogs BH

<sup>1046</sup> ni] ABCDEGHIJ, na F

<sup>1047</sup> ni] ACDEFGHIJ, kham B

<sup>1048</sup> pa] BCDEFGHIJ, par A

<sup>1049</sup> tu] BEFGI, la ACDHJ

<sup>1050</sup> thogs] ABCF.GHI, thog DEJ

<sup>1051</sup> rtog] ABCEFG, rtogs DHIJ

<sup>1052</sup> te] ACEFHII, de B, ste DG

<sup>1053</sup> pas] BCDEFGHIJ, cing A

<sup>1054</sup> zhi] BCDEFGHIJ, zhing A

- thugs rjer<sup>1055</sup> ldan zhing 'khor rnams la ||  
sna tshogs sku dang gsung ston {C, p. 431} mdzad ||  
chos chen dbyangs<sup>1056</sup> kyi dkyil 'khor 'byung ||  
ting 'dzin gzungs<sup>1057</sup> rnams<sup>1058</sup> kun gyi gter ||  
longs spyod rdzogs sku zhes su brjod || [134–141]
27. sgo lnga yid kyi cha gcig ni ||  
yang dag kun rtog las skyes pa || {A, p. 455, A, p. 456}  
bden bzhi'i tshul gyi rnam pa can || {C, p. 432}  
shes bzod la sogs bcu drug gis ||  
don mthong bden pa<sup>1059</sup> rtogs pa las || [142–146]
28. dbang po lnga rnams gnas gyur ni<sup>1060</sup> ||  
don kun 'jug dang thams cad kyi ||  
yon tan brgya phrag bcu gnyis la<sup>1061</sup> ||  
dbang 'byor de nyid mthar phyin pas ||  
bya ba grub pa'i ye shes te || [147–151]
29. khams rnams kun tu sna tshogs pa'i ||  
dpag {C, p. 433} med bsam yas sprul pa<sup>1062</sup> yis ||  
sems can kun don bgrub pa'o ||  
'di ni sprul pa'i sku chen po || [152–155]
30. sems yid rnam shes gnas gyur pa'i ||  
sku gsum mdzad par<sup>1063</sup> bcas<sup>1064</sup> pa rnams ||  
chos dbyings spros bral dkyil 'khor du ||  
rdzogs pa 'khor 'das thog med kun ||

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<sup>1055</sup> rjer] DEFGHIJ rje ABC

<sup>1056</sup> chen dbyangs] ACDGHIJ, dbyangs chen B, dbyings EF, *conj.* chos kyi dbyings (see v. 30.3)

<sup>1057</sup> gzungs] ABDEFGHIJ, sgo C (*em.*, obviously a misprint)

<sup>1058</sup> rnams] ABCDGHIIJ, rnam EF

<sup>1059</sup> pa] ABCDGHIIJ, par EF

<sup>1060</sup> ni] CDEFGHIJ, ci A, na B

<sup>1061</sup> la] ACDEFGHIJ, 'byung B

<sup>1062</sup> pa] ABCDEFGIJ, ba H

<sup>1063</sup> par] ABDEFGHIJ, pa C

<sup>1064</sup> bcas] ABCDEFHIIJ, btsas G

- gcig dang tha dad bral ba ru ||  
 bzhugs pa ngo bo nyid skur bzhed || [156–161]
31. rgyal bas<sup>1065</sup> gzhung gzhan kha cig tu || {A, p. 457}  
 'di la chos kyi sku zhes bstan ||  
 de tshe me long ye shes sku ||  
 gzhan ni gzugs sku gnyis zhes brjod || [162–165] {C, p. 434}
32. ye shes lnga dang sku bzhi yi ||  
 rang bzhin mngon gyur sangs rgyas te || [166–167]
33. sems yid rnam par shes pa yi<sup>1066</sup> ||  
 dri mar<sup>1067</sup> ldan gang kun gzhi yin ||  
 dri med rgyal ba'i<sup>1068</sup> snying por brjod || [168–170]
34. ma dag kun rtog 'joms byed pa ||  
 dag pa'i kun rtog las skyes pa'i ||  
 'phags pa'i shes rab dbang po<sup>1069</sup> ni ||  
 'dzin pa lam gyi bden par gsungs || [171–174] {C, p. 435}
35. don dam tshul 'di ma rtogs<sup>1070</sup> pas ||  
 rmongs rnams 'khor ba'i rgya mtshor 'khyams ||  
 theg chen gru 'di ma rtogs<sup>1071</sup> pas<sup>1072</sup> ||  
 gang gis pha rol phyin par 'gyur || [175–178]
36. kun gyis 'di don rtogs<sup>1073</sup> par shog || [179]

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<sup>1065</sup> bas] ABCEFHI, ba'i DGJ

<sup>1066</sup> pa yi] ACDEFGHIJ, pa'i B

<sup>1067</sup> mar] ACDEFGHIJ, ma B

<sup>1068</sup> rgyal ba'i] BCDEFGHIJ, sangs rgyas A

<sup>1069</sup> dbang po] ABDEFGHIJ, dpang po C

<sup>1070</sup> rtogs] ABCEFGHI, rtog DJ

<sup>1071</sup> rtogs] ACEFGI, gtogs B, rtog DHJ

<sup>1072</sup> rtogs pas] CDEFGHIJ, pa A, rtogs B

<sup>1073</sup> rtogs] ABCEFGHI, rtog DJ

rnam shes<sup>1074</sup> ye shes 'byed pa'i<sup>1075</sup> bstan bcos<sup>1076</sup> | phag lo zla ba bcu<sup>1077</sup> pa'i  
 tshes<sup>1078</sup> gcig la rang byung rdo rjes {C, p. 436} bde chen steng gi ri khrod du sbyar  
 ba'o<sup>1079</sup> || ||

The verse numbering corresponds to both the English and French translations (ROBERTS 2001 and TCHEUDREUN 2007) based on Thrangu Rinpoche's commentaries given at Oxford, 1989, and Namo Buddha, Nepal, 1990, respectively.<sup>1080</sup>

A few abbreviations have been applied in this section on the critical edition:

- em.* emendatio
- conj.* conjecture
- r.* recto
- v.* verso
- { } change of page

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<sup>1074</sup> shes] BCDEFGHIJ, shes dang A

<sup>1075</sup> 'byed pa'i] BCDEFGHIJ, brtag pa'i A

<sup>1076</sup> bcos] BCDEFGHIJ, bcos zhes bya ba A

<sup>1077</sup> chu] BDEFGHI, chu gnyis A, zla ba bcu (phag lo omitted) C

<sup>1078</sup> tshes] ABCDEFGIJ, tshe H

<sup>1079</sup> sbyar ba'o] BCDEFGHIJ, sbyar ba rdzogs so A

<sup>1080</sup> This verse numbering of the root text has been slightly emended in the two books, in comparison to the root text, in the first transcript published under the title of "The Treatise that differentiates Consciousness and Wisdom," Namo Buddha Seminar, 1989.

## 7. 4 Introduction to the Translation

The translation is based on the emended Tibetan text, which results from the critical edition presented above. Even though it strives to stay as close as possible to the Tibetan original, it must at the same time be fluent. Since the grammatical particles in the verse lines have often been omitted, the context as elucidated in the commentaries plays a vital role for a correct rendering. This holds especially true for the many citations from classical Indian sources. For this reason, these sources were discussed separately already in the second chapter.

Concerning the structure, the treatise basically consists of two parts, which separate the *rnam shes* and *ye shes* sections from each other. The subdivision of the verses also strictly follows the ones presented in the critical edition, based on the above-mentioned verse numbering. As was stated above, according to the colophon of Kong-sprul's commentary, "the Venerable Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself wrote an outline to the *rNam shes ye shes* which is not extant today." The underlying structure of the three characteristics (*mtshan nyid gsum: trilakṣaṇa*) or three natures (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*) was discussed in chapters 2 (2.2.2), 3 (3.2), and 5 (5.3).

The second chapter investigated in detail the key terms related to the principal treatise and the other extracts related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, as well as the Indian references from the *rNam shes ye shes* and its various commentaries. Only very specific terms that have not been discussed before appear in the following annotations to the translation. Furthermore, the annotations identify the direct or paraphrased quotations, clarify syntactic problems, and provide alternative interpretations wherever possible.

In order to render the often condensed meaning more easily understandable, glosses from the commentaries have been added. Among the available commentaries the author has relied especially on explanations from the interlinear commentary *rNam shes dang ye shes brtag pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos*, in short: *rNam ye brtag pa*, composed by the Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag. This master was often able to clarify in just a few words a context that otherwise would be difficult to understand. The second often applied commentary is the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* composed by the First Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, since he gave the most elaborate explanations on the root text by the Third Karmapa. Occasionally, the third important commentary *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel* composed by the Fifteenth Karmapa mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje clarifies the condensed meaning of the root verses.

## 7.5 Annotated Translation of the Tibetan Text

### The Treatise Distinguishing Perception from Gnosis<sup>1081</sup>

#### Part I

1. I pay homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.<sup>1082</sup>
2. Having thoroughly relied upon study and reflection,<sup>1083</sup>  
In order to apply [this] in the practice<sup>1084</sup> of meditation,<sup>1085</sup>  
While staying in retreat,<sup>1086</sup>  
I shall express this mode [of perception and gnosis] as it became apparent [at  
that time]. [1–4]
3. [There are those who] think that the three realms and all sentient beings<sup>1087</sup>  
Arose either from a self, or from something else,

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<sup>1081</sup> The Tibetan terms *rnam shes* (Skt. *viññāna*), and *ye shes* (Skt. *jñānā*) as the key terms of this thesis have been extensively discussed in chapter 3. This includes the reasons for the mostly applied choice of “perception” and “gnosis” respectively, even if these terms do not cover the whole variety of meanings implied by their Tibetan and Sanskrit equivalents. Whenever these terms do not completely fit in the following verses, this will be indicated by means of further terms or definitions.

<sup>1082</sup> Thrangu Rinpoche, when commenting on “paying homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas,” stated in ROBERTS 2000: 16, that “in paying homage to the bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas can be seen as the eight consciousnesses. Our eight consciousnesses, when transformed, are transformed into the eight principal bodhisattvas.” It has been shown in chapter 2.2 that several tantras, such as the *Vimalaprabhā*, teach this specific symbolism.

<sup>1083</sup> Note that Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag in his *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 446.2, introduced this verse as follows: “In terms of what brings about the accomplishment of liberation and omniscience, having thoroughly relied upon ethics and study and reflection...”

<sup>1084</sup> The term *tshul*, which has a variety of meanings, has been rendered here as “practice” in this case expressing what is meant more precisely than “way” or “mode” such as in the last line of this verse.

<sup>1085</sup> These two lines are a paraphrase of *Abhidharmakośa*, 6.5ab. Vasubandhu in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, fol. 7b, commented by inserting “ethics” before “study:” *vyttasthaḥ śrutacintāvānbhāvanāyām prayujyate* || *tshul gnas thos dang bsam gtan nas* || *bsgom pa la ni rab tu sbyor* ||. Instead lines 1–2 read: | *thos dang bsam la rab brten nas* || *bsgom pa'i tshul la sbyor ba'i phyir* ||. In following this source, Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in his *rNam ye 'byed 'grel* elaborated on the importance of ethics as a foundation of study and other qualities. He also quoted from *Suḥrillekha*, 7.cd in order to substantiate his claim. dKon-mchog-yan-lag at the end of his interlinear commentary *De gshegs snying po gtan la dbab pa*, p. 473.4–5 referred to study, reflection and meditation as three types of higher knowledge or discerning insight (*shes rab: prajñā*).

<sup>1086</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 54.4, described the conditions of a place perfectly suited for retreat in the same words as Rang-byung-rdo-rje in *Phyag chen khrid yig*: “at an isolated place which is a delightful site (*dben zhing nyams dga' ba'i gnas su*).”

<sup>1087</sup> Another possible interpretation of this first line refers to all sentient beings of the three realms as the subject of the sentence, as those who think that there exists arising from a self and so on. But logically not all of them are inclined to philosophical or religious views.

From both or without a cause.<sup>1088</sup>

They assert that a creator,

Such as *Jha*,<sup>1089</sup> or *Īśvara*, or *Brahmā*, or *Viṣṇu*,<sup>1090</sup>

External particles, a truly existent hidden substance<sup>1091</sup>

Produce the self<sup>1092</sup> and the world. [5–11]

#### 4. The Unique Omniscient One<sup>1093</sup>

From his [perfect] knowledge taught<sup>1094</sup> to sentient beings that

These three realms are merely<sup>1095</sup> mind.<sup>1096</sup>

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<sup>1088</sup> Lines 5–7 refer to a famous quotation from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 1.1.ab, and other sources such as the *Prasannapadā*, 18.6, in LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1903–13, pp. 13, 36 and 38–39. It has been translated into many languages, cf. SEYFORTH RUEGG 1977: 58, fn. 4, and GARFIELD 2001: 509. This topic has been designated “Nāgārjuna’s primary tenet” in BROWN 1991: 83, fn. 18; for further details, such as the Sanskrit lines, refer to Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>1089</sup> Brandon Dotson explained this term in DOTSON 2008 as follows: “While phywa is similar to g.yang as “fortune”, the phywa are also the ancestral gods from which the Tibetan kings descended. In the songs of the Old Tibetan Chronicle, it is clear that the role of the king is to instantiate on earth the ways of the phywa in heaven.” (<http://earlytibet.com/2008/08/21/buddhism-and-empire-iii-the-dharma-king/>), accessed 28 January 2013.

<sup>1090</sup> Lines 8–11 in more or less identical form can be found also in *sNying po bstan pa*, A, p. 286, lines 104–106, and in *Phyag chen khrid yig*, fol. 4b.4. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 446.3, provided the names of the corresponding non-Buddhist philosophical schools, such as the Grangs-can-pa or Sāṃkhya, the rGyang-’phen-pa or Carvākas, and so on.

<sup>1091</sup> This listing of the non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical views, prevalent for many centuries in India and the surrounding countries, is extremely condensed here. Rang-byung-rdo-rje himself offered a more detailed discussion on the various philosophical tenets in his commentary on the *Hevajratāntra*, entitled *dGyes par do rje’i rnam bshad*, pp. 297.2–300.3, in *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 8, pp. 275–489. Blo-gros-mtha’-yas, when commenting on these two lines in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, fols. 7a.3–8b.5, also went very much into detail. dKon-mchog-yan-lag, in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 447.1, explained the two Buddhist viewpoints as follows: “Some *Śrāvakas* maintain [external] particles as [being] true on the ultimate level, and that these produce the coarse [phenomena]; furthermore if a hidden self-characterized outer object induces an aspect (or image) in the perception, a truly existent hidden substance ... (*nyan thos kha cig ’dod ste shes pa la rnam pa gtod byed don rang mtshan pa’i phag na || phag na mo yi rdzas bden pa kog pas*)”. The term *phag na mo* in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, fol. 8b.3–4, is regarded as a synonym of *lkog na mo*: a truly existent secret or hidden substance (*phag gam lkog na mo yi rdzad su bden par yod pas*); see JÄSCHKE 1881: 339. Explanations on the origin and contents of this school appear in HALLISEY 2007: 675–677.

<sup>1092</sup> From among the two meanings of this term, clearly the personal self is meant here, not the metaphysical self (*ātman*) as referred to at the beginning of this verse.

<sup>1093</sup> This designation is an epithet of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni.

<sup>1094</sup> In *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.1, dKon-mchog-yan-lag explained the context of the following teaching: “the methods of realizing (*rtogs pa’i thabs*).”

<sup>1095</sup> This general ontological statement is very condensed here. Therefore, dKon-mchog-yan-lag (p. 447.2) adds the soteriological perspective for clarification: These three realms (the desire realm, the form and formless realms) “are merely the conceptuality of the mind (*sems kyi rnam rtog tsam ste*).”

<sup>1096</sup> While the previous verse discusses the possible variations of mistaken views of various non-Buddhist and Buddhist schools of thought, verse 4 provides an outline of correct provisional and ultimate Buddhist teachings. In this context line 14 presents a famous quotation from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, the *Triṃśikākārikā*, the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, and other sources (see also chapter 2,

They neither [arise] from a self, nor from anything else,  
 Not from both, nor without a cause.<sup>1097</sup>  
 All phenomena arise through dependent origination,<sup>1098</sup>  
 And<sup>1099</sup> this [dependent origination] itself is empty of (lit. by) its own nature.<sup>1100</sup>  
 They<sup>1101</sup> are free from being either identical or different,<sup>1102</sup>  
 Utterly devoid of deception and truth.<sup>1103</sup>

2.2, under “The Indian References in the *rNam shes ye shes* and Commentaries”). It shows clearly that Rang-byung-rdo-rje considers the Mind Only viewpoint (*sems tsam pa*) as being taught by the historical Buddha and not as a doxographical system developed at a later time. The whole verse teaches the realization of the Mind-only (*cittamātra*) doctrine as a step on the way towards the goal of the Middle Path (*madhyamā pratipat*) beyond extremes following the presentation of the *Madhyamākalamkāra*: 92–93 by Śāntarakṣita and others.

<sup>1097</sup> The repetition of this quotation, which Rang-byung-rdo-rje later even repeated a second time, verse 10, lines 56–59, indicates that he firmly based his exposition on the Madhyamaka exposition of Nāgārjuna and in this way also on the Rang stong view, even if the whole structure of the composition and several other elements at the same time clearly emphasize the gZhan stong approach (q.v. the section in the fourth chapter related to the balanced philosophical viewpoint of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, 4.6).

<sup>1098</sup> Concerning the exact determination of which aspect of dependent origination is meant here, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 447.3, glossed “in terms of actions and their results (*las dang 'bras bu*).”

<sup>1099</sup> Here again, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 447.3, went more into detail: “perceiving something nonexistent as existent, the dualistic perception of ... (*med pa la yod par bzung ba de nyid kyi gzung 'dzin '2' ka...*).”

<sup>1100</sup> Lines 15–18 are paraphrased quotations from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 1.1.ab and 24. 18–19. Kong-sprul, when commenting on these citations, offered a rather detailed line of logical arguments leading to these assertions including the argument of dependent origination in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fols. 9a.6–10a.4.

<sup>1101</sup> Referring back to “all phenomena.” dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 447.3, connected the two aspects mentioned before to the relative and absolute level: “The dualistic appearance on the relative level and the emptiness of the nature of that on the absolute level (*kun rdzob gnyis snang dang de'i rang bzhin stong pa don dam gnyis ni...*)” The philosophical impact here is that phenomena, while clearly appearing, do not have the slightest independent or true existence; thus appearance and emptiness are said to be inseparable (expressed on the following page in condensed form, p. 448.1: *snang stong zung 'jug*).

<sup>1102</sup> This philosophical analysis alluded to the Madhyamaka reasoning as e.g. presented in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, 50, 122, and to “the five great Mādhyamaka reasonings” (*dbu ma'i gtan tshigs chen po lnga*) at the beginning (chapter 1) of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (see chapter 2, 2.2.1, of this thesis). dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 447.4, continued to analyze the “two truths” on the basis of the discussion on the questions of Suviśuddhamati in the third chapter of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, pp. 35–49: *gcig yin na kun rdzob mthong bas don dam mthong ba dang tha dad na don dam kun rdzob kyi chos nyid min par 'gyur ba sogs skyon bzhi bzhi dgongs 'grel las gsungs*, rendered as: “If they were identical, by realizing the relative truth [also] the ultimate truth would be realized; and if they were different, the ultimate truth would not be the actual nature (*dharmatā*, *chos nyid*) of the relative truth and so on; the four faults of each have been taught in the *dGongs 'grel* (*Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, D 107, chapter 3, fols. 10a–14b).” English translation in POWERS 1995: 35–49. The *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, B, fol. 10a.4–10b.5 provides an even more elaborate presentation of this topic including the above-mentioned quotation from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*.

<sup>1103</sup> The Tibetan term *spangs* can be rendered also as “free from, left behind, given up, transcend.” This line 20 provides evidence for the choice of the general title of this thesis as “Transcending Delusion“, since according to this line assigned to the Buddha the true nature of phenomena is beyond the two extremes of either deception or truth, which condition each other, it transcends all conceptual delusion. Lines 17, 20 and 21 are a paraphrased, almost verbatim quotation from *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, 45.abc (Tib. *Rigs pa drug cu pa*;

And they are like a magical illusion or like the moon [’s reflection] in water,<sup>1104</sup>  
and so on.<sup>1105</sup> [12–21]

5. If one asks in accordance with that,

“From where does the root of delusion and nondelusion arise?”

I will clearly describe here [my] realization<sup>1106</sup>

Through teaching the principle (*tshul*)<sup>1107</sup> of dependent origination,<sup>1108</sup>

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Engl. *Sixty Verses of Arguments*) ascribed to Nāgārjuna (for the exact citation, refer to chapter 2, 2.2.1). The Tibetan version and an English translation appear in LINDTNER 1987: 114–115.

<sup>1104</sup> The last two lines (20, 21) are a paraphrase of the examples given in *Hevajratāntra*, 2.3. 36b–d. Kurtis Schaeffer in SCHAEFFER 1995: 97, note 26, referred to the original lines (in English) from the *Hevajratāntra*, Part 1, p. 98. Later, pp. 114–115, for the similar lines 50–51 of *sNying po bstan pa* he applied the form *brdzun*. The *sNying po bstan pa* paraphrase (again nearly identical to *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, 45.abc) runs as follows:

*thams cad bden min brdzun min ste ||*  
*chu zla bzhin du mkhas rnam ’dod ||*

The full Tibetan and Sanskrit verses from the *Hevajratāntra* in SNELLGROVE 1959, Part 2, pp. 56–57, read:

*rang bzhin gdod nas ma skyes pa ||*  
*brdzun min bden min de bzhin du ||*  
*thams cad chu yi zla ba ltar ||*  
*’dod pas rnal ’byor mas shes kyis ||*  
  
*svabhāvam ādyanutpannam na satyaṃ na mṛṣā tathā |*  
*udakacandropamam sarvaṃ yoginyo jānacchayā ||* (36)

Thus, Rang-byung-rdo-rje based the presentation of these examples on both sūtra and tantra sources.

<sup>1105</sup> This and corresponding examples have been extensively applied in Tibetan Buddhist philosophical literature and go back to Indian origins, e.g. the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, chapter 1, see VAIDYA 1963: 9:

*| tadyathā darpaṇāntargatam svabimbapratibimbam jale vā svāṅgacchāyā vā jyotsnādīpapradīpite*  
*vā grhe vā āṅgacchāyā pratiśrutkāni |*

The Tibetan lines in D 107, vol. 49, fol. 44a.4–5 (p. 126) read:

*’di lta ste me long gi nang na yod pa’i bdag gi gzugs kyi gzugs brnyan dang | chu la bdag gi lus kyi*  
*grib ma dang | zla ba’i ’od dang | khyim na me mar ’bar ba la bdag gi lus kyi grib ma dang | brag*  
*ca’am | gzhan yang bdag gi rnam par rtog pa’i gzung ba rab tu bzung ste |*

For the English translation, see SUZUKI 1978: 20: “The world as seen by discrimination is like seeing one’s own image reflected in a mirror, or one’s shadow, or the moon reflected in water, or an echo heard in a valley.”

<sup>1106</sup> Three of the text witnesses (EFI) have *rtog* (understanding) instead of *rtogs* (realization), but *rtogs* seems to be preferable here, since Rang-byung-rdo-rje at the beginning stated that he stayed in retreat and that the distinction between perception and gnosis became apparent at that time. This is clearly a realization. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.2, further explained that “this realization of the nature [of phenomena knows] that in terms of all three realms there does not [truly] exist any other appearance to the outside except for the mind (*kham gsum pa thams cad sems las ma rtogs phyi rol na ’don par med par bdag gi rtogs pa*).”

<sup>1107</sup> Except for the Rum-btegs blockprint E reading *ches*, which is clearly a misprint for *chos*, one other version (F) also reads *chos* instead of *tshul*. According to this reading “principle” should be replaced by “phenomena.”

<sup>1108</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje in this verse provided an outline for the whole following presentation of the various functions of the eightfold group of perceptions by strictly setting it in the context of dependent origination. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.2, further elucidated how Rang-byung-rdo-rje taught this

In the same way as one [knows about] one's own form  
From a mirror,<sup>1109</sup> or fire from smoke.<sup>1110</sup> [22–27]

6. The perceptions of the five [sense] doors adopt or reject<sup>1111</sup>

Sights, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations<sup>1112</sup>

Thereby giving rise to disturbing feelings.<sup>1113</sup>

“What are these objects [of perception]?”<sup>1114</sup>

If those possessing higher knowledge analyze carefully,

[They find out that] there is nothing established on the outside, like particles, etc.

Which would be different from the cognizing awareness (*rnam rig shes pa*).<sup>1115</sup>

[28–34]

7. If at any time the substance of [cognized] objects<sup>1116</sup>

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principle: “by means of insight into the teachings of the Victor and the treatises of the Noble Ones (*bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' dang 'phags pa rnams kyi bstan bcos mthong bas*).”

<sup>1109</sup> The picture of a form in a mirror is another famous example provided in the above quotation from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. It has been analyzed in detail in WAYMAN 1974A.

<sup>1110</sup> The meaning of these two examples is that the Karmapa communicated his realization by means of inferential perception or correct logic.

<sup>1111</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag expanded this condensed verse line in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.3 as follows: ... by letting adopt what is desired or reject what is not desired and in between develop the ignorance of not understanding with respect to the objects of sights and so on ... (*'dod pa blang mi 'dod pa dor byas pas bar ma ma gtogs pa'i gti mug sogs...*). Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 12a.4–6, here closely followed the Fifth Zhwa-dmar-pa's commentary, to the extent of even slightly changing the reading of the root text: *'dod cing blang pas* (instead of *blang dor byas pas*), which seems to follow from the elaborateness of his explanations.

<sup>1112</sup> Lines 28–37 contain a variety of terms describing the mental functions in the state of an ordinary person. The author has attempted to translate these terms as precisely and consistently as possible. For example, he has rendered “*rnam rig shes pa*” in line 34 as “cognizing awareness,” “*shes*” (mostly to be distinguished from “*shes pa*” which would be either “knowledge” or “cognitive entity,” or a short form of “*rnam par shes pa*”), in this case rendered as “perception” or “consciousness,” as “cognizing” and “*rig*” as “awareness.” As stated at the beginning, a detailed discussion of the reasons for choosing the terminology of the principal topic appears in chapter 3 (3.2).

<sup>1113</sup> The Tibetan term *nyon mongs* (Skt. *kleśa*), which originally means “misery, trouble” or “pain” (see JÄSCHKE 1881: 191) in this context has to be regarded as a mental factor (*sems byung*, see the definition in *BGT*: 970) mostly translated as “conflicting emotions” or “disturbing feelings.”

<sup>1114</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag specified this in terms of the experiencing sentient beings in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.3: “when wandering in the cycle of existence (*ste 'khor bar 'khyams*).”

<sup>1115</sup> The last three lines of this verse (32–34) consist of a paraphrased quotation from several Yogācāra works, such as e.g. the *Bodhicittabhāvanā*, 5.62, the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, 6.ac, etc. dKon-mchog-yan-lag added in the form of a repetition of line 14 in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.5: “and it is only one's own mind (*cing rang gi sems tsam mo*).” This formulation clearly alludes to the Cittamātra (*sems tsam pa*, Mind-Only) doctrine, in this case as a step on the way to a higher viewpoint.

<sup>1116</sup> In terms the substance of objects dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 448.5, clarified: “would truly exist with a content different from cognition, at that time the nature of the perception and the object, these two... (*shes las gzhan du don bden par yod na de'i tshe shes pa dang yul gnyis...*).”

Were different from cognition (*shes*),<sup>1117</sup>

These [two] would not be of the same nature.<sup>1118</sup>

From awareness (*rig*) which is indemonstrable and unobstructed

A material substance does not arise.<sup>1119</sup>

Therefore, a connection where that [latter] arises [from the former] does not exist.<sup>1120</sup>

If one asserts that, it is illogical that objects appear [to the perception]<sup>1121</sup>

Which are different] from cognition (*shes*), because there is no connection.<sup>1122</sup>

[35–41]

8. Therefore, these manifold appearances,<sup>1123</sup>

Do not exist as objects different from perception.

They arise [from] that as the experience of self-awareness.

Appearances from the partless particles to the most extensive phenomena are mind.

