

In Search of Mila's Collected Songs:

Back to the Basics



A Comparative Study of Stories and Songs of

Milarepa

In Tibetan Texts

From the Twelfth through the Fifteenth Century

Kristin Blancke
Sarnano, 2024

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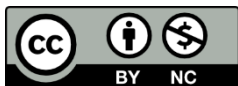
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Detail of the Serzang temple, Basgo, Ladakh.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TN-Dha	Tsangnyön Heruka 1990. <i>rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur</i>
RBC	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , The Twelve Great Repa Disciples
Ms-Oxford	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , Oxford manuscript
RBC-Pt	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , Paltsek edition
Ms-Newark	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , Newark manuscript
Ms-Drukpa	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis, dbu can</i> manuscript
Ms-Gansu	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , facsimile <i>dbu can</i> manuscript
Ms-Bordier	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , manuscript at the Tibet Museum, Gruyères, Switzerland
Ms-Lhasa	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , Drepung archive
Ms-BDRC	<i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> , BDRC website
DNM-RD	<i>mDzod nag ma</i> , The <i>Black Treasury</i> in Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's Collected Works
BCG	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , <i>A River of Blessings</i>
Ms-India	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , ms. Dalhousie, India
Ms-Smith	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , ms. in Gene Smith's collection
Ms-Drepung	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , facsimile Drepung Archive
BCG-D	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , Drikung edition
BCG-Si	<i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> , Si khron edition
BZ	Byang chub bZang po
D	mDo chen rosary
M	Mon rtse pa Kun dga' dPal ldan
Pt	dPal rtsegs yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang
BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Centre
Zhwa	Zhwa dmar II mKha' spyod dBang po

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The present study results from a forty-year-old fascination with Milarepa and his songs. It started with the translation in Italian of Tsangnyön Heruka's *Collected Songs of Milarepa*¹ in the early 1980s when my late husband and I were living at Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Bir, Himachal Pradesh, India. For this early translation work, we received the precious guidance of the Twelfth Tai Situ Rinpoche, of the Venerable Salgey Rinpoche, with whom we had the great fortune to unravel the meaning of the songs and, after his passing, of the then very young Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. I wish to express my most tremendous gratitude to these three primary Tibetan teachers.

And then came three “whistleblowers” – three persons who made us understand that Tsangnyön Heruka's work was a final result of three and a half centuries of previous hagiographies. Francis Vincent Tiso brought to our attention Gyalthangpa's life story of Milarepa, not always in accord with Tsangnyön's version. Hubert Decler, with his *The Melodious Drumsound All-Pervading: The Life and Complete Liberation of Majestic Lord Rwa Lotsāwa, the Yogin-Translator of Rwa, Mighty Lord in Magic Intervention*, demonstrated that different perspectives

¹ “The Collected Songs of Milarepa” – *Mi la'i mgur 'bum* – is the abbreviated title of “The Collected Songs expanding on the Life of Jetsün Milarepa,” *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rgyas par phye ba mgur 'bum*. It is the second part of Tsangnyön Heruka's *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur*, “The Life and Songs of the Great Powerful yogin Milarepa.” I will refer to the first part of that text as *Life* and to the second part as *Songs*. Although *mgur 'bum* stands for “Collected Songs,” in its English translation, the book is famous as “The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,” the title given by Garma C.C.Chang, the first translator of the work into English, on behalf of the fact that *'bum*, when standing alone, means “Hundred Thousand.”

are possible when reading early hagiographies. Peter Alan Roberts brought to the foreground the enormous narrative variety in the different hagiographies of Rechungpa. These three researchers made the dice rolling for further exploration of the origin of Mila's songs.

Later came the works of Andrew Quintman, Stefan Larsson and Ulrich Timme Kragh, with whom I had meaningful exchanges. Special mention goes to Marta Sernesi, who continuously encouraged me to complete this research, to Cécile Ducher and Hubert Decler, who went through the preliminary draft of the book, and to Fabrizio Torricelli, since ever walking on the same path. My gratitude also goes to Etienne Bock, with whom I worked on the different versions of the Zhepé Dorje Compendia. I dedicate this book to the two persons with whom I shared the joys and sorrows of my discoveries: the late Roberto Donatoni, editor of the first volume of *I Centomila Canti di Milarepa* (Adelphi ed.), and my late husband Franco Pizzi, who embarked with me on this fantastic adventure and accompanied me for so many years.

On this occasion, I wish to thank all those dedicated people who spend their time and capacities to preserve old Tibetan texts and make them accessible online: the Tibetan printing houses in Tibet, India and Nepal, who provide printed computerised texts; the BDRC team who makes these texts digitally available with a few clicks. What a luxury after the times we had to physically visit libraries and monasteries all over India to get our copies! Special thanks go to Tony Duff and the Padma Karpo team for digitising the entire Tibetan text of Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life and Songs*. It was a fantastic tool to locate the songs in the comparative work. I am also grateful for the digital Tibetan-English dictionaries provided: the *Illuminator* by Tony Duff and

the *Rangjung Yeshe Tibetan-English dictionary* by Erik Pema Kunsang and his team.

INTRODUCTION

Previous scholarship¹ brought to light a rich literary corpus of life-and-song stories regarding Jetsün Milarepa that had come into being from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries – 1488 when Tsangnyön Heruka created *Life and Songs*. Most of the research concentrates on the study of the narrative of different episodes of Mila’s *Life* throughout the centuries and how these led to the famous “standard” image of Milarepa and the world he lived in presented by Tsangnyön Heruka and his disciples. By comparing the available biographies before Tsangnyön’s *Life and Songs*, these studies illustrate the gradual build-up of a more and more detailed narrative of the yogin’s evolution, from his childhood to his search for a teacher, his apprenticeship under Marpa, his meditative experiences, his teaching career, and finally his death. Mila’s life, the lives of his closest disciples and those of the authors of these life stories receive significant attention. In particular, Tsangnyön Heruka’s endeavours to print his works brought forth the spreading of Mila’s *Life and Songs* to all levels of society – meditators, monks, lay people and politicians alike. In his iconic image of Milarepa, Tsangnyön Heruka skillfully wove together most of the elements in the previous hagiographies, modelling them to the political, social and religious situation of his time and to his own experiences. In so doing, “his” Milarepa became the version universally accepted until now, the reference point for the devotional cult of

¹ Tiso 2014 and 2019; Roberts 2007 and 2010; Quintman 2010, 2012, 2014a and 2014b; Ducher 2017 and 2020; Torricelli 2001 and 2019; Sernesi 2007, 2011, 2021 and 2022; Larsson 2012, 2016 and 2021.

Milarepa and later doctrinal evolutions – principally within the Kagyü lineages.

While previous research has acknowledged the existence of the texts that form the literary corpus, indexed their content, and studied a few fragments, there is still much to be discovered about the uniqueness of each of these texts. This leaves a vast potential for future in-depth studies to reveal more about these texts and their significance.

The present study focuses mainly on Mila’s songs. These experiential songs appear to me as Mila’s true legacy as a teacher. They are expressions of the life of a wandering Tibetan yogin between the eleventh and twelfth century, happy with the solitary life that enabled him to realise his nature and happy to poetically share his experiences with disciples, devotees, and whoever he met. Therefore, the temptation to go back to the beginnings and study the evolution of the songs and their narrative context has been irresistible to me.

According to a story of the genesis and transmission of the *Mi la’i mgur ’bum* narrated in some versions of the Zhepé Dorje Compendia,² the Jetsün told the senior *repa*-disciples to gather songs he had inscribed on leaves and tree bark in the places where he had meditated. He later helped them with the compilation of a text. Legendary as this story may sound, Martön (twelfth century) made continuous references to a

² E.g., BCG-D 8: 513, *rJe btsun gyi rgyal po mi la ras pa’i mgur ’bum karma pa nas brgyud pa’i mdzod nag ma yi lo rgyus ni*. “The History of the Dark/Black Treasury, the Collected Songs of Milarepa, King of the Jetsüns, transmitted by the Karmapas.” For details, see Quintman 2014a: 105-6 and Bock 2024: 94-106. This history is included only in Ms-Bordier and some versions of *A River of Blessings* (group B: Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si).

mgur'bum. Khyungtsangpa and Lama Zhang (twelfth century), Dönmo Ripa and Sangyé Bum (thirteenth century) mentioned song titles without elaborating on them as if they were known. Were these songs known from the oral tradition, or had they already been written down?

If they were written down at that time, how could the “original” *Collected Songs* have been? I imagine a short text, a record of only songs, maybe with some annotations of where and to whom they were delivered. These songs seem unlikely to have been divided into different headings or organised in chapters or song cycles. All this must have come later.

In contrast to what the texts mentioned above insinuate, this original song collection cannot be *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* because, as will be seen, that collection was already a blend of previous texts. One can still hope that the original *mgur'bum*, a hypothetical collection with songs in their purest form, is not lost forever and may come to light someday in Tibet or some library. To be on the safe side, the songs inserted in the early *Golden Rosaries* are probably the closest we can get to Mila's way of expressing himself. So, for now, the earliest texts available to us are here re-assessed and re-ordered.

Using Tsangnyön Heruka's *Collected Songs of Milarepa* (*Mila'i mgur 'bum*) as the reference point for the present study, I have meticulously numbered the chapters in his work (Chapters 1-61) and the songs within each chapter. Although strictly speaking the episodes of Mila's training under Marpa and his death do not belong to the *Songs*, I have also paid attention to the teaching transmission from Marpa to Milarepa and to the chapter relating Mila's death. Each song has been systematically compared with its precursors in other texts, be it *Golden*

Rosaries or the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, ensuring a thorough and comprehensive analysis.

In the book's first part, I review the different sources and their characteristics.

Chapter 1 considers the life-and-song stories of Milarepa, Gampopa, Ngendzong Tönpa, and Rechungpa included in the texts produced before Tsangnyön Heruka. Roberts and Quintman have already thoroughly studied most of these sources. The present contribution further specifies the differences in approach to life-and-song writing in the various lineages.

First, I examine the early *Golden Rosary* liberation stories. These are divided into three "strands," according to the lineage holder to which the author of the text-collection refers – Gampopa, Ngendzong Tönpa, or Rechungpa. I briefly discuss the texts belonging to each strand.

Next, I compare different editions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* to each other and the early Golden Rosary texts.

Then, I examine a third group of texts related to Shamar Khachö Wangpo's works.

Finally, I examine the versions of the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings* and a similar compendium kept at the British Library.

Chapter 2 examines Tsangnyön Heruka's *Collected Songs of Milarepa*. I point out his contributions and the details he omitted from the previous works and try to understand the reasons behind these changes.

In *Chapter 3*, I examine some doctrinal points revealed in Mila's songs and their evolution in time through cross-section comparisons of specific topics in the works studied.

Part One ends with some conclusions from this comparative study.

* * *

Part Two of the book contains translations. Relying primarily on existing translations, I choose specific topics and verify how they are presented in each work to corroborate what has been discussed in Part One. I use Quintman's translation for episodes from Tsangnyön's *Life*, Khenpo Könchog Gyaltzen's translation for those from Dönmo Ripa's text, and Stagg's translation for Tsangnyön's *Songs*.³ These chapters thoroughly analyse the way how the relationship between Mila and his foremost disciples is recounted in the different texts.

Chapter 4 contains a translation of Ngendzong Tönpa's unstudied life story of Milarepa – *The Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*. It is an example of very early liberation stories structured into different "qualities" that brought Milarepa to enlightenment.