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<sup>1117</sup> Here the translation could be “... from the cognitive entity,” or “from the cognizing subject,” because it is an ontological reasoning. mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje glossed in *rNam shes ye shes mchan ’grel*, p. 420.5: “... different from the inner eye-cognition and so on (*nang mig shes la sogs pa*)...”. In between this line and the following we could insert: “it would follow that ...”

<sup>1118</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag as some kind of general introduction in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 448.5, provided the only possible alternative from the Buddhist point of view (see the next footnote), which in the following three lines is explained very precisely by Rang-byung-rdo-rje: “...and they would also not exist as originating in dependence upon each other (*zhing de ’byung ’brel yang min te*).”

<sup>1119</sup> See WANGCHUK 2009: 229–230, quoted from Rong-zom-pa’s *Rang byung ye shes*, pp. 120.16–123.21: “...the power of self-cognition is explained as the ability of the mind to cognise itself; that is, mind, being always self-cognitive, is not an inanimate entity (*bem po*) and offers no physical resistance (*rdos can*). If the mind were not self-cognitive or devoid of any cognitive characteristics (*shes rig gyi mtshan nyid dang bral ba zhig*), nothing would appear.”

<sup>1120</sup> Dharmakīrti has presented the two kinds of connection of cause and effect or production-from-that (*tadutpatti*) and of identity (*tādātmya*) in *Pramāṇavārttika*, 1.2 (see the discussion in DUNN 2004: 152) and later also Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251) in *Tshad ma rig gter*, chapter 6, “A Precise Analysis which Examines Connections” (*’brel pa brtag pa’i rab tu byed pa*), book ed., pp. 128–169.

<sup>1121</sup> See WANGCHUK 2009: 227: “A direct ontic-epistemic correspondence between appearance and perception is presupposed by most Tibetan scholars, since only that which is ontologically possible is epistemically cognisable; and only that which appears is perceived or perceptible.”

<sup>1122</sup> mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje provided the complete reasoning in *rNam shes ye shes mchan ’grel*, p. 421.2–3, showing the consequence of the mistaken assertion of truly existent substantial objects: “Furthermore, in order to appear as such [outer objects] it is necessary (lit. it pervades) that they are either of the same nature of that [perception] or that they originate from that. If they are not connected [in either way], they necessarily also do not appear, such as entities which are not seen (*de yang snang ba la de’i bdag nyid dam | de las byung ba yin pas khyab | ma ’brel na mi snang pas khyab ste | ma mthong ba’i dngos po bzhin no*).”

<sup>1123</sup> The literal translation would be: “these appearances, however they [manifest] (*ci ltar snang ba ’di*)...” dKon-mchog-yan-lag here in the shortest possible form summarized the previous reasoning in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.1: “being established through awareness (*rig pas grub pa*).”

This means to realize that since nothing is established to exist externally as different [from mind],

Creators like *Brahmā*, etc., do not exist.<sup>1124</sup> [42–48]

9. Furthermore, the connection between the mental cognition and<sup>1125</sup> phenomena  
Corresponds to the experience in a dream.

This is just attachment to what is focused on in terms of that [mental cognition]<sup>1126</sup> itself,

But substantial entities do not truly exist.<sup>1127</sup> [49–52]

10. In this way,<sup>1128</sup> since these perceptions of the sixfold group,

The appearance of objects and of sentient beings,<sup>1129</sup>

The self-clinging, and the cognitive awareness,

Whatever aspects of appearance arise,<sup>1130</sup>

Are not created by anything else,

They are [also] not made by a self,

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<sup>1124</sup> According to the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 13b.6–14a.6, lines 47–48 allude to a teaching given by the Bodhisattva *Mañjuśrī* to Padmavīkrīdita, the son of the gods that outer objects appear because of the power of the habitual tendencies of the conceptual mind and that, for this reason, creators like *Brahmā*, etc., do not exist. Since this quotation does not appear in any of the canonical editions of this *sūtra*, the source seems to be a *sūtra* different from the *Mañjuśrīvikrīditaśūtra* mentioned in Kong-sprul's commentary (for more details, see the section on the citations in the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in chapter 2, 2.2.1).

<sup>1125</sup> See *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.3. dKon-mchog-yan-lag defined the relationship more precisely: “its objects (*di'i yul*).”

<sup>1126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 449.3. The supplementation here follows dKon-mchog-yan-lag, who clarified the line by inserting the soteriological perspective: “mental cognition (*vid*).”

<sup>1127</sup> The whole verse no. 9 presents an almost literal quotation from *Vimśatikā*, 16ab–17a. For a French rendering, refer to LÉVI 1932: 55–56; for English translations, see ANACKER 1984: 170–171; KOCHUMUTTOM 1982: 182–185.

<sup>1128</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag commented on the beginning of this verse by alluding to the *Madhyantavibhāga*, I.3ab, as the source (of lines 53–56) in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.3: “In terms of the mind, which is established as unborn, in this way the cognition, depending on the objects of these perceptions of the sixfold group, [manifests as] outer appearances (*sems skye med du sgrub pa ni de ltar shes pa shes bya la ltos pas tshogs drug shes pa 'di la snang ba'i phyi rol*).”

<sup>1129</sup> In order to introduce his teachings given in the next annotation and in the following verse, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.* p. 449.4, inserted into this line: “the appearance of objects gathered by the five sense faculties and of sentient beings as the others and oneself (*don dang dbang po lnga la bsdu pa sems can bdag gzhan snang ba dang*).”

<sup>1130</sup> As was shown before, these four lines 53–56 allude to a classical Indian source: *Madhyantavibhāga*, I.3ab, translated in STANLEY 1988: 18; ANACKER 1984: 212; DHARMACHAKRA TR. COMMITTEE 2006: 28. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.4, explained in the same words as Rang-byung-rdo-rje in the next verse – thus providing a hint to the importance of this statement: “these are only mind (*'di sems tsam mo*).” At a first glance this looks like a teaching of the Mind-Only school (*Sems tsam pa*, *Cittamātra* or *Vijñaptimātra*). In fact, it has to be understood in the context of a progressive realization. The relevant references will be provided in note 1134 below.

Nor produced from both, nor from neither.<sup>1131</sup> [53–59]

11. Therefore, as the Victor has taught,

The whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is only mind.<sup>1132</sup> [60–61]

12. [Buddha] taught that the dependent origination of the causes and conditions<sup>1133</sup>

Of this [saṃsāra] is the sixfold group [of perceptions], cognition (*vid*) and the fundamental mind (lit. all-base).<sup>1134</sup> [62–63]

13. The perceptions of the sixfold group...

Depend on their object conditions.

These again are all six objects of form, and so forth...<sup>1135</sup> [64–66]

14. [As well as] the predominant conditions.

These are all six sense faculties,

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<sup>1131</sup> As mentioned above, these famous lines 56–59 quoted from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 1.1 and other sources are repeated here (cf. verse 3, lines 5–7, fn. 1090, and verse 4, lines 14–15, fn. 1099). In order not to leave the slightest doubt as to whether or not the other extreme of nihilism could be meant here, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.5, completed this statement: “and also not without a cause (*sgyu med kyang min*).”

<sup>1132</sup> This quotation on top of the one in verse 4, line 14, also incorporates the state of nirvāṇa. mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 423.3, added the reason for this statement: “because appearances and mind are inseparable (*snang sems dbyer med pa'i phyir ro*).” Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 16a.2–16a.4, book ed., pp. 85–86, when commenting on this quotation, set it into the Mādhyamaka context and provided a concise overview of the development towards a realization of the empty nature of phenomena. In accordance with *Madhyāntavibhāga*, I.6–7.12, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 6, verse 8, Skt. in LÉVI 1907: 24, Rang-byung-rdo-rje's teaching on emptiness in verse 4 and in his *Phyag chen smon lam*, verse 9, he explained: “In terms of the progressive realization of that very meaning at the stage of the path, again at first, depending on focusing just on the awareness aspect one realizes, that outer objects do not exist as different from mind. From that nonperception of objects arises. Depending on not perceiving objects, because if something perceived does not exist, a perceiver does not exist, also nonperception of a perceiver, the awareness aspect, arises. The Tibetan reads: | *don de nyid lam gyi gnas skabs su rtogs pa'i rim pa 'ang dang por rnam par rig pa tsam du dmigs pa la brten nas sems las gzhan du gyur pa'i phyi rol gyi don med par rtogs nas* | *don mi dmigs pa skye'o* | *gzung ba med na 'dzin pa med pas* | *don mi dmigs pa la brten nas rnam par rig pa tsam du 'dzin pa yang mi dmigs pa skye ste*.” In the Rum-btegs edition of the *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 16a, between line 4 and 5, the following two lines from the *Madhyāntavibhāga*'s (*dBus mtha*) quotation are missing: *mi dmigs pa ni rab tu skye || de yi phyir na dmigs pa ni ||*. Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided the same (complete) quotation from the *Madhyāntavibhāga* in his *Phyag chen khrid yig*, E, fol. 3b.5–6, p. 58.

<sup>1133</sup> The following section (verses 12–21) provides a presentation of the fourfold conditions. Chapter 2 of this thesis offers a summary of the Indian sources related to this topic, including selected secondary sources.

<sup>1134</sup> In terms of this summarized presentation of the eightfold group, especially the eighth aspect, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 449.6, went into detail: “[which consists of] the causal all-base and again the resultant all-base having collected the habitual tendencies of the sevenfold group (*kun gzhi rgyu yang bdun po'i bag chags bsags pas 'bras bu kun gzhi*).”

<sup>1135</sup> Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 18ab, in this context also listed the various subdivisions of the sense objects as outlined in *Abhidharmakośa* 1.10–11.

Which again possess form and are clear.<sup>1136</sup> [67–68]

15. Both [objects and sense faculties] arise from the mind.

Whatever clearly appears as objects and faculties

Is based on the beginningless element.<sup>1137</sup> [69–71]

16. Even if these are the [sense] perceptions which cognize (lit. see) the objects,

The mental factors construct<sup>1138</sup> their particulars.<sup>1139</sup>

These are based on cognition (*yid*),<sup>1140</sup>

<sup>1136</sup> Since the verse lines again offer an abbreviated explanation, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 450.1–2, provided the reason for this characterization of possessing form: “Because they arise from the cause of the four elements (*’byung ba bzhi’i rgyu las byung bas*)” and of being clear: “because of being connected to the perceptions (*rnam par shes pa dang ’brel bas*).”

<sup>1137</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje quoted these last two lines 70–71 in summarized form from *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, 7.c–8. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 450.2, elaborated on this last line: “which is attached to dualistic perception (lit. perceived and perceiver); and it has been placed into the all-basis and activated from that (*gzung ’dzin du zhen pa’i khams las kun gzhi la bzhas pa de sad pa ni*).”

<sup>1138</sup> Both *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 450.3, and *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, fol. 19b.4, here read *’du shes* which would mean “discriminate,” and the authors comment accordingly, while mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan ’grel*, p. 424.6, had *mngon par ’du byed pa* (actually or clearly construct), and all later editions (D–J) have *’du byed*, to produce, to construct, or formation. Even if both interpretations are possible (see the analysis of this quotation in chapter 2, 2.2.1), the translation here follows all later versions, since “discrimination” is only one of the mental factors and “construct” or “produce” relates to all mental factors and thus seems to be a stronger statement. The original line just says: “Their particulars arise from the mind.” Vasubandhu’s *Bhāṣya* explains: “Perception merely sees an object, and mental formation, events or states, such as sensation etc., see its distinct characteristics (*don tsam mthong ba ni rnam par shes pa’o || don gyi khyad par mthong ba ni sems las byung ba rnam tshor ba la sogs pa’o ||*).” The understanding of *’du byed* for this line is also supported by a corresponding section in *Zab mo nang don*, p. 311.1–2, in *Rang byung rdo rje gsung ’bum*, volume 7, which runs as follows:

*de nyid rang gis rang ma rig ||*  
*’du byed yid kyis g.yo ba ni ||*  
*chu rlabs lta bur g.yos pa las ||*  
*don dang ’dzin pa gnyis snang bas ||* – rendered as:

That very [mind] which is ignorant with respect to itself  
Is moved by mental formation.  
From this movement which resembles waves on water  
There appears the duality of objects and perceiver.

<sup>1139</sup> The passage in *Madhyāntavibhāga*, 1.8.c–d, corresponds to the lines 72–73. It does not decide about the afore-mentioned two readings. The Sanskrit line in NAGAO 1964: 6 reads: *tatrārthadrṣṭir vijñānam tadviśeṣe tu caitasāh ||* The latter two lines of the Tibetan verse run: “With respect to that, the perceptions cognize (lit. see) the objects; their particularities [are produced by] the mental factors (lit. arise from the mind) (*de la don mthong rnam par shes || de yi khyad par sems las byung ||*).” For a more detailed discussion of this quotation, refer to chapter 2, 2.2.1.

<sup>1140</sup> When understood as the sixth aspect of perception, especially the outside-oriented facet, *yid* means “mental perception.” *Yid* as the seventh aspect and the inside-oriented facet of the sixth, connects the sense perception to the fundamental mind. In this case “cognition” fits better. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of this function under the headline “The Specific Interpretation of the *vijñāna–jñāna* Distinction by the Third Karma-pa” (5.4).

The immediate and the defiled mind, these two.<sup>1141</sup> [72–75]

17. [The first of those] is “immediate,” because it is the condition  
For the arising and ceasing of the sixfold group [of perceptions].<sup>1142</sup>  
Being of the same number as the arising and ceasing moments  
Of the sixfold group [of perceptions], it occurs in connection with those.  
This is understood through the mind in meditation<sup>1143</sup>  
And the Victor’s Teachings. [76–81]

18. The [second] part of this [cognition] in terms of the mind as such  
Perceives the mind as an “ego,” the pride [of an “ego”],  
And has attachment to the “ego” together with ignorance [to see the “ego” as  
real].  
Because it produces all [20 views of the] transitory collections<sup>1144</sup>  
It is called “the defiled mind.”<sup>1145</sup> [82–86]

19. When the sixfold [group] ceases,  
The immediate mind is the location for the arising of the perceptions.  
The defiled mind becomes the location for [developing] disturbing feelings.

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<sup>1141</sup> Even though the last two lines are connected, the last line (75) can also be understood as an introduction into the following topic, see Blo-gros-mtha’-yas in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, fol. 20a.5–6, who by means of the last line (75) starts a new topic, at first introducing just the names: *gnyis pa de ma thag rkyen nyon yid dang bcas bshad pa la gnyis | ming gis mdor bstan ||* – rendered as: “In terms of the second: ‘The Explanation of the Immediate Condition Together with the Defiled Mind’ there are two [parts]: 1. Short explanation through the name, ...” The verse numbering (based on Thrangu Rinpoche’s commentaries) which has been applied also in the critical edition, clearly connects line 75 to the previous verse. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 450.4, showed the connection of these two (the immediate mind and the defiled mind) to their basis: “...which abide on the all-basis (*kun gzhi la gnas pa’i*).”

<sup>1142</sup> The lines 75–77 are in accordance with the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.6.1. (D 4048, fols. 3b.5–4a.1; P 5549, vol. 112, p. 217, fol. 4a.4–7).

<sup>1143</sup> The literal translation of this expression is: “the mind being endowed with the connection to the natural state or to the real (*rnal ’byor ldan pa’i yid*).” In terms of the exact functions of meditation, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 450.6, defined what is meant here by “meditation”: “...of concentration and insight in union (*zhi lhag zung ’jug gi*).”

<sup>1144</sup> The term “view of the transitory collection [as possessing a self-entity]” (*jigs tshogs la lta ba, satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*) mainly denotes the ego-clinging on the basis of the aggregates.

<sup>1145</sup> Lit. “the mind possessing defilements.” This verse (lines 82–86) is the continuation of the previous quotation from the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.6.2. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 451.2, further expounded on the reason for this designation: “because all these states of mind of valid cognition produce the incorrect imputations (*tshad ma yin pa’i blo thams cad bskyed pas yang dag ma yin kun rtag go*).” An alternative rendering of this function would be “the afflicted mind.”

Since it possesses the capacity to produce and to defile,<sup>1146</sup>

This mind has two aspects. [87–91]

20. Especially to those<sup>1147</sup> endowed with intelligence (or wisdom)

[The Buddha] taught the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*).

This is also taught as the support, the ground,

Or the receiving consciousness.<sup>1148</sup>

It is called “that which is completely ripening,”

Because all actions produced by the sevenfold group [of perception]<sup>1149</sup>

Are gathered there<sup>1150</sup> unmixed and<sup>1151</sup> indeterminate,

Just like rain, river and ocean.<sup>1152</sup> [92–99]

21. Because it produces everything,

Being the ground (lit. all-base) for the arising of all seeds,

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<sup>1146</sup> Again following his previous quotation dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 451.4, pointed out the source for this statement in lines 87–91 as being the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.6.

<sup>1147</sup> Here, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 451.4, specified: “followers of the Greater Vehicle (*theg chen*).” The two lines 92–93 are more or less identical to *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.2, last line, while lines 94–95 refer to the line before. Asaṅga here cited the *Abhidharmasūtra* (*mNgon pa’i mdo*), now no longer extant, and also quoted by Blo-gros-mtha’-yas in *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, (B) fol. 23a.2–3. For a more detailed discussion of this source, see SCHMITHAUSEN 1987, vol. 1, pp. 11–12, and vol. 2, note 103. Line 92 could also refer to *Mahāyānasamgraha*, 1.4, last line, originating from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, V, 7 (see the discussion of the quotations in chapter 2). This line alludes to a possible misunderstanding of this function as a truly existing nature of phenomena or self, see *rNam ye ’byed ’grel*, fol. 23a.1.

<sup>1148</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 451.5, provided the reason for this designation: “because it is the cause of all faculties having form, and since it receives the seeds of the habitual tendencies and connects to the reincarnation into a body (*dbang po gzugs can thams cad kyi rgyu dang sa bon thams cad len pa dang lus nying mtshams sbyor ba sgrel bas*).”

<sup>1149</sup> Even though the “sevenfold group” includes the defiled mind, which cannot be designated as a perception, rather as a “cognition,” still the majority of these seven functions are perceptions. Therefore, *tshogs bdun* has been rendered here as “the sevenfold group of perception.”

<sup>1150</sup> In order to cover all instances of what is stored in the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*), dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 451.6, glossed: “and all the seeds of the perceptions individually (*dang shes pa’i sa bon kun so sor...*).”

<sup>1151</sup> To prevent misunderstanding, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 451.6, elucidated the ontological meaning of this description: “in essence (*ngo bo*),” meaning beyond discrimination into positive or negative.

<sup>1152</sup> In order to clarify this process, once more dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 452.1, provided a quotation from the lost *Abhidharmasūtra*: “From the “*mNgon pa’i mdo*”: “The perceptions arise from the [defiled] mind, the [defiled] mind arises from the all-base. In the all-base all phenomena entirely move like waves.” Thus it is said. (*mngon pa’i mdo las | rnam par shes pa yid las byung | yid ni kun gzhi las byung ste | kun gzhi las ni chos rnams kun | rba rlabs bzhin du rnam par g.yo | gsungs pa ltar*).” Here it is interesting that Rang-byung-rdo-rje in this verse explained this mental process from inside to outside through the ripening aspect and from outside to inside by means of the vivid example of rain, river and ocean. The Fifth Zhwa-dmar dKon-mchog-yan-lag in his commentary emphasized the movement from inside to outside and for this applied the example of the movement of waves.

It is described as “the causal condition.”<sup>1153</sup>

It is also to be known as “the conditional consciousness,”

Because it is counteracted,

When the sevenfold group is overcome.<sup>1154</sup> [100–104]

## Part II

22. This very fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*),<sup>1155</sup>

The nature of the external and the internal,

Is the root of all that is to be given up.<sup>1156</sup>

It has been taught as that which is to be overcome

By the *vajra*-like *samādhi*.<sup>1157</sup> [105–109]

23. When the ground (lit. all-base) together with the defilements is counteracted,<sup>1158</sup>

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<sup>1153</sup> Here dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 452.1, clarified: “for the sixfold group (*tshogs drug*).” Lines 100–102 are in accordance with the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, I.14.2. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 452, first explained “which is produced by the sevenfold group (*tshogs bdun gyis bskyed pa'i*)”, and for this designation provided a quotation from another verse (I.17): “From the *Mahāyānasamgraha*: In the same way as the all-base [consciousness] is the cause of those completely defiled [phenomena], those completely defiled [phenomena] are also said to be the cause of the all-base [consciousness] (*theg bsdu las | kun nyon rnams kyi rgyu kun gzhi yin pa ltar kun gzhi'i rgyu kun nyon rnams yin par gsungs*).” See P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 219, fol. 7a.3.

<sup>1154</sup> The teaching that the fundamental mind finally is overcome is given in accordance with *Mahāyānasamgraha*, I.48–49, P, 5549, vol. 112, p. 220, fol. 11b.6–7.

<sup>1155</sup> In order to prevent possible misconceptions, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 452.2, further elaborated on the function of the fundamental mind: it “is the one where the capacity of producing everything conditioned abides in an unmixed way (*chos 'dus byas thams cad bskyed pa'i nus pa ma 'dres par gnas pa ste*).”

<sup>1156</sup> mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 428.4, provided the reason for this statement: “because ignorance [which is] the underlying root of the [duality of] perceived and perceiver obscures the level of buddhahood (*gzungs 'dzin gyi gzhi rtso ma rig pas sangs rgyas kyi sar sgrib pas*).”

<sup>1157</sup> Blo-gros-mtha'-yas explained in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fols. 27b.6–28a.2, that any lower concentration state is not able to overcome the fundamental mind: “Needless to say the remedy for giving this up cannot be any worldly meditation. Even the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas by means of the ultimate wisdom realizing selflessness are incapable of giving it up (*'di spong byed kyi gnyen po'ang 'jig rten pa'i bsam gtan gyis lta ci smos | nyan rang bdag med rtogs pa'i shes rab mthar thug pas kyang spang mi nus te*).” For a precise explanation of the level of this realization, he continued: | *sa chu rgyun tha mar rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyis bcom par bya bar gsung pa yin no* | – rendered as: “It has been taught as that which is to be overcome by the *vajra*-like *samādhi* at the end of the continuity of the tenth [*bodhisattva*] level (Skt. *bhūmi*).” Also dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 452.4, glossed: “At the end of the continuity of the tenth [*bodhisattva*] level (*sa bcu rgyun mtha'i...*).”

<sup>1158</sup> Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in the next section of *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 28a.2–3, presented the reason why the *vajra*-like *samādhi* (Skt. *vajropamasamādhi*, also called “adamantine-like concentration,” see BUSWELL 2004: 202) has this capacity: “The *vajra*-like *samādhi* becomes a most subtle remedy to the defilements because of not being attached to whatsoever and unhindered wherever (*ci la'ang ma chags shing gang du'ang thogs pa med pas ... rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin ..*).”

At that time the mirror[-like] gnosis<sup>1159</sup>  
 [Lets] all kinds of gnosis appear without [any grasp] as “mine,”  
 Completely uninterruptedly and everlasting.<sup>1160</sup>  
 It realizes [all] objects of knowledge and is unbiased with respect to them.  
 Since it is the foundation for all kinds of gnosis,<sup>1161</sup>  
 It is called the “*dharmakāya*.”<sup>1162</sup> [110–116]

#### 24. After that defiled mind<sup>1163</sup>

Has been overcome completely by the heroic *samādhi*,<sup>1164</sup>

<sup>1159</sup> Additionally (*ibid.*, fol. 28a.5), in order to elucidate the word meaning of the term “mirror-like gnosis,” Kong-sprul quoted from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verse 69, Skt. in LÉVI 1907: 46, Tibetan: P 5521, fol. 13a.4: “...because the gnoses arise (like) a reflection (*ye shes gzugs brnyan 'byung phyir ro*).” Again, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 452.4, provided the exact level: “on the level of buddhahood (*sangs rgyas kyi sar*).”

<sup>1160</sup> In terms of this ultimate level of buddhahood, which is actually beyond expression, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 452.5, explained the reason for the statement made in this line: “Since perception is entrusted with reality and not knowing does not exist, something that [the perception] is not entrusted with,.. (*don gyi gtad pa rnam par shes pa ma gtad pa mi shes pa med pas...*).”

<sup>1161</sup> Lines 111–115 represent a quotation from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verses 68–69.1, For the Sanskrit quote, see p. 72, LÉVI 1907: 46. The fourfold scheme of gnosis has been taught in a general way in chapter 9, verses 66–74. For an English translation of these verses, refer to LIMAYE 1992: 138–142; for a French translation, see LÉVI 1911: 46–47. Additionally, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 453.1, provided a canonical source for this designation: “in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* (*gser 'od las*).”

<sup>1162</sup> As was shown in the third chapter (3.2), Orna Almogi provided a discussion of the four gnoses as presented by the eleventh-century Tibetan scholar Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po in ALMOGI 2009: 68–70, including further primary and secondary references for this topic. See also the presentation of the rNying-ma view on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in chapter 6. Even though here the relationship to the three *kāyas* of a buddha is part of the discussion, a previous section of Almogi’s thesis (pp. 61–67) also analyzed “The Theory of the Three *Kāyas*.” Altogether we find a strong correspondence between this presentation by Rong-zom-pa and the one provided by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 453.1, in the same way as above, expounded on the level of realization: “which is shown as being the *dharmakāya* after the fundamental mind (*ālayavijñāna*) has been given up (...*yin pa 'i kun gzhi 'i rnam par shes pa spangs pa chos skur ston to*).”

<sup>1163</sup> In terms of the seventh aspect of perception or cognition, the defiled mind, mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 429.2, explained the method by which this deluded function is overcome: “for which the antidote is the completely nonconceptual gnosis of the path of cultivation (*gnyen po sgom lam gyi rnam par mi rtog pa 'i ye shes*).”

<sup>1164</sup> A short definition of the “heroic-march concentration,” or “concentration of moving as a spiritual warrior” (*dpa' bor 'gro ba 'i ting nge 'dzin: sūramgamasamādhi*), as it is literally called, appears in BUSWELL 2004: 2133. The fourth chapter of this thesis (4.1.2) provides an explanation of the correspondence between the four concentration states explained in this gnosis part and the four levels of Mahāmudrā practice as presented in the eighth chapter of the *Ālikāliguhyācintyatantra*. Alexander Schiller produced a critical edition and translation of this section in SCHILLER 2014: 196–197, 757–758. Further explanations on these four *samādhis* appear in Saraha’s *Dohakośagīti*, verses 30–33. English translation and commentary in THRANGU 2006: 100–107.

And after the defilements have been given up completely [on the paths of] seeing and cultivation,<sup>1165</sup>

The defilements do not exist<sup>1166</sup> as well as [*samsāric*] existence and [*nirvāṇic*] peace do not exist.

That is described as the gnosis of equality.<sup>1167</sup> [117–121]

25.a The immediate mind<sup>1168</sup> is the apprehender,

Because it apprehends the sixfold group [of perceptions];

And it is conceptual because it creates concepts.

That is overcome through perfect higher knowledge

And the illusion-like *samādhi*.<sup>1169</sup> [122–126]

25.b Thus, at that time “great forbearance” is attained.<sup>1170</sup>

Due to the change of state of the perceiver together with its objects<sup>1171</sup>

Into manifestations of pure lands,<sup>1172</sup>

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<sup>1165</sup> In order to show the result of purification, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 453.2, commented on the path of cultivation: “because the simultaneously arisen (or inborn) [defilements], the subtle [aspect] which looks at the inside, has been given up on the path of cultivation (*bsgoms lam gyi kha nang ba lta ba 'i phra ba lhan skyes spangs pas*).”

<sup>1166</sup> The absence of defilements implies an extremely stable state of mind. Therefore, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.* p. 453, further explained: “because the completely nonconceptual concentration state (*samādhi*) does not fall into either [of the two] sides, existence and peace (*samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*) (*rnam par mi rtog pa 'i ting nge 'dzin ni 'khor 'das gang gi 'ang phyogs su ma lung pas*).”

<sup>1167</sup> The last two lines (120–121) are a paraphrase of *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verse 70; for an English translation, see chapter 2, p. 73, and LIMAYE 1992: 140. dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 453, added: “On the level of buddhahood (*sangs rgyas kyi sar*).”

<sup>1168</sup> As a kind of definition dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 453, summarized the function of the immediate mind in accordance with the presentation in verse 17: “The location producing the arising and ceasing of the sixfold group (*tshogs drug skye 'gag byed pa 'i gnas*).”

<sup>1169</sup> A precise definition of the illusion-like *samādhi* (*sgyu ma lta bu 'i ting nge 'dzin: māyopamasamādhi*) appears in BUSWELL 2004: 1326. The root verse is again very condensed here, therefore, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 453, glossed according to what Rang-byung-rdo-rje explained at the end of the following verse: “it (the immediate mind) changes into the discriminating gnosis. Inasmuch as it changes on the eighth [*bodhisattva* level (*bhūmi*)], ... (*so sor rtog pa 'i ye shes su 'gyur ji ltar 'gyur nas brgyad par*...).”

<sup>1170</sup> mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 430.1, explained what “great forbearance” here refers to: “with respect to all phenomena being unborn (*mi skye ba 'i chos la*).”

<sup>1171</sup> In terms of the control over manifestations dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 453, elucidated how this mastery is obtained: “just as it is wished for by manifesting various enjoyments (*ji ltar 'dod pa bzhin longs spyod rnams ston pas*).”

<sup>1172</sup> The Tibetan term *zhing dag pa* or *zhing kham dag pa* (appearing in the root text of *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*) denotes the powerfield or pure realm (*maṇḍala*) of a buddha. Nevertheless, already shortly before full realization of buddhahood the pure land starts to manifest. Accordingly, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 454, commented here: “And on the ninth [*bodhisattva* level] there is the power to engage free from the obstructions of attachment ... (*sa dgu par... chags thogs med par 'jug pa la dbang ba*).”

Gnosis at all times,<sup>1173</sup>

And completely unimpeded activities<sup>1174</sup>

The concepts<sup>1175</sup> completely change their state<sup>1176, 1177</sup>

Into discriminating gnosis.<sup>1178</sup> [127–133]

26. Thus, these two kinds of gnosis [of equality and discrimination]

By means of pure<sup>1179</sup> meditation do not abide

In [saṃsāric] existence and [nirvāṇic] peace.<sup>1180</sup>

Being endowed with peace, love and compassion,<sup>1181</sup>

[The bodhisattvas] perform the manifestation of various bodies and teachings to the retinues.<sup>1182</sup>

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<sup>1173</sup> The term “gnosis” (*ye shes: jñāna*) has been explored in detail in the second part of the third chapter under “The Terminology of the *viññāna-jñāna* Distinction.” The investigation in this section covers the most significant applications in the Sanskrit and Tibetan sources. Furthermore, David Higgins offered an extensive discussion on the various connotations of the term *ye shes* as understood from the *rDzog chen* perspective in HIGGINS 2012: 95–106. Besides quoting the two main definitions contained in *BGT*: 2593–2594, he also referred back to the discussion of this term including its Sanskrit origin *jñānā* in ALMOGI 2009: 160–162. The discourse on what Higgins called “the complex typologies of *ye shes*” as applied in the sNying-thig framework has partially been taken up in chapter 3 and further summarized within the presentation of the rNying-ma view in chapter 6.

<sup>1174</sup> In order to clarify the rather condensed meaning, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 454, elaborated: “on the tenth [*bodhisattva* level] there is the power to engage without obstructions into the level of completely unimpeded activities of instructing whomever (the disciples), (*sa bcu par gang 'dul gyi 'phrin las rnam kun la thogs med sar 'jug pa la dbang ba*).”

<sup>1175</sup> Here, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 454, explained the different kinds of powers obtained on this level: “[related to] such power over complete freedom from concepts and over [buddha] fields and gnosis and actions” (*rnam par mi rtog pa dang zhing dang ye shes dang las la dbang ba de ltar*).

<sup>1176</sup> Lines 128–132 are a paraphrase of *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 43–44, see chapter 2, p. 73.

<sup>1177</sup> In terms of the level of realization dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 454, further commented: “On the ultimate level of buddhahood [they change]... (*mthar thug sangs rgyas kyi sar*)...”

<sup>1178</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje presented more details on the third type of gnosis in *sNying po bstan pa*, A, fols. 287.6–288.1, edited and translated in SCHAEFFER 1995: 103. These lines refer back to the *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 43–44; for an English translation of these verses, see THURMAN 2004: 88–98.

<sup>1179</sup> In this context the term “pure” according to dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 454, is defined more precisely as: “nonconceptual (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i*).”

<sup>1180</sup> This balanced state is often called the “nonabiding nirvāṇa” (*mi gnas zhi ba*, see *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 70c, P, fol. 13a.4). dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 454, explained: “[It means] to abide in the state of great peace of the *bodhisattva* level; and the support of that is ... (*sa'i zhi ba chen po'i ngang du bzugs shing de'i grogs*)...”

<sup>1181</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 454, inserted: “functioning in the way that according to their respective inclinations ... (*rang rang gi mos pa ltar*).”

<sup>1182</sup> Concerning this line dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 454, again provided further details: “The essence of the discriminating gnosis realizes all objects of knowledge unmixed as many as there are and functions in the way of displaying the practice for the *maṇḍalas* of the retinue (*sor rtog gi ngo bo shes bya ji snyed ma 'dres par rtogs byed las 'khor gyi dkyil 'khor du 'byor pa ston pa*).”

The *maṇḍala* of the melody of the great *Dharma*<sup>1183</sup> arises,  
 Which is the treasury of all *samādhis* and *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>1184</sup>  
 This<sup>1185</sup> is designated as the *sambhogakāya*.<sup>1186</sup> [134–141]

27. In terms of the five doors and the one aspect of the mental cognition:

Arisen from pure concepts,<sup>1187</sup>  
 Endowed with the aspects of the function of the “four truths”<sup>1188</sup>  
 Through the sixteen aspects of knowledge, forbearance and so on,<sup>1189</sup>  
 Their [actual] meaning is seen and realized as [ultimate] truth.  
 In this way....<sup>1190</sup> [142–146]

28. The five [sense-perceptions of the five] faculties change their state.

That interacting with all objects  
 As well as perfecting the actual mastery over

<sup>1183</sup> In accordance with the verse structure which has been composed in the manner of a song of realization, Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied this poetic expression at the end of a longer quotation consisting of three parts (the source appears in the following note). dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 454, commented: “the sound of the *Mahāyāna* teachings... cutting the doubts (*the tshom gcod pa'i ... gsung theg chen sgra*).”

<sup>1184</sup> Lines 137–140 are cited from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verses 71, 72.3–73.2, 72.1–2.

<sup>1185</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 454, here referred back: “Both of these gnoses [together] (*ye shes gnyis po ni*).”

<sup>1186</sup> For this last line dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 454, again provided a source: “In the *gSer 'od* (Skt. *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra*) the purified [defiled] mind resting on that is taught as the *sambhogakāya*” (*gser 'od las de la gnas pa'i yid dag pas longs skur ston...*). This statement has been further discussed in chapter 5 under the topic “The Specific Interpretation of the *viññāna-jñāna* Distinction by the Third Karma-pa (5.4).” The exact reference concerning this quotation including a short discussion on the various sources was given in chapter 2 (2.2.2).

<sup>1187</sup> For clarification of the term “pure concepts” mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, p. 434.4–5, quoted from the *Ratnagotravibhāga* or *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, chapter 1, 33 (for a full rendering of this passage, refer to TAKASAKI 1966: 206–207, and JOHNSTON 1950: 164), where these pure concepts are called “four antidotes against four kinds of obstructions,” as follows: “of (1.) possessing something like the seed of faith and (2.) aspiration towards the *Mahāyāna*, (3.) the womb of the concentrative meditation by means of the higher knowledge of selflessness, (4.) the nanny of being able to develop great compassion.” dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 454, added the respective levels: “of the path of junction ... it is the path of seeing (*sbyor lam gyi... mthong lam yin te*).”

<sup>1188</sup> The detailed explanation of the 16 aspects of the Four Noble Truths (lines 143–144) is given in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, D 4049, fol. 93a.6–93b.4; P 5550, *Li*, fols. 110b.1–111b.4. Alex Wayman provided a comprehensive analysis of these 16 aspects and their opposites, including the major sources, in WAYMAN 1980.

<sup>1189</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 456, glossed: “again for each truth, when newly realizing the meaning of the true nature (*bden pa bzhi chos nyid kyi don gsar du mthong*).”

<sup>1190</sup> In terms of the result of purification, mKha'-khyab-rdo-rje in *rNam shes ye shes mchan 'grel*, fol. 432.4, stated: “At the time, when the truths are realized on the path and the first *bodhisattva* level is attained, the delusions of the perceptions of the five faculties, the eye and so on, are purified and have changed their state ... (*de ltar bden pa mthong ba'i lam gyi rjes | sa dang po thob pa de'i tshe | mig sogs dbang po lnga rnam par shes pa'i 'khrul pa rnams dag cing gnas gyur nas ni*).”

The hundred times twelve qualities of all [*bodhisattva* levels]<sup>1191</sup>  
Is the all-accomplishing gnosis.<sup>1192</sup> [147–151]

29. This [gnosis] accomplishes the benefit of all sentient beings  
Through manifold, limitless, inconceivable  
Emanations in all realms.<sup>1193</sup>  
This is the great *nirmāṇakāya*.<sup>1194</sup> [152–155]

30. The three *kāyas* (lit. bodies) together with their activities,<sup>1195</sup>  
Which are the change of state of the [dualistic] mind (*sems: citta*),  
The mental perception (or cognition) (*vid: manas*), and the [sense-]perceptions  
(*rnam shes: vijñāna*),<sup>1196</sup>  
Are perfected in the *maṇḍala* of the<sup>1197</sup> sphere of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*) free  
from mental fabrications.  
They abide without saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, without beginning,<sup>1198</sup>  
All [states being] free from being identical or different.<sup>1199</sup>

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<sup>1191</sup> Concerning the qualities attained on the various *bodhisattva* levels, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 456, clarified the starting number of twelve hundred: “on the first [*bodhisattva* level]; on the second there are twelve thousand and so on (*dang po gnyis pa la stong phrag bcu gnyis sogs*).”

<sup>1192</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje also explained this fourth type of gnosis in his *sNying po bstan pa*, A, fol. 288.5, translated in SCHAEFFER 1995: 105, referring back to the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 74; for an English translation, see LIMAYE 1992: 142. Furthermore, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 456, commented on the level: “on the level of a buddha (*sangs rgyas kyi sar*).”

<sup>1193</sup> The two preceding verses (28, 29) except for the last line (lines 147–154) originate from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 41, 74. For more details on these quotations refer to chapter 2. dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 456, here characterized the realms as: “of clinging to reality (*bden 'dzin gyi...*).”

<sup>1194</sup> In the same way as for the *sambhogakāya* in verse 26, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, p. 456, provided a source for this statement: “In the *gSer 'od* (Skt. *Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra*) the perception because of being purified of interacting with entities is taught as the *nirmāṇakāya* (*gser 'od las dngos po la 'jug pa'i rnam par shes pa dag pas sprul sku ston to*).” Again the exact reference is to be found in chapter 2 (2.2.2).

<sup>1195</sup> The Second dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba offered a detailed commentary on the *kāyas* and gnoses in the (Indian) lineages of profound view and vast activities, including the enlightened activities, in his *sPyod 'jug rnam bshad*, pp. 757.1–778.1.

<sup>1196</sup> This kind of summary introduces the presentation of the essential state (or body). dKon-mchog-yan-lag, in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 456, preferred to refer to the mental functions in terms of what they experience: “The whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa (*'khor 'das thams cad*).”

<sup>1197</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 456, inserted: “gnosis of the” sphere of phenomena (*chos dbyings kyi ye shes*). This seems to be an important clarification, because Rang-byung-rdo-rje in verse 32 just mentioned five kinds of gnosis in general without explicitly designating the fifth kind, the gnosis of the sphere of phenomena (*dharmadhātujñāna* or *de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes: tathāgatajñāna*).

<sup>1198</sup> In order to complete this brief verse line, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 456, commented: “They abide without any difference (*tha dad med pa*) between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, without beginning and end (*thog ma dang tha ma med*).”

<sup>1199</sup> Lines 159–160 are a paraphrase of *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 9, verse 77 (see chapter 2, 2.2.2).

This is explained as<sup>1200</sup> the essential state (lit. body) (*svābhāvikakāya*). [156–161]

31. In some other scriptures the Victor

Taught this to be the *dharmakāya*.<sup>1201</sup>

The mirror-like [gnosis] is then designated as the “gnosis *kāya*,”

And the other [three kinds of gnosis] as the two “form *kāyas*.”<sup>1202</sup> [162–165]

32. The manifestation of the nature of the five kinds of gnosis and four *kāyas*<sup>1203</sup> is buddhahood. [166]

33. What possesses the stains of the [dualistic] mind (*citta*),

The mental cognition (*manas*) and the [sense] perceptions (*viññāna*)

Is the fundamental mind (*ālāya*) (or [perception of] the all-base).<sup>1204</sup>

Free from stains it is called the buddha nature.<sup>1205</sup> [167–170]

34. That which overcomes the impure concepts

Is the power of the higher knowledge of the “noble ones”

Arisen from pure concepts.<sup>1206</sup>

To hold on to this has been taught as the truth of the path. [171–174]

35. Because they don’t realize this nature of the ultimate,

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<sup>1200</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 456, inserted: “the *dharmadhātu* gnosis and ... (*chos dbyings ye shes dang*).”

<sup>1201</sup> For example, this designation appears in the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, chapter 9, verse 60, citation in chapter 2. For an English translation, refer to THURMAN 2004: 95.

<sup>1202</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje in these two lines applied the terms “*ye shes sku*” and “*gzugs sku gnyis*.”

<sup>1203</sup> mKha’-khyab-rdo-rje glossed in *rNam shes ye shes mchan ’grel*, p. 434.1: “which abides by [its] nature from the beginning (*gdod nas rang bzhin gyis bzhugs pa*’i).”

<sup>1204</sup> dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 457, commented: “... is the perception of the all-base or all-base consciousness (*kun gzhi’i rnam shes*), the essence of this eightfold group [of perception] which from the beginning abides free from stains (*tshogs brgyad po de dag gi rang ngo gdod nas dri med du zhugs pa*).”

<sup>1205</sup> Literally, “the heart of the victors”. This term is a reference to the second work in the appendix of the *Zab mo nang don*, the *sNying po bstan pa*. The work has been academically explored in SCHAEFFER 1995. Concerning the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy, see chapter 5 (5.2).

<sup>1206</sup> Again, dKon-mchog-yan-lag in *rNam ye brtag pa*, p. 457, elaborated on this brief statement: “Concerning the three [aspects of] the path and nirvāṇa and [the accumulation of] merit the *Dharma* is that which prevents (lit. holds one) from falling down. Therefore, it is that which is preventing us (lit. holding us) from falling down into existence and peace (*samsāra* and nirvāṇa) of (or “belonging to”) the *Mahāyāna* path ... (*lam dang nyang ’das dang bsod nams gsum ni lung la las ’dzin pas chos yin | des na theg chen lam gyi srid zhir lung ba las ’dzin pa yin pas*).”

The deluded wander in the ocean of saṃsāra.  
Not realizing this boat of the *Mahāyāna*,  
How will one reach the other shore?<sup>1207</sup> [175–178]

36. May all realize the meaning of this!<sup>1208</sup> [179]

The *Treatise Distinguishing Perception from Gnosis* was composed by Rangbyung-rdo-rje in the mountain retreat of “Upper Dechen” (Great Bliss) (Tib. bDe-chen-steng), on the first day of the tenth month in the Pig Year (most probably the year 1323).

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<sup>1207</sup> In terms of what is meant here by “the other shore”, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 457, elucidated this poetic expression: “of existence and peace (saṃsāra and nirvāṇa) (*srid zhi 'i*).” This annotation implies that “the other shore” in the context of the *Mahāyāna* lies beyond both existence and peace.

<sup>1208</sup> In order to contextualize this teaching, dKon-mchog-yan-lag, *ibid.*, p. 457, referred back to the previous picture: “*Mahāyāna Dharma (theg chen chos)*.”

## Chapter 8: Critical Editions and Translations of Selected Passages from the *gSung 'bum*

Several passages in Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse require a more elaborate academic treatment. Even though they do not extend to a complete composition, they still function as a kind of auto-commentary to the principal treatise. The final chapter of this thesis is therefore dedicated to the critical editions and annotated translations of a few selected passages from the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*. The structure remains the same as in the previous chapter. The first part introduces the special significance of the chosen section for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse and the extant editions of the respective work. The actual critical edition of the Tibetan text and the annotated translation follow.

### 8.1 A Critical Edition of Selected Sections from the *Phyag chen khrid yig*

The “Practice Manual of the Co-emergent Union of Mahāmudrā,” *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig*, as the full title says, or in short: *Phyag chen khrid yig*, details the progressive development of the Mahāmudrā practice. According to tradition, the practitioner needs to follow the oral advice given by a qualified teacher in order for the instructions to be effective. The Third Karmapa emphasized moreover that at the very beginning of the meditation sessions (not included in this selected section) the practitioner should invoke the spiritual influence or blessing of the Lama by means of a short Guru yoga meditation.

After practicing the preliminaries (*ngon 'gro*), the main practice (*dnagos gzhi*) consists of developing a stable state of calm abiding or concentration (*gzhi gnas*) followed by higher insight (*lhag mthong*) into the nature of mind. Both levels of training then lead to the actual practice of Mahāmudrā. The selected passages combine all three levels of calm abiding, higher insight and Mahāmudrā. The two lower levels build up a solid foundation for the most profound levels of practice explained at the end of this section.

This structure shows clearly that Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed this manual by strictly following the Mahāmudrā instructions given by sGam-po-pa. This is also what he expressed in the colophon. He expanded somewhat sGam-po-pa's method of passing on spiritual advice to his students. The principal difference lies in the extensive incorporation

of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse into the practice instructions.<sup>1209</sup> He also recommended practicing these instructions in conjunction with the Six Teachings of Nāropa. This recommendation, together with the structuring into several meditation sessions, implies a retreat situation in order to unfold the full effectiveness of the practice. This ties in with Rang-byung-rdo-rje's having founded several retreat centers and having guided his students closely in their spiritual development.

This structure of the “The Practice Manual of the Co-emergent Union of Mahāmudrā,” places the work between sGam-po-pa's principal Mahāmudrā works<sup>1210</sup> and the most important manuals composed by the later bKa'-brgyud masters, who also very closely followed sGam-po-pa's guidelines. In this way, the *Mahāmudrā Manual* by the Third Karmapa appears to be a forerunner of the Mahāmudrā works composed by Dwags-po-paN-chen bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1512/13–1587), such as the *Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer*, and by the Ninth Karmapa dBang-phyug-rdo-rje, who composed e.g. the *Phyag chen nges don rgya mtsho*, English translation in WANGCHUK DORJE 2006. These manuals still function today as core treatises for Mahāmudrā practice in the Karma bKa'-brgyud tradition.

The critical edition of the relevant passages from the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, the “Manual of the Mahāmudrā Instructions,” takes as its fundamental redaction the version compiled by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas in his *gDams ngag mdzod*, “A treasury of Instructions and Techniques for Spiritual Realization.” According to Dan Martin,<sup>1211</sup> who produced one of the catalogues to this collection, Kong-sprul worked on this compilation during the years 1871–1881. He first transmitted this treasury in the year 1882.

This edition is a reproduction from a xylographic print originating from the Dpal-pungs blocks, edited by Ngawang Lungtok and Ngawang Gyaltsen, Delhi 1971–1972. The work appears as the first text in volume 6. The introduction states that “this volume contains the special teachings of the Karmapa bKa'-brgyud-pa (Kaṃ-tshang) and its

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<sup>1209</sup> Karma bKra-shis-chos-'phel (b. 19<sup>th</sup> century) in the introduction of his *Phyag chen rna rgyan*, p. 7, has described the practice-oriented approach of Rang-byung-rdo-rje in the transmission lineage of the Mahāmudrā practice in verse as follows: | *rang byung rgyal dang yid la mi byed pa'i* | *chos tshul gzhung lugs gcig tu sdus mdzad pa* | - rendered as “The Victor Rang-byung has integrated the way of the phenomena beyond mental activity (Skt. *amanasikāra*) into the scriptural tradition.”

<sup>1210</sup> See sGam-po-pa's exposition of the progressive stages of the Mahāyāna practice of the Great Seal in his famous *Dwags-po thar rgyan* in “The bKa'-brgyud Viewpoint at Rang-byung-rdo-rje's time,” in the fourth chapter (4.4).

<sup>1211</sup> See MARTIN 1993: 1.

offshoots ...” We find a corresponding designation in the title: “Karma kaṃ tshang Phyag chen” (Karma-kaṃ-tshang Mahāmudrā). The prominent position in this volume alludes to the special importance that Kong-sprul assigned to this work.

The critical edition has been generated by means of emphasizing the preferred reading, where 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul's earliest *gDams ngag mdzod* redaction (A) functions as the principal source and earliest text witness. The apparatus provides all variants of the sources listed below, except for the *tsheg* and *shad*. The edition E of the *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig*<sup>1212</sup> is, of course, a much later edition of this work. It has obviously seen a few changes when collated with the other editions; for example, the division according to the meditation sessions has been omitted. The page numbers of this *gSung 'bum* edition have also been inserted for easy reference.

The critical edition applies the following sigla as related to the various Tibetan redactions in chronological order:

- A Kun-bde-gling Edition, Delhi 1971–1972, xylographic print from Dpal-spungs blocks.
- B Paro Edition, 1979–1981, xylographic print from Dpal-spungs blocks.
- C *Phyag chen khrid mdzod* Edition, New Delhi, 1997, from Dpal-spungs blocks.
- D Shechen Edition, 1999, input by Nitārtha International, from Dpal-spungs blocks.
- E *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* Edition, Zi-ling, 2006.

Whenever the original Tibetan lines behind the citations from classical sources contained in the *bKa'-'gyur* and *bsTan-'gyur* deviate from these editions, they have also been taken into consideration in this critical edition.

The reference work is a reproduction of a xylographic print from the Dpal-spungs blocks copied into a hardbound volume. It is written in *dbu can* script on gray Indian paper with a medium size format of 27,5 x 4 cm on the outside and 26,5 x 3 cm of the actual print inside. The print on the title page is smaller, just 13,5 x 2,5 cm on the outside, displaying the title in one line and the author below in a second line. The following two pages contain five lines respectively in a frame with a space of 3 cm to both sides. From the third page onwards, each page has six lines. Only the last page (16) finishes after a little more than five lines. The pages appear on opposite sides, the *recto* side of the folios on the left page and the *verso* side on the right page. Both the Tibetan and Western paginations appear in the left margin, where the Tibetan numbers designate the folios (1–

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<sup>1212</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 53–72.

8, a + b), and the Arabic numbers count the pages 1–16. The left margin of every back shows the title of this volume: *Karma Kam-tshang*.

The first selected section (E, *gSung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 57.1–62.3) starts from the second half of the first meditation session in the main body of the treatise (*dnegos gzhi*). The main part relates to the development of a mind of calm abiding and the introduction to the co-emergent meaning of higher insight with respect to that.<sup>1213</sup>

[fol. 3a.1] [p. 57]

| de la gsal stong dbyer med du rtse gcig tu mi gnas na | yul drug la brten nas bsgom pa ni  
| dang po mig gi yul du rnam pa gang gsal ba cig la lta stangs gtad la sems bzung | skabs  
su sku gzugs lta bu'am | shing bu'am rde'u lta bu la gtad cing rig pa bzung la rtog<sup>1214</sup> pa  
gzhan gyis bar ma chod<sup>1215</sup> par bzhag || de la brtan na | gnyis pa sgra la brten nas bsgom  
pa ni | chu sgra'am | rlung gi sgra'am | sems can sgra skad la sogs pa gang gsal ba la sems  
gtad la bzung | de brtan pa dang | yang gsum pa sna'i yul du snang ba'i dri bzang ba dang  
ngan pa gang byung ba la yang sems bzung la bgom mo || de bzhin du bzhi pa lce la snang  
ba'i ro zhim pa dang mi zhim pa la yang sems gtad la sgom | de ltar du lta ba lus kyi reg  
bya bde ba dang mi bde ba gang gsal ba la sems bzung |

thun gnyis |<sup>1216</sup>

| de rnams la cung zad zin pa dang | drug pa yid kyi yul du snang ba'i chos la brten nas  
bsgom pa yang | 'dus byas kyi chos dang | 'dus ma byas kyi chos gnyis las | dang po ni  
'khor ba'i chos spang bya'i rtog pa | 'dod chags dang khong khro dang | nga rgyal dang |  
ma rig pa dang<sup>1217</sup> | lta ba rnam pa lnga dang | the tshom la sogs pa | nyon mongs<sup>1218</sup> pa  
rnams dang | nye ba'i nyon mongs pa rnams kyi rtog pas [58] sems g.yengs na yang | rtog  
pa<sup>1219</sup> i yul du rnam pa gang gsal ba cig la shes pa rtse gcig tu gtad la bsgom | yang gnyen

<sup>1213</sup> The Tibetan (fol. 1b.2–3, p. 2) reads: | ... *dnegos gzhi zhi gnas kyi sems btsal zhing* | *de la lhag mthong gi don lhan cig skyes pa ngo sprad pa* ... |.

<sup>1214</sup> rtog] ABCD, rtogs E

<sup>1215</sup> ma chod] AC, mchod BDE

<sup>1216</sup> thun gnyis] ABCD, *om.* E

<sup>1217</sup> ma rig pa dang] A, dang (as a misprint ma rig pa *om.*) BCD, lta ba (as a misprint ma rig pa dang *om.*) E

<sup>1218</sup> mongs] BCDE, mong sa A

<sup>1219</sup> pa] BCDE, ba A

po'i rtogs pa dge ba'i sems la yang gang skyes pa de la gtad la rtog pa gzhan gyis bar ma  
chod par rtse gcig tu sems bzung bas gnas pa'i nyams skye'o ||

[fol. 3b]

de ltar rtog pa gang skyes pa la | dran pa dang ldan pas sems 'dzin pa 'di yi gnad shes na  
bying rgod kyis mi gnod par gnas cha skye la | yang kha cig gis spang bya'i rtog pa de  
nan gyis bkag dgos byas pas | sems mi gnas pa'i steng du slar gegs su 'gro zhing ting nge  
'dzin skye dka' ba yin | 'di la dgongs<sup>1220</sup> nas | mdo sde rgyan las |

gang phyir chags sogs de nyid la ||

tshul bzhin 'jug pa de yi phyir ||

de las rnam grol 'gyur des<sup>1221</sup> na ||

de yis de dag las nges 'byung ||

zhes 'byung ba dang he badzra las kyang |

chags pas 'jig rten 'ching 'gyur na<sup>1222</sup> ||

'dod chags nyid kyis rnam grol 'gyur ||

zhes gsungs pas thabs mkhad pa yang de nyid yin la |

dmigs pa la ni brten nas su ||

mi dmigs pa la rab tu skye ||

mi smigs pa la brten nas su ||

mi dmigs pa ni rab tu skye ||

de yi phyir na dmigs pa ni ||

mi dmigs ngo bo nyid du grub ||

de lta bas na dmigs pa dang ||

mi dmigs mnyam par shes par bya ||

zhes dbus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa las gsungs pas |

dang po sems 'dzin pa la | [59] yul gzugs lta bu gcig la bsdus pas | tshogs drug gcig tu  
bsdu bar byed pas yul gzhan la dmigs pa'i sems nye bar zhi bar skye'o ||

thun gsum |<sup>1223</sup>

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<sup>1220</sup> dgongs] BCDE, dgods A

<sup>1221</sup> des] BCDE, and P 5521, fol. 20a.5, nge A

<sup>1222</sup> na] ABCDE, ba *Do ha mdzod kyi glu'i don gsal bar byed pa*, p. 217.1.