The following three chapters are cross-sections of the works centred around a particular topic.

³ Quintman 2010; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltzen 2006; Stagg 2017; I use the spellings and vocabulary of these translators, whereas, in my translations, I sometimes use different spelling and terminology.

Chapter 5 analyses the teaching transmission from Marpa to Mila narrated in the hagiographies. Besides the biographies of Milarepa, those of Marpa are taken into account wherever these provide additional information not contained in Mila's biography.

Chapter 6 regards the entrustment of the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara (*bDe mchog snyan brgyud*) to Rechungpa. Although this Aural Transmission, also translated as "hearing lineage," seems to be the principal teaching corpus transmitted by Mila to his disciples, the actual transmission to Rechungpa is included only in the liberation stories in Rechungpa's lineage.

Chapter 7 includes the exchanges between Mila and Gampopa. The core narrative of Gampopa's stay with Milarepa was already written down from the very early times, as can be seen in the liberation story of Gampopa by Barompa Darma Wangchuk ('Ba' rom pa Dar ma dBang phyug, 1127–1199, a direct disciple of Gampopa).

Chapter 8 contains some interesting aspects of Zhijé Ripa's *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*. A lively exchange between Mila and his disciples provides an early outline of the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara. Among other points, Zhijé Ripa includes a list of Mila's most famous songs, with particularly relevant details for this study.

In *Chapter 9*, I compare the episode of a dying Bönpo (Tsangnyön's Chapter 54) to the same episode throughout the previous works.

In *Chapter 10*, I examine three episodes in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, comparing these to the same chapter in Tsangnyön's *Songs*:

- "Meeting Paldarbum," Tsangnyön's Chapter 14
- "The Episode at the Zangyü Kitchen," Tsangnyön's Chapter 24, "Meeting Shengom Repa."
- "The Episode at the Tsibri Mountain" appears in two late versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. This episode contains fragments mentioned in the Golden Rosaries and Tsangnyön's *Life and Songs*. Here, I highlight the narrative's evolution over time.

Chapter 11 is a translation of an interesting supplement, a short text by Lord Barompa Darma Wangchuk found in one group of *A River of Blessings* – Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si. Here, Darma Wangchuk discusses the interconnections between the development of the elements of the subtle body and Mila's visual appearances of demons and gods.

Chapter 12 contains an overview regarding the Tseringma Chapters 28-31 included in Tsangnyön's *Songs*. It studies the differences in the colophons in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia and references these episodes in other texts.

In *Chapter 13*, I translate two doctrinal texts with instructions on the intermediate states attributed to Milarepa. Supposedly, Ngendzong Tönpa wrote down the first text (twelfth century) and Zhang Lotsāwa (†1237) the second. A comparison between both texts shows that although the core instructions are identical, some differences appear due to the respective lineage transmissions and the addition of elements from later times. The book ends with a bibliography.

* * *

In the Appendix, I provide eight Song Charts, grouping the works with similar structure and song content in the same order as explained in Part One. Each chart indicates the chapters and page numbers where each song can be found in the studied texts. The Song Charts should help future researchers locate and compare specific episodes or songs throughout all the available texts. Therefore, I indicate the BDRC reference codes for downloading the texts wherever they are available.

* * *

This book will hopefully inspire and facilitate future researchers to conduct more in-depth studies of this incredible treasure trove of knowledge. The present work offers suggestions to re-evaluate the stories and songs attributed to Milarepa, considering the elements present from the beginning and the new inputs integrated into the texts as time went by. On the one hand, the study tries to shed more light on the differences between the lineages in representing Milarepa and his disciples. On the other hand, it allows us to appreciate the richness of the evolutions that have taken place within the Kagyü lineages in the period between Milarepa and Tsangnyön Heruka's life.

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PART ONE: SOURCE ASSESSMENT

1 – LIFE-AND-SONG STORIES OF MILAREPA, GAMPOPA, NGENDZONG TÖNPA AND RECHUNGPA BEFORE TSANGNYÖN HERUKA

1A – EARLY GOLDEN ROSARY LIBERATION STORIES OF MILAREPA AND HIS MAIN DISCIPLES

As explained in the introduction, the present research aims to study the evolution in the narrative and the songs attributed to Jetsün Milarepa to obtain a clear picture of the changes that have taken place from the beginning to the time of Tsangnyön Heruka. Therefore, I am studying and comparing as many texts as possible. In my research, I try to re-evaluate the stories and songs attributed to Milarepa, considering the elements present from the beginning and the new inputs integrated into the texts as time went by. As a tool for the comparative study of the texts, I created detailed Song Charts in which each song is identified and labelled with the corresponding chapter and song number in Tsangnyön's work. In this way, it becomes easy to observe multiple layers of narrative development in describing the great Jetsün's life. From the analysis of the short liberation stories compiled in the *Golden Rosary* collections and the elaborate "biographical compendia"¹ dedicated uniquely to Milarepa's story, we see how successive authors adapted the life writing to

¹ For the use of the term "biographical compendia," see Quintman 2014a: 82-83 and Blancke & Bock 2024.

changes in approach to the spiritual path, changes inside the society and lineage priorities.

The Golden Rosaries contain the earliest written witnesses of Milarepa's story. A *Golden Rosary* (*gser 'phreng*) is a form of biographical literature that collects the lives of successive masters in a particular lineage. These life stories, called *rnam thar* – complete liberation – are usually short. They contain salient points illustrating how each master reached liberation and transmitted his knowledge and experience to his disciples. The purpose of a *Golden Rosary* collection is to inspire future disciples with faith and devotion and to encourage them to follow the masters' examples.

To track down Mila's songs included in these Golden Rosaries, I examine the life stories of Milarepa, Marpa, Gampopa and Rechungpa in these collections. It so appears that we can distinguish three "strands" of life stories of Milarepa in the early *Golden Rosary* literature, each with its unique characteristics linked to the transmission in the respective lineages. That there are such distinctions is not a new idea: previous researchers had already indicated differences between the life stories transmitted in the lineages coming from Gampopa, Rechungpa and Ngendzong Tönpa.² However, it is crucial to note that these lineage differences are responsible for different structures of the hagiographies and that the authors of each lineage maintained these differences even after the creation of the large biographical compendia.

² Roberts 2007: 8-18; Quintman 2014a: 32-81.

Golden Rosary life stories of Milarepa in Gampopa's lineage

In the “strand” of *Golden-Rosary* life stories of Milarepa transmitted in early lineages coming from Gampopa – in particular, the Tselpa, Drikung, Barom, Taklung, and in part also the Drukpa Kagyü lineages – the first known *Life* seems to be a transcription of an oral account of Gampopa written down by Khyungtsangpa Yeshé Lama (1115–1176).³ This narrative has been reproduced with only minor changes by Lama Zhang (1123–1193), founder of the Tselpa (*Tshal pa*) Kagyü lineage.⁴ Both are twelfth-century texts. About a hundred years later, around the middle of the thirteenth century, three more elaborated biographies of Milarepa appeared in these lineages:

- *The Life of Jetsün Mila*, by Dönmo Ripa, a Drikung Kagyü master (b.1203)⁵
- *The Life of Milarepa, King of the Jetsüins*, by Gyalthagpa Dechen Dorje⁶

³ *rJe mar pa dang rJe btsun mi la'i rnam thar*. The life story appears in four different text collections of writings attributed to sGam po pa bsod nams rin chen: 1974: 18-30; 1975, 1:16-26; 1982, 1: 23-42; 2005: 47-68.

For an English translation, see Quintman 2014a: 191-98 or Tiso 2014: 250-58. For my Italian translation, see Blancke 2019. For a discussion about the authorship of this text, see Kragh 2015: 136-39.

⁴ Bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa brTson 'grus Grags pa, *dKar rgyud rnam thar* In *bKa' thor bu* 1972: 333-43.

⁵ Don mo Ripa, *rJe btsun mi la'i rnam thar* 1985: 176-217. For English translation, see Khenpo Könchog Gyaltzen 2006: 123-43.

⁶ rGyal thang pa bDe chen rDo rJe, *rJe btsun gyi rgyal po mid la ras pa'i rnam thar*, 1973: 189-265. For English translation, see Tiso 2014: 173-246., There are

- *The Life of Milarepa*, by Sangyé Bum.⁷

All these texts consist of loose vignette-like episodes narrated one after the other without an apparent structure. Gyalthangpa is an exception because he uses a typical literary structure. Each episode is introduced with a few verses of praise, then elaborated in a commentary in prose. The narrative of the lives of Marpa, Mila and Gampopa in Gyalthangpa's collection provides many details that Tsangnyön Heruka later integrated into his *Life and Songs*.

As time goes by, the episodes become more numerous and longer. In this first group, all authors indicate Gampopa as the foremost disciple of Jetsün Mila. There are a few songs, some are mentioned only by the title or a single verse line – e.g., The Song of the Snow, The Song of the Bamboo Staff – as if to indicate that the songs were already known to the readers.⁸

In addition to the life stories of Milarepa, it is of great interest to study the relationship between Marpa and Milarepa described in the Marpa *namthars* – see Chapter 5, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Mila in the Hagiographies* – as well as the relationship between Gampopa and Milarepa

still some doubts about Gyalthangpa's identity. However, presumedly he was a disciple of the Drukpa Kagyü teacher Götsangpa Gönpö Dorje (*rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje*, 1189–1258). For details, see Roberts 2007: 11-16.

⁷ *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*. In: *Rwa lung dkar brgyud gser'phreng* 1:167-216. According to Quintman (2014a: 70-72), this author served as the fifth abbot of the Tsel Gunthang monastery founded by Lama Zhang. *The Life of Milarepa* was probably produced during this period or shortly after (between 1225 and 1250). This unsigned text is attributed to Sangyé Bum based on a similarity in the colophon with the Nāropa life story signed by Sangyé Bum contained in the same *Golden Rosary*. However, judging from the structure and the songs it includes, it seems it must dated later.

⁸ See SONG CHART 2.

described in the Gampopa *namthars*. For example, *The Collected Writings of Gampopa* contains a few autobiographical fragments in which Gampopa narrates some details of his time with Milarepa. In his biography of Gampopa, Barompa Darma Wangchuk depicts the interactions between Jetsün Mila and Gampopa in a very detailed way, similar to how they would appear in later works – see Chapter 7, *Gampopa Sönam Rinchen Meets Jetsün Mila*.

ToC

Golden Rosary life story of Milarepa in Ngendzong Tönpa's lineage

The second strand of *Golden-Rosary* life stories of Milarepa regards the lineage biographies coming from Ngendzong Tönpa Bodhiradza. This disciple of the Jetsün is said to have spent seventeen years – according to another version, twenty-seven years⁹ – at the service of his teacher and he supposedly had the gift of perfect memory. We know this author by different names: *Ngam rdzong Ras pa*, *Ngan rdzong sTon pa Bodhi ra tsa [dza]*, *Ngan rdzong sTon pa Byang chub rGyal po*, and yet a new form in his life story of Milarepa, *Ngan tshong Ras pa*. Throughout this study, I will adopt the spelling Ngendzong Tönpa.

First, let us find out a little about this teacher.

In his lineage, Ngendzong Tönpa was considered the most important disciple of Milarepa. Dampa Rechen and Götsang

⁹ *Ngam rdzong ras pa'i rnam thar don bdun*, in 'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo 2004: 63 fols. 73r-77v.