<sup>1223</sup> thun gsum] ABCD, om. E

| de brten na chos 'dus ma byas pa dang 'brel ba | yul drug dmigs pa'i rten de yang yid la  
mi byed par rang lugs su snang ba dang stong pa dang | spang bya dang | gnyen po'i  
mtshan ma med par rnam par rtog par ci yang yid la mi bya bar bdun gyi nam mkha' la  
mig gnyis gtad de | lus ma 'gul ba | rlung 'gro ba dang 'ong ba | rang sor dal bar bzhag  
nas | ngag mi smra bar bzhag ste dpal te lo pas || sems ni nam mkha' 'dra bar bzung bar  
bya<sup>1224</sup> zhes pa dang |  
sa ra ha pas kyang ||

nam [fol. 4a]

mkha' 'dra byas<sup>1225</sup> rlung ni mnyam par 'ching ||

mnyam nyid yongs su shes pas rab tu thim ||

mda' bsnun gyis<sup>1226</sup> smras nam zhig nus ldan na ||

mi rtag g.yo ba myur du spong bar 'gyur ||

zhes gsungs zhing<sup>1227</sup> shes rab kyi pha rol phyin pa las kyang ||

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la rnal 'byor du byed pa ni nam mkha' la rnal 'byor du byed  
pa'o ||

zhes gsungs pa'i don go bar bya'o || de ltar bsgoms pas gnas cha bzang po skyes pa dang  
| bsam gtan dang zhi gnas kyi rgyu phun sum tshogs pa 'grub pa yin no | de dag gi yan  
lag rgyas pa ni | sems gnas thabs dgu dang yid la byed pa bcu cig<sup>1228</sup> kho bos bstan pa der  
blta bar bya'o ||

zhi [60] gnas kyi rgyu ni tshul khrims dang brten te || ngo bo nyon mongs rtog pas dben  
pa yis || rkyen ni sems gnas khyad par la skye ste | phan yon nyon mongs sdug bsngal rags  
pa gnon || zhes bya ba ni sems mi gnas pa gnas pa'i rim pa'o ||

<sup>1224</sup> The line in P 3068, *tsi*, fol. 155b.5 reads: | *de ltar sems kyi rang bzhin nam mkha' 'dra* | A line, which is nearly identical to the quotation, appears in P 3068 (*Dohākośagīti*), *mi*, fol. 77a.3: | *sems ni nam mkha' 'dra bar bzung bya te* |.

<sup>1225</sup> nam mkha' 'dra byas] A, mkha' 'drar byas na P 3068, *mi*, fol. 77a.4

<sup>1226</sup> gyis] ABCD, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 77a.4, gyi E

<sup>1227</sup> zhing] ACE, zhid BD

<sup>1228</sup> Note that the expression '*yid la byed pa bcu cig*' (the eleven [kinds of] mental activity) appearing in all editions in this context is opposite to the one applied in the title of another work by Rang-byung-rdo-rje: '*yid la mi byed pa bcu cig*' (the eleven [kinds of] freedom from mental activity), see note 1257 in the translation section. As was shown above (see note 1211), Karma bKra-shis-chos-'phel confirmed that Rang-byung-rdo-rje had integrated the teachings on "freedom from mental activity" into the scriptural tradition. Therefore, the expression in the text must be a mistake.

thun bzhi'o |<sup>1229</sup>

| de nas lhag mthong bskyed pa'i phyir ngo sprad pa ni | dpal te lo pa<sup>1230</sup> i zhal snga nas  
||

kye ho 'di ni rang rig ye shes te ||

ngag gi lam 'das yid kyi spyod yul min ||

te lo<sup>1231</sup> nga yis<sup>1232</sup> ci yang bstan du med ||

rang gis rang nyid<sup>1233</sup> mtshon te shes par byos ||

zhes gsungs pa'i don sngar sems bzung nas gsal la mi rtog par gnas pa de'i ngang nas |  
tshogs drug gi shes pa 'phro ba la brtag par bya ste | rtog de pha rol<sup>1234</sup> gyi yul du snang  
ba'i gzugs dang | sgra dang | dri dang | ro dang | reg dang | chos rnam las skyes pa yin  
nam | mig dang | rna ba | sna | lce | lus rnam las byung ba yin nam | zhes brtags na de  
thams cad las ni rtog pa byung ba ma yin te | yul drug dang dbang po lnga<sup>1235</sup> rang gi ngo  
bos gsal kyang ma rtog par thag chod | 'o na sgo lnga po'i shes pa gzugs 'dzin pa'i mig  
gi rnam par shes pa dang | sgra

[fol. 4b]

'dzin pa'i rna ba'i rnam par shes pa dang | dri 'dzin pa'i sna'i rnam par shes pa dang | ro  
'dzin pa lce'i rnam par shes pa dang | reg bya 'dzin pa'i lus kyi rnam par shes pa ste lnga  
po 'di yang | yul dang dbang po la brten nas skad cig tu snang ste ngo bos [61] gsal la mi  
rtog par 'dug pas | tshogs drug gi shes pa yid gcig pu 'di'i rtsa bar bcad par bya ste | 'di  
la ni yid chos la gtad pa de ni sgo lnga'i shes pa dang 'dra bar rang gi ngo bos skad cig  
ma gcig tu gsal la mi rtog par 'dug pas | tshogs drug gi shes pa'i rang gi ngo la ni 'khrul  
pa mi 'dug ste | snga ma'i shes pa ni 'gags phyi ma ni ma skyes | da ltar gyi skad cig gang  
skyes pa de yang snang zhing gsal bas kun rdzob kyi bden pa mi 'dor bar | gsal kyang  
dbyibs su ma grub | kha dog tu ma grub | byed pa po bdag gam phyas'am dbang phyug  
gam tshangs pa'am | rdul phran nam phag na mo'am gang zag la sogs pas byas pas mi  
'dug pas | rang bzhin gyis stong pas na don dam pa'i bden pa mi 'dor ba snang stong gnyis

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<sup>1229</sup> thun bzhi'o] ABCD, *om.* E

<sup>1230</sup> te lo pa] ABCD, tai lo pa E

<sup>1231</sup> te lo] ABCD, tai lo E

<sup>1232</sup> nga yis] BCD, pa yis A, ngas ni *NA ro pa'i rnam thar*, fol. 58a.2

<sup>1233</sup> rang gis rang nyid] ABCD, rang rig rang gis *NA ro pa'i rnam thar*, fol. 58a.2

<sup>1234</sup> pha rol] A, phyir rol BCDE

<sup>1235</sup> lnga] ABCD, lngar E

kyang dbye ba med gang du yang snang zhing gang du yang brjod du btub pas de nyid  
dang gzhan las rnam par grol ba'o || zhes rtogs par bya'o ||  
'di ni rang rig ste gang rang rig 'khrul bar rtogs pa nyid ye shes zhes bya ste | ye nas gnas  
pa'i gnas lugs shes pa'i phyir ro || de lta bu'i mngon sum de ni byis pa so so'i skye bo  
rnams kyis ngag gis brjos par mi shes la | yid nyon mongs can gyi rtog pa'i spyod yul ma  
yin no || des na rang gis nyams su ma myong gi bar la bstan du med do || 'di ni do ha las  
kyang ||

chu dang mar me rang gsal [62] gcig pur<sup>1236</sup> zhog ||

'gro 'ong nga yis mi len mi 'dor ro zhes pa dang ||

kye ho 'di ni rang rig ste <sup>1237</sup> ||

bzhan yang dngos su bstan du med ||

'di las<sup>1238</sup> 'khrul par ma byed cig ||

ces gsungs so || lta ba mdor bsdus nas kyang ||

rang [fol. 5a] rig spros bral de nyid ni<sup>1239</sup> ||

snang zhing stong la stong zhing snang ||

de phyir snang stong dbyer med do<sup>1240</sup> ||

dper na chu yi zla ba bzhin ||

de ltar gnyis med gtan la dbab ||

shes pa la sogs pa lung dang rig pas gtan la phab pa gzhung thams cad nas gsungs kyang  
spros pas chog go | de ni tshogs drug gi shes pa la ngo sprad pa'o ||

### Author's note:

The second selected section (E, *gSung 'bum*, vol. 11, pp. 66.1–70.2) provides a continuation of the meditation instructions in terms of the inner mental functions in the context of *Session Five*.

[fol. 6a] [66]

| bogs 'don pa ni tshogs drug gi shes pa dang | dbang po yul drug rang gi sems las don  
gzhan byed pa po

<sup>1236</sup> gcig pur] ABCDE, gcig tu *Dohākośagīti*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 80a.4.

<sup>1237</sup> rang rig ste] ABCDE, rang rig yin pa ste *Dohākośagīti*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 76b.1.

<sup>1238</sup> las] ABCDE, la *Dohākośagīti*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 76b.1.

<sup>1239</sup> ni] ABCDE, kyang *Dr̥ṣṭisamkṣeta*, D 2304, *zhi*, fol. 244b.3.

<sup>1240</sup> do] ABCDE, de *Dr̥ṣṭisamkṣeta*, D 2304, *zhi*, fol. 244b.3.

[fol. 6b]

med par rtogs nas | gzung 'dzin bden med du dang por shes | de nas nyams su myong |  
mthar mngon sum du byed pa na | rnam par shes pa thams cad skye ba dang 'gag pa'i de  
ma thag pa'i yid la brtag pa gal che ste | rnam shes drug po gang skye yang yid kyi 'du  
byed de ma thag pa la brten nas skye la | 'gag pa na yang las dkar ba dang nag pa dang  
mi g.yo ba'i las thams cad des khyer nas sems kun gzhi'i steng du 'dres par byed pas 'di'i  
mtshang rig par bya'o |

| de dang mtshungs ldan du nyon mongs pa can gyi yid skye ste sems la nga'o zhes nga  
bdag tu 'dzin pa bdag la chags pa nga rgyal ba rang la sgrib par byed pas ma rig par byed  
pa'o ||

de'i rkyen gyis tshogs drug gi shes pa skye ba na yang yul dang yul can gnyis rang gsal  
du mi shes par bdag dang bdag gi ba'i bzung 'dzin gnyis su bden par rtog pa skyed par  
byed pas nyon mongs pa thams cad 'byung bar byed do |

| rgyu mtshan des na tshogs drug gi nyon mongs pa kha phyir lta ba la brten nas skyes pa  
'di ni mthong bas spang bar bya ba yin la nang du lta ba'i nyon mongs pa ni bsgoms pas  
spang bar bya bar gsungs so |

| nyan thos la zhugs pa dag kyang | gang zag la bdag tu lta ba'i cha shas kyi [67] nyon  
mongs pa mthong ba dang bsgoms pas spang bar bya ba spangs pas zhi ba thob pa yin  
kyang | de ma thag pa'i yid dang gnyen po chos la bdag med pa'i tshul la rmongs pas sang  
rgyas kyi byang chub chen po la ring ba nyid do |

| des na so so'i skye bo blo dang ldan pa bsam gtan gyi sems thob pa rnams kyis 'di ltar  
bsgom par bya ste | yid mi rtog pa'i bsam gtan la 'jog pa na | tshogs drug gi sems dbyings  
su 'gag pa dang | yang ting nge 'dzin de las ldang ba<sup>1241</sup> na rtog pa yid kyi 'du byed phra'u  
g.yo ba mthong ste |

de'i tshe yang dag pa'i bla mas bstan pa'i lta bas

[fol. 7a]

ma zin na | 'khrul pa'i rtog pa 'di rnams 'byung ste | yid 'di bden par grub pa dang skye  
ba'i gnas dang 'gag pa'i bden pa'i mi 'dug pas rtog pa thams cad rgyu med pa'o snyam  
pa'i chad lta dang | yang rtog pa'i rang ngo bkag kyang yang skye zhing 'byung ba 'di la  
rgyun chad pa mi 'dug pas rtag go snyam pa'i rtag lta dang | shes pa 'gru ba 'di 'ongs pa'i  
sa sems gcig nang na yod di snyam pa'i bdag la rtog pa dang | yang phyi'i yul snang bkag  
na mi rtog par 'dug pas yul snang dgag dgos snyam pa'i phyi rol yul dgag byar rtog pa'i

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<sup>1241</sup> ba] BCDE, pa A

'khrul pa dang | yang rtog dpyod nub pa dang | dga' bde nub pa dang | dran rig g.yo ba  
nub pa dang | rlung dbyung rdub nub pa'i bsam gtan la mthar thug [68] yin snyam pa'i  
bsam gtan la mthar thug tu 'dzin pa'i gol sa dang | gsal la mi rtog pa yul la mtshan mar  
'dzin pa'i 'du shes bkag pa mthar thug tu 'dug snyam pa 'du shes med pa'i snyoms 'jug  
tu gol ba dang | snang ba dang thogs pa thams cad bkag pa nam mkha' lta bu dang rnam  
shes mtha' yas dang | ci yang med pa dang | 'du shes med 'du shes med min la mthar thug  
tu 'dod na gzugs med pa'i gol sa te | 'di rnams la sogs pa'i khams gsum gyi 'jigs tshogs  
la sogs pa'i lta ba ngan pa rnams rtsa ba yid 'di ma shes pas nyon mongs pa thams cad  
'byung bas nyon mongs pa can gyi yid ces bya bar gyur te | rtsa ba ni yang dag pa ma yin  
pa'i kun tu rtog pa las byung ba'o || 'di mthong nas phyi tshogs drug gsal la mi rtog pa'i  
rang ngo la ye shes su bzhugs kyang | yid kyi mtshan 'dzin gyis dkrugs nas blang dor byas  
pas 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal thams cad bskyed la | gnyen po'i shes pa dge ba rnams bskyed  
pas 'khor ba'i bde ba thams cad bskyed cing 'byung bar togs par byas nas | spang gnyen  
gnyis ka

[fol. 7b]

la rtog cing rgyug pa'i yid 'di mnyam bzhag tu rang ngo gsal la stong par bzhag la bsam  
gtan<sup>1242</sup> bzhi gzugs med bzhi 'gog pa dang bcas pa so sor sbyong | rjes thob tu spang bya  
dang gnyen po'i rtog pa thams cad la rgyu dang rkyen 'bras bu 'grub pa'i tshul thams [69]  
cad la mkhas par bya zhing rtogs par bya | 'khor gsum du rtog pa'i 'du shes thams cad  
sgrib par shes pas chos thams cad la stong zhig bdag med pa'i ngo bo nyid mnyam pa  
nyid kyi rgyas gdab | sems kun gzhi la bdag dang bdag gi ba'i snyoms byed mi bya bar |  
nyon mongs thams cad dag pa dang | rtog pa thams cad la dbang ma thob kyi bar du<sup>1243</sup>  
brtson 'grus 'skyed la nyams su blang ngo || rgyas par ni rnam rtog rtsal sbyong dang |  
'brel pa bzhi ldan du bshad yod pas der blta bar bya'o ||

tshogs drug shes pa gsal la mi rtog pa ||  
mngon sum rtog bral shes shing goms pa la ||  
brten nas rang rig yid kyi mngon sum ni ||  
de ma thag bcas chu zla lta bur mthong ||  
de la brten nas sgrib bcas kun gzhi dang ||  
sgrib med me long lta bu'i ye shes kyi ||

<sup>1242</sup> bsam gtan] C, bsam tan ABDE

<sup>1243</sup> ma thob kyi bar du] BCDE, thob kyi bar du A

gnas lugs rjes su dpag pa'i tshul du mthong ||  
 nyon mongs mngon gyur rags dang bag la nyal ||  
 gnyen pos spang sgyur rang ngo rtogs byas nas ||  
 spang gnyis gnyis kyi rtogs pa ji snyed pa ||  
 so sor shes pa'i shes rab dag pa dang ||  
 de yi ting nge 'dzin la dbang thob pas ||  
 de tshe kun gzhi mngon sum snang bar gyur ||  
 de bzhin nyid dang 'bras bu'i rtog pa kun ||  
 grol ba'i skad cig de la kun gzhi dag ||  
 de tshe sangs rgyas byang chub thob pa yin ||  
 kye ma tshul 'di ma rtogs pas ||  
 byis pa bdag dang bdag gis [70] bcings ||  
 nyan thos gang zag bdag med kyi ||  
 gnyen po'i 'ching bas bcings par gyur ||  
 chos kyi bzung rtog rtsal sbyangs nas ||  
 rang rgyal thob kyang 'dzin pa'i cha ||  
 kun gzhi ma<sup>1244</sup> rtogs lam  
 [fol. 8a]  
 du lus ||  
 thams cad rtogs pa rdzogs sangs rgyas ||  
 yin phyir bla na med pa yin ||

| rjes kyi don ||

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<sup>1244</sup> gzhi ma] BCDE, gzhis A

## 8.2 Annotated Translation of Selected Sections from the *Phyag chen khrid yig*

The selected passages base the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) instructions strictly on the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction. Rang-byung-rdo-rje here at first provided meditation instructions related to the various functions of the sixfold group of perception (concerning outer objects). In the second selected section, he also incorporated the seventh and eighth aspects of perception or cognition (the inner mental functions). He described the processes explained in detail in the *rNam shes ye shes* from the perspective of how to pacify the mind and develop insight into its nature. In Mahāmudrā terminology: He offered an introduction to the co-emergent gnosis of self-awareness. The major difference in these sections on the functions of the eightfold group of perception to the presentation provided in the *rNam shes ye shes* is the strictly practice-oriented perspective. The translation refers to the Tibetan text emended by means of the critical edition presented above.

The first section comprises pp. 57.1–62.3 in volume 11 of the *gSung 'bum*. It starts out with the second half of the first meditation session in the main part (*dnegos gzhi*). Here, Rang-byung-rdo-rje expounded on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse while providing meditation instructions related to the outer sixfold group of perception:

[fol. 3a.1] [57]

With respect to that,<sup>1245</sup> if you do not abide one-pointedly in the inseparability of clarity and emptiness, meditate depending on the six objects [of the senses].<sup>1246</sup>

1. At first, hold the mind focusing in the way of looking only at the clarity of any appearance in terms of the objects of the eyes. At times direct [the mind] towards something like a [buddha] form or something like a stick or a pebble and hold the awareness on the object never letting any other thought get in the way.
2. When that has become stable, the second is the meditation on sound. Focus the mind on the sound of water or on the sound of the wind or on the sound of sentient beings speaking and so on, holding it on any clear sound.

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<sup>1245</sup> This refers back to the instruction to settle in the realization of the present, in a state of clarity and nonconceptuality.

<sup>1246</sup> The first part explains various techniques of calm abiding meditation (*zhi gnas: śamatha*).

3. When that [meditation on sound] has become stable, as the third [practice] meditate also on whatever good or bad fragrance arises appearing as an object of the nose and hold the mind on that.
4. Likewise, as the fourth [practice] meditate in terms of focusing the mind also on delicious or disagreeable tastes appearing to the tongue.
5. In the same way, hold the mind as clearly as possible on a pleasant or unpleasant touch to the body.

*Session 2*<sup>1247</sup>

6. Having finished those<sup>1248</sup> [at least] to a slight degree, there is the meditation based on phenomena, which appear as objects to the mind, the sixth [perception].

Again from among the two, compounded [mental] phenomena and uncompounded [mental] phenomena, the first relates to conceptualizing the phenomena of the cycle of existence, which has to be given up. Even if the concepts of attachment, anger, pride, ignorance, of the five kinds of mistaken views, and doubt and so on, the disturbing feelings and the secondary disturbing feelings have agitated the mind, the meditation is to focus one-pointedly on knowing clearly one of any representations in terms of the object of the concepts. Again, when you concentrate on the development of any virtuous [state of] mind, the concepts of antidotes abide with the thoughts that spring up in the mind, holding the mind one-pointedly not interrupted by other concepts.<sup>1249</sup>

[fol. 3b]

In terms of bringing forth any concept like that, if you know the essential point of this apprehending mind by means of possessing mindfulness (or recollection), let the abiding arise without being harmed by drowsiness or agitation. With respect to that again, because some say that those concepts, which [previously] were to be abandoned, must be stopped by pressure, on top of not abiding, the mind later gets obstructions and it is difficult to develop a concentrative state (*samādhi*).

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<sup>1247</sup> The second session starts with a change of concentration from the objects of the senses to mental objects.

<sup>1248</sup> Stable concentration states focusing on outer sense objects.

<sup>1249</sup> In short, the instructions here recommend that the practitioner should neither be attached to any wholesome state of mind nor reject any unwholesome state of mind. He/she should let the mind abide with the respective thought, which is the root of the disturbing feeling.

The *mDo sde rgyan* (Skt. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*) [teaches] the intention with respect to that:<sup>1250</sup>

Because of skillful engagement

With any [disturbing feeling such as] attachment and so on,

There will be complete liberation.

This being so, through this there is disengagement from these [disturbing feelings].

Thus, it appears, and from the *Hevajratantra*:<sup>1251</sup>

When the world (*samsāra*) becomes bound by attachment,

Through the desire itself [it] becomes completely liberated.

That teaching in itself is a skillful method. With respect to that it was taught in the *dBus dang mtha' rnam par byed pa* (Skt. *Madhyāntavibhāga*):<sup>1252</sup>

Depending on perception [of just the awareness aspect]

Nonperception [of objects] truly arises.

Depending on nonperception [of objects]

Nonperception [of pure awareness] truly arises.

Therefore, perception is established

In its very essence as nonperception.

Therefore, perception and nonperception

Should be understood as being equal.

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<sup>1250</sup> See *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, chapter 14, verse 13. The Sanskrit lines in LÉVI 1907: 92 read:

*aratiṃ śamayet tasmin vikṣepadoṣadarśanāt |*  
*abhidhyā daurmanasyādīn vyutthitān śamayet tathā ||*

The Tibetan versions of this verse originate from P 5521, vol. 108, fol. 13a.2–3, and from D 4020, *phi*, fol. 18a.4; P 5521, fol. 20a.5–6. For a further English translation of this verse, refer to LIMAYE 1992: 251. For a French translation, see LÉVI 1911: 164.

<sup>1251</sup> See *Hevajratantra*, book 2, 2:51; P 10, *ka*, 280b.3–4. The Sanskrit line in SNELLGROVE 1959: 50 reads as follows: *rāgena badhyate loko rāgenaiva vimucyate ||*.

<sup>1252</sup> See *Madhyantavibhāga*, I.6–7; D 4021, *phi*, fol. 1a.4; P 5522, *phi*, fol. 43b.8–44a.1. The Sanskrit verses read:

*upalabdhiṃ samāśritya nopalabdhiḥ prajāyate |*  
*nopalabdhiṃ samāśritya nopalabdhiḥ prajāyate || 1.6*

*upalabdheḥ tataḥ siddhā nopalabdhisvabhāvatā |*  
*tasmāc ca samatā jñeyā nopalambhopalambhayoh || 1.7*

Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, in *rNam ye 'byed 'grel*, fol. 16a.2–4, book ed., pp. 85–86, has commented extensively on this quotation, as mentioned in the annotations to verse 11 of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise.

Therefore, in terms of the perceiving mind we at first gather the objects such as form into one. In this way, by gathering [also] the sixfold group [of perception] into one, the mind perceiving any other object becomes thoroughly pacified.

### Session 3

When that [concentration] has become stable, in connection with the uncompounded [mental] phenomena, [leave] even the six objects as that basis of focusing. [Rest] in the natural state free from mental activity, without any conceptualizing of what is free from characteristics in terms of appearance and emptiness, what has to be given up and the antidote.

With respect to being free from any mental activity, you should direct both eyes towards the space in front of you. The body does not move. The breath is coming and going; let it be free in its natural condition. The speech remains silent. Glorious Ti-lo-pa said that we should hold the mind to be like space.<sup>1253</sup>

Also Sa-ra-ha [said]:<sup>1254</sup> [fol. 4a]

To perform [the meditation which is] similar to space and breathing equally ties [the mind].  
Perfectly knowing the equality [brings about] complete absorption.

The Archer (Sa-ra-ha)<sup>1255</sup> says, “When you possess that ability,  
The impermanent movement will quickly be abandoned.”

Thus, he taught, and you should understand the meaning of what is taught also from the *Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā)*:<sup>1256</sup>

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<sup>1253</sup> See *Mahāmudropadeśa*, verse 8, Tib. *Phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag*, D 2303, fol. 243b.3; P 3132, *tsi*, fol. 156b.5. This paraphrased citation does not correspond exactly to the Tibetan line in this work, even though the content is similar. The precise wording fits much better to P 3068 (*Dohākośagīti*), *mi*, fol. 77a.3, as has been shown above in the critical edition.

<sup>1254</sup> See *Dohākośagīti*, verse 79. The Sanskrit verse in RAY 2007: 145 (English translation p. 165) reads:

*sabba rūa tahi kha-sama karijjaī*  
*kha-sama-sahābē maṇa bi dharijjaī.*  
*[jo tahī so maṇa] amaṇu karijjaī*  
*sahaja-svabhābē so paru rajjaī ||.*

Tib. *Do ha mdzod kyi glu*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 77a.4–5; D 2224, fol. 72b.7. For slightly different English translations, refer to GUENTHER 1993: 98; JACKSON 2004: 75; SCHAEFFER 2005: 148, lines 179–182. Kurtis Schaeffer further provided the Sanskrit and Tibetan sources of this song in SCHAEFFER 2005: 209, 211.

<sup>1255</sup> The full metaphorical explanation of the Tibetan name of Sa-ra-ha, “mda’-bsnun,” according to the *Do ha skor gsum tī ka*, fol. 3.2–3, is contained in a praise of Sa-ra-ha: “he who has shot the arrow of nonduality into the heart of duality.”

<sup>1256</sup> See *Āṣṭasāhasrikā*, chapter 8: *viśuddhiparivarto 'ṣṭamaḥ*, “Depth and Purity of Perfect Wisdom;” The Sanskrit line in VAIDYA 1960B: 98 reads: *ākāṣe sa kauśika yogamāpatsyate, yaḥ prajñāpāramitāyām yogamāpatsyate*. Tib. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*, D 12, *ka*, fol. 111a.2, p. 221a.2.

To perform the practice in terms of the Perfection of Wisdom

Means to perform the practice in terms of space.

By meditating in that way you will develop a good part of abiding, and you will achieve the excellent cause [for the development] of a stable meditation state (*bsam gtan: dhyāna*) and calm abiding (*zhi gnas: śamatha*).

Concerning the detailed branches of these [practices], you should read what I have taught concerning the nine methods for mental [calm] abiding and the eleven [kinds of] mental activity.<sup>1257</sup>

The cause of calm abiding is relying on positive conduct. The essence is to separate yourself from conceptualizing the disturbing feelings. This is the condition to create an especially stable mind. The benefits are to overcome coarse disturbing feelings and suffering. We should recognize [from the above explanations] the progressive steps of stabilizing the unstable mind.

#### *Session 4*

Then, in terms of the direct introduction in order to develop higher insight,<sup>1258</sup> previously [it was said] from the mouth of Glorious Ti-lo-pa:<sup>1259</sup>

Alas, this is the gnosis of self-awareness.

It is beyond the path of speech; it is not an object of experience of the [defiled] mind.

There is nothing whatsoever to be taught by me, Ti-lo-pa.

You should know that it displays its own nature.

The meaning of what was thus taught is that from the state of clear and nonconceptual abiding, after the mind is held as previously [explained], you should examine the unfolding perception of the sixfold group.

Do those discursive thoughts arise from form, sound, smell, taste, sensations and [mental] phenomena appearing as external objects, or do they arise from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body? Having thus examined, discursive thoughts do not arise from any

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<sup>1257</sup> This work, under the title of | *sems gnas pa'i bzhag thabs dgu dang yid la mi byed pa bcu gcig gsal byed* |, which actually should be rendered as “the nine methods for mental [calm] abiding and the eleven [kinds of] freedom from mental activity,” appears in the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum* among the titles of nonextant works of the Third Karmapa, furthermore as no. 234 in the composite list of his works in SEEGER 2009: 229.

<sup>1258</sup> The second part explains various techniques of higher insight meditation (*lhag mthong: vipaśyanā*).

<sup>1259</sup> See *NA ro pa'i rnam thar*, fol. 58a.1–2, p. 191.

of these. There is certainty that the six objects and the five sense faculties are clear in their own essence, but nonconceptual.

Well, the perceptions of the five [sense-]doors, the eye-perception apprehending forms, [fol. 4b] the ear-perception apprehending sounds, the nose-perception apprehending smells, the tongue-perception apprehending tastes, the body-perception apprehending sensations, the group of these five then appears momentarily as depending on the objects and sense faculties. And their essence is clear but nonconceptual. Therefore, in terms of the perception of the sixfold group the mental perception (*vid*) alone has to be investigated as the root.

With respect to this, mind focusing on phenomena in correspondence to the perceptions of the five [sense-]doors in its own essence is of a momentary nature, clear, but nonconceptual. Therefore, in terms of one's own essence of the perceptions of the sixfold group, there is no delusion. The previous perception has ceased, the later one has not [yet] arisen; the arising of any present moment then appears and is clear, therefore relative truth is not discarded.

Even though it is clear, it is not established as form, it is not established as color. It does not exist as produced by a creator or a self, [such as] *Jha*, or *Īśvara*, or *Brahmā*, or subtle particles, or a truly existent hidden substance, or an individual (*puruṣa*), and so on.<sup>1260</sup> Therefore, if it is empty by its own nature, absolute truth is not discarded.

The two [aspects of] appearance and emptiness again are inseparable. Whatever appears and whatever can be expressed is completely liberated in its true nature and from everything else.<sup>1261</sup> Thus, it should be realized.

This is “self-awareness,” and the actual realization concerning any self-awareness as being deluded is called “gnosis,”<sup>1262</sup> because of knowing that the natural state abides from the beginning.<sup>1263</sup> Ordinary childish persons do not know how to express such direct

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<sup>1260</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje provided this list of possible mistaken viewpoints concerning the origin of all phenomena almost literally also in his *rNam shes ye shes*, verse 3, lines 8–11, and in the *sNying po bstan pa*, A, p. 286, lines 104–106. Among other contents, this also shows the close connection between these works as discussed in chapters 3.5 and 5.2.

<sup>1261</sup> This passage was quoted and discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis in the context of presenting Rang-byung-rdo-rje's balanced approach and his specific way of formulating the Rang stong and gZhan stong viewpoints (4.6).

<sup>1262</sup> Here, the Third Karmapa commented on the first line of the above verse by Ti-lo-pa: “Alas, this is the gnosis of self-awareness.” His commentary on this verse continues from this line up to the end of this section.

<sup>1263</sup> In this last part of the sentence, Karmapa skillfully incorporated an etymological explanation of the term gnosis (*ye shes*): *ye nas gnas pa'i gnas lugs shes pa* = to know (*shes*) the natural state, which abides from the beginning (*ye*).

perception, since it is not an object of experience of the conceptual defiled mind (lit. the concepts of the mind possessing disturbing feelings). Therefore, there is nothing to explain, until you experience it yourself.<sup>1264</sup> This is also [taught] in a *Doha*:<sup>1265</sup>

I do not accept and reject the coming and going,  
Leave alone the natural clarity of water or a butter lamp.

Thus, and<sup>1266</sup>

Alas, this is self-awareness;  
More than that cannot be directly shown.  
Do not produce as a delusion [something different] from this.<sup>1267</sup>

Thus, it is said. Also from the *lTa-ba mdor-bsdus (Dr̥ṣṭisaṃkṣeta)*:<sup>1268</sup>

[fol. 5a] That very self-awareness free of elaborations  
In terms of appearance and emptiness is empty and appears;  
Therefore, appearance and emptiness are inseparable,  
For example, like the moon in water.<sup>1269</sup>  
Establish nonduality in that way.

Even though the establishment of the perceptions and so on by means of scriptural authority and reasoning is taught in all scriptures, these are enough conceptual elaborations. That concludes the introduction into the perceptions of the sixfold group.

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<sup>1264</sup> This statement alludes to the teachings by the master sGam-po-pa in the 20th chapter of his *Dwags po thar rgyan*. Orna Almogi in her Ph.D. thesis (ALMOGI 2009: 351–360, 463–472) provided a translation and a critical edition of this section. She showed that Mi-la-ras-pa’s view concerning the gnosis of a buddha, which was more or less the same as the one expressed here by the Third Karmapa, was originally just a gloss (p. 359), which had only later been incorporated into the main text (see KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 286). Sherab Gyaltzen’s edition of the *Dwags po thar rgyan* (B), p. 337, left it out.

<sup>1265</sup> See *Dohākośagīti*, Tib. *Do ha mdzod kyi glu*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 80a.3–4. The two lines appear in RAY 2007: 147, verses 82, 83.

<sup>1266</sup> Lines 1 & 3: *Dohākośagīti*, verse 34, lines 1 & 2. Tib. *Do ha mdzod kyi glu*, P 3068, *mi*, fol. 76b.1; line 2 approximately fol. 76b.3. The Sanskrit lines in RAY 2007: 145 (English translation p. 160) read:

*sai-sambiti ma karahu re dhandhā  
bhābhāba sugati cēba bandha ||.*

<sup>1267</sup> The reading of the Tibetan line in the *bsTan-’gyur* (D; P, see the critical edition above) differs by applying the particle “la” instead of “las.” This changes the meaning of the line as follows: “Do not be deluded about this.” Instead of the epistemological approach, not to produce something different from self-awareness as a delusion, the second version would be an ontological approach, not to be deluded about self-awareness as such (see RAY 2007: 160). For slightly different English translations, refer to GUENTHER 1993: 95; SCHAEFFER 2005: 144, lines 129–130.

<sup>1268</sup> See *Dr̥ṣṭisaṃkṣeta*, D 2304, *zhi*, fol. 244b.3. For a further English translation of this song, refer to KUNSANG 1997: 13–14.

<sup>1269</sup> Again an identical example as in the *rNam shes ye shes* appears in this quotation: the moon in water (see chapter 7, verse 4, line 21, including the corresponding footnote).

**Author's note:**

After having provided some more general meditation instructions in between, Rangbyung-rdo-rje continued the *rNam shes ye shes* theme (pp. 66.1–70.2, vol. 11 of the *gSung 'bum*) by focusing on the inner mental functions and their change of state into gnosis.

*Session 5* contains instructions concerning the following three topics:

- A. How the Lama points out your own essence, and after you had experience of it,
- B. How you [attain] proficiency and
- C. How you improve your practice.

The selected section corresponds to the last main point (C.).

**Translation:**

C. To improve your practice means to realize that the perceptions of the sixfold group and the six objects [of] the six faculties are not different from your own mind and that no other creator exists. [fol. 6b] Then, at first, you understand that perceived [objects] and perceiver do not truly exist; then you experience it; finally, you make it a direct clear perception.

In this context, it is most important to examine the immediate mind of the arising and ceasing of all perceptions.<sup>1270</sup> Whenever any perception of the sixfold group arises, it arises depending on the immediate mental activity. With respect to that, when it ceases, after carrying all those positive, negative and immovable actions,<sup>1271</sup> it mixes them with the mind's all-base (fundamental mind); and you should be aware of the hidden defects of this.

Accompanying that [immediate mind] the defiled mind arises,<sup>1272</sup> the thought of "I" in the mind, holding the ego to be a self, the attachment to a self, the ego-pride, which by defiling yourself produces ignorance. Furthermore,<sup>1273</sup> if the perceptions of the sixfold group arise by the condition of that [defiled mind], both subject and object are not recognized as your own clarity. This lets arise the concepts of the truly existing "me and

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<sup>1270</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 16, 17, including the reference to the *Mahāyānasamgraha*. The fifth chapter provides a detailed discussion on the understanding of the immediate mind in the context of the specific interpretation by the Third Karmapa (5.4).

<sup>1271</sup> The latter kind of actions relates to holding the mind in a state of stable concentration, see *Dwags po thar rgyan*, D, pp. 98–101. The English translation appears in KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 118–119.

<sup>1272</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 18, 19, again including the reference to the *Mahāyānasamgraha*.

<sup>1273</sup> Karmapa here provided quite an elaborate explanation on the various functions of the defiled mind, which ends after the presentation of possible deluded concepts below.

mine,” the duality of subject and object. In this way, all disturbing feelings are made to arise. For this reason it is taught that the disturbing feelings of the sixfold group, which have arisen depending on looking outward, are what has to be given up on the path of seeing, whereas the disturbing feelings from looking inward have to be given up through [the path of] meditation.

Even though those who have entered [fruition] as Śrāvakas have obtained peace by having given up those disturbing feelings, which have to be given up on the paths of seeing and meditation related to the aspect of the view concerning the individual self, they are far away from the great enlightenment of a buddha. This is because they are [still] deluded in terms of the functions of the immediate mind and the antidote, which is the selflessness of phenomena.<sup>1274</sup>

Therefore, intelligent persons who have obtained the state of mind of meditative stability should meditate in this way. When they settle the mind in the nonconceptual concentration, the mind of the sixfold group dissolves into space. When they arise again from that meditative absorption, they see the movement of the subtle mental activity of the concepts. If at that time they do not accept the view taught by an authentic Lama, the [following] deluded concepts [might] arise:

[fol. 7a]

[There might be] the nihilistic view of thinking: “Since the mind is not truly established and any place for the arising and any truly ceasing do not exist, all thoughts are causeless.”

Or [there might be] the eternalistic view of thinking: “Even though the nature of the thoughts is that they are obstructed, they arise again and because this appearance is not interrupted, they are permanent.”

And [there might be] concepts in terms of a self when thinking: “The place of the occurrence of these movements of the perceptions exists within one single mind.”

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<sup>1274</sup> Concerning this specific explanation, Jim Rheingans in RHEINGANS 2008: 178–179 has summarized the instructions provided by the Eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje in his *Kam-tshang phyag chen khrid* (fol. 17a, p. 988) as follows: “Vipaśyanā is at first introduced with the depictions of essencelessness (Tib. *bdag med*, Skt. *anātman*). After some discussions, the Karmapa argues for a particular way of insight meditation, which is summarized as ‘... [one] needs to settle the immediate mind (*de ma thag yid*) on all aspects of the mental formation (Skt. *saṃskāra*, Tib. *’du byed*) of the eight groups of consciousness’. In other words, ‘immediate’, meaning also ‘moment’ and ‘settle’ is defined as ‘apprehending’ (*’dzin pa*), an approach attributed to sGam po pa and the Third Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje.” Further details on the connection between this instruction and the Great Seal practice are given in footnote 66, pp. 178–179, including a reference to “Rang byung rdo rje’s *rNam shes ye shes ’byed pa’i bstan bcos*.”

Also [there might be] deluded concepts that outer objects should be obstructed thinking: “If the appearances of outer objects cease, this is a nonconceptual state, and therefore, the appearances of objects must be blocked.”

Again [there might be] the deviation of holding the state of stable meditation to be ultimate when thinking: “The stable meditation state is ultimate when discursive thinking subsides, happiness and bliss subside, the movement of mindfulness and awareness subsides, and the exhaling and inhaling of the breath subside.”<sup>1275</sup>

In addition [there might be] the deviation into the nondiscriminative meditative absorption when thinking that obstructing the discrimination of holding onto characteristics concerning the clear but nonconceptual objects would be ultimate.

Then [there might be] the deviation of the formless [state] asserting that dissolving all appearances and materiality similar to space or limitless consciousness or nothingness or the absence of both, nondiscrimination and discrimination,<sup>1276</sup> would be ultimate.

Not understanding these [functions of the] mind is the root of these and other negative views of the three realms such as the belief in an individual self and so on. In this way all disturbing feelings arise which then is called the defiled mind.

This root originates from incorrect conceptualization. When you have seen this, you remain in gnosis with respect to the natural state of the clear and nonconceptual outer sixfold group [of perception]. The agitation by the mind’s clinging to characteristics as well as accepting and rejecting generates all the sufferings of the cycle of existence, whereas knowing the remedies produces all virtues and thus all happiness of the cycle of existence.

[fol. 7b]

After having realized this as the origin, settle this mind, which conceptualizes both what has to be given up and the remedies and runs towards them, in a stable meditation state, which is naturally clear but empty and train respectively in the four concentration states, the four formless states accompanied by cessation.

In post-meditation you should be skilled with respect to all the functions of how causes and conditions [and their] results come about in terms of the concepts of what has

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<sup>1275</sup> According to tradition, any state of stable concentration is just a state of mind, but does not mean to have realized the nature of mind. That is why, as mentioned above, *zhi gnas* (*śamatha*) and *lhag mthong* (*vipāśyanā*) have to be practiced in inseparable union.

<sup>1276</sup> The four states mentioned here are the four concentration states experienced in the formless realm; they are not identical with liberation from the cycle of existence. These states are explained in *Dwags po thar rgyan*, D, pp. 99–101 under *’bras bu skye ba’i bsam gtan*, rendered in KÖNCHOG GYALTSEN 1998: 118–119 under the heading of “Results Born of Meditative Concentration.”

to be given up and the remedies, and you should realize them (these functions). The understanding that all conceptual discriminations into the three circles<sup>1277</sup> are obscurations seals all phenomena with equanimity, having emptiness and selflessness as their true essence.

Do not develop the pride of “me and mine” concerning the mind of the all-base,<sup>1278</sup> but practice the development of joyful effort until all disturbing feelings are purified and you have control over all concepts. Detailed explanations exist in *Training Conceptuality* and *Possessing the Four Connections*,<sup>1279</sup> therefore, you should read it in those [works].<sup>1280</sup>

Based on understanding and becoming familiar  
 With the clarity and nonconceptuality of the sixfold group of perception,  
 Directly perceived and free from concepts,  
 You develop insight into the direct clear perception of the mind,<sup>1281</sup>  
 Its self-awareness, accompanied by the immediate mind  
 [As being] like the [reflection of the] moon on water.

Depending on that, you see the nature of the fundamental mind,  
 Which is accompanied by defilements  
 And of the undefiled mirror-like gnosis<sup>1282</sup>  
 In the way of an inference.

By means of remedies you abandon, transform and realize the nature of both,  
 The gross manifest disturbing feelings and their latent tendencies.

<sup>1277</sup> The three circles are subject, object, and action. To realize these three circles as being inseparable, or in other words aim for the realization of nonduality, is the principal approach of the Great Seal (*Mahāmudrā*) practice. This is meant by the expression “seals all phenomena.”

<sup>1278</sup> See *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 20–22. Rang-byung-rdo-rje here called this function “the mind of the all-base (*sems kun gzhi*),” but not the “all-base consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*).” He explained this distinction in his *Zab nang rang 'grel*, B, 8a.6–7. For a discussion of this distinction from the rNying-ma perspective, see chapter 6, section 2.

<sup>1279</sup> See *rNam rtog rtsal sbyong*, no. 256, and *lTa sgom 'brel pa bzhi ldan gyi don bshad kyi man ngag*, short: *'Brel pa bzhi ldan*, no. 257 in the list of nonextant works, in SEEGER 2009: 230.

<sup>1280</sup> This is the concluding advice to this section with further references. Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed the following section, the final instructions of the main body of this treatise, in verse. Its content closely corresponds to the second part of the *rNam shes ye shes* emphasizing the pure aspect of gnosis.

<sup>1281</sup> The four kinds of direct, clear perception (*mngon sum tshad ma: pratyakṣa*) have been discussed in the second chapter under the Pramāṇa Sources (2.1.2).

<sup>1282</sup> Concerning the mirror-like gnosis see *rNam shes ye shes*, verses 23, 25b, including the Indian source. The other four kinds of gnosis have been explained in verses 24–32.

Then you attain mastery in terms of pure discriminating higher knowledge<sup>1283</sup>

And its meditative concentration,

The realization of freedom from both [manifest and latent disturbing feelings],

As many as there are.

At that time, the fundamental mind (or all-base) will directly appear.

The all-base is pure at the moment of being liberated

From all concepts of suchness and of results.<sup>1284</sup>

At that time, you will attain the enlightenment of a buddha.

Alas! Because they do not realize this function,

The naïve persons are bound by “me and mine.”

The Śrāvakas become bound by the fetters

Of the antidote that is individual selflessness.

Although after training in the concepts of perceived phenomena,

They attain the state of a Pratyekabuddha,

[As long as] the perceiving part is not realized as the fundamental mind,

They are [still] left on the path.

Perfect buddhahood is complete realization.

Because it is [like that], it is unsurpassable.

[Conclusion]

#### Author’s note:

The third and final part of the treatise is the Conclusion (*rjes kyi don*). This last part does not directly involve the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. It has therefore not been included here. The colophon reports that Rang-byung-rdo-rje composed these “progressive Mahāmudrā instructions as a slight extension to the spiritual advice given by the Protector Zla-’od-gzhon-nu<sup>1285</sup> ... They should be practiced together with the Six Teachings of

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<sup>1283</sup> The term *so sor shes pa’i shes rab* closely corresponds to *so sor rtog pa’i shes rab*, mostly rendered as “discriminating higher knowledge” or “discriminating wisdom.”

<sup>1284</sup> Rang-byung-rdo-rje explained the freedom from concepts concerning suchness and the results in his *sNying po bstan pa*, A, p. 287. 3–4: “This is to be free from the four types of clinging to characteristics: the concepts concerning what has to be given up, the remedies, suchness and the results (*spangs gnyen de bzhin nyid rtogs dang || ’bras bu’i mtshan ’dzin bzhi bral ba ||*).”

<sup>1285</sup> Alias Kumāra Candrabhā or sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079–1153).

Nāropa.<sup>1286</sup> These instructions have been composed on the first day of the fifth month in the Wood Mouse year (1324) at [the retreat place] bDe-chen.”<sup>1287</sup> This final advice once more confirms the function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as a bridge between the two core instructions of the bKa’-brgyud lineage, the *Nā ro chos drug* (Six Doctrines of Nāropa), and the Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*, Great Seal).

### 8.3 Critical Editions and Translations of Other Selected Sections on the *rNam shes ye shes* Discourse

The following selected sections elaborate on and highlight several subtopics included in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise. As was noted in chapter 5, in his songs and in other commentaries Rang-byung-rdo-rje addressed particular aspects of this discourse, because he could not explain them in detail in the rather concise principal composition. In this way, he widened the understanding of the implications of his profound instructions for his students. The limited scope of this thesis only allows for those examples most relevant to the precise understanding and evaluation of these topics.

#### 8.3.1 The *Sems can rnams kyi thog mar ’khrul pa’i tshul*

A few verses are taken from the song entitled *Sems can rnams kyi thog mar ’khrul pa’i tshul*<sup>1288</sup> – rendered as “The Manner of Delusion at the Beginning of Sentient Beings<sup>1289</sup>.” The three extant editions of the selected sections belong to the collection of songs called *mgur ’bum*, also entitled *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung mgur phyogs sdebs*.<sup>1290</sup> The two later editions are more or less copied from the first one, appearing in the *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, 2006. Except for two missing syllables and one misspelling, there do not therefore appear to be any serious mistakes or alternative readings.

<sup>1286</sup> The *Nā ro chos drug*. The essential bKa’-brgyud viewpoint (and practice) at Rang-byung-rdo-rje’s time has been discussed in chapter 4 (4.4) and in SEEGER 2009: 73–78.

<sup>1287</sup> The retreat center bDe-chen-bstengs was located above mTshur-phu Monastery, the main seat of the Karmapas in Tibet, south of the capital Lha-sa. The quoted colophon in *Phyag chen khrid yig*, B, p. 16.2–6, reads: | ... *phyag rgya chen po’i khrid kyi rim pa mgon po zla ’od gzhon nu’i zhal gdams cung zad rgyas par rang byung rdo rje yis ... bris pa’o* | *’di dang chos drug lhan cig tu nyams len bya’o* | *shing pho byi ba’i lo zla ba lnga pa’i tshes gcig la bde chen du sbyar ba’o* ||.

<sup>1288</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 5, pp. 348.2–353.1.

<sup>1289</sup> This is a literal translation of the title, which becomes evident in the course of this song.

<sup>1290</sup> See *Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum*, vol. 5, pp. 185.2–358.6.

Concerning the contents, the selected sections mainly expound on the principle of dependent origination. They elaborate especially on the conditions that are responsible for the arising of the delusion of the eight aspects of perception. Further verses express the qualities progressively achieved on the path and on the level of highest realization. Thus, they elucidate aspects of the gnosis part of the *rNam shes ye shes*.

fol. 174b.2 [348.2]

sems can rnam kyī thog mar 'khrul pa'i tshul ||  
rang sems rgyal ba'i snying po dri med las ||  
rang ngo spros bral stong pa'i rang bzhin dang ||  
rang bzhin ma 'dres yongs su gsal ba las ||

'gag med rol par kun tu 'byung ba ste ||  
mar me dang ni mar me'i 'od bzhin du ||  
de nyid dang ni gzhan du brjod med kyang ||  
rang snang gsal ba'i cha las yul du gyur ||

rang rig 'gyu ba yul du ma gnas pas ||  
tha dad ltar snang yang dag mi rtog gis ||  
dkrugs pas nang du nga dang bdag du rtog ||  
yul drug snang ba nga yi zhes su 'dzin ||

de ltar yul dang dmigs pa'i rkyen las ni ||  
sems kyī nus pa dbang por snang ba yis ||  
bdag rkyen 'tshogs pa'i skas cig byas ||<sup>1291</sup>  
tha dad snang ba'i rnam shes drug po bskyed ||

de'i khyad par sems las byung ba las ||  
dkar nag mi g.yo las rnam 'du byed pas ||  
kun gzhi'i<sup>1292</sup> rnam par shes pa bskyed pa yin ||  
de ni rgyu'i rkyen zhes grags pa ste ||

de ni ma | 349 | sgribs lung ma bstan pa'i phyir ||

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<sup>1291</sup> The comparison to the meter applied in all other lines of the song confirms that two syllables are missing in this line.

<sup>1292</sup> gzhi'i] the spelling *bzhi* in *kun gzhi* is obviously a mistake.

khams gsum las kyi 'bras bu nye bar bsgrubs ||  
de ma gtogs pa rten 'brel bcu gnyis su ||  
ma rtogs zo chu'i khyud mo bzhin du 'khyam || [349.1]

...

[350.2]  
bsam gtan la brten mngon shes rdzu 'khrul thob ||  
sbyor ba'i lam la nges par son pa yin ||  
'khor 'das thams cad sems kyi tshul shes shing ||  
gzung dang 'dzin pa rnam par dben pa dang ||

chos kun rnam par 'byed pa'i shes rab dang ||  
skyon brgyad med pa'i bsam gtan bzhi pa 'dres ||  
yang dag brtson 'grus ting nge 'dzin ni ||<sup>1293</sup>  
dag dang shin tu sbyangs pa'i yon tan rdzogs ||

mnyam gzhaq rnam par mi rtog thob nas kyang ||  
de nyid ngang nas phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten kun ||  
gzugs sgra dri ro reg bya sems can gyi ||  
khams dang dbang po gsal bar snang ba dang ||

yon tan brgya phrag bcu gnyis snang 'gyur zhing ||  
rtog pa med pa'i rgyal ba'i sras gyur pa || [350.5]

...

[351.1]  
sangs rgyas zhing sbyongs sems can thams cad sgrol ||  
rjes su dran pa bcu drug rdzogs pa yis ||  
spyan lnga gzungs dang ting 'dzin yon tan rnams ||  
dpag tu med pa yongs su rdzogs gyur cing ||

dga' ba bcu drug snying rje bcu drug dang ||  
stong pa bcu drug yongs su rtogs pa yis ||  
skad cig gcig la mngon par byang chub 'gyur ||  
de'i yon tan bshad kyis lang pa min ||

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<sup>1293</sup> Similar to before, the comparison to the meter applied in all other lines of the song confirms that one syllable is missing in this line.

## Translation:

The manner of delusion at the beginning of sentient beings is that  
From the stainless buddha essence<sup>1294</sup> in one's own mind,  
Which in essence has the nature of emptiness free from mental fabrications and  
Which is completely clear and unmixed by nature,

It (the delusion) has fully emerged as unhindered play.  
This is like a butter lamp and the light of a butter lamp.  
Even if with respect to the reality of that no other expression exists,  
The part, which is the clear self-appearance, turns into objects.

Because the movement of self-awareness does not abide as objects,<sup>1295</sup>  
What appears as being different is not correctly realized.  
This is the reason why by turning to the inside, an “I” and a “self” are conceptualized.  
The appearance of six [kinds of] objects is perceived as that which is called “mine.”

From such object and focusing conditions  
By the appearance as [sense] faculties, [which is] the capacity of the mind,  
The group of the predominant conditions is instantly<sup>1296</sup> produced.  
The group of the six perceptions, which appear as separate, have arisen.

From the mental factors (lit. that which has arisen from the mind) being their  
particulars,<sup>1297</sup>

Through the collected activity of positive, negative and immovable actions,<sup>1298</sup>

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<sup>1294</sup> Right from the beginning the Third Karmapa connects the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse to the buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) teachings, because later in the song he also expounds on the level of tantric practice, which is based on these instructions. This combination makes this song repeat the core theme of his *gSung 'bum*, the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy.

<sup>1295</sup> On top of the 9-syllable meter of this line, the logical conclusion applied in this and the following line also clearly show that the two Tibetan syllables *du ma* (many) do not belong together, but *ma gnas* (not abiding or not remaining). The principal mistake in the process of perception seems to be to project a lasting quality on outer objects of perception and seeing them as separate from the projecting awareness. Rang-byung-rdo-rje by means of these lines showed that this is a mistaken perception, because the reification of outer objects depends on the movement of self-awareness.

<sup>1296</sup> The term “instantly” in this context hints to the immediate condition (*de ma thag pa'i rkyen*), which Karmapa otherwise does not explicitly mention in these verses.

<sup>1297</sup> This line relates to verse 16 of the *rNam shes ye shes*, which reads: “Even if the sense perceptions cognize the objects, the mental factors construct their particulars.”

<sup>1298</sup> These kinds of actions and their results have been explained in the previous section in this chapter under the instructions on how “to examine the immediate mind of the arising and ceasing of all perceptions.”

The fundamental mind (or all-base consciousness) is generated.

That is well-known as the causal condition.

And because that is not veiled, being neutral,

The three realms are directly established as the results of the actions.

Nothing else but not having realized that as the twelve links of dependent origination

[Makes one] wander around like the rim of a water wheel.<sup>1299</sup>

...

Relying on meditative stability, we obtain the miraculous powers of higher perception.

Having definitely arrived on the path of junction,

We understand the functions of the mind of the whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Moreover, we have completely removed [the duality of] the perceived and the perceiver.

The [discriminative] higher knowledge of completely distinguishing all phenomena,

Having integrated the fourth stable concentration state free from the eight faults,<sup>1300</sup>

[As well as] the right joyful effort and the right *samādhi*,<sup>1301</sup>

Perfect the qualities of purity and complete training.

Again, after having obtained a nonconceptual meditation state,

While in that very state, there clearly appear all worlds of the ten directions,

Form, sound, smell, taste and touch,

The realms and faculties of sentient beings.

In addition, the twelve times a hundred qualities become apparent,<sup>1302</sup>

We become the son / daughter of the Victor (a *bodhisattva*) free from concepts.

...

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<sup>1299</sup> This example is well-known from the introduction to the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, verse 3, by the Indian master Chandrakīrti.

<sup>1300</sup> According to the *BGT*, p. 3037, the eight faults of the stable meditation states (*bsam gtan gyi skyon brgyad*) pertain to the beings in the desire realm and the three lower levels of meditative absorption (*dhyaṇa*). They are 1. the suffering of existing in the desire realm, 2. an unhappy mind, 3. the concepts and 4. analysis on the first level, 5. attachment to the joy of the second level, 6. the relief of going on to the third level, 7. giving this up, 8. the bliss of the third level.

<sup>1301</sup> These two qualities together with the higher knowledge mentioned before represent the three highest of the “six perfections” (*pha rol tu phyin pa drug: ṣaḍ-pāramitā*).

<sup>1302</sup> Chandrakīrti dedicated the first three verses of the eleventh chapter of his *Madhyamakāvatāra* to this topic. sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen also taught the set of these 1200 qualities in detail in his *Dwags po thar rgyan*, chapter 19, in the context of the qualities attained on the first *bodhisattva* level.

The training of the buddha fields liberates all sentient beings.

By perfecting the sixteen [kinds of] recollections,<sup>1303</sup>

The five eyes<sup>1304</sup> follow; and the qualities of concentration

Become limitless and fully perfected.

By completely realizing the sixteen [kinds of] bliss, the sixteen [kinds of] compassion

And the sixteen [kinds of] emptiness<sup>1305</sup>

In one moment, enlightenment becomes manifest.

There is no end to explaining the qualities of that.

### 8.3.2 The *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*

The Third Karmapa provided several detailed explanations on the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in his commentary on the *Chos dang chos nyid rnam 'byed* (*Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*), which is ascribed to the Bodhisattva Maitreya.<sup>1306</sup> Some shorter sections of this work have already been discussed in chapter 5, especially related to the *three natures* (*rang bzhin gsum: trisvabhāva*). The following section, also referring to the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction, places this topic even more clearly in the context of the “three natures.” The focus here lies on the “change of state” (*gnas gyur pa*) of the deluded state into the state free from delusion.

In the fifth chapter we saw that Rang-byung-rdo-rje regarded the change of state, the suchness of the eight aspects of perception, the nonconceptual gnosis, the buddha nature, as well as the *dharmakāya* as synonyms. He confirmed the inseparability of “gnosis” and

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<sup>1303</sup> There exist different enumerations of recollections, nevertheless, the “sixteen kinds of recollections” most probably refer to the “Sixteen Recollections of Inhaling and Exhaling the Breath” (*dbugs dbyung ba dang rngub pa rjes su dran pa rnam pa bcu drug: ṣoḍaśākāra anāyānānusmṛtiḥ*) taught in the *Mahā-sāhasrapramardanīsūtra*, 1.247, Tib. fol. 76.b. For the Sanskrit version, see IWAMOTO 1937: 24.