Repa¹⁰ composed the most extensive known biography of Ngendzong Tönpa. It has two main chapters: the difficulties in his early life, including his meeting with Milarepa, and his spiritual realisations. This second chapter describes seven qualities. Under the sixth quality, “The quality of lighting the torch of the realisation of primordial wisdom” we read:

Having obtained the power of perfect recall (*mi rjed pa'i gzhangs*) [Ngendzong Tönpa] compiled a volume with the collected words and teachings of the great Jetsün Milarepa for the benefit of sentient beings. He gathered many disciples and turned the wheel of *Dharma* for a long time. In particular, while he was staying at Laso in Drin and Jetsün Dampa Rechen came

¹⁰ *rJe btsun ngan rdzong ras pa'i rnam thar 'khrul med* written by rJe Dam pa ras chen and slightly extended by the yogin rGod tshang ras pa. In *Ngam dzong sñan brgyud kyi skor* 1985: 16. Götsang Repa (rGod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol, 1494–1570) was a disciple of Tsangnyön Heruka. [Quintman (2014a: 90) mistakenly states it was Götsangpa Gönpö Dorje (1189–1258) who re-edited Dampa Rechen's biography of Ngendzong Tönpa].

Dampa Rechen is not mentioned anywhere as a disciple of Ngendzong Tönpa. In Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa's “A Scholar's Feast” – dPa' bo gTsug lag Phreng ba (1504–1566) *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* 1986, 1: 784 – Dampa Rechen is said to be a disciple of Repa Zhiwa Ö and holder of Zhiwa Ö's Aural Transmission, whereas the Ngendzong Aural Transmission continued through Gungthang Repa (*Gung thang ras pa*, also called Gungthangpa Rolpé Dorje) and Nyelpa Sungché (*gNyal pa gSung bcad*). The same is confirmed in Tse Wangyal's *The Lhorong Dharma History* (rTa tshag Tshe dBang rgyal, fifteenth century, *Lho rong chos 'byung* 1994: 152). There are many examples in the biographies of Milarepa attesting a close relationship between Ngendzong Tönpa and Zhiwa Ö, so it is not unlikely that Dampa Rechen knew Ngendzong Tönpa well enough to be able to write his biography.

According to Quintman (2014a: 233n18): “One Dam pa Ras chen is mentioned as the direct recipient of Ngan rdzong's aural transmission lineage in Gtsang smyon Heruka's *Bde mchog mkha' 'gro snyan brgyud kyi bzhung 'brel sa bcad dang sbrags pa*.”

[to meet him], he explained the history [of Milarepa] in a very detailed way. He was one of Jetsün Milarepa's four heart sons. Zhiwa Ö had received teachings from Jomo Tashi Tseringma that [Mila] had not taught to any human being: "The Three Tseringma Cycles: Liberation from the Narrow Paths of the Intermediate States," three unknown cycles. (*Tshe rings skor gsum / bar do 'phrang sgrol / ma grags skor gsum*)¹¹. According to the words of Zhiwa Ö [referred to him] at the forest Om Chung Pal, the venerable Ngendzong Tönpa composed these in beautiful verses. Three times, [he?/they?] had asked the great Jetsün [Mila] to review the text before [Mila] finally accepted. Until now, he has done us a great favour, for which we are very grateful.

Moreover, he has compiled the specific oral instructions of the Aural Transmission's Wish-fulfilling Gems that are unknown to others, according to the words of the great Jetsün, without omitting or adding anything. These are now famous as the Aural Transmission Lineage of Ngendzong.¹²

¹¹ Tib. *'phrang sgrol*, translated as "deliverance from the perilous straits" (Cuevas 2003: 46-57; Sernesi 2022) or "Liberation from the Treacherous Paths." (Stagg 2017: 349). The Tibetan *'phrang* refers to the narrow mountain paths along the sides of a cliff, which I translate as 'narrow paths.'

¹² *rJe btsun ngan rdzong ras pa'i rnam thar 'khrul med*, 15-16,
Mi rjed pa'i gzhungs thob nas rje btsun chen po mi la ras pa'i gsung sgros bka'i
bsdu bam dzad pas sems chen la phan btags / las can gyi slob ma mang du 'dus
pa la chos 'khor yun ring du bskor / khyad par brin gyi la so na bzhugs pa'i dus
su rje btsun dam pa ras chen drung du byon pa'i lo rgyu ni legs su gsal / rje mi la
raspa'i thugs kyi sras bzhi 'i ya cig zhing / zhi ba 'od jo mo tshe rings ma mi dang
mi lab pa ltar yod pa'i gsung sgros tshe rings skor gsum / bar do 'phrang sgrol /
ma grags skor gsum rnams zhi ba 'od kyi gsung ltar o' 'byung dpal gyi nags khrod
du re ngam rdzong pas snyan ngags legs pa'i tshig sdeb su sgrig ste rje btsun chen
po'i drung du zhus dag lan gsum mdzad pa dgos shing gnang bas dus ding sang
gi bar du bka' drin che bar mdzad / gzhan la ma grags pa'i khyad chos snyan
rgyud yid bzhin nor bu'i gdams ngag rnams kyang rje btsun chenpo'i gsung las

The first thing we notice in the above citation is that Ngendzong Tönpa's biographers do not refer to an elaborate life-and-song collection composed by the teacher; they only mention a collection of miscellaneous words and teachings of the Jetsün, the three cycles of Tseringma and the Aural Transmission collection. If Ngendzong Tönpa had composed *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – as might be understood from the colophon of that text – there would at least have been some mention of it, given the importance of that song collection.¹³

The following point in the citation is Ngendzong Tönpa's vital role in writing down Milarepa's teachings recounted by Tashi Tseringma to Repa Zhiwa Ö. We mainly know the Tseringma episodes from Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs* (Chapters 28-31), who seems to have copied them from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Each song cycle closes with a colophon attributing the text to Ngendzong Tönpa alone or together with Repa Zhiwa Ö.

Other texts also mention these cycles. For example:

- Part of the Tseringma episodes is included in the text attributed to Lord Barompa Darma Wangchuk (1127–1199) translated in Chapter 11 of this book.¹⁴

phri gnan med par zin bris mdzad pas ngan rdzong snyan rgyud zhes yongs su grags.

¹³ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* is extensively treated in Chapter 1b.

¹⁴ Chapter 11, *Interconnections Between Inner Winds and Outer Perceptions of Non-Human Beings*.

- Yangönpa (*rGyal ba Yang dgon pa*, 1213–1258) wrote a *History of Liberation from the Narrow Paths of the Intermediate States* (*Bar do 'phrangs grol gyi lo rgyus*).¹⁵
- Jamgön Kongtrül ('*Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas*, 1813–1899) comments on “The textual tradition of the three Tseringma cycles” (*Tshe ring skor gsum gyi gzhung*).¹⁶
- The *Drikung Kagyü Great Dharma Treasury* ('*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*)¹⁷ includes three unknown cycles of the Aural Transmission (*sNyan brgyud ma grags skor gsum*) that also contain questions from Tseringma to Milarepa.

In Chapter 12 of this book, I review the episodes and their colophons in all these texts.¹⁸ From the analysis of the same, differences come to light that lead to doubts regarding the authorship of the full-sized Tseringma chapters in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Moreover, the writing style of Ngendzong Tönpa's biographies of Marpa¹⁹ and Milarepa²⁰ differs significantly from the above.

All these elements seem to indicate that the Tseringma chapters in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and later texts – attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa and bearing colophons from the

¹⁵ *Collected Writings of rgyal ba yang dgon pa rgyal mtshan dpal* 1984, 2: 41-43. See also Sernesi 2022 on the *History of the Mountain Teachings*.

¹⁶ *gDams ngag mdzod* 1971, Marpa Kagyu 8: 107-124.

¹⁷ '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* 2004, 61: 3-71. Although the first two cycles are attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa; I suspect these to be posterior due to their scholastic content.

¹⁸ For details, see Chapter 12, *The Tseringma Chapters and their Colophons*.

¹⁹ See Ducher 2017: 46-54.

²⁰ *The Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*. See Chapter 4.

Samvara Aural Transmission – might be a re-working of original but less elaborated texts written by Ngendzong Tönpa.

The third important point to notice in Dampa Rechen's citation mentioned above is that Ngendzong Tönpa is known as the holder of the Aural Transmission of Samvara, Demchok Nyengyü (*bDe mchog snyan brgyud*), transmitted in his lineage as the Ngendzong Nyengyü – *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud*. Dampa Rechen/Götsang Repa narrate Ngendzong Tönpa's meeting with the Jetsün as follows,

The teacher and the disciples went to Lachi Snow Mountain. On reaching there, Ngendzong Tönpa requested,

“Great Jetsün, I know the characteristics of Secret Mantra, but I do not understand mind's nature. Could you please grant me some authentic oral instructions?”

[Mila] bestowed the ripening empowerment and many liberating instructions. Later, when they were at Nyanang, he gave extensive advice on the paths of means and liberation.

While at the Laso cave in Drin [Ngendzong Tönpa] requested further profound advice. The great Jetsün replied: “When Father Marpa the Translator went to India, he asked all the complete great Secret Mantra instructions from the learned and accomplished Nāropa. He said he would give me eight special instructions from among those and gave them to me, like filling up a vase to the brim. However, [Mila] said, the heart of all this is ‘The Aural Transmission of Samvara’.” [Mila] then bestowed the empowerment based on the precious Aural Transmission that ripens what is not ripened yet, together with the sacred commitments.

Moreover, he gave all the instructions for the path of liberation²¹ to obtain the ultimate fruit of buddhahood in this very life in a way beyond any possible mistake. Like a body and its shadow, [Ngendzong Tönpa] uninterruptedly served the Jetsün and meditated for seventeen years. He held the great Jetsün's instructions in his heart like a vase filled to the brim. In particular, he said: "The Jetsün did not give these instructions of the Aural Transmission Wish-fulfilling Gems to anybody except me." Some say he had also given them to Rechungpa, although others say he had not.²²

* * *

²¹ As explained below on page 51, this terminology – path of ripening and path of liberation – seems to be introduced later. Therefore, Götsang Repa might have introduced a change. The same might be valid for the title *bar do 'phrang sgrol*, an expression first seen in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

²² Idem, 7-9, *dPon slob rnam la phyi gangs la phebs tshe/der ngan rdzong ston pas zhus pa/rje btsun chen po lags/ngas gsang sngags mtshan nyid sogs shes bya mang du bslabs te/sems kyi don ma gos bas yang dag pa'i gdams ngag gnang bar zhu zhus pas rung gsung nas/smin byed kyi dbang dang grol byed kyi khrid mang du gnang/de nas nya nang du byon nas thabs lam dang grol lam gyi gdams pa mang du gnang/de nas brin gyis la so phug tu byon nas bzhugs dus yang dag pa'i gdams pa gnang bar zhu zhus pas/rje btsun chen po'i zhal nas/pha mar pa lotsha de rgya gar du byon nas mkhas grub n'a ro sangs ngags chen gyi 'dams pa thams cad tshang bar zhus pa yin / de'i nang nas kyang khyad par can gyi gdams pa brgyad la sogs pa nmams khyod la ster ba yin gsung nas/kho bo la bum pa gang 'byor gnang ba yin / de las kyang 'di yang snying bde mchog snyan rgyud bya ba yin gsung nas/snyan rgyud rin po che'i sgo nas ma [smin pa] smin par byed pa dbang dang dam tshig/grol lam mthar thug 'bras bu sangs rgyas tshe 'di nyid la thob pa'i gdams pa phyin ci ma log pa gnang ste / lo bcu bdun gyi bar du lus dang grib ma bzhin du bla ma 'bral med rten nas bsgoms pas/rje btsun chen po'i gdams pa bum pa gang 'byo thugs la mnga'/khyad par snyan rgyud yid bzhin nor bu'i gdams pa 'di nga ma yin pa gzhan su la yang ma gnang ba yin /rje btsun ras chung pa la res gnang ba skad kyang gsung/ras ma gnang ba skad kyang gsung gin gda' gsung ngo.*

I found a liberation story of Milarepa titled *The Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*, attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa and Gung Repa.²³ If the attribution is correct, it could be dated to the twelfth century, in which case it would be contemporary with the life story of Milarepa attributed to Gampopa/Khyungtsangpa.