<sup>1304</sup> According to *BGT*, pp. 1671–1672, these five eyes are: 1. human eye (*sha'i spyan*), 2. divine eye (*lha'i spyan*), 3. wisdom eye (*shes rab kyi spyan*), 4. Dharma eye (*chos kyi spyan*), and 5. gnosis eye (*ye shes kyi spyan*), often also called “buddha eye” (*sangs rgyas kyi spyan*).

<sup>1305</sup> The sixteen kinds of bliss, compassion and emptiness can be explained separately. Nevertheless, all of these sets appear in the context of the inner (second) chapter of the *Kālacakratāntra* (*Adhyātmapaṭāla*). Therefore, it seems that Rang-byung-rdo-rje in this verse especially alluded to the teachings of this tantra. For the Sanskrit section related to the sixteen kinds of bliss, refer to UPADHYAYA 1986: 45. Vesna A. Wallace provided a detailed explanation of this topic in WALLACE 1995: 155–157. The Sanskrit lines related to the sixteen kinds of emptiness and the sixteen kinds of compassion appear in UPADHYAYA 1986: 21. For corresponding explanations, refer to WALLACE 1995: 93–94 as well as BANERJEE 1985: xv–xvi. Chandrakīrti taught the sixteen kinds of emptiness on the sūtra level in his *Madhyamakāvatāra*, chapter 6, verses 180–218.

<sup>1306</sup> See the *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan* in *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 488–613.

“change of state” again a few lines further down in his commentary: “The essential purpose is that through the engagement [into the path] the gnosis of the complete change of state will be realized.”<sup>1307</sup> This belongs to the Third Karmapa’s special interpretations of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse. It is an additional reason why the detailed explanations on the expression “change of state” provided in this commentary refer to the whole gnosis part of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise.

Again the latter two from among the three extant editions are just copies of the first edition in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*. Therefore, when preparing this critical edition and translation, except for the citations from classical treatises, no significant differences between one edition and the next could be detected. Apparent misspellings or other errors will be indicated.

[fol. 33a.3] [552.3]

| de la kun brtags gzhan dbang gi dri ma med par gyur pa na | shes bya thams cad gnyis  
su med pas | ye shes zang mar gyur te | de bzhin nyid tsam du snang bas te | 'di ni sems  
yid rnam par shes pa gnas gyur nas ye shes lnga'i rang bzhin du yongs su grub pa yin no  
| 'dir 'gyur ba ni bsgom pa'i lam mthar thug par ro | de ni skad cig ma zhes mngon par  
rtogs pa'i rgyan du gsungs te<sup>1308</sup> | zag pa med pa'i chos gcig gi rang bzhin du chos thams  
cad bsdu nas rtogs par 'gyur ste | zo chu'i rgyud thams cad rtog pa<sup>1309</sup> cig gis 'gul ba ltar  
ro | de'i tshe rnam par smin pa'i skad cig kyang shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i rang  
bzhin dang | chos dkar po thams cad | dbye ba med par rang gi rang bzhin du gyur pas  
skad cig ma'i ye shes zhes bya'o | de la [553] kun brtags gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid

<sup>1307</sup> The Tibetan line (p. 496.1) reads: | *zhugs pas gnas yongs su gyur pa'i ye shes rtogs par 'gyur ba ni | dgos pa'i dgos pa'o* ||.

<sup>1308</sup> See *Abhisamayālamkāra* (*mNgon rtogs rgyan*), P 5184, vol. 88, fol. 13a.4–6. Here, Rang-byung-rdo-rje paraphrased the contents in prose, but he did not quote the exact verse lines. The Tibetan lines in P read:

*sbyin pa la sogs re res kyang*	
*zag med chos kun bsdu pa'i phyir*	
*thub pa'i skad cig gcig pa yis*	
*rtogs pa 'di ni shes par bya*	
*ji ltar skyes bus zo chun rgyud*	
*rdog thabs gcig gis bskyod pa na*	
*thams cad cig car 'gul pa ltar*	
*skad cig gcig shes de bzhin no*	
*gang tshe chos dkar thams cad kyi*	
*rang bzhin shes rab pha rol phyin*	
*rnam smin chos nyid gnas skabs skyes*	
*de tshe skad cig gcig ye shes*	

<sup>1309</sup> rtog pa] rdog thabs P 5184, vol. 88, fol. 13a.4.

snang yang mi bden par mi lam ltar rtogs pa mthar phyin pas | pha rol tu phyin pa'i spyod  
 pa dag pa phul du phyin pa dang | chos thams cad dmigs su med pa'i don skyes bu gnyid  
 las sad pa lta bur sgrib pa thams cad las grol bar gyur pa'i phyir ro | des na 'dir sgrib pa  
 thams cad zad pa'i shes pa dang | chos thams cad mi skye ba mngon sum mthar thug pas  
 zad pa dang mi skye ba shes pa'o | theg bsdus las kyang<sup>1310</sup> | ci ltar chos kyi sku 'di reg  
 pas<sup>1311</sup> thog ma nyid du thob ce na | theg pa chen po'i chos 'dres pa la dmigs pa rnam par  
 mi rtog pa dang | rjes las<sup>1312</sup> thob pa'i ye shes rnam pa lnga<sup>1313</sup> legs par bsgoms pas thams  
 cad du tshogs legs par bsags pa dang | sgrib pa phra mo<sup>1314</sup> bshig<sup>1315</sup> par dka' ba bshig  
 pa'i phyir | rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyis<sup>1316</sup> ting nge 'dzin<sup>1317</sup> de'i 'jug thogs su sgrib  
 pa thams cad dang bral ba'i phyir<sup>1318</sup> de'i<sup>1319</sup> gnas gyur pa<sup>1320</sup> 'thob bo | zhes gsungs te |  
 | gang gnas gyur pa kun gzhi'i rnam shes dang | gang gis gnas 'gyur pa rgyu mthun  
 pa'i chos skus dang | gang du gnas gyur pa dri ma med pa'i chos skur dang | tshul ci ltar  
 gnas gyur pa | med pa'i chos gnyis dag cing | yod pa'i chos nyid snang bar gyur pa dang  
 | dus nam gyur pa rnam pa bzhi po mos pa dang | reg pa dang | rjes su dran pa dang | skad  
 cig gis de'i rang bzhin du gyur pa dang |<sup>1321</sup>

### Translation:

With respect to that [thoroughly established or perfect nature], when the defilements of the imputed and the dependent natures have become nonexistent, all objects of knowledge are nondual. Therefore, gnosis becomes apparent. There appears only suchness. This means that after the fundamental mind (*sems*), cognition (*vid*) and perception (*rnam par shes pa*) have changed their state, they become thoroughly established as the nature of

<sup>1310</sup> See *Mahāyānasamgraha*, (*Theg bsdus*) P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.6–8.

<sup>1311</sup> pas] P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.6, pa *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*.

<sup>1312</sup> rjes las] de'i rjes la P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.7.

<sup>1313</sup> ye shes rnam pa lnga] P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.7, ye shes lnga *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*.

<sup>1314</sup> phra mo] srab mo P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.7.

<sup>1315</sup> bshig] gzhig P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.7.

<sup>1316</sup> gyis] gyi P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.8.

<sup>1317</sup> no punctuation or interruption] | P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.8.

<sup>1318</sup> no punctuation or interruption] | P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.9.

<sup>1319</sup> de'i] de dag gis P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.9.

<sup>1320</sup> pa] pas P 5549, *Li*, fol. 44a.9.

<sup>1321</sup> The Tibetan lines, pp. 552.3–554.6, are contained in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 6, pp. 488–613. The complete section on “change of state” (*gnas gyur pa*) appears on pp. 554.5–560.1 in the Tibetan text.

the five gnoses. Here, this change of state is the ultimate path of [meditative] cultivation. That is instantaneous, as is said in the *mNgon par rtogs pa'i rgyan* (*Abhisamayālamkāra*)<sup>1322</sup>:

It is realized that all phenomena are comprised of the nature of one undefiled phenomenon.<sup>1323</sup> This is similar to the movement of the whole continuity of a water mill by one single concept (or plan, thought).<sup>1324</sup> At that time, the instant of complete ripening is also of the nature of the perfection of higher knowledge, and all positive phenomena, which are indistinguishable from one's own nature, are called "instantaneous gnosis."<sup>1325</sup>

With respect to that, on the ultimate level we realize that even though the characteristics of the imputed and dependent nature appear, they are false like a dream. This is because the pure conduct of the perfections reaches the highest degree, and the person, [having understood] that all phenomena are unobservable, becomes liberated from all obscurations like waking up from a sleep. Therefore, here it is the knowledge of waking up from all obscuring states and of waking up through the ultimate direct clear perception of all phenomena having not [truly] arisen and knowing that they have not [truly] arisen. This is also stated in the *Theg bsdus* (*Mahāyānasamgraha*):<sup>1326</sup>

If someone asks how the *dharmakāya* is initially attained through getting in touch,<sup>1327</sup> [the answer is:] [It is attained] by means of completely nonconceptual gnosis and the subsequent

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<sup>1322</sup> For the Sanskrit version of this section, refer to verses 1–3, chapter 7, in STCHERBATSKY 1929A: 33.

<sup>1323</sup> The verse version in P 5184, vol. 88, fol. 13a.4, reads slightly different:

Because each instant, such as generosity,  
Contains all undefiled phenomena,  
This realization of the Mighty Ones (buddhas),  
In one single instant, should be understood.

<sup>1324</sup> Again, in P 5184, vol. 88, fol. 13a.4–5, the meaning appears to be slightly different:

In the same way as when a person stirs the continuity of a water mill,  
By one single method of striking,  
The complete mill turns simultaneously.  
The knowledge in one single instant is just like that.

<sup>1325</sup> The last part of the verse version in P 5184, vol. 88, fol. 13a.5–6, is rendered as follows:

At the time, when [resting] in the state of true nature,  
Which is the completely ripened nature of all positive phenomena,  
At that time the Perfection of Higher Knowledge has arisen,  
The gnosis in one single moment.

<sup>1326</sup> For further translations of this citation, refer to LAMOTTE 1973, chapter 10, pp. 373–374, verse 4; GRIFFITHS 1989: 50.

<sup>1327</sup> The reading *reg pas* (through getting in touch) is preferable here, since the particle "to" connecting with the *dharmakāya* is missing. Lamotte has inserted many Sanskrit terms for clarification which he must have reconstructed, because any complete Sanskrit version is missing so far.

gnosis, which have as their object the unified doctrine of the Mahāyāna. Moreover, [these gnoses are attained] through having cultivated well the five aspects of gnosis<sup>1328</sup> and having gathered completely the [two] accumulations. [They are attained] by the *vajra*-like *samādhi*, since that concentration state eliminates the subtle obscurations, which are difficult to overcome. Because we are free from all obscurations, which obstruct the engagement into that [stable concentration state], we have accomplished [the *dharmakāya*] through the change of state of those (obscurations). Thus, it is said.

That which has changed state, is the fundamental mind (*alayavijñāna*). In addition, that by which it has changed state, is the *dharmakāya*, which is in conformity with the cause. That into which it has changed its state is the undefiled *dharmakāya*. The way in which it has changed state is that the two nonexistent phenomena (the imputed and the dependent natures) have become pure and that the existing true nature of phenomena (*dharmata*) has become apparent. Moreover, the time during which it has changed state is the group of four [phases] of aspiration, contact, recollection and instantaneous [realization],<sup>1329</sup> through which it becomes the essence of that [fundamental mind].

### 8.3.3 The *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*<sup>1330</sup>

Rang-byung-rdo-rje explained in the following section what defiles the *dharmadhātu*, and in which way gnosis realizes it. Again, these explanations function as a kind of summary and auto-commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes* theme. In the context of this treatise, they present the perspective of the *dharmadhātu*, the sphere of reality or basic space of phenomena. The Third Karmapa understood the *dharmadhātu* as a synonym for the inseparability of the pure nature of mind and the nature of all phenomena.<sup>1331</sup> At the same time, as discussed in the fifth chapter, for the Third Karmapa no difference existed between the *dharmadhātu* and gnosis.<sup>1332</sup> Therefore, the exposition here refers to how

<sup>1328</sup> These five aspects including their Sanskrit versions appear in chapter 5, verse 4, of the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, see LAMOTTE 1973: 281.

<sup>1329</sup> The four phases, in this order, correspond to the paths of application, seeing, cultivation or meditation, as well as the *vajra*-like *samādhi*.

<sup>1330</sup> The Tibetan title is: *dBu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*, A, vol. 7, pp. 1–125. The selected section appears on pp. 40.4–42.4, commenting on verses 28–29.

<sup>1331</sup> See *Chos dang chos nyid rgyan*, p. 553.6, the statement at the end of the previous section: “The way it has changed state, is that the two nonexistent phenomena (the imputed and the dependent natures) have become pure, and the existing true nature of phenomena (*dharmata*) has become apparent.”

<sup>1332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.1.

deluded states of mind prevent the realization of gnosis and how gnosis realizes the *dharmadhātu*.

We find again several modern editions of this work. In general, later editions were copied from the earlier ones. The two book editions, *mDo sngags mtshams sbyor*, and RANGJUNG DORJE 2004, received some editorial treatment before publication. In the same way as before, apparent misspellings or other errors will be indicated in the Tibetan text. The critical edition applies the following sigla related to the three main Tibetan editions of the *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*:

- A *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 1–125, 2006, here pp. 40.4–42.4.
- B *mDo sngags mtshams sbyor*. Xining: mTsho-sngon-mi-rigs-dpe-skrun-khang, vol. 16, pp. 219–321, 2003; here pp. 252–253.
- C RANGJUNG DORJE 2004, Sarnath / India: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, pp. 157–312, 2004; here pp. 203–206.<sup>1333</sup>

Whenever the cited classical Tibetan lines deviate from these editions, they were also taken into consideration in this critical edition.

[fol. 20b.4] [40.4]

de la sgrib par byed pa bstan pa ni ||  
bdag dang bdag gi rnam rtog dang ||  
ming gi 'du shes rgyu mtshan gyis ||  
rnam rtog bzhi po 'byung ba yang ||  
'byung dang 'byung las gyur pas so || zhes gsungs te |<sup>1334</sup> (28)

| rang la yod pa ma rtogs pa yang sngar gong du bstan pa ltar | snang ba dang stong pa  
dbyer med pa'i sems rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba la 'gag pa med pa'i yid g.yo ba la brten  
nas | rnam par shes pa la bdag tu rtogs pa dang | de'i dbang gis gzugs la sogs pa bdag gi  
bar rtog pas | 'du byed kyis 'phen pa dang | 'du shes kyi mtshan mar 'dzin pa dang | tshor  
bas bde sdug tu dpyod [41] | cing gcod par byed pa ste | ming bzhi'i<sup>1335</sup> rgyu mtshan ma  
rtogs pa la brten nas mi rtag pa la rtag go snyam pa dang | sdug bsngal ba la bde bar 'dzin

<sup>1333</sup> For the bibliographical details, see Appendix 3, Modern Tibetan Books.

<sup>1334</sup> See *Chos dbyings bstod pa*, *Dharmadhātustrota*, in P 2010, vol. 46, p. 32, fol. 74b.1–2. The cited version of this and the following verse (28 and 29) corresponds to the one in the critical edition of the Tibetan text published by Zhen Liu in LIU 2016: 204–205.

<sup>1335</sup> bzhi] BC, gzhi in A is a misspelling, because the four aspects of “name” have been mentioned just before.

pa dang | rang bzhin gyis stong pa la dngos por 'dzin pa dang | bdag med pa la bdag tu  
rtog pa'i phyin ci log gi rnam rtog bzhi po 'byung ba yang rgyu'i cha nas kun 'byung ba  
dang | 'bras bu'i cha nas 'byung bar 'gyur ba ste | rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba ma rtogs  
pa las gyur pa yin no |

| ye shes rtogs pa'i tshul ni | tshigs su bcad pa gcig ste |

sangs rgyas rnam kyis smon lam yang ||

snang ba med cing mtshan nyid med || (29ab)

| zhes bya ba ni gang dag 'phags pa'i bden pa mngon sum du gzigs pa dang | de la 'jug pa  
rnam kyis lam dang | 'gog pas bsdu pa yang sdug bsngal dang | kun 'byung ba snang ba  
med | rang bzhin mtshan nyid kyis kun tu brtags pa dang | gzhan gyis dbang gis ngo bo  
nyid med par mkhyen nas | sems can thams cad la rgyu med pa'i thugs rje chen po 'jug  
ste | de'i phyir sangs rgyas kyis thabs dang smon lam yang 'di ltar 'jug ste |

so sor rang rig sbyor ldan nyid ||

sangs rgyas rtag pa'i chos nyid can ||<sup>1336</sup> (29cd) zhes gsungs te |

| rnam par rtog pa dang mtshan ma 'dzin pa'i 'du shes kyis 'ching ba las nam par grol ba  
las | so so rang gis rig pa la sbyor bar mdzad pa dang ldan pa nyid de | [42] | 'dir rig par  
bya ba de yang chos kyis dbyings rang bzhin gyis dag pa la | de'i rgyu mthun pa rab tu zab  
pa'i rnam par dkar ba'i chos kyis 'od zer 'phro bas glo bur gyi dri ma sel ba tsam nyid du  
thog mar mkhyen cing bar du<sup>1337</sup> mngon du gyur nas | mthar dri ma med par ye shes dang  
yon tan 'phrin las dang bcas pa la bzhugs pa ni | rang bzhin dang rgyun dang rgyun chad  
med pa'i rtag pa nyid gsum gyi ngo bor gyur pa'o | de ltar mdo sde rgyan las kyang |

sku gsum dag gi<sup>1338</sup> sangs rgyas kyis ||

sku bsdu par ni shes bya ste ||

sku gsum dag gi rang gzhan<sup>1339</sup> gyi ||

don ni<sup>1340</sup> rten dang bcas par bstan ||

de dag rten dang dgongs pa dang ||

'phrin las kyis ni mnyam pa nyid ||

<sup>1336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32, fol. 74b.3.

<sup>1337</sup> bar du] BC, bar tu in A is a misspelling.

<sup>1338</sup> gi] ABC, gis *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, P 5521, vol. 108, chapter 9, verse 65, fol. 12b.8.

<sup>1339</sup> gzhan] *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, P 5521, chapter 9, verse 65, fol. 13a.1, bzhin ABC.

<sup>1340</sup> ni] ABC, 'di *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, P 5521, chapter 9, verse 65, fol. 13a.1.

rang bzhin gyis<sup>1341</sup> ni rgyun mi 'cad ||  
rgyun gyis de dag rtag pa nyid ||<sup>1342</sup> zhes gsungs pa yin no |

### Translation:

Concerning the teaching about what defiles that [above-mentioned Buddha nature, *tathāgatagarbha*]:

Through the concepts of “self and mine,”  
Discriminations of names and reasons,  
The group of four concepts has arisen,  
Based also on the elements and what has appeared from the elements. (28)

It has been shown above that we do not realize what exists inside us. Correspondingly, with respect to the clear light nature of mind, which is appearance and emptiness inseparable, depending on the unhindered movement of the defiled mind, cognition is understood as being a “self.” Moreover, under that influence, form and so on are conceptualized as “mine.” Thus, mental formations propel us [toward activities], and we hold on to discriminated characteristics, and through feelings we analyze and define [experiences] as pleasure and displeasure. Based on not realizing the reason for the four [aspects of] name,<sup>1343</sup> we think of what is impermanent as permanent, perceive suffering as happiness, cling to what is empty by nature as [substantial] entities, and conceptualize what is selfless as a self. The arising of the group of these four mistaken concepts from the point of view of the cause [belongs to] the origin [of suffering], from the point of view of the result it has originated from that. [Both] function like that because of not having realized dependent origination.

The way in which gnosis realizes [the *dharmadhātu*] is composed in one verse:

Even the Buddha’s wishes

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<sup>1341</sup> gyis] ABC, dang *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, P 5521, chapter 9, verse 65, fol. 13a.2.

<sup>1342</sup> For these two verses, refer to *Mahāyānasūtrāṃkāra*, chapter 9, verses 65–66. The Sanskrit in LÉVI 1907: 44 reads:

*tribhiḥ kāyais tu vijñeyo buddhānām kāyasamgrahaḥ |*  
*sāśrayaḥ svaparārtho yas tribhiḥ kāyair nirdarśitaḥ || 65*

*āśrayeṇāśrayenāpi karmaṇā te samā matāḥ |*  
*prakṛtyā 'sraṃsanenāpi prabandhenaiṣu nityatā || 66*

<sup>1343</sup> These are the four mental aggregates (*skandhas*) of feeling, discrimination, mental formation, and perception. They were mentioned earlier. Name and form together make up the five aggregates.

Do not [truly] appear and do not have characteristics.<sup>1344</sup> (29ab)

What is expressed here is what is summarized as the path (*lam*) and the cessation (*'gog pa*) of those who directly see the truths of the Noble Ones and engage in them. For them even suffering and its origin do not appear. After they understand that the natures of imputing characteristics and being dependent on something else do not exist in essence, they enter into causeless great compassion toward all sentient beings. Therefore, they engage in [the *pāramitās* of] methods and wishes [performed] by the buddhas also like this.

Being completely united with their individual self-awareness,  
Buddhas have permanence as their true nature. (29cd)

Being completely liberated from the fetters of concepts and discriminations that hold onto characteristics, [buddhas] are endowed with the activity of uniting with their individual self-awareness. Here, what is called “awareness,” furthermore, refers to the naturally pure *dharmadhātu*. With respect to that, at the beginning it (the *dharmadhātu*) is simply understood in the way that, as corresponding cause through the radiating light rays of the extremely profound positive teachings, the accidental defilements have been removed. In the middle it (the *dharmadhātu*) becomes manifest. After that, at the end, the stainless gnosis and the qualities, together with the activities, are established. They have the essence of the three [aspects of] permanence, of nature [concerning the *dharmakāya*], of continuity [in terms of the *nirmāṇakāya*], and of uninterrupted continuity [concerning the *sambhogakāya*]. As the [*Mahāyāna*]*sūtrālamkāra* says:

The three kāyas should be known  
As a summary of the buddha kāyas.  
The three kāyas are taught [to fulfill] the benefit  
For oneself and for others, together with its foundation.

Through their basis, their motivation, and  
Their activities they are completely equal.  
By their nature, their uninterrupted continuity,  
As well as their continuous [activity], they are naturally permanent.<sup>1345</sup>

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<sup>1344</sup> See *Chos dbyings bstod pa*, *Dharmadhātustrota*, P 2010, vol. 46, p. 32, fol. 74b.2–3.

<sup>1345</sup> For two further English translations of this citation, refer to LIMAYE 1992: 137–138; THURMAN 2004: 97.

**Author's note:**

The selected sections comprise several of the most detailed occurrences of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*. The *Collected Works* contains more treatises partly dedicated to this topic, such as the *Nyams len lag khrid ma* and so on, which could not receive academic treatment in this thesis because they are too extensive. Thus, the sections selected here have to represent all others. They are designed to provide an impression of the vast scope and the profundity of this discourse as elucidated by the Third Karmapa.

## Abbreviations and Bibliography

### (a) Journals, Series, Collections, and Institutions

- BB Bibliotheca Buddhica
- BGT Krang dbyi sun (Zhang Yisun) et al., eds., *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. Beijing: Mi-rigs-dpe-skrun-khang, 1985, 1993.
- BHSD Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Volume 2: Dictionary*. 1953. Reprint: Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., 1985.
- BIB Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica
- BITS Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series
- BST Buddhist Sanskrit Texts Series. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute.
- BTS Buddhist Tradition Series
- CIHTS Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, India (renamed into CUTS, Central University of Tibetan Studies).
- D The Tōhoku reproduction of the sDe-dge *bKa*'-'gyur and *bsTan*'-'gyur. Hakuju Ui et al., eds., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)*. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934.
- DKT mKas-dbang Dung-dkar-blo-bsang-'phrin-las, *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*. Beijing: Krang go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2002.
- DzD Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *mDzod bdun*. Gangtok: Dodrub Chen Rinpoche, 1969. Reprints: Thimphu: National Library of Bhutan, 1983; Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen & Khyentse Labrang, n.d.; volumes 13–19 in *Klong chen pa'i gsung 'bum*, Krung-go-bod-rig-pa-dpe-skrun-khang, 2010.
- HDT John Powers & David Templeman, *Historical Dictionary of Tibet*. Lanham-Toronto-Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012.
- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
- IAIC International Academy of Indian Culture
- IeT Indica et Tibetica
- IIBS The International Institute for Buddhist Studies
- Is.M.E.O Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JIABS *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*
- LIRI Lumbini International Research Institute
- LTWA Library of Tibetan Works and Archives

- MW* Sir Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1899. Reprints: Tokyo: Meicho Fukyukai Co., 1986. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1993.
- NGMCP* Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project, launched in April 2002 (previously Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, NGMPP).
- ODE* Catherine Soanes & Angus Stevenson, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Second revised edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- P* The Kyoto reproduction of the Beijing bKa’-’gyur and bsTan-’gyur (Ōtani). Numbers according to Daisetz T. Suzuki, ed., *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition, Kept in the Library of the Ōtani University, Kyoto*. 168 volumes, Catalogue and Index. Tokyo/Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1961. Reduced-size edition. Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., 1985.
- NZBK* Numata Zentrum für Buddhismuskunde, University of Hamburg
- PTS* Pali Text Society
- Skt.* Sanskrit
- SOAS* School of Oriental and African Studies, London
- SPBMS* Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series
- sTog* sTog bKa’-’gyur. Numbers according to Skorupski, T., “A Catalogue of the sTog Palace Kanjur.” SPBMS, Maior 4. Tokyo: IIBS, 1985.
- SUNY* State University of New York Press
- Taishō* Paul Demiéville et al., eds., *Répertoire du Canon Bouddhique Sino-Japonaise. Édition de Taishō (Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō)*. Fascicule Annexe du Hōbōgirin. L’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Institut de France. Paris & Tokyo: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve – Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1978.
- TBRC* Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (renamed BDRC, Buddhist Digital R.C.).
- Tib.* Tibetan
- WSTB* Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde
- WZKS* *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences; Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna.

**(b) Primary Sources: Indian Works<sup>1346</sup>**

- Abhidharmakośa* Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośam*.  
– Skt. ŚĀSTRĪ 1970, 1981, see *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.  
– Tib. D 4089; P 5590.
- Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.  
– Skt. PRADHAN 1967, 1975.  
– Tib. D 4090; P 5591.
- Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* Yaśomitra, *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.  
– Skt. WOGIHARA 1932–36.  
– Tib. D 4092; P 5593.
- Abhidharmasamuccaya* Asaṅga (ascribed), *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.  
– Skt. PRADHAN 1950.  
– See *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*.  
– Tib. D 4049; P 5550.
- Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* Jinaputra, *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*.  
– Skt. TATIA 1976.  
– Tib. D 4053; P 5554.
- Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyā* Sthiramati, *Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyānāma* (also ascribed to Jinaputra).  
– Tib. D 4054; P 5555.
- Abhisamayālaṃkāra* Maitreya (ascribed), *Abhisamayālaṃkāranamaprajñā-pāramitopadeśaśāstrakārikā*.  
– Skt.1 STCHERBATSKY 1929.  
– Skt.2 TRIPATHI 1993.  
– Tib. D 3786; P 5184.
- Abhisamayālaṃkāraloka* Haribhadra, *Abhisamayālaṃkāraloka*.  
– Skt.1 TUCCI 1932.  
– Skt.2 WOGIHARA 1932–35.  
– Skt.3 VAIDYA 1960A.

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<sup>1346</sup> For the Indian Buddhist works an edition of the Sanskrit and/or the Tibetan version is listed where available. The editions themselves appear under the Secondary Literature below. For easy reference also the Tibetan bibliographical details for the canonical works are given (D = the Tōhoku catalogue number and P = the Ōtani catalogue number, as provided under the above listed abbreviations). English titles of Tibetan texts occasionally appear under the Tibetan short titles, since the Tibetan has priority.

- Tib. D 3791; P 5189.
- Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* *Āryākṣayamatīnirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra*.  
 – Skt. In *Prasannapadā*, LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1903–13.  
 – Tib. BRAAVIG 1993.  
 – Tib. D 175; P 842.
- Ālambanaparīkṣā* Dignāga, *Ālambanaparīkṣā* + *vr̥tti*. (Sanskrit reconstructed, Tib. *dMigs pa brtags pa* + 'i 'grel pa )  
 – Skt. (sections) YAMAGUCHI 1929.  
 – Tib. D 4205; P 5703 (*kārikās* + *vr̥tti*).
- Ālikāliguhyācintyatantra* *Ālikāliguhyācintya[panibhayumahā]tantra*. Tib. *A li ka li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud*. Tib. translation in *Bo-dong-pa'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 92, pp. 1–110; vol. 125, pp. 1–94.
- Ārya-saddharmānusmṛtyupasthāna* Aṭṭacandra [Tr], Ābhayākaragupta, [Tr]  
 Subhūticandra, [Tr] Vidyākaraśānti, [Tr] Śākyarakṣita, [Tr] Śāntākaragupta: *āryasaddharmānusmṛtyupasthānasūtram*.  
 – Skt. (sections) STUART 2015.  
 – Tib. D 287; P 953.
- Āryatrikāyasūtra* *Āryatrikāyanāmamahāyanasūtra*  
 – Tib. D 283; P 949.
- Āṣṭasāhasrikā* *Āryāṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitānāmamahāyānasūtra*.  
 – Skt. VAIDYA 1960B.  
 – Tib. D 12; P 734.
- Atthasālinī* *Atthasālinī* (*Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary).  
 – Pāli E. Müller, revised by Cousins, London: PTS, 1979.
- Avataṃsakasūtra* *Buddhāvataṃsakanāmamahāvāipulyasūtra*.  
 – Tib. D 44; P 761.
- Bodhicaryāvatāra* Śāntideva, *Bodhi[sattva]caryāvatāra*.  
 – Skt. MINAYEFF 1889; BHATTACHARYA 1960.  
 – Tib. D 3871; P 5272.
- Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* Prajñākaramati, *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*.  
 – Skt. VAIDYA 1960C.

- Bodhicittabhāvanā* Mañjuśrīmitra, *Bodhicittabhāvanā*.  
– Tib. P 3418; D 2591.
- Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā* Atīśa (ascribed), *Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā*.  
– Tib. D 3948; P 5344.
- Bodhisattvabhūmi* Asaṅga (ascribed), *Yogācārabhūmau-  
bodhisattvabhūmiḥ*.  
– Skt. WOGIHARA 1930–36; DUTT 1966.  
– Tib. D 4037; P 5538.
- Buddhabhūmisūtra* Āryabuddhabhūmināmahāyānasūtra.  
– Tib. SKORUPSKI 1985, 39; D 275; P 941.
- Catuḥśataka* Āryadeva, *Bodhisattvayogacaryāśāstra-Catuḥśataka-  
Kārikā*, Sanskrit fragments: *Yogācāra*.  
– Skt. LANG 1986.
- Catupratiśaraṇasūtra* *Catupratiśaraṇasūtra*.  
– Skt. VAIDYA 1961.
- Daśabhūmikasūtra* *Daśabhūmikasūtra*.  
– Skt.1 RAHDER 1926.  
– Skt.2 VAIDYA 1967.  
– Tib. D 44; P 761.
- Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* Maitreya (ascribed), *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*.  
– Tib.1 Nozawa in NAGAO & NOZAWA 1955, pp. 9–  
49.  
– Tib.2 P 5524; in MATHES 1996, pp. 61–68.
- Dharmadhātustotra* Nāgārjuna (ascribed), *Dharmadhātustotra*.  
– Tib. D 1118; P 2010.
- Dohākośagīti* Saraha, *Dohākośagīti*.  
– Skt.1 SHAHIDULLAH 1928 (tr. in RAY 2007).  
– Skt.2 BAGCHI 1938.  
– Tib. D 2224; 2268; P 3150; 3068. *mi*, fols. 74b6–  
81b.4. In *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol.  
*om*, fols. 142b2–151a5, pp. 284–301. Phun-tshogs-  
rgyal-mtshan, ed., Dpal-dpungs block print. n. d.
- Dohākośamahāmudropadeśa* Saraha, *Dohākośamahāmudropadeśa*.  
– Tib. D 2273; P 3119.

- Dr̥ṣṭisaṃkṣipta* Nāropa, *Dr̥ṣṭisaṃkṣipta* or *Adhisiddhisamanama*  
– Tib. D 2304.
- Guhyagarbhatantra* *Srīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya*.  
– Tib. P 455; D 832.
- Gurusādhana* Tilopa (Tailika), *Gurusādhana*, transl. by  
Vibhūticandra  
Tib. P 5013; D 3012.
- Hevajrat Tantra* *Śrīhevajramahātantrarāja*.  
– Skt.; Tib. SNELLGROVE 1959.  
– Skt. TRIPATHI & NEGI 2001.  
– Tib. D 417; P 10.
- Jātakamāla* Āryaśūra, *Jātakamāla*  
– Skt. SPEYER 2007.  
– Tib. D 4150; P 5650.
- Jñānavajrasamuccaya* *Śrījñānavajrasamuccayanāmatantra*.  
– Tib. D 447; D 450; P 84.
- Kālacakrat Tantra* *Kālacakranāmatantrarāja*.  
– Skt.1 VIRA & CHANDRA 1966.  
– Skt.2 BANERJEE 1985.
- Laṅkāvatārasūtra* *Āryālaṅkāvatāramahāyānasūtra*.  
– Skt.1 NANJIO 1923.  
– Skt.2 VAIDYA 1963.  
– Tib. P 775; D 107.
- Madhyamakahrdayakārikās* Bhāvaviveka or Bhavya, *Madhyamakahrdayakārikās*  
incl. the *Mādhyamakahrdayavṛttitarkajvālā*, D 3856, T  
5256.  
– Skt. IIDA 1980, chapter 3, pp. 1–136.  
– Tib. D 3855; T 5255.
- Madhyamakālaṃkāra* Śāntarakṣita, *Madhyamakālaṃkārikā*.  
– Tib. ICHIGŌ 1989: 189–225.  
– Tib. D 3884; P 5284.
- Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* Śāntarakṣita, *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti*.  
– Tib. D 3885; P 5285.
- Madhyamakāvatāra* Chandrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatārikā*.

- Skt. XUEZHU 2015.  
– Tib. LA VALLÉE POUSSIN 1912.  
– Tib. D 3861; P 5262.
- Madhyāntavibhāga* Maitreya/Maitreyaṇātha (ascribed),  
*Madhyāntavibhāgakārikā*.  
– Skt. NAGAO 1964.  
– Tib. D 4021; P 5522.
- Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya* Vasubandhu, *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya*,  
– Skt. NAGAO 1964.  
– Tib. D 4021; P 5522.
- Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* Sthiramati, *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*.  
– Skt. YAMAGUCHI 1934.  
– Tib. D 4027; P 5528.
- Mahāmudropadeśa* Tailikapāda (Tilopa), *Mahāmudropadeśa*.  
– Tib. D 2303; P 3132, *zhi*, fols. 242b.7–244a.5.
- Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Pāli edition); *Āryamahāparinirvāṇanāmahāyānasūtra* (Skt. edition).  
– Skt.; Tib. WALDSCHMIDT 1950.  
– Tib. D 120; P 788.
- Mahāparinirvāṇamāhasūtra* *Mahāparinirvāṇamāhasūtra*.  
– Skt. only fragments survived.  
– Tib. HABATA 2013.
- Mahāsāhasrapramardanīsūtra* *Mahāsāhasrapramardanīnāmasūtra*  
– Skt. IWAMOTO 1937.  
– Tib. D 558; P 177.
- Mahāvibhāṣā* Katyāyāniputra, *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*  
*Taishō* 1545.
- Mahāvyūtpatti* *Mahāvyūtpatti*.  
– Skt.; Tib. SAKAKI 1916–25.
- Mahāyānasamgraha* Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha*.  
– Tib. LAMOTTE 1973.  
– Tib. D 4048; P 5549.
- Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* Maitreya (ascribed), *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārakārikā*.  
– Skt.1 LÉVI 1907.

- Skt.2 BAGCHI 1970.  
– Tib. D 4020; P 5521.
- Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* *Mañjuśrījñānasattvasyaparamārthanāmasaṃgīti*  
– Skt.; Tib. WAYMAN 1985.  
– Tib. D 360; P 2.
- Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra* *Āryāmañjuśrīvikrīḍitanāmamahāyānasūtra*  
– Tib. D 96; P 764.
- Mūlamādhyamakakārikā* *Nāgārjuna, Prajñānāmamūlamādhyamakakārikā.*  
– Skt. 1 VAIDYA 1960D.  
– Tib. D 3824; P 5224.
- Nyāyabinduṭīkāṭippaṇi* *Dharmottara, Nyāyabinduṭīkāṭippaṇi.*  
– Skt. ŚĀSTRĪ 1985.  
– Tib. D 4231; P 5730.
- Nyāyamukha* *Dignāga, Nyāyamukha, transl. Xuanzang (602–664).*  
– *Taishō* 1628.
- Pañcaśatkārikā* *Kamalaśīla, Śramaṇapañcaśatkārikāpadābhismaraṇa*  
– Tib. D 4128; P 5630.
- Pañcaskandha* *Vasubandhu, Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇam.*  
– Skt. ŚĀSTRĪ 1955; Skt. & Tib. ENGLE 2009.  
– Tib. D 4059; P 5560.
- Pañcaskandhavaibhāṣā* *Sthiramati, Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavaibhāṣā.*  
– Tib. D 4066; P 5567.
- Pañcaskandhavivaraṇa* *Guṇaprabha, Pañcaskandhavivaraṇa.*  
– Tib. D 4067; P 5568.
- Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrika* *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikaprajñāpāramitā.*  
– Skt. DUTT 1934.  
– Skt. KIMURA 2006.  
– Tib: D 0009/3790; P 0731/5188.
- Pramāṇavārttikā* *Dharmakīrti, Pramāṇavārttikākārikā.*  
– Skt. SĀNKRTYĀYANA 1953; GNOLI 1960.  
– Skt. MYASAKA 1972; VETTER 1990, pp. 39–173.

- Tib. D 4210; P 5709.
- Pramāṇasamuccaya* Dignāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.  
– Skt. HATTORI 1968.  
– Tib. D 4203; P 5700.
- Pramāṇaviniścaya* Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.  
– Skt.1 STEINKELLNER 2007.  
– Tib. D 4211; P 5710.
- Prasannapadā* Candrakīrti, *Mūlamadhyamakavṛttiprasannapadā*.  
– Skt.1 LA VALLEE POUSSIN 1903–13.  
– Skt.2 VAIDYA 1960C.  
– Tib. D 3860; P 5260.
- Ratnagoṭravibhāga* Maitreya (ascribed) *Ratnagoṭravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*.  
– See *Ratnagoṭravibhāgavyākhyā*  
– Skt. NAKAMURA 1961.  
– Tib. D 4024; P 5525.
- Ratnagoṭravibhāgavyākhyā* Asaṅga, *Ratnagoṭravibhāgavyākhyā*.  
– Skt. JOHNSTON 1950.  
– Tib. D 4025; P 5526.
- Ratnaguṇasaṃcaya* *Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*.  
– Skt. OBERMILLER 1937; YUYAMA 1976.  
– Tib. D 13; P 735.
- Samādhirājasūtra* *Samādhirājasūtra*.  
– Skt. in RÉGAMEY 1938, pp. 29–59.
- Sambandhaparīkṣā* Dharmakīrti, *Sambandhaparīkṣā*.  
– Skt. ŚĀSTRĪ 1972.  
– Skt. & Tib. FRAUWALLNER 1934.
- Samdhinirmocanasūtra* *Āryasamdhinirmocananāmamahāyānasūtra*.  
– Skt. LAMOTTE 1935.  
– Tib. D 106; P 774.
- Samdhinirmocanabhāṣya* Asaṅga, *Āryasamdhinirmocanabhāṣya*.  
– Tib. D 3981; P 5481.
- Śrīmālādevīsūtra* *Āryaśrīmālādevīsiṃhanādanāmamahāyānasūtra*.

- Tib. D 92; P 24.
- Suvarṇaprabhāsūtra* *Āryasuvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtrendrarājasūtra*.  
 – Skt.1 NOBEL 1937, 1944, 1958.  
 – Skt.2 BAGCHI 1967.  
 – Tib. D 556; P 174.
- Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* *Āryatathāgatagarbhanāmamahāyānasūtra*.  
 – Skt. ZIMMERMANN 2002.  
 – Tib. D 258; P 924.
- Tattvāvatārākhyā* Śrī Jñānakīrti, *Tattvāvatārākhyasakalasugata-  
 vacastātparyavyākhyāprakaraṇa* (Tib. short: *De kho  
 na nyid la 'jug pa*).  
 – Tib. D 3709; P 4532.
- Triṃśikā* Vasubandhu, *Triṃśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*.  
 – Skt. LÉVI 1925.  
 – Tib. D 4055; P 5556.
- Triṃśikābhāṣya* Sthiramati, *Triṃśikābhāṣya*.  
 – Tib. D 4055; P 5556.  
 – Skt. fragments LÉVI 1925.
- Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* Vasubandhu, *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*.  
 – Skt.; Tib. MUKHOPADHYAYA 1939.  
 – Skt. TOLA & DRAGONETTI 2004.  
 – Tib. D 4070; P 5571.
- Vajrajñānasamuccayaḥ* Jñānakara, tr., *Vajrajñānasamuccayanāmatantra*.  
 – Tib. D 447, vol. ca, fols. 282a.1–286a.6; P 84.
- Vajrapradīpā* Jālandharipāda, *Ācāryasaroruhapādaviracitaśrī-  
 hevajrasādhanasyavajrapradīpānāmaṭippaṇī-  
 viśuddhiḥ*.  
 – Tib. D 1237; P 2366.  
 – Skt. GERLOFF 2017.
- Vajrasikharatantra* *Vajrasikharamahāguhyayogatantra*.  
 – Tib. D 480; P 113.
- Vimalaprabhāṭikā* Kalkin Śrī Puṇḍarīka, *Vimalaprabhāṭikā on Śrī  
 Laghukālacakratantrarāja by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśa*.  
 – Skt. UPADHYAYA 1986.

- Tib. D 1347; P 2064.
- Viṃśatikā* Vasubandhu, *Viṃśikā* / *Viṃśatikā* / *Viṃśatikākārikā*,  
and *Viṃśatikāvṛtti* or *Viṃśatikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*.  
– Skt. LEVI 1925.  
– Tib. D 4056–7; P 5557–8.
- Visuddhimagga* Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*.  
– Pāli: Pali Text Society, 1920–1921.
- Yogācārabhūmi* Asaṅga (ascribed), *Yogācārabhūmi*, or *Bhūmivastu*.  
– Skt. BHATTACHARYA 1957.  
– Tib. D 4035; P 5536.
- Yoginīsañcārya* *Yoginīsañcārya*.  
– Tib. D 375; P 23.
- Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* Nāgārjuna, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikānāma*.  
– Skt.; Tib. in LINDTNER 1987, pp. 72–93, 100–119,  
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*Writings and Revelations of His Holiness bDud-'joms Rin-po-che 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje*, 25 volumes. Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1979–85. TBRC W20869. Reprint: New Delhi: Yashodhara Publications, 1999.

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## Appendix 1

### List of Newly Identified Extant Works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje

In the course of his research on the life and works of the Third Karmapa, the author identified 14 additional extant works (SEEGERS 2009):

- 4 Works related to the rNying-ma lineage (*Rin chen gter mdzod*)**
  - a. *rdo rje rnam 'jom kyi cho ga* |
  - b. *'phags pa gdugs dkar gyi cho ga* |
  - c. *bde gzhegs thugs dril gyi las byang* |
  - d. *rtsa gsum dril sgrub* | (3 works, counted as one)
- 1 Work ascribed to the bKa'-brgyud lineage (*bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*)**
  - a. *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs* |
- 3 Works within the gCod transmission lineage (*Gdams ngag mdzod*)**
  - a. *gcod kyi nyams len* |
  - b. *gcod kyi tshogs las rin po che'i phreng ba* |
  - c. *gcod tshogs yon tan kun 'byung* |
- 4 Commentaries on the *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub* teachings (TBRC)**
  - a. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi gegs sel* |
  - b. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa* |
  - c. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi rnam bshad* |
  - d. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi sgom khrid* |
- 1 *rnam thar* (Liberation Story) of Vajradhāra (*rDo-rje-'chang*) (NGMCP)**
  - a. *chos sku rdo rje 'chang gi rnam par thar pa* |
- 1 Summary on the *phal po che sūtra* (vol. 5, *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*)**
  - a. *mdo sde phal po che las btus pa* |

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**In total 14 additional extant works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje, identified and located until 2009**

The catalogue of the 'Bras-spungs Monastery, published in 2004 by the Dpal-brtsegs Institute in Lhasa, contains further extant works of the Third Karmapa. Logically they have to be structured into three groups:

**The first group** represents the 86 works identified as extant in the *gSung 'bum* published in 2006 and will not be mentioned here.

**The second and third group contain together 16 newly identified works:**

**The second group** in the catalogue of the 'Bras-spungs Monastery (2004) contains those four works which can be more or less clearly identified on the basis of the title list of nonextant works published in this *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*.

The Arabic numbers show the page numbers, the work numbers in the catalogue and below the numbers in the title list compiled by the present author in SEEGERs 2009.<sup>1347</sup>

Work 1:

704. 007763 *gtor ma brgya rtsa bzhugs so* | seems to correspond to  
288. *gtor ma brgya rtsa gsol 'debs dang bcas pa'i skor rnam* |

Work 2:

716. 007908 *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i bzlas pa'i zhal gdams* | and  
740. 008192 *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i zhal gdams* | seem to correspond to  
294. *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs* |

Work 3:

1546. 017446 *byang chub sems dpa' rgyal ba ye shes kyi rnam thar bsdus pa* | and  
1547. 017461 *byang chub sems dpa' rgyal ba ye shes kyi rnam thar bsdus pa* | similar to  
213. *byang sems rgyal ba ye shes kyi rnam thar* |

Work 4:

1620. 018361 *byang chub sems dpa'i skyes pa'i rabs la bstod pa mu tig phreng ba* | and  
218. *gsang byad mu tig phreng ba'i snying po las skyabs 'gro* | most likely correspond

**The third group** in the catalogue of the 'Bras-spungs Monastery (2004) consists of those twelve works not appearing at all in the *gSung 'bum* (2006):

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<sup>1347</sup> This list appears in the *gSung 'bum*: vol. 1, pp. 39.6–43.5, fols. 15.b–20.b. Numbers have been assigned to these works in SEEGERs 2009: 222–226.

176. 001620 *bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi sa chog dbang dbang bskur* |
616. 006734 *rang byung rdo rje mdzad pa'i gar 'byams kyi lung gar las btus pa*
661. 007264 *sku gsung thugs kyi rgyur mdzad ma'i sgrub thabs* |
662. 017267 *rang byung pas mdzad pa'i lhan skyes jo mo'i zhal gdams ngag 'don don bsdus* |
662. 007271 *thams cad mkhyen pa rang byung pa'i zhabs kyi gdams pa gnas gsum mkha' 'gro'i srog snying* |
662. 007272 *lhan skyes jo mo'i zhal gdams bzlas rim 'phrul 'khor rin po che rang byung pas mdzad pa'i dbu phyogs lags so* |
810. 009034 *phyag chen ring rgyud la bstod pa* |
900. 010125 *dpal re ma ti'i srog sgrub kyi man ngag* |
1511. 017031 *dbu ri ba chos kyi dbang phyug gi rnam thar* |<sup>1348</sup>
1605. 018169 *rtogs ldan bsam rin pa'i dris lan yid kyi mun sel* |
1621. 018375 *skyes rabs kyi sdom tshig bzhugs* |
1644. 018660 *skyes rabs brgya pa'i bod rtsom cha tshang* |

The one additional work (not counted here), for which the editors were not able to clarify the authorship of Rang-byung-rdo-rje without any doubt is:

762. 008459 *thugs rdo rje'i man ngag mkhar chung ba'i'o* | ('dir rang byung rdo rje yin min brtag)

The following eight works from the list of 30 works newly identified by the author have later been inserted into the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gSung 'bum 2* published in 2013:

#### 4. *chos sku rdo rje 'chang gi rnam par thar pa*

<sup>1348</sup> The biography of dBu-ri-ba composed by Rang-byung-rdo-rje refers to Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug-brtson-'grus (1187–1259), a student of both gTsang-pa-rgya-ras Ye-shes-rdo-rje (1161–1211) and the First Karmapa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (1110–1193) (see '*Brug pa'i chos 'byung*': fols. 292r–295r, pp. 583.4–587.4. See also *Deb ther sngon po*: fols. 119a.5–121a.2, 587.5–591.2; ROERICH 1949: 672–676). Especially the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud tradition, but also other bKa'-brgyud lineages have regarded and still value this master as an outstanding example for a meditator completely focused on the goal of enlightenment, similar to the famous yogi Mi-la-ras-pa (1040–1123). Three of his compositions extracted from the *Chos rje dbu ri pa'i bka' 'bum* have been included in the same catalogue on p. 1512, the authorship of which is attributed to Lo-ras-dbang-phyug-brtson-'grus.

50. *mdo sde phal po che las btus pa* (extant but so far not identified, therefore not counted)
145. *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs*
146. *thams cad mkhyen pa rang byung rdo rje'i zhal gyi gdams pa gnas gsum mkha' 'gro'i srog snying*
148. *lhan skyes jo mo'i zhal gdams bzlas rim 'phrul 'khor rin po che rang byung pas mdzad pa*
150. *bde gshegs thugs dril gyi las byang gsal ba'i me long*
151. *rdo rje rnam 'jom kyi cho ga*
152. *'phags pa gdugs dkar gyi cho ga*
154. *gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun 'byung*

When subtracting these eight works from the 30 works newly identified by the author, there remain the following 22 works which so far have not been officially included into the *gSung 'bum*:

1. *phyag rgya chen po'i snying gtam tshig gcig ma*
2. *rtsa gsum dril sgrub* | (3 works, counted as one)
3. *gcod kyi nyams len* |
4. *gcod kyi tshogs las rin po che'i phreng ba* |
5. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi gegs sel* |
6. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa* |
7. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi rnam bshad* |
8. *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi sgom khrid* |
9. *mdo sde phal po che las btus pa* |
10. *gtor ma brgya rtsa gsol 'debs dang bcas pa'i skor rnams* |
11. *byang chub sems dpa' rgyal ba ye shes kyi rnam thar bsdu pa* |
12. *byang chub sems dpa'i skyes pa'i rabs la bstod pa mu tig phreng ba* |
13. *bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi sa chog dbang dbang bskur* |

14. *rang byung rdo rje mdzad pa'i gar 'byams kyi lung gar las btus pa*
15. *sku gsung thugs kyi rgyur mdzad ma'i sgrub thabs |*
16. *rang byung pas mdzad pa'i lhan skyes jo mo'i zhal gdams ngag 'don don bsdus |*
17. *phyag chen ring rgyud la bstod pa |*
18. *dpal re ma ti'i srog sgrub kyi man ngag |*
19. *dbu ri ba chos kyi dbang phyug gi rnam thar |*
20. *rtogs ldan bsam rin pa'i dris lan yid kyi mun sel |*
21. *skyes rabs kyi sdom tshig |*
22. *skyes rabs brgya pa'i bod rtsom cha tshang |*

In addition, the NGMCP Catalogue (2016) offers the following eight extant works:

23. *bcom ldan 'das dzam bha lha dmar po'i bum gter sgrub thabs kyi las rim lhan thabs su sbyar ba*
24. + 25. *mnam chen mtha' la gtad pa dang | mtha' gtad chu yi gzer bu gnyis*
26. *'dir nye bar kho ba byang chub sems dpa'i nyes ltung bshags pa*
27. *rje rang byung rdo rje mdzad pa'i gdon tshogs dgu ma dang sa bdag drug sbyor*
28. *dkar gsur zhing khams kun khyab*
29. *mtshan ldan rig ma'i bstan thabs rje rang byung pas mdzad pa'o*
30. *gnas mchog nyi shu rtsa bzhi gnas bshad*

These additional 30 works have to be incorporated into any new edition of the *Rang byung rdo rje gsung 'bum*. As mentioned in chapter 1, only those works have been presented here, which can be clearly assigned to the Third Karmapa. When analyzing other collections of works not only according to the lists of titles, but according to the actual contents of the works, there might appear more works composed by this master.

## Appendix 2

### List of Indian Sources in the *rNam shes ye she*

Lines	Sources	Author
<b>Part I, <i>rnam shes</i>:</b>		
1–2	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i>	Vasubandhu
5–7, 15–18, 58–59	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā &amp; Prasannapada</i>	Nāgārjuna & Candrakīrti
14, 19	<i>Laṅkāvatārasūtra</i>	-
19	<i>Mādhyamakālaṃkāra</i>	Śāntarakṣita
20–21	<i>Yuktiṣaṣṭikā &amp; Hevajratantra</i>	Nāgārjuna
32–34	<i>Bodhicittabhāvanā &amp; Ālambanaparikṣā</i>	Mañjuśrīmitra & Dignāga
37–39	<i>Pramāṇavārttika</i>	Dharmakīrti
40–41	<i>Pramāṇasamuccaya</i>	Dignāga
49–52	<i>Viṃśatikākārikā</i>	Vasubandhu
53–56	<i>Madhyantavibhāga</i>	Maitreya
70–71	<i>Ālambanaparikṣā</i>	Dignāga
72–73	<i>Madhāntavibhāga</i>	Maitreya
74–77, 82–104	<i>Mahāyānasamgraha</i>	Asaṅga
<b>Part II, <i>ye shes</i>:</b>		
111–115, 120–121, 128–132, 137–140, 147–154, 159–160, 162	<i>Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra</i>	Maitreya
116, 141, 155	<i>Suvarṇaprabhāsaṣṭikā</i>	-
143–144	<i>Abhidharmasamuccayaḥ</i>	Asaṅga

## Appendix 3

### Modern Works and Translations of the *rNam shes ye she* Discourse

The following compilation lists the available works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje in book format for future research. This refers to all books and articles published in modern times, including various translations known to the author at the time of completing this thesis. A special subcategory consists of the books and texts on the *Phyag chen smon lam* (*Great Seal Wishes*) by Rang-byung-rdo-rje. These books actually appear in many languages. Only a few selected examples represent the large amount of editions here.

#### Modern Translations

- BORGHARDT 2014 Tilmann Lhündrup Borghardt, tr., *Das Mahāmudrā-Wunschgebet des wahren Sinnes*. Badenweiler: Norbu-Verlag, 2014.
- BROWN 1981 Daniel P. Brown, “Mahāmudrā Meditation-Stages and Contemporary Cognitive Psychology: A Study in Comparative Psychological Hermeneutics.” Ph.D. thesis. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981.
- BROWN 2006 *Idem*, *Pointing Out the Great Way: The Stages of Meditation in the Mahāmudrā Tradition*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006.
- BRUNNHÖLZL 2007 Karl Brunnhölzl, *In Praise of Dharmadhātu: Nāgārjuna and the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2007.
- BRUNNHÖLZL *Idem*, *Straight from the Heart: Buddhist Pith Instructions*. Ithaca, 2007A New York, Boulder, Colorado: Snow Lion Publications, 2007.
- BRUNNHÖLZL 2009 *Idem*, *Luminous Heart: The Third Karmapa on Consciousness, Wisdom, and Buddha Nature*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2009.
- BRUNNHÖLZL 2012 *Idem*, *Mining for Wisdom within Delusion: Maitreya’s “Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena” and Its Indian and Tibetan Commentaries*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2012.
- CALLAHAN 2014 Elizabeth M. Callahan, tr., *Rangjung Dorje, the third Karmapa, The Profound inner Principles. With Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye’s*

- Commentary Illuminating “The Profound Principles.”* Boston & London: Snow Lion Publications, 2014.
- CHANG 1986 Garma C. C. Chang, *The Six Yogas of Naropa and Teachings on Mahamudra*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1986.
- CHÖKYI NYIMA Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, *Song of Karmapa: The Aspiration of the*  
1992 *Mahāmudrā of True Meaning by Lord Rangjung Dorje*. Hong Kong & Kathmandu: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1992.
- DRASZCZYK 1995 Alex and Tina Draszczyk, trs., *Von der Klarheit des Geistes: Drei buddhistische Texte von Karmapa Rangjung Dorje*. Vienna: Marpa-Verlag, 1995.
- FUCHS 2002 Rosemarie Fuchs ed. & tr., The 12th Tai Si-tu-pa, Si-tu Pema Donyo Nyinche, *The Third Karmapa’s Mahamudra prayer*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002.
- GAMBLE 2013 Ruth Ellen Gamble, “The Travels of the Third Karmapa, Rangbyung rdo rje in Stories and Songs.” Ph.D. thesis. Canberra: The Australian National University, 2013.
- JINPA, ELSNER Thupten Jinpa & Jas Elsner, *Songs of Spiritual Experience: Tibetan*  
2000 *Buddhist Poems of Insight and Awakening*. Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 2000.
- GALBAABADRAA Lama Galbaabadraa, “3. Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Zab mo nang  
2013 don,” *Mongolian Tibetology Series* 7–9. Ulaanbaatar: Amžiltyn Garc, 2013.
- MOLK 2014 David Molk, tr., Sangyes Nyenpa, *Tilopa’s Mahamudra Upadesha: The Gangama Instructions with Commentary*. Boston & London: Snow Lion Publications, 2014.
- NYDAHL 1988 Lama Ole Nydahl, *Mahamudra: Freude und Freiheit grenzenlos*. Isny: Joy-Verlag, 1988.
- NYDAHL 1991 *Idem, Mahamudra: A Commentary on the Mahamudra Text of the Third Karmapa (1284–1339): Boundless Joy and Freedom*. Nevada City: Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1991.