Gung Rechen (*Gung ras chen*, also known as *Gung thang ras pa*), probably the scribe of the text, was one of the main disciples of Ngendzong Tönpa. The text bears a colophon similar to other writings attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa:

I have written down the life story of the emanation body of the Immaculate Secret Aural Transmission Instructions. For the benefit of the fortunate beings of later generations, I asked permission to the Lama. To be in accord with the words of the Exalted One, I took the *ḍākinīs* as my witnesses. [I did not write it] for the sake of my memories. I pray to the gods that until the lower realms are emptied, we may drink the nectar of the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the practice lineage. I wrote this to dispel

²³ *Mi la rdo rje rgyal tshan gyi mam thar*.

In *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum*, Paltsek 2011, 5: 126-53 and In *Karma pa rang jung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, 4: 89-124. For translation, see Chapter 4; for a chart of the songs in the biography, see Song Chart 3. "Mila Dorje Gyaltzen" was the name Marpa gave to Mila when he first accepted him as his disciple. He also received the name "Glorious Laughing Vajra", *dpal bzhad pa rdo rje*. In Ngendzong Tönpa's life story of Milarepa, the two names seem to be given on the same occasion. In contrast, in Tsangnyön's version the first is given when Mila receives the vows of a layman and the bodhisattva vows (not mentioned in Ngendzong's life story!) and the second is provided by Marpa and the *ḍākinīs*, on the occasion of the appearance of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala in the sky. (Quintman 2010: 83-84). Remarkably, the name-giving does not appear in the first-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia (*The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*). It surfaces in Möntsepa's text, (probably the source for Tsangnyön) and the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, but in a simplified way. See Chapter 5, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Mila*.

obscurations in the same way as sunlight does. May the fortunate ones living on earth be able to meet this.

This innermost essence of the *ḍākinīs*, their heart secret, was arranged in written form by Bodhiradza, inspired by compassion, without wanting anything [for himself]. I arranged it in written form to benefit the few future yogins who will exert themselves in the practice. If I transgress this inspiration, I ask the *ḍākinīs* to forgive me. If my own wishes have inspired me, may I go to hell.

Ithi

Jetsün Mila's disciple, Ngendzong Repa, served [his master] for twenty-seven years. [This was written down by] his heart son, Gung Repa, a begging Indian mendicant blessed by the holy one and taken under his care.

Besides the importance of this very early witness of Mila's life story, it is crucial also for another reason. As explained above, the life story recounted by Gampopa and written down by Khyungtsangpa is merely an assembly of loose fragments mentioning the main points of Mila's life with hints at a few songs. By contrast, this liberation story is an account structured around the development of different "qualities" that led Milarepa to complete liberation, in a way very similar to Mila's life stories included in *Golden Rosary* collections in Rechungpa's lineage and in the biographical compendia. This type of hagiography – present especially in Ngendzong Tönpa and Rechungpa's lineages – is part of a specific hagiographic tradition linked to the Saṃvara Aural Transmission lineage. As pointed out by Sernesi:²⁴

²⁴ Sernesi 2010: 405 and 408.

The Aural Transmission instructions are grouped into three Wish-fulfilling Gems.(...) The first Gem is called the Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem (*brgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu*), and is defined as “externally, to cut the doubts, the instructions of the emanation-body” (*phyi sgro 'dogs gcod par byed pa sprul sku 'i gdam ngag*) (...) The Gem of the Lineage is defined as “cutting the doubts”, because it establishes the authenticity of the revelation and its transmission within a succession of enlightened beings, which assures its preservation and shows its effectiveness. This is achieved by narrating the “complete liberation” (*rnam thar*), that is to say, the life-stories and signs of realization of the masters. (...) This intimate link between the Aural Transmission’s Gem of the Lineage and life-narrative is reflected in the structural device adopted by the main hagiographical tradition of the Aural Transmission. Indeed, its *rnam thars* are all structured in two main sections: (1) the quality of enduring hardships, connected with the family (*rigs dang 'brel ba dka' ba spyad pa 'i yon tan*) (2) the quality of experience, connected with meditative absorption (*ting nge 'dzin gi dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba 'i yon tan*). The first section usually gives information on the birth-place, birth-name, parents, relatives and education of the master, including teachers and instructions received, in a fluent narrative following a general chronological order. The second section is devoted to the master’s spiritual accomplishments, the main deeds of his life, the disciples he benefitted and, sometimes, the circumstances of his death. It is divided into a variable number of subsections, all also titled following specific ‘qualities’ (*yon tan*) of the master.

The tradition of narrating Mila's life concentrating on such "qualities" could have originated from Ngendzong Tönpa.²⁵ He could have been a precursor to this particular way of narrating Mila's life. This kind of life writing pays little attention to outer circumstances and details about life with the disciples; there are few "stories" (*lo rgyus*), only the main feats, each illustrated with one or more songs.

Ngendzong Tönpa's life story of Milarepa has twenty such "quality" sections. The text ends with the statement: "This is the fourth chapter." This could refer to a more extensive text collection— a *Golden Rosary* by Ngendzong Tönpa including other life stories. From Ducher's research we know he also wrote a life story of Marpa²⁶ that could have been his third chapter, the other two being either Tilopa and Nāropa or Vajrayoginī as the first and Tilo and Nāro as the second. Unfortunately, no such full collection has surfaced yet.

²⁵ Ducher (2017: 61) ascribes the primacy of this kind of life writing, at least in Marpa's biographical tradition, to Ngok Dode (rNgog mdo sde). She writes: "It would certainly make sense to think that Mar-pa's life story was written at the same time or slightly before Mi-la-ras-pa's; in this case, it would mean that Mdo-sde developed a terminology (perhaps inspired by an oral tradition) that was systematized in the first Aural Transmission version of Mi-la-ras-pa's life and generalized until it became typical of all biographies of the lineage." It is hard to determine the exact age of the two texts because Ngendzong Tönpa must have been more or less contemporary with Ngok Dode.

As explained above, also Ngendzong Tönpa's biography by Dampa Rechen was structured in the same way.

²⁶ Ducher 2017: 46-54. This biography is part of Möntsepa's collection, but it does not have the ending "this is the third section." Also, the biography does not have quality chapters.

In Chapter 4 of this book, Ngendzong Tönpa's *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner* is translated, as a paradigm of this kind of life writing divided into qualities. It is interesting to note that the same songs from Ngendzong Tönpa's text are included in the life stories in Rechungpa's lineage. By contrast, the last part of Ngendzong Tönpa's text narrates some episodes present in Gampopa's lineage, while these are consistently missing in the texts from Rechungpa's lineage.[ToC](#)

Golden Rosary life stories of Milarepa in Rechungpa's lineage

The third strand of Milarepa's early *Golden Rosary* life stories consists of a group of texts transmitted in Rechungpa's lineage. In this group, only one (supposedly) twelfth-century biography has been found, included in the sixteenth-century *Samvara Dākinī Aural Transmission (Demchok Khandro Nyengyü)* collection by Jangchup Zangpo.²⁷ Next, I study one late thirteenth-century *Life* by Ogyenpa²⁸ and two fourteenth-century

²⁷ Byañ chub bzañ po, “brGyud pa yid bzhin nor bu rnam par thar pa” In *bDe mchog mkha' 'gro sñan rgyud* 1973, 1: 97-125.

²⁸ O rgyan pa, *The Kagyü Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (Bka' brgyud yid bzhin nor bu yi 'phreng ba)*, 1972: 174-245. This is a Drikung Kagyü collection. Earlier researchers thought the author was the famous O rgyan pa Rin chen dPal (1229–1309). Still, as further research identified the final biography in the collection as the work of an earlier Ögyenpa, it has been tentatively dated to circa 1244. For details, see Roberts (2007: 17). Although this collection has many characteristics similar to the Gampopa-based biographies, the biography of Milarepa belongs to the Rechungpa-lineage “quality” structure. Roberts supposes it is based on an earlier text, possibly by Khyungtsangpa, but it could just as well be based on a supposed text by Zhang Lotsāwa, as I will explain later when talking about Zhijé Ripa.

Lives, one in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*²⁹ and one by Zhijé Ripa.³⁰ The last two are almost identical. Later, in the fifteenth century, there were several more of these life stories, all very similar to the narrative of Mila's biography in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*.

Now, I want to make a digression about the supposedly twelfth-century biography in Jangchup Zangpo's collection. Jangchup Zangpo "was a monk within the administration of the 7th Karma-pa (1454–1506), and later attended the young 8th. His life story of Milarepa is part of the section "Complete Liberation of the Lineage Wish-fulfilling gems" (*brGyud pa yid bzhin nor bu 'i rnam par thar pa*). It has two chapters:

- The quality of the hardships undergone linked with his family (*rigs dang 'brel pa dka' ba spyad pa 'i yon tan*) narrates the period of his early life, the search for a teacher, and the apprenticeship under Marpa.
- The qualities of his experiences linked with meditative absorption (*ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel pa nyams su myong ba 'i yon tan*); it contains seven qualities, with the sixth one again subdivided into six parts.³¹

²⁹ *rJe btsun rin po che mi la ras chen gyi rnam par thar pa*. In *bDe mchog snyan brgyud kyi rnam thar skor*, 160–89. In *Bod gyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*, 23 ('a): 173–242. According to Roberts (2007: 16), this is a history of the Demchok Nyengyü lineage transmitted from Rechungpa through Khyungtsangpa. As in the case of Ögyenpa, I think it may be based on a supposed text collection by Zhang Lotsāwa.

³⁰ Zhi byed ri pa, "The Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams," *Nyi zla 'i 'od zer sgron me*, In *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*. 2004, 9: 247–494.

³¹ See Appendix, Song Chart 4.

This same structure is also present in Marpa's life in the same collection. By contrast, in the life stories of Rechungpa and Khyungtsangpa, the second chapter only has four qualities.

There exists another text collection authored by Jangchup Zangpo, titled "Complete Liberation of the Wish-fulfilling Gems of the Aural Transmission lineage" (*sNyan brgyud kyi brgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu'i rnam par thar pa*).³² In this collection, the life stories of Mila and Rechungpa do not correspond to the ones in the Delhi-published edition cited above. Torricelli, who encountered the same problem with the Tilopa biography in the collection, supposed that Jangchup Zangpo must have arranged two sets of the same text collection.³³ A comparison of the two sets shows that out of twenty-one hagiographies, thirteen are identical and eight are different. Among the different ones are those of Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, Milarepa, Rechungpa and Khyungtsangpa Yeshe Lama. Torricelli supposed that Jangchup Zangpo had first compiled the collection by inserting his own summaries of the life stories currently at hand in the sixteenth century and that he might have laid his hands on some older documents later – discovered in a library or given to him by someone else – that he used to compile the second set. Whereas the accounts of the lives of Tilopa and Nāropa in the second set, attributed to Marpa, bear a formal colophon attesting the author, the compiler attributes Marpa's life to Milarepa, the Milarepa

³² This first set is available in two editions: one, compiled in *dbu med* and facsimiled in recent times (2010-2012) in the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* collection by the Paltsek editorial house, 22: 283-92; the second edition is compiled in *dbu chen* in the '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, 2004, 58: 160-71.

³³ See Torricelli 2019: 66-74.

hagiography to Rechungpa, that of Rechungpa to Ra Shernangpa alias his attendant Rinchen Drak and that of Khyungtsangpa to Zhang Lotsāwa. However, none of these have a formal colophon. Such early attributions are hardly credible, as previous research pointed out.³⁴

Be that as it may, Mila's life story in this set seems to be an early text. It could be a first, somewhat clumsy attempt within Rechungpa's lineage to describe Mila's life in terms of the "quality" structure. However, if the attributions are spurious, the question arises: Who wrote the hagiographies of Marpa, Mila Rechungpa?

Ducher studied Marpa's life stories. She found the following indication in the colophon of one of the studied texts, KSTC-2:

These were the qualities of master Mar-pa Lo-tsā-ba Blo-gros.
They were drawn from father Shangs-pa Mar-ston's mind.

Shangpa Martön Tsultrim Jungné (*Shangs pa Mar ston Tshul khrims 'Byung gnas*) was one of the three main disciples of Rechungpa's foremost disciple Khyungtsangpa, the other two being Ma Cig Onjo (*Ma gcig 'Ong jo*) and Gedingpa (*dGe sdings pa*). These three transmitted the lineage to Zhang Lotsāwa (*Zhang Lo tsā ba*), who died in 1237. We do not know Martön's exact dates, but he must have been active around the end of the twelfth century.

³⁴ About the disputed authorship, see Roberts 2007: 50 – according to Roberts, the life stories of Milarepa and Rechungpa in the collection are “just a crude summary of the same source as used by Gyadangpa” – and Quintman 2014a: 51.

According to Ducher, Marpa's biography in the *Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Lineage*-collections, including the one by Jangchup Zangpo, is to be attributed to Martön.³⁵

Therefore, the question arises whether the same Martön Tsultrim Jungné could also be the author of Mila's and Rechungpa's biographies in this collection. To answer this question, let us first examine the similarity in the composition of the Marpa and Milarepa biographies.

Marpa ³⁶	Milarepa
<p>I. The quality of his undergoing hardships, linked with his potential (<i>rigs dang 'brel pa dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan</i>)</p> <p>II. The quality of his experience, linked with meditative absorption (<i>ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel pa nyams su myong ba'i yon tan</i>).</p> <p>1. The quality of decoding symbols and of being urged [to go back to India] (<i>brda' bkrol zhing bskul btab pa'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>2. The quality of being prophesized as a worthy vessel (<i>snod ldan du lung btsan pa'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>3. Prophecies of the meetings (<i>'jal [sic] bar lung stan</i>);</p>	<p>I. The quality of his undergoing hardships, linked with his family (<i>rigs dang 'brel pa dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan</i>)</p> <p>II. The quality of his experience, linked with meditative absorption (<i>ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel pa nyams su myong ba'i yon tan bdun</i>).</p> <p>1. Subduing his mindstream after he realised that there is no essence in <i>samsāra</i> (<i>'khor ba snying po med par rtogs shing rang rgyud thul ba</i>);</p> <p>2. Recognising blissful heat (<i>bde drod ngo sprad pa</i>);</p> <p>3. The spontaneous liberation of the knots of food and clothes (<i>lto gos kyi mdud pa rang sar grol ba</i>);</p> <p>4. Not being oppressed by a debate (<i>brtsod pa mi sdzi ba</i>);</p>

³⁵ Ducher 2017: 83.

³⁶ Ibid. 78-80. (see also 80n225).

<p>4. The quality of being uplifted by the [guru's] kindness (<i>brtse bas dbugs dbyung ba'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>5. The quality of being accepted [as a disciple] in accordance with [Tilopā's] proclamation (<i>bka' bzhin zhal gyis bzhes nas thugs kyis bzung ba'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>6. The quality of prophecy and of self-liberation <i>lung bstan rang grol gyi yon tan</i></p> <p>a. the prophecy (<i>lung bstan pa ni</i>)</p> <p>b. qualities of self-liberated desire (<i>'dod pa rang grol gyi yon tan</i>):</p> <p>i. the quality of fame of the strength of his lineage (<i>brgyud pa'i rtsal gyis snyan par grags pa'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>ii. the quality of being introduced to Mahāmudrā thanks to the strength of the blessing (<i>byin labs kyi rtsal gyis phyag rgya chen po ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>iii. the quality of being unobstructed as to appearance thanks to his power over nāḍis and vāyus (<i>rtsa rlung gi rtsal gyis snang pa lathog ba dugs med pa'i yon tan</i>);</p> <p>iv. the quality of entering another's body thanks to the strength of his meditative absorption (<i>ting nge 'dzin rtsal gyis grong 'jug mdzad pa'i yon tan</i>).</p> <p>7. The quality of not being ordinary but of appearing for the benefit of beings as an emanation body (<i>rang rgyud pa ma yin par sprul pa'i skus sems can gyi don la byon pa'i yon tan</i>). The quality of the prophecy and of self-liberation (<i>lung bstan rang grol gyi yon tan</i>);</p>	<p>5. Upholding the torch of wisdom (<i>ye shes sgron ma bltam pa</i>);</p> <p>6. Five [types of] conduct [revealing his] realisation (<i>grub pa thob pa'i spyod pa la lnga</i>):</p> <p>a. Showing miraculous manifestations of his body (<i>rdzu sprul lus kyi bkod pa bstan pa</i>);</p> <p>b. Not being crushed by the four elements (<i>'byung ba bzhi mi rdzi ba</i>) – which has four parts</p> <p>-penetrating the earth element (<i>sa la 'dzul ba</i>);</p> <p>-not drowning in water (<i>chu la mi 'bying ba</i>);</p> <p>-not being burnt by fire (<i>mes mi 'tshig pa</i>);</p> <p>-flying in the sky (<i>nam mkha' la 'phur ba</i>);</p> <p>c. Obtaining power over the wisdom gods (<i>ye shes lha la dbang thob pa</i>);</p> <p>d. Binding demi-gods in his service (<i>lha ma yin brang du 'khol ba</i>);</p> <p>This section includes also benefitting the sick and the dying (<i>na shi'i don mdzad pa</i>);</p> <p>e. The blissful appearance of extra sensory perceptions (<i>mngon shes kyi snang ba bde bar shar ba</i>); this section has two parts:</p> <p>-how he protected Rechungpa through his clairvoyance</p> <p>-four blissful aspects: real bliss (<i>bde ba dngos</i>); blissful guides (<i>bde ba lam mkhan</i>); blissful circumstances (<i>bde ba mthun rkyen</i>); self-liberation of the eight worldly dharma (<i>chos brgyad rang grol</i>);</p> <p>f. The quality of great blessing (<i>byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan</i>)</p> <p>7. Self-liberating mahāmudrā <i>phyag rgya chen po rang grol ba</i></p>
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From the above, I posit that there is a good chance that Martön might have written both biographies (Mila's and Rechungpa's – but maybe also Khyungtsangpa's).

Compared to Ngendzong Tönpa's liberation story of Milarepa – which has twenty qualities – in Rechungpa's lineage the life stories have two main chapters, out of which the second describes seventeen or eighteen qualities [or only seven in Martön's case]. The most significant difference is that Ngendzong Tönpa also counts the two main chapters – hardships in early life and meditation experiences – as belonging to the qualities. In contrast, in Rechungpa's lineage, the qualities are subdivisions of the meditation experiences. However, comparing Song Charts 3 and 4 (in Part III), one can see a very close relationship between the songs transmitted in both lineages.

The second chapter in the life stories of Milarepa in Rechungpa's lineage, connected with Mila's meditative experiences, starts with only seven qualities in Martön's text and expands to seventeen or eighteen qualities from Ögyenpa onwards.³⁷ The separation between Mila's early life and his search for and practice under Marpa on one side and the qualities resulting from his meditation practice on the other side seems to be a further development compared to Ngendzong Tönpa's life story. Tsangnyön Heruka followed this division quite closely in his *Life and Songs*.

These life stories have minor differences, but the chapters and the songs they contain are mainly the same. This quality

³⁷ For details, see Song Chart 4. Ögyenpa, Zhijé Ripa, *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* and Jangchup Zangpo maintain the same structure. We find the same structure also in two anonymous life stories of Milarepa contained in the 5th volume of the *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum* edited by Paltsek: *rJe mi la ras pa'i lo rgyus* (5: 70-98) (very similar to the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*), and *Bla ma mi la'i rnam thar bsdu pa* (5: 98-125).

structure has been kept intact until recent times. *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the late Zhepé Dorje Compendia, such as *The Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings*, and similar texts adopted the same structure.³⁸

Zhijé Ripa's *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams* (*Nyi zla'i'od zer sgron me*, completed in 1381) is not a *Golden Rosary* collection, as he dedicates his text entirely to the life of Milarepa. I include it here because the chapters on the qualities linked with Mila's meditative experiences correspond to the other life stories in Rechungpa's lineage. Zhijé Ripa repeatedly says that his two primary sources are Khyungtsangpa Yeshe Lama (the Gampopa narrative of the Jetsün's life?) and Zhang Lotsāwa (†1237). The reference to the latter could mean that a life story of Milarepa (or maybe a *gser'phreng*) authored by Zhang Lotsāwa could have existed that has not come to light so far. It could have been the first seventeen-quality text in the lineage. Given that both Zhijé Ripa's account and the life story in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* are almost identical (except for the last chapter),³⁹ both liberation stories of Milarepa – as well as Ogyenpa's – might have been very close to this hypothetical text by Zhang Lotsāwa.

However, in addition to these chapters, Zhijé Ripa's text includes many other elements, such as conversations between

³⁸ See Chapter 1d.

³⁹ On Zhijé Ripa see Quintman 2012. Quintman calls this work a “historical biography” (*rnam thar lo rgyus*). To my knowledge, Zhijé Ripa was the only author before Tsangnyön Heruka who attributed Mila's death to a Geshe instead of a Bönpö. For the importance of Zhang Lotsāwa in the Aural Transmission of Samvara see Sernesi 2011 and Torricelli 2001 & 2019.

Mila and his disciples, lists of disciples, lists of tantric teachings and transmissions, historical data and the like.

From his list of Mila's most famous songs, it seems that Zhijé Ripa did not have access to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, although he mentions some of the song cycles included in that work. That he mentions these probably means that he had access to the second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's biography of Milarepa (1350-1405),⁴⁰ which contains quite a few of these "new" song cycles and songs that were not in the *Golden Rosary* biographies discussed until now.

All the life stories in Rechungpa's lineage consider Rechungpa as Mila's most important disciple.

* * *

To have a complete picture of the song exchange between Mila and Rechungpa, I have also outlined the songs present in the *Golden Rosary* life stories of Rechungpa – in the Jangchup Zangpo/Martön collection, Gyalthangpa's collection, the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*, Möntsepa's⁴¹ collection and the sixteenth-century summary by Jangchup Zangpo. For details, see Part III, Song Chart 5. Here, we see that *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* integrated many of these Rechungpa songs that were not in the biographies of Milarepa.

⁴⁰ See my discussion in Chapter 8, *Zhijé Ripa – The Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams. Some Interesting Details*.