- NYDAHL 1998 *Idem, Das Große Siegel: Raum und Freude grenzenlos*. Sulzberg: Joy Verlag, 1998. Reprint: Munich: Knaur Verlag, 2006.
- NYDAHL 2004 *Idem, The Great Seal, The Mahamudra View of Diamond Way Buddhism*. San Francisco: Fire Wheel Publications, 2004.
- ROBERTS 2000 Peter Alan Roberts, tr., Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Third Karmapa's Treatise on Buddha-essence* (Tib. *Nyingpo Tenpa*). Boulder: Namo Buddha Publications, 2000.
- ROBERTS 2001 *Idem, tr., Thrangu Rinpoche Transcending Ego: Distinguishing Consciousness from Wisdom*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 2001.
- ROBERTS 2011 *Idem, tr., Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions: Core Teachings of the Kagyü School*. The Library of Tibetan Classics 5. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011.
- ROBERTS 2015 *Idem, tr. Mind of Mahamudra: Advice from the Kagyu Masters*. Tibetan Classics 3. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2015.
- SCHAEFFER 1995 Kurtis Rice Schaeffer, "The Enlightened Heart of Buddhahood: A Study and Translation of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje's Work on Tathagatagarbha, the bDe bzhin gshegs pa'i rnying po gtan la dbab pa." M.A. thesis. Seattle: University of Washington, 1995.
- SCHEFCZYK 1999 Susanne Schefczyk, tr., Thrangu Rinpoche, *Alltagsbewußtsein und Buddha-Erwachen*. Langenfeld: Kagyü Dharma Verlag, 1999. Reprint: 2005.
- SCHUH 1973 Dieter Schuh, „Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Kalenderrechnung." *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* 16. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973.
- SEEGERS 2009 Manfred Seegers, "The Lord of Teachings: Life and Works of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339)." M.Phil. thesis. Canterbury: University of Kent, 2009.
- SHAMAR 1992 Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche, *Change of Expression. Working with the Emotions* (Gendun Rinpoche). A commentary to Namshe Yeshe and Mahamudra Explanations. St Léon/Vézère: Edition Dzambala, 1992.

- SHEEHY 2005-6 Michael, R. Sheehy, “Rangjung Dorje’s Variegations of Mind, Ordinary Awareness and Pristine Awareness in Tibetan Buddhist Literature.” In D.K. Nauriyal, Michael S. Drummond, Y.B. Lal, eds., *Buddhist Thought and Applied Psychological Research: Transcending the Boundaries*. London & New York: Routledge, 2005, and Oxford: Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, 2006, pp. 69–92.
- SHEEHY 2007 *Idem*, “Ordinary Awareness and Pristine Awareness: A Treatise on the Distinction.” Ngedon Thartuk Translation Initiative by the Jonang Foundation’s Digital Library. Available at: [www.JonangFoundation.org/library](http://www.JonangFoundation.org/library) (Accessed: 25 February, 2018).
- SI TU CHOS KYI Si-tu PaN-chen Chos-kyi-’byung-gnas, *Mahamudra Teachings of*  
 'BYUNG GNAS *the Supreme Siddhas, The Eighth Situpa Tenpa'i Nyinchay on The*  
 1995 *Third Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's "Aspiration Prayer of Mahamudra of Definitive Meaning."* Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1995.
- TCHEUDREUN Tashi Tcheudreun, tr. Thrangu Rinpoche, *Le Traité des 5 Sagesses*  
 2007 *et des 8 Consciences*. Saint-Cannat : Éditions Claire Lumière, 2007.

## Modern Tibetan Books

- RANGJUNG DORJE    Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, *Rang byung rdo rje'i mgur rnam*. Reproduced from a rare manuscript from the Library of Lama Senge of Yol-mo. Bidung, Tashigang: Kunchhap, 1983.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, *Dpal gyi sde'i skyes pa'i rabs*. In *Gangs ljongs mkhas dbang rim byon gyi rtsom yig gser gyi sbram bu*, 1988, Zi-ling: Mtsho-sngon-mi-rigs-dpe-skrunkhang, pp. 192–226.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Third Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, ed. China Senior Buddhist Institute of Tibetan Language Textbook Compilation Group, *One Hundred Jatakas*. Composed of two works: thirty-four Jatakas by Asvaghosa (c. 2nd century), and sixty-six Jatakas by the 3rd Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House, 1995.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    *Bzang spyod smon lam, byam smon lam, spyod 'jug smon lam, bde smon lam, phyag chen smon lam dang, hlung bshags bcas kyi 'grel ba*. Five Monlams in Tibetan Only with Commentaries. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute, 2000.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, *bKa'-brgyud gsung rab 16. Mdo sngags mtshams sbyor*. Xining: mTsho-sngon-mi-rigs-dpe-skrunkhang, 2003.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, *Illuminating Lamp: Topics from the Ornament of Realization and Other works* (Tibetan only): 1. *Mngon rtogs rgyan gyi sa bcad snang byed sgron me*, 2. *Sher phyin skabs brgyad kyi stong thun*, 3. *Dbu ma chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2004.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje, Thub-bstan phun-tshogs, ed., *Zab mo nang gi don 'grel ba'i lus sems gsal ba'i me long, Profound Inner Meaning*. Lha-sa: Bod-ljongs-mi-dmangs-dpe-skrunkhang, 2004.
- RANGJUNG DORJE    Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, *Brtag gnyis rnam bshad dri med 'od*.

- 2006 Stainless Light: An Explanation of “The Two-Part Hevajratana,”  
1 & 2. Rigpe Dorje Practice Series 30 & 31, Kathmandu: Rigpe  
Dorje Institute, 2011.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, *rNam shes ye shes 'byed pa dang de'i*  
2006 *'grel pa rang byung dgongs rgyan, de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*  
*bstan pa dang de'i 'grel pa rang byung dgongs gsal*. Choje Lama  
Phuntsok. Kathmandu: Karma Lekshey Ling Institute, 2006.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje and Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye,  
2010 *rGyud bla ma'i dgongs 'grel phyogs bsdus*. “The Collective  
Intention”: A Compendium of Commentaries on the Intention of  
the *Uttaratantrashastra*, *the Highest Continuum of the Mahayana*.  
Rigpe Dorje Series 8. Kathmandu: Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2010.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, *Dam pa'i chos dran pa nye bar bzhag*  
2010A *pa'i mdo yi don snang bar byed pa'i bstan bcos*. Lha-sa: Bod-  
ljong-mi-dmangs-dpe-skrun-khang, 2010.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, *Phyag chen gyi gdams pa gces btus*  
2010B *bzhi pa*. *The Essential Instructions on Mahamudra* 4. The Third  
Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, the Eighth Situpa Tenpe Nyinche,  
Khenpo Rinchen Dargye, and Bokar Rinpoche. Rigpe Dorje  
Practice Series 12. Kathmandu: Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2010.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Jamgon Kongtrul (2 volumes), *Rnal*  
2011 *'byor bla med rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i snying po bsdus pa zab mo*  
*nang gi don nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par 'grol ba zab mo snang*  
*byed*. The Profound Inner Reality: Background Teachings for the  
Six Dharmas of Naropa, Karmapa Rangjung Dorje; and The  
Profound Illuminator Elucidating through Few Words the  
Profound Inner Reality, the Condensed Essence of the Ocean of  
the Highest Yoga Tantras. Rigpe Dorje Practice Series 29.  
Kathmandu: Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2011.
- RANGJUNG DORJE Karmapa Rangjung Dorje & Shamar Chokyi Wangchuk, *NA ro'i*  
2011A *chos drug gi zin khrid gces btus*, The Collection of Essential  
Instructions on the Six Dharmas of Naropa 1 & 2. Rigpe Dorje

- Practice Series 30 & 31. Kathmandu: Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2011.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2011B Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Drubthob Lingrepa & Parphukpa Lodro Senge, *Drup chen sa ra ha'i do ha skor gsum gyi bod 'grel grags che ba gsum phyogs sgrig. A Collection of Commentaries on Saraha's Poems*. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2011.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2011C Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, *Nang brtag rgyud gsum. Zab mo nang don, rgyud brtag gnyis dang, rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*. A Collection of Important Root Texts. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2011.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2013 Karmapa Rangjung Dorje & Khenpo Sherab Rinchen, *Dam chos dran pa nye bar bzhag pa'i mdo yi don snang bar byed pa'i bstan bcos. A Collection of Commentaries to the Practice of Close Placed Mindfulness*. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2013.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2013 Karmapa Rangjung Dorje & 'Ju Mi-pham, *Mdo sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i 'grel ba phyogs bsgrig. A Collection of Commentaries to the Short Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*. Sarnath: Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2013.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2014 Karmapa Rangjung Dorje & Karmapa Khakyab Dorje, *Zab mo nang gi don gsal bar ston pa'i gzhung bde blag tu rtogs par byed pa'i mchan 'grel rdo rje sems dpa'i zhal lung nor bu rnam par snang ba dri ma med pa'i 'od*. Root Text by the Third Karmapa, Commentary by the Fifteenth Karmapa. Kathmandu: Karma Lekshey Ling Institute, 2014.
- RANGJUNG DORJE 2015 Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Tāranātha, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, *Shangs lugs rtsa gsum sgrub thabs zin khrid gces btus*. Shangpa Kagyu, Rigpe Dorje Practice Series 7. Kathmandu: Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2015.
- SMAN SDONG 2002 *Smon lam lna 'grel las | phyag chen smon lam 'grel chung dwags brgyud dgongs rgyan*. In *Sman sdong mtshams pa rin po che'i gsung 'bum pod dang po*, 2002, edited by Ma ni ba Kar-ma nges don bstan rgyas. Chief Editor: Shangpa Rinpoche. Pokhara: Vikrama Shila Buddhist Institute, pp. 207–240.

## Summary of the Research Results

This thesis investigates the discourse on the distinction between perception (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) and gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*) in the *Collected Works* of the Third Karmapa Rangbyung-rdo-rje (1284–1339). It demonstrates that the “Lord of Teachings” (Tib. *Chos-kyi-rje*) as he was called, was not only a key figure of the formative fourteenth century in Tibet, but his *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as part of his principal doctrines had and still has a tremendous impact on the Tibetan Buddhist tradition up to the present.

Part One (chapters 1–6) explores the historical and doctrinal context for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse, as well as its precise meaning and functions in Rangbyung-rdo-rje’s *Collected Works*. Part Two (chapters 7 and 8) provides critical editions and annotated translations of the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and other relevant passages from the *gSung ’bum*.

This study focuses on the detailed analysis of the primary sources in the *Collected Works* of the Third Karmapa. For this purpose, critical editions and annotated translations of the relevant sections from the *gSung ’bum* include the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise, the *Phyag chen khrid yig*, a Mahāmudrā practice manual, the *Sems can rnams kyi thog mar ’khrul pa’i tshul*, several longer sections from the *Chos dang chos nyid rnams par ’byed pa’i rgyan* and the *Chos dbyings bstod pa’i rnam bshad*. The annotated translations have to be regarded as a preliminary attempt to assign an adequate terminology and understanding to the profound explanations given by the Third Karmapa. The annotations also identify the major sources for further research on this subject.

The two newly published *Collected Works* (2006 and 2013) served as principal sources for the academic treatment. After approximately 100 years, during which only few of Rangbyung-rdo-rje’s works were still extant, the new editions made it possible to analyse and contextualise major topics of his literary output anew. Due to these circumstances, the author so far exclusively conducted academic research on the newly published *gSung ’bum*. Furthermore, he was able to identify 30 additional works as extant. They could be found in various collections, to which the editors obviously did not have access. For example, several extant works were documented in the catalogue of the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP), under the supervision of Hamburg University.

The author has condensed the Indian philosophical key concepts of this discourse into an outline related to the relevant schools of thought integrated into the discourse. This survey renders the historical and doxographical-religious background of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse as transparent as possible. The discussion of the general Indian provenience of these concepts prepared a fertile ground for contextualizing the various direct or paraphrased citations in the *rNam shes ye shes* treatise and its commentaries. The part on *rnam shes: vijñāna* incorporates 16 Indian śāstras, most of them composed by Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and their followers. A few lines originate from works ascribed to the masters Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. The part on *ye shes: jñāna* is based on three principal sources, among which the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* figures prominently.

An important research result refers to the close connection between the *vijñāna–jñāna* distinction and the “four reliances” (*rton pa bzhi: catvāri pratiśaraṇāṇi*). The contrast between the two terms *rnam shes* and *ye shes* represents the highpoint and summary of this hermeneutical advice applied in all Buddhist traditions. However, the scope of these guidelines is normally restricted to the hermeneutical perspective, whereas Rang-byung-rdo-rje elaborated in detail on the various functions of *rnam shes* and *ye shes* in order to clarify the distinction specifically for soteriological purposes. He thus incorporated this well-known advice together with its philosophical and epistemological impact into the essential spiritual instructions of the bKa’-brgyud lineage. The further analysis of the basic concepts of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse includes the investigation of the range of meanings of the key terms as applied in primary and secondary literature.

In terms of the historical background, the author explored the connection between the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in the works of Rang-byung-rdo-rje and several important treatises composed during the earlier (*snga dar*) and later propagation (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet. For example, the masters Padmasambhava, Ye-shes-sde and Rong-zom-pa in the rNying-ma tradition, as well as Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa in the bKa’-brgyud tradition applied the *rNam shes ye shes* distinction in general teachings or in their songs of realization. The ’Bri-gung bKa’-brgyud master Yang-dgon-pa elucidated the exact connection between the purification of the eight aspects of perception (*tshogs brgyad: aṣṭavijñāna*) and the four levels of Mahāmudrā practice (*phyag rgya bzhi*) until full realization of the gnosis of a buddha.

Later, the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud master Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor propagated the way of teaching by the Third Karmapa according to the threefold or fourfold turning of the *dharma* wheel (*dharmacakrapravartana*) as a role model for commenting on the Buddha's thought. Furthermore, this dissertation explores the range of philosophical views connected to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in early Tibet, the role of Rang-byung-rdo-rje as lineage holder of the eight practice lineages and other transmissions and the bKa'-brgyud viewpoint at his time. His vast scholarship developed through his studies and practice of all available Buddhist teachings. He further expressed it through his balanced viewpoint without falling into any of the extreme views. This balanced approach specifically served as basis for the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse in his *Collected Works*.

After a concise survey of the contents and structure of the *Rang byung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, the investigation of the role the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse plays in the *Zab mo nang don* trilogy and in the whole *Collected Works* yields the result that these teachings fulfilled a great variety of functions: as praises (*bstod pa*); songs of accomplishment (*rdo rje'i mgur*); letters of advice to his students (*zhal gdams* or *man ngag*); short, middle length and extensive commentaries on sūtric and tantric treatises etc. Together with the longer sections explored in the second part of this thesis, these occurrences can be regarded as a comprehensive auto-commentary on the *rNam shes ye shes*.

It is remarkable that Rang-byung-rdo-rje applied the whole range of his commentaries to present further details of this discourse, facilitating the understanding and enriching the contents by means of his specific interpretation. Nevertheless, the principal function of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse appeared to be a link between the two core doctrines of the bKa'-brgyud lineage, the Six Teachings of Nāropa (*na ro'i chos drug*) and the Mahāmudrā instructions (*phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*). In this way, the Third Karmapa on the basis of the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse elucidated and systematized the view and practice, as previously taught by Indian and Tibetan masters, into the effective form that is applied in the Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage right up to the present. The analysis of the tremendous impact of these teachings on later bKa'-brgyud masters, as well as the comparison with interpretations of this topic in other traditions – such as the rNying-ma, Jo-nang, and dGe-lugs lineages – substantiates this particular research result.

In the future, new material related to the *rNam shes ye shes* discourse might become accessible, which could prove beneficial for the research on this topic. For example, the

*rNam shes ye shes* commentary composed by the Third Karmapa's direct student, the scholar Shes-rab-rin-chen, has not yet been located. Continuous publication activity on the part of the publishers in Tibet and Nepal or other organizations could possibly fill this gap. To direct further academic attention to Rang-byung-rdo-rje's works would definitely bring great benefit to studies in the field of Tibetology as well as in other related academic disciplines.

## Zusammenfassung der Forschungsergebnisse

Diese Forschungsarbeit untersucht den Diskurs über die Unterscheidung zwischen Wahrnehmung (*rnam shes: vijñāna*) und Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*) im Gesamtwerk des dritten Karmapa Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1284–1339). Sie weist nach, dass der „Meister der Lehren“ (tib. *Chos-kyi-rje*), wie er genannt wurde, nicht nur eine Schlüsselfigur des prägenden vierzehnten Jahrhunderts in Tibet war, sondern dass sein *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs als Teil seiner Haupt-Lehren einen weitreichenden Einfluss auf die Tradition des Tibetischen Buddhismus hatte und bis in die Gegenwart immer noch hat.

Teil Eins dieser Arbeit (Kapitel 1–6) erforscht den historischen und lehrmäßigen Zusammenhang des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses, sowie seine genaue Bedeutung und Funktion im Gesamtwerk von Rang-byung-rdo-rje. Teil Zwei (Kapitel 7 und 8) stellt kritische Editionen und mit Anmerkungen versehene Übersetzungen der *rNam shes ye shes*-Abhandlung und anderer relevanter Passagen aus dem *gSung 'bum* bereit.

Diese Studie legt den Schwerpunkt auf die genaue Untersuchung der Primärquellen im Gesamtwerk des dritten Karmapas. Zu diesem Zweck behandeln die kritischen Editionen und Übersetzungen der relevanten Abschnitte aus dem *gSung 'bum* die *rNam shes ye shes*-Abhandlung, umfangreiche Teile des *Phyag chen khrid yig*, einer Mahāmudrā Praxis-Anleitung und des *Sems can rnams kyi thog mar 'khrul pa'i tshul*, verschiedene längere Abschnitte aus dem *Chos dang chos nyid rnams par 'byed pa'i rgyan*, sowie aus dem *Chos dbyings bstod pa'i rnam bshad*. Die mit Anmerkungen versehenen Übersetzungen müssen als vorläufiger Versuch betrachtet werden, den tiefgründigen Erklärungen des dritten Karmapas eine angemessene Begrifflichkeit und ein entsprechendes Verständnis zuzuordnen. Die Anmerkungen identifizieren weiterhin die wichtigsten Quellen für die weitere Forschung zu diesem Thema.

Die neu veröffentlichten Gesamtwerke (2006 und 2013) dienen als Haupt-Quellen für die akademische Forschung. Nach etwa 100 Jahren, in denen nur noch wenige von Rang-byung-rdo-rje's Werken zugänglich waren, ermöglichen die beiden neuen Editionen, wichtige Themen seines literarischen Schaffens neu zu untersuchen und in den entsprechenden Zusammenhang hineinzustellen. Diese Umstände führten dazu, dass der Autor bis heute als Einziger das neu veröffentlichte *gSung 'bum* akademisch erforscht hat. Im Zuge dessen ist es ihm gelungen, zusätzlich 30 Werke als vorhanden zu identifizieren. Sie wurden in verschiedenen Sammlungen nachgewiesen, zu denen die

Herausgeber offensichtlich keinen Zugang hatten. Zum Beispiel sind mehrere vorhandene Werke im Katalog des Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP) dokumentiert, das von der Hamburger Universität betreut wird.

Um den historischen und doxographisch-religiösen Hintergrund des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses so transparent wie möglich zu gestalten, hat der Autor die in diesen Diskurs integrierten indischen Schlüssel-Gedanken in einen Abriss über die maßgeblichen philosophischen Schulen zusammengefasst. Die Diskussion des allgemeinen indischen Ursprungs dieses Diskurses bereitet den fruchtbaren Boden, um die direkten oder paraphrasierten Zitate in der *rNam shes ye shes*-Abhandlung und ihren Kommentaren in ihren jeweiligen Zusammenhang zu stellen. Die Untersuchung hat ergeben, dass Rang-byung-rdo-rje im Abschnitt über *rnam shes: vijñāna* 16 indische Abhandlungen (*śāstra*) mit einbezieht, die hauptsächlich von Asaṅga, Vasubandhu und ihren Nachfolgern verfasst wurden. Einige Zeilen stammen aus Werken, die den Meistern Nāgārjuna und Candrakīrti zugeschrieben werden. Der Abschnitt über *ye shes: jñāna* stützt sich auf drei Haupt-Quellen, unter denen das *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* besonders hervorsteht.

Ein bedeutendes Forschungsergebnis bezieht sich auf die nahe Verbindung zwischen der *vijñāna-jñāna* Unterscheidung und den „Vier Stützen“ (*rton pa bzhi: catvāri pratiśaraṇāni*). Die Gegenüberstellung der beiden Begriffe *rnam shes* und *ye shes* stellt den Höhepunkt und die Zusammenfassung dieser hermeneutischen Ratschläge dar, wie sie in allen buddhistischen Traditionen verwendet werden. Jedoch ist die Bandbreite dieser Richtlinien normalerweise auf die hermeneutische Perspektive begrenzt, während Rang-byung-rdo-rje im Einzelnen die verschiedenen Funktionen von *rnam shes* und *ye shes* erläuterte, um den Unterschied speziell für soteriologische Zwecke zu klären. Dadurch nahm er diese bekannten Ratschläge zusammen mit ihren philosophischen und epistemologischen Bedeutungen in die wesentlichen spirituellen Anweisungen der bKa'-brgyud-Linie auf. Die weitere Analyse der grundlegenden Gedanken des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses beinhaltet die Untersuchung der Bandbreite von Bedeutungen der Schlüssel-Begriffe, wie sie in der Primär- und Sekundär-Literatur verwendet werden.

Die Dissertation behandelt weiterhin die Verbindung zwischen dem *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs in den Werken von Rang-byung-rdo-rje und verschiedenen wichtigen Abhandlungen, welche während der frühen (*snga dar*) und späteren Verbreitung (*phyi dar*) des Buddhismus in Tibet verfasst wurden. Zum Beispiel haben die Meister

Padmasambhava, Ye-shes-sde und Rong-zom-pa in der rNying-ma-Tradition, sowie Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa und sGam-po-pa in der bKa'-brgyud-Tradition die *rNam shes ye shes*-Unterscheidung in allgemeinen Lehren und in Gesängen der Verwirklichung verwendet. Der 'Bri-gung bKa'-brgyud-Meister Yang-dgon-pa erläuterte die genaue Verbindung zwischen der Reinigung der acht Aspekte der Wahrnehmung (*tshogs brgyad: aṣṭavijñāna*) und den vier Stufen der Mahāmudrā-Praxis (*phyag rgya bzhi*) bis zur vollen Verwirklichung der Gnosis eines Buddha.

Später verbreitete der 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-Meister Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor die Auffassung, dass die Lehrweise des dritten Karmapas entsprechend dem dreifachen oder vierfachen Drehen des Dharmarades (*dharmacakrapravartana*) ein Vorbild für das Kommentieren von Buddhas Lehre sei. Weiterhin erforscht diese Dissertation die Bandbreite der philosophischen Sichtweisen, die mit dem *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs im frühen Tibet verbunden waren, die Rolle Rang-byung-rdo-rjes als Linienhalter der acht Praxis-Linien und anderer Übertragungen, sowie die bKa'-brgyud-Sichtweise zu seiner Zeit. Seine umfassende Gelehrtheit entwickelte sich durch sein Studium und seine Praxis aller zur Verfügung stehenden buddhistischen Lehren. Er drückte sie weiterhin durch seine ausgeglichene Sicht aus, ohne in irgendeine der extremen Sichtweisen zu fallen. Diese ausgeglichene Annäherung diente speziell als Grundlage für den *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs in seinem Gesamtwerk.

Die Untersuchung der Rolle, die der *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs im Gesamtwerk und in der *Zab mo nang don*-Trilogie spielt, führt zu dem Resultat, dass diese Lehren eine große Bandbreite an Funktionen erfüllt: als Preisungen, (*bstod pa*), Gesänge der Verwirklichung (*rdo rje'i mgur*), Briefe mit Ratschlägen an seine Schüler (*zhal gdams* oder *man ngag*), kurze, mittellange und ausführliche Kommentare zu sūtrischen und tantrischen Abhandlungen, usw. Zusammen mit den umfangreichen Abschnitten, die im zweiten Teil dieser Forschungsarbeit untersucht werden, können diese Vorkommnisse des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses als ein umfassender Eigen-Kommentar zum *rNam shes ye shes* verstanden werden.

Es ist besonders auffallend, dass Rang-byung-rdo-rje die ganze Bandbreite seiner Kommentare verwendet, um weitere Einzelheiten dieses Diskurses darzustellen, das Verständnis zu erleichtern und die Inhalte durch seine besondere Interpretation zu bereichern. Gleichwohl scheint die wichtigste Funktion des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses die eines Bindeglieds zwischen den beiden Kern-Lehren der bKa'-brgyud-Linie zu sein,

den Sechs Lehren von Nāropa (*na ro'i chos drug*) und den Mahāmudrā Anweisungen (*phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*). Auf diese Weise erläuterte und systematisierte der dritte Karmapa auf der Grundlage des *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurses die Sichtweise und Praxis, wie sie vorher schon von indischen und tibetischen Meistern gelehrt worden war, und brachte sie in die gültige Form, die in der Karma bKa'-brgyud-Linie bis in die Gegenwart verwendet wird. Die Untersuchung des starken Einflusses dieser Lehren auf spätere bKa'-brgyud-Meister, sowie der Vergleich mit den Interpretationen dieses Themas in anderen Linien, wie die rNying-ma-, Jo-nang-, und dGe-lugs-Linien, erhärtet dieses besondere Forschungsergebnis.

In Zukunft könnte neues Material bezogen auf den *rNam shes ye shes*-Diskurs zugänglich werden, das sich für die Forschung zu diesem Thema als nützlich erweisen könnte. Zum Beispiel wurde bis jetzt der *rNam shes ye shes*-Kommentar, verfasst von dem direkten Schüler des dritten Karmapas, dem Gelehrten Shes-rab-rin-chen, noch nicht wiedergefunden. Eine fortwährende Veröffentlichungsaktivität auf Seiten der Verlage in Tibet und Nepal oder anderer Organisationen könnte möglicherweise diese Lücke füllen. Die wissenschaftliche Aufmerksamkeit auf weitere Werke von Rang-byung-rdo-rje zu lenken würde für die Studien auf dem Gebiet der Tibetologie wie auch für andere damit verbundene akademische Fachgebiete mit Sicherheit großen Nutzen bringen.

## **Eidesstattliche Versicherung**

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt durch meine Unterschrift, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig und ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder annähernd wörtlich aus Veröffentlichungen entnommen wurden, als solche kenntlich gemacht und mich auch keiner anderen als der angegebenen Literatur bedient habe. Ich versichere weiterhin, dass ich die Arbeit nicht in einem anderen Prüfungsverfahren eingereicht habe und dass die eingereichte schriftliche Fassung der auf dem elektronischen Speichermedium entspricht. Diese Versicherung bezieht sich auch auf die in der Arbeit gelieferten Zeichnungen, Skizzen, bildlichen Darstellungen und dergleichen.

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