⁴¹ Mon rtse pa Kun dga' dPal ldan (1408–1475) was a member of the Bara Kagyü (*Ba ra bka' brgyud*), a branch of the Drukpa Kagyü lineage. His *bKa' brgyud gser 'phreng* is probably datable circa 1450-1475. See Roberts 2007: 29.

Roberts⁴² mentions some lost biographies of Rechungpa, especially the one by his disciple and attendant Sumpa titled “Essence of a Wonderful Jewel” (*Ngo mtshar nor bu snying po*). Götsang Repa (rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs ming can, 1494–1570, a disciple of Tsangnyön Heruka) used this biography as the basis for his life story of Rechungpa. I have not included the latter because Tsangnyön Heruka is the end point of my study. These lost biographies could solve some doubts about Rechungpa’s time with Milarepa.

Gyalthangpa’s *dKar brgyud gser ’phreng* contains a life story of Rechungpa. However, by contrast to the life stories of Marpa, Milarepa and Gampopa in his collection – firmly based on those transmitted in the lineages coming from Gampopa – Rechungpa’s liberation story is part of the Aural Transmission tradition in Rechungpa’s lineage. As pointed out by Roberts,⁴³ the absence of a *Life* of Rechungpa must have seemed a shortcoming in the eyes of later compilers of the collection. Therefore, they probably added Rechungpa’s biography in the Gyalthangpa edition we know.

It seems to be quite common that *Golden Rosary* collections host biographies written by different authors. I have already explained the example regarding various authors in Jangchup

⁴² Roberts 2007: 7-9.

⁴³ Roberts (2007: 15-16) points out the absence of Gyalthangpa’s typical verse and commentary style in this life of Rechungpa, as well as the absence of a life story of Rechungpa in the collections transmitted in the lineages coming from Gampopa. He concludes that Rechungpa’s hagiography must have been a later addition to the collection. Rechungpa was a prominent figure in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage and holder of the Rechung Aural Transmission tradition. He also mentions that the same Rechungpa biography is repeated verbatim in (or from?) the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*.

Zangpo's collection. Möntsepa's collection also hosts life stories by multiple authors. For instance, he uses Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Marpa life story.⁴⁴ Mila's life story is also strongly influenced by Khachö Wangpo's narrative of the Jetsün's life. The author of his Rechungpa life story is unknown but close to the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* (influenced by Zhang Lotsāwa?). His Gampopa life story is an early version, very close to Ogyenpa's, probably thirteenth century.⁴⁵

When comparing Rechungpa's life stories, we note that Martön's text in Jangchup Zangpo's collection has the same "clumsy" subdivision as his version of Milarepa's life story. Generally speaking, the songs in all five texts are roughly identical. The order of the qualities varies slightly in Möntsepa so I have highlighted the quality number in the song chart (see Part III, Song Chart 5). The *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* and Gyalthangpa's text are almost identical.

A particularity of the biographies in Rechungpa's lineage is that we find the entrustment of the Aural Transmission Lineage from Mila to Rechungpa. There is no mention of this in the liberation stories in Gampopa's lineage and Ngendzong Tönpa's

⁴⁴ Ducher 2017: 119-22.

⁴⁵ The Gampopa hagiographies in Ögyenpa's and Möntsepa's rosary are pretty short. After the first meeting with Mila (similar to the version in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*), Gampopa receives *gtum mo* instructions and goes to meditate; after this follows the episode of his meditation experiences, which he refers to the Jetsün, and Mila's replies. Immediately after that, Gampopa leaves. There are no songs, and many details that would appear in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's life story of Gampopa, such as the doctrinal explanations on emptiness (*shor sa bzhi*), all the songs and the lengthy farewell, are missing. For comparative details on Gampopa's meeting with Jetsün Mila in the different texts, see Chapter 7, *Gampopa Sönam Rinchen Meets Jetsün Mila*.

text,⁴⁶ nor in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, the Shamar group of texts and Tsangnyön's *mgur 'bum*. Later authors would re-introduce his topic in the late Zhepé Dorje Compendia and Rechungpa's biographies written by Tsangnyön's disciples Götsang Repa and Lhatsün Rinchen Namgyal (*lHa btsun Rin chen rNam rgyal*, 1473–1557). For details, see Chapter 6, *The Entrustment of the Aural Transmission Lineage to Rechungpa*.

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⁴⁶ As we have seen above, in Ngendzong Tönpa's biography it is said that the Jetsün bestowed the Aural Transmission Lineage to Ngendzong Tönpa.

1. Introduction

Our exploration thus far has centred on the earliest records of Mila’s life and songs, found in the *Golden Rosary* collections. These collections feature brief life stories of various lineage masters. Marking a significant shift, more comprehensive “compendia” seem to have emerged from the early thirteenth century, dedicated exclusively to Milarepa’s life and songs. This compendia literature, identified by its structure (the qualities and song cycles) and content (narrative episodes, songs and illuminations contained in them), represents a crucial phase in the preservation of Milarepa’s legacy.

Nowadays, there seems to be a tendency to consider all of these compendia – *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its variants, the *Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings* and other supplementary compendia – as belonging to the same text family called *Black Treasury* (*mdzod nag ma*). Quintman writes,⁴⁷

As a general title, *The Black Treasury* does not indicate a single text or even multiple editions of a single text. Rather, the name refers to a broad collection of biographical compendia sharing common (if not always identical) sources, structures, and content. In this sense, *The Black Treasury* seems to have been understood as a container into which all known material about Milarepa’s life and career might be locked away.

⁴⁷ Quintman 2014a: 104-107.

In particular, the term *Black Treasury* seems to be especially linked to the biographical literary corpus of Milarepa – not only to the “compendia” but also to other texts regarding Milarepa. For instance, citing the early nineteenth-century *History of Drakar Taso*, Roberts writes,⁴⁸

The one named Zhijé Ripa (Zhi-byed Ri-pa) who is famous for having read a hundred and twenty-seven different biographies of the venerable one, composed *A Dark Treasury* and a block print of this previously existed amongst the retreat centres of Chuwar (Chu-dbar) as is described in the biography of Gamnyön Chardor Norbu (sGam-smyon Phyag-rdor Nor-bu).

According to Roberts, “a Dark Treasury (mDzod-nag-ma) is a generic title for texts that should not be made available to the public. It refers to that part of the home where precious things not put on display are kept. This room, or closet, has no windows and therefore is in darkness.”⁴⁹

So, in its broadest sense, *The Dark Treasury* can be considered “a collection of rare texts regarding Mila’s life and songs.”

The present research will make clear that the texts analysed here indeed belong to the same family as far as their structure is concerned. This analysis is meticulous and thorough, leaving no room for doubt. However, there are two reasons why applying the name *The Black Treasury* to all these texts does not seem appropriate.

⁴⁸ Roberts 2007: 32.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 229n128, citing a personal communication, Khenpo Sonam Tobgyal Rinpoche, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 5 October 2005.

First, by doing so, we overlook some significant differences between the earlier and later texts.

Second, as Quintman further writes:

But the tradition is also closely associated with the line of the Karmapas, Kagyu hierarchs famous for their iconic black crowns, for which reason the name might equally be rendered “the treasury of the black.” It is now clear that the name refers to a specific chapel – or perhaps a single room in a chapel – in southern Tibet associated with the Karmapas wherein an early version of *The Black Treasury* was preserved.

The above paragraph exclusively links the texts to the Karma Kagyü lineage. This overshadows the fact that other lineages transmitted similar texts, e.g., the Drukpa Kagyü, the Taklung Kagyü, and the Geluk.

For these reasons, I respectfully disagree with Quintman’s use of the term “*Black Treasury*” for all the compendia. The name “The Zhepé Dorje Compendia” is proposed as a more accurate designation for these texts, based on the consistent use of the name Zhepé Dorje in all of them. Here, the term *Dark/Black Treasury*⁵⁰ refers exclusively to the text in Karmapa Rangjung Dorje’s *Collected Works*.

Among these texts, it is essential to distinguish between two strata: an earlier literary stratum – *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its variants, presumably created in the 13th-early 14th century – and a later stratum created in the late 15th-early 16th century, which contains *A River of Blessings*, *The*

⁵⁰ By using the expression *Dark/Black Treasury*, I refer to the translation of *mdzod nag ma* by both Roberts and Quintman.

Dark/Black Treasury, and an untitled manuscript kept at the British Library.

List of the studied texts

First stratum bZhad pa'i rDo rje Compendia					
A. Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples <i>Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis</i> (RBC)			B. Variant versions RBC		
Ms-Oxford/ RBC-Pt	Ms-Newark	Ms-Drukpa/ Ms-Gansu	Ms-Bordier	Ms-BDRC	Ms-Lhasa

Second stratum bZhad pa'i rDo rje Compendia						
Dark/Black Treasury <i>ndzod nag ma</i>	A River of Blessings <i>Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun</i> (BCG)					British Library Ms
	Group A		Group B			
	DNM-RD	Ms-Smith Ms-India	Ms- Drepung	BCG-D Drigung	BCG-Si Sikhron	
						Ms-BL

Unfortunately, among all the texts and copies available to us, not a single one predates the late 15th century. The main reason why I presume the existence of an early stratum in the 13th-14th century is the reference to the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's endorsement of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* as a valid source of Mila's life and songs and the slightly amended new compilation of the text he supposedly created – as mentioned in the colophon of two 'variant' versions.

Regarding the second stratum, the use of new inputs in the late compendia – datable to the late 14th century, originating from the writings of the second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo, Zhijé Ripa and other so far undiscovered but mentioned works – leaves no doubt to the distinction in time between the two strata. However, three of the texts in the first stratum – Ms-Oxford, Ms-

Drukpa and Ms-Gansu – share part of the later inputs of the second stratum. What distinguishes the first from the second stratum is not the time factor but rather that the second-stratum compendia take the variant version created by the Karmapa Rangjung Dorje as their reference point. As this is not the case in Ms-Oxford, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, we should still classify these three works as belonging to the first stratum. In fact, in the latter case, the compilers clearly distinguish new inputs as added chapters to the ‘standard’ *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. By contrast, in the second-stratum compendia, the compilers weave new inputs inside the other chapters.⁵¹

2. General description of The Twelve Great Repa Disciples

Life and Songs of the Glorious Zhepé Dorje (dPal bzhad pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar 'gur chings dang bcas pa) is the title of the first “biographical compendium” – an extensive liberation story of Milarepa combined with experiential songs.⁵² This title appears only in the colophon of the text. It is common to all the versions studied here. In academic circles, the text is known by its informal title, “The Twelve Great Disciples” – *bu chen bcu gnyis* – referring to the presumed contribution in the composition of the text by Mila’s twelve most prominent disciples, such as Ngendzong Tonpa Bodhiradza and the others. However, the complete Tibetan expression being *ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis*, it

⁵¹ This point is noticeable in Song Chart 7. When comparing Song Chart 7 with Song Chart 8, in the latter case, we see the innovations (indicated in red) scattered throughout the texts, which is not the case in Song Chart 7.

⁵² For *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, see Roberts 2007: 19-25 and Quintman 2014a: 82-3.

seems crucial to refer to the text as *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, adding the detail that the sources of the text are the “*repa*” disciples, thereby indicating the cotton-clad community, not the monk disciples.

The exact contribution of these disciples to the composition is still to be determined. Some versions claim they created the text, while others claim it was compiled according to their words. As I will explain below, the latter is more likely.

The colophon of the text states,

This Life [of Milarepa] has been written down for the benefit of worthy meditators, by/in the words of/ the twelve great *repa* sons such as Ngendzong Tönpa (Ngan rdzong sTon pa) Bhodhirādza and the others.⁵³

Then follows a list of Mila’s male and female disciples, especially the twelve *repa* disciples.

The attribution of the text to the Jetsün’s twelve *repa* disciples headed by Ngendzong Tönpa does not seem realistic. Although the second part of the colophon (see below) is similar in style to other colophons written by Ngendzong Tönpa,⁵⁴ the entire colophon may have been adapted into this context from another text. The reasons for this apparent inadequacy are the following:

⁵³ E.g., RBC-Pt 515, *rnam thar 'di skal ldan sgom chen rnams kyi don du / ngan rdzong ston pa bho dhi raa dza la sogs pa 'i ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis kyi yi ger bkod pa'o/*

⁵⁴ See for example the colophons of the Tseringma chapters in Quintman 2014a: 199-202, or the colophon of Ngendzong Tönpa’s *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*, Chapter 4.

- First, various earlier liberation stories of Milarepa and his disciples already existed in the *Golden Rosary* collections, including the liberation story of Milarepa by Ngendzong Tönpa discussed above. These biographies lack the wealth of detail introduced in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.
- Second, in Ngendzong Tönpa's biography written by his disciple Dampa Rechen,⁵⁵ there is no mention of this compilation, and one would think that it would be a point of honour for a disciple to include such an important work of his teacher.

The second part of the colophon gives an added piece of information, repeated in all versions,

This has been written down following the Lama's words
 out of fear that those with lesser intelligence [among] the future
 holders of this Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem – the lineage of the
 Saṃvara Aural Transmission – might forget it.
 Except for those individuals in later generations
 who are fit vessels [for the teaching] rejoicing in
 empowerments, blessings, *gaṇacakras*,
 and making offerings to *dākas* and *dākinīs*,
 this [text] has been sealed by the Lord guru's command.
 If one transgresses that command,
 the *dākinīs* will become extremely angry.
 Therefore, please do not promulgate these writings; keep them
 secret.
 The Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem, *dāki*, samaya

⁵⁵ Dam pa Ras chen 1985: 1-17, see above.

Accordingly, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* would be part of the “Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem” of the Cakrasaṃvara Aural Transmission.

These “Wish-fulfilling Gems” can be traced back to the life story of Tilopa,⁵⁶ in particular to the episode in which Tilopa asks instructions from the Gandola wisdom-*dākinī* (jñāna dākinī) in the land of Oḍḍiyāna. He requests instructions called “Three Wish-fulfilling Gems.” In the earliest available life story of Tilopa, the name of the first Gem is the “General/Common/Ordinary Wish-fulfilling Gem” (*thun mongs yid bzhin nor bu*), the second is the “Commitment Wish-fulfilling Gem” (*dam tshig yid bzhin nor bu*). The third is the “True Nature Wish-fulfilling Gem” (*gnas lugs yid bzhin nor bu*).

⁵⁶ Among Tilopa’s various life stories, the earliest available biography I have seen – included in Jangchup Zangpo’s *bDe mchog mkha’gro śān rgyud* – is attributed to Marpa Lotsāwa (1012–1097/1000–1085). This attribution might be spurious, but the text, although undatable, is anyway old. I wonder whether it could be written by Shangpa Martön Tsultrim Jungné (second half of the 12th century), considering that the lives of Marpa, Milarepa and Rechungpa in Jangchup Zangpo’s collection also could be written by him, as argued above. This earliest biography is recounted and commented upon by the XII Khentin Tai Situpa (1988: 40-69) and translated by Fabrizio Torricelli (1995: 34-60 and 2019: 171-7). Wangchuk Gyaltzen, a disciple of Tsangnyön Heruka (1474–1552), wrote a second major biography of Tilopa, and Pema Karpo (Kun mkhyen Pad ma dKar po, 1527–1592) composed a third one. Significant differences exist between these life stories, as can be seen by comparing the terminology used in the recently published *Tilopa’s Wisdom* by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, 2019: 31-34. Here, I refer to the earliest version. Among the other early versions, only Dönmo Ripa (13th century) follows the same classification of the Wish-fulfilling Gems as the one in this early *nam thar* (see Khenpo Könchog Gyaltzen 1990: 40). The 13th-century *nam thars* of Ti lo pa by Gyalthagpa Dechen Dorje (dkar bgyud gser ’phreng 1973: 27-28) as well as the one by Ögyenpa (bka’ bgyud yid bzhin nor bu yi ’phreng ba 1972: 20) both classify the Wish-fulfilling Gems as *brgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu*, *smin lam yid bzhin nor bu* and *grol lam yid bzhin norbu*, as would be the case in later times.

In later times, it was presumably Zhang Lotsāwa (†1237)⁵⁷ – in the early thirteenth century – who wrote down this extraordinary Aural Transmission, initially transmitted only orally. From then onwards, in all the successive life stories of Tilopa, the first Wish-fulfilling Gem is codified as the “Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem” (*brgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu*). It contains the basic instructions of the tradition intended to eliminate doubts regarding the emanation bodies – the lineage gurus – and the liberation stories of the masters of the past. The second Gem becomes the “Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Path of Ripening” (*smin lam yid bzhin nor bu*). The third, the “Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Path of Liberation” (*grol lam yid bzhin nor bu*), includes the General, the Commitment and the True Nature Wish-fulfilling Gems. Thus, this codification seems to be a later development.

In addition to the above-stated reasons of doubt regarding the direct authorship of the twelve great *ras pa* disciples, the use of the later codified term “Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem” in *The Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples* is another indication that we should consider this work as a new creation that collected the words of the *repa* disciples in one great compendium. Presumably, one or more anonymous author/s in the thirteenth century composed it, and over time, it was transmitted in

⁵⁷ See Zhang lo tsa wa’s introduction to the Aural Transmission of Śaṃvara, Torricelli 2001. The manuals by Tsangnyön Heruka, Pema Karpo, Jangchup Zangpo and Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé contain the doctrinal aspects of this Aural Transmission. See also Sernesi 2007 & 2011: 179-209. The latter article gives a detailed outline of Zhang-lo’s *thim yig* on page 186. See also Callahan 2023: 173-9. In Chapter 8, *Zhi-jé Ripa. The Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, I suggest that this “Introduction” may be wrongly attributed to Zhang Lotsāwa and thus be later.

different lineages (mostly Kagyü – Drukpa, Karma, Taklung, Drikung – but also Geluk).⁵⁸

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples follows the 17/18 quality structure of the hagiographic tradition in Rechungpa's lineage. Therefore, somebody presumably created the work within that lineage. In the first half of the thirteenth century, Rechungpa's lineage was already absorbed in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage, and some changes – such as considering Gampopa as the Jetsün's foremost disciple – had already taken place. The compilers incorporated these in the text, much like Tsangnyön Heruka would integrate further variations in his work two hundred years later.⁵⁹ In the *Golden Rosary* collections, each lineage considered its founder Mila's principal disciple. By contrast, starting with *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, the Jetsün's most prominent disciple became Gampopa.

In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, there are two instances in which this is clear. To the question of patroness Chammé (ICam me) whether the Jetsün would have realised disciples, the Jetsün replied:

According to a prophecy of the *ḍākinīs* regarding emanation bodies, Dakpo will rise like a sun for the beings, and Rechung will be a moon-like emanation body.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See a detailed description of the texts below.

⁵⁹ See the discussion about the demotion of Rechungpa in Chapter 2.

⁶⁰ E.g., RBC-Pt 182, *mkha' 'gro'i lung bstan sprul pa'i sku / dwags po nyi ma 'gro la shar / ras chung zla ba sprul pa'i sku*. The same episode comes in Tsangnyön's song 55.2, TN-Dha: 769; Stag 2017: 648.

The following reference to Gampopa's preeminence appears in a chapter titled "The story of the prophecy of Dakpo's future arrival" (*Dags po 'byon pa 'i ma 'ongs lung bstan gyis bskor*),

Rechungpa asked again: "While you were with Lama Marpa from Lhodrak, with his noble heart, he chose you to inspire us. Will there be someone to protect the instructions and the community of our Dharma lineage? As I was the first to meet the Lama, will you give that permission to me? Or do you think there could be someone else?"

[The Jetsün] was slightly displeased. He said: "Rechungpa, don't talk like this! When Marpa from Lhodrak pointed his staff to my heart, saying: 'I entrust my lineage to you,' he also had many other good disciples, and he chose me, not because I was his favourite but because there was promising connection [for me] to uphold the lineage. In a few days from now, the one who will uphold my lineage will arrive."⁶¹

3. Versions of The Twelve Great Repa Disciples

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples survives in different versions. I consulted the following eight versions:

⁶¹ E.g., Ms-Oxford 164a. *Yang ras chung pas zhus pas / bla ma lho brag mar pa 'i drung nas / rang re la sku snyan pa che ba 'i thugs rtsis mdzad zin pas / nged rang gi chos rgyud 'di la / khrid dang tshogs pa skyong ba e yong / nga yang bla ma dang mjal snga bas bka' gnang 'dra e yod / 'o na gzhan 'dra la mchis sam zhus pas / thugs chad pa cig byung nas / ras chung pa de skad ma zer / nga la lho brag mar pas sba ber snying khar gtad nas / nga 'i rgyud pa 'di khyod la gtad pa yin gsungs nas / gzhan slob ma bzang la mang po yod de / nga la thugs rtse ba ma yin te / rgyud pa 'dzin pa 'i rten 'brel cig shar ba red / da nga 'i rgyud pa 'dzin mkhan cig zhag mang po mi 'gor bar 'ong bar yod gsung ngo*. Tsangnyön narrates the episode more dramatically in TN-Dha: 625, Stagg 2017: 492.

- The Oxford manuscript (Ms-Oxford), an untitled manuscript kept at Oxford University Bodleian Library.⁶² The text ends by mentioning *dPal bzhad pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar / mgur chings dang bcas pa mdzogs so*, “The Life of Glorious Zhepé Dorje, together with a song-outline, is completed.” This title in the end sentence is common to all the editions.
- The Newark manuscript (Ms-Newark) is titled *rJe btsun chen po mid la ras pa'i rnam thar zab mo*, “The Profound Life Story of the Great Jetsün Milarepa.” This manuscript, dated no earlier than the late seventeenth century,⁶³ is a version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* transmitted in the Geluk lineage. Compared to the Oxford version, especially in the chapter on Gampopa’s stay with Jetsün Mila, the compiler left out various details regarding differences between the teachings of the Kadampa and Milarepa.⁶⁴
- The Paltsek Tibetan Rare Texts Research Center published a recent edition of the Ms-Oxford in book form in the Ancestral Legacy Series (RBC-Pt),⁶⁵ as the first of five volumes of *rJe*

⁶² The manuscript was brought to the Bodleian Library in the early 1900’s, and we ignore the provenance or the date of composition.

⁶³ Quintman 2014: 88.

⁶⁴ Ms-Newark 213-21; see Chapter 7 and compare the episode in Sangyé Bum’s biography with the one in the Newark version. The latter abbreviated version eliminates all forms of criticism by Mila versus the Kadampas.

⁶⁵ RBC-Pt, *dPal rtsegs yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, Mes po'i shul bzag* 2011. The second and third volumes of the *gsung 'bum* contain *The Dark/Black Treasury* included in Karmapa Rangjung Dorje’s *Collected Works*. The fourth volume consists of the *rdo rje'i mgur drug* – “The Six Vajra Songs” – as well as some doctrinal texts such as the *phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal 'byed*, “Mahāmudrā, Illuminating Primordial Wisdom” and *bar do blo chod, (lam blo nas gcod pa bar do ngo sprod kyi gdams ngag zab mo)* “The Profound Instructions Pointing Out the Intermediate States for Reaching the End of the Path with the Mind.” (the latter translated in Chapter 13). The fifth volume contains four short biographies of Milarepa – the last being the one by Ngendzong Tönpa

btsun Mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum, “The Collected Works of Jetsün Milarepa.” It corresponds to the Oxford version, with fewer scribal errors. It bears the same title as the Newark version.

- Ms-Drukpa,⁶⁶ a *dbu can* manuscript in the BDRC database titled *rJe btsun mid la ras pa chen po'i mgur 'bum*, “The Collected Songs of the Great Jetsün Milarepa.” We ignore the origin of this text. It contains 20 illuminations of lineage masters, the last of which are Lingrepa (1128-1188), Tsangpa Gyaré (1161-1211), Götsangpa (1189-1258) and Yangönpa (1213–1258).⁶⁷ These images collocate the manuscript in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage, hence Ms-Drukpa. Considering its content is almost identical to Ms-Gansu, it is a late version.
- Ms-Gansu, a *dbu med* manuscript reproduced in facsimile in a collection printed in Gansu (China), titled *rNal 'byor dbang phyug mi la chen po'i mam thar bka' 'bum chen mo grub thob ras pa bcu gnyis kyis bsgrigs pa ngo mtshar kun 'dus*, “The Life and the Great Teaching Collection of the Great Mila, the Powerful Yogin, compiled by the Twelve *Repa* Siddhas: a collection of marvels.” After the general colophon of *The Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples* – identical to the one cited above– the scribe adds the printer’s colophon of the xylographic edition mentioned by Roberts as the “Stockholm version” that belonged to the collection of Toni Schmid and was donated to the Stockholm Folkens Museum Etnografiska, but is now missing.⁶⁸ As a Central Tibetan printed edition, that text can not predate the fifteenth century. Consequently, as Ms-

(translated in Chapter 4) as well as Zhijé Ripa’s *Nyi zla'i 'od zer sgron me*, “Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams” and a prayer to Milarepa.

⁶⁶ BDRC W3CN22290, 315 fols. I thank Marta Sernesi for kindly providing me with copies of Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu. These two manuscripts greatly contribute to understanding *The Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples*.

⁶⁷ See the outline in Bock’s Appendix A, 2024: 169-72.

⁶⁸ Roberts 2007: 21-22.

Gansu seems to be a handwritten reproduction of the xylographical edition, it also is not datable earlier than the fifteenth century.

Thus, no early witness of the compendium is available, and none of these five copies – except the modern edition RBC-Pt – is precisely datable. As we will see from their content, they all seem to be quite late.

So, why could we date the original work to the thirteenth century? One reason is the discovery of three slightly ‘variant’ versions, one of which the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (Rang byung rDo rje 1284–1339) has allegedly compiled.⁶⁹ All three bear the same main colophon as the above versions. Their shared content is almost identical.⁷⁰ Therefore, I posit that a late thirteenth-early fourteenth-century version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, complemented with some details from sources that have not yet come to light, is the basis of these ‘variant’ versions.

- Ms-BDRC. The BDRC database hosts a manuscript with a damaged title page catalogued with the title *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug rje btsun mi la 'i mam thar – ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis kyis bsgrig*, ‘Liberation story of Jetsün Mila, the Powerful Lord of Yogins, Compiled by the Twelve Great *Repa* Disciples.’⁷¹ The origin of the manuscript is unknown, except

⁶⁹ The early date is also corroborated by the presence of episodes and songs from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* in Khachö Wangpo’s 14th-century “Clouds of Blessings” (see Chapter 1c).

⁷⁰ See Song Chart 7: Outline and Song Index in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

⁷¹ BDRC W3CN25684, 418 fols. The manuscript’s title page is only half readable, with a title referring to a different text ([...] *bcas dbu'i gzigs phyogs legs par bzhus so*); the last few folios are missing. The last folio has two superimposed

that it came from Central Tibet. For the moment, I will refer to it as Ms-BDRC.

- The Bordier manuscript (Ms-Bordier) is preserved at the Tibet Museum – Foundation Alain Bordier – in Switzerland. It bears the title *rJe btsun mi la bzhad pa rdo rje 'i 'gur bum nam thar 'bril ma*, “The Collected Songs of Mila Zhepa Dorje, together with his Liberation Story.”⁷² The primary colophon is identical to the one in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. As is shown in Étienne Bock’s article,⁷³ it contains an additional colophon, “The History of the *Dark Treasury* transmitted by the Karma pas,” very similar to a transmission history included in the “*River of Blessings*”-versions Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si (see below).
- Ms-Lhasa is a manuscript that was kept in the archives of Drepung monastery, Lhasa. Quintman considers it to be the earliest *mdzod nag ma* text, calling it DNM-Lhasa.⁷⁴ On close inspection, there is nothing in this text that refers to a *Black Treasury*: it has no the title page and is catalogued as *rJe btsun mi la rdo rje rgyal tshan gyi nam par thar pa*, “The Liberation Story of Jetsün Mila Dorje Gyaltsen.”⁷⁵ The primary colophon is identical to the general *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* colophon. It has a second colophon in which the scribe of the text writes:

pages; there seems to be part of the colophon of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second colophon regarding Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.

⁷² 323 fols., in *dbu med*. I thank Étienne Bock and Alain Bordier for allowing me to study this beautiful manuscript.

⁷³ Bock 2024: 46 and 92.

⁷⁴ Quintman 2014a: 107-109.

⁷⁵ Note that this title corresponds to the title of Ngendzong Tönpa’s liberation story of Milarepa! However, this title and the name Dorje Gyaltsen are not mentioned in the text, making it only the cataloguers’ choice.

The Dharma Lord, Mipham Gönpö – the Invincible Guardian – has said: “The great Jetsün Mila’s collected songs seem to be limitless in number, but from some one hundred⁷⁶ textual arrangements I have seen this compilation includes most of them.” Since Lord Rangjung Dorje had it written down, he considered it a valid source and he had the most excellent estimation for it. This one must be that universally known volume.

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⁷⁶ The second volume of a text collection called *mDo smed la brang phyogs nas rnyed pa’i gso rigs la sogs pa’i dpe rnying phyogs sgrigs*, “Collection of Old Tibetan Medicine and Other Texts from Amdo Labrang Area.” (W5CN96) includes a life-and-song story of Milarepa attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa as the author and Rangjung Dorje as the editor of the text (fols. 50b-144b). At first, I thought this might be one of those above-mentioned hundred textual arrangements seen by Rangjung Dorje. However, from an accurate evaluation, it is clear that the text is from a later time because it includes several songs that appeared only in the late versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, see below). Thus, the attribution to Rangjung Dorje is not reliable.

⁷⁷ Ms-Lhasa, 308b.4. This interpretation is how I understand the extremely confused colophon. For an elaborate discussion, see Bock 2024: 82-88. Without this colophon and its reference to the Karmapa’s contribution, it would have been more logical to date *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* to the late 14th-early 15th century, just after or around the same time as the compilation of the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* and Zhijé Ripa’s *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams* (the latter completed in 1381). These two texts are examples of the 18-quality life stories of Milarepa included in the Golden Rosaries of the Saṃvara Aural Transmission. Zhijé Ripa – who says he had access to 127 of Mila’s life stories – seems not to have known about the existence of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, which sounds rather strange. One possible explanation could be the highly restricted circulation of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Zhijé Ripa mentions a few of its song cycles, which he might have read in the second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo’s “Clouds of Blessings” – *byin rlabs kyi sprin phung*. mKha’ spyod dbang po (1283–1349) also dedicates limited space to the stories in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. However, as a disciple of the fourth Karmapa, he was introduced to texts with limited distribution. In his liberation story of Milarepa, similar to those in Gampopa’s lineage, he does not follow the quality

So, in this colophon, the scribe of the text writes that Rangjung Dorje endorsed *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* as a valid source of Mila's life stories and songs; he somewhat edited the manuscript and had a new copy made. Ms-BDRC also possibly included the same second colophon, although the last page is not entirely readable. By contrast, the Ms-Bordier manuscript does not include it. This second colophon – referring to a compilation made by the Third Karmapa – brought this version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* into the Karma Kamtshang lineage and allows us to date it to the late 13th - early 14th century.

ToC

4. Content of The Twelve Great Repa Disciples

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples consists of detailed song cycles (*skor*) narrated following the same quality structure as the liberation stories in Rechungpa's lineage. Many new songs appear within each chapter, with Mila granting Dharma teachings and meditation instructions to various disciples and patrons.

Part of the new material in this work comes from the *Golden Rosary* biographies of Rechungpa: Rechungpa's first meeting with Jetsün Mila, his trip to India and Nepal and his relationship

structure: he does not include entire song cycles from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, but only parts of their stories. However, he does mention some of these stories, which attests to the existence of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* before his and Zhijé Ripa's time. (See Chapter 8).

with Mila.⁷⁸ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* introduces the stories of the yak horn and the wild asses. In the early biographies of Rechungpa we do find one song included in the yak-horn chapter and two included in the wild-ass chapter.⁷⁹ However, there the narrative of the tension between Mila and Rechungpa found in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* is missing.⁸⁰

The chapters of the conversations between Mila and the Tseringma sisters and his meetings with Ngendzong Tönpa and Repa Zhiwa Ö probably come from Ngendzong Tönpa's lineage.⁸¹

Other songs and episodes have been elaborated from narratives transmitted in the lineages descending from Gampopa, especially from the biographies of Milarepa included in the Golden Rosaries by Dönmo Ripa, Gyalthagpa and Sangyé Bum – for instance, the story of Drakmar Chonglung (Mila gathers wood) and the Journey to Lachi Chuzang.

⁷⁸ For an overview of the *Golden Rosary* life stories of Rechungpa, see Song Chart 5 – Outline and Songs in The Life of Rechungpa in Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's Lineage.

⁷⁹ Song 38.2, Stagg 2017: 447 – the song in which Rechungpa recounts the teachings he received in India.

Song 39.9, Stagg 2017: 476 – the song about Mila's hopes and fears regarding Rechungpa.

Song 39.10, Stagg 2017: 478 – Rechungpa's song about defeating debaters.

⁸⁰ For details about the demotion of Rechungpa to the profit of Gampopa in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, *The Dark Treasury* and Tsangnyön's work, see Roberts 2007, 179-82.

⁸¹ Chapters 28-31, e.g., Ms-Oxford 124a-145b; Stagg 2017: 307-81. As mentioned in Chapter 1a, Ngendzong Tönpa supposedly wrote a text called *Tshe rings skor gsum*.

Zhiwa Ö's story, e.g., Ms-Oxford 99a-100a, comes in Tsangnyön's Chapter 17; Stagg 2017: 159-90.

However, many episodes of encounters with disciples do not result in any of the previous texts – e.g., the meeting with Seban Repa, Paldarbum, Drigom Repa, Salé Ö, to mention but a few. These episodes might come from a presumed early *Mi la'i mgur 'bum*; some extra content might come from the oral tradition or be a later enrichment.

From a quick overview of Song Chart 7, we notice a truly remarkable consistency in the content of all versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Except for the differences indicated below, they all include the same song cycles and songs.

Ms-Oxford, compared to the Newark manuscript as well as to the three ‘variant’ versions, contains three additional chapters, which we also find in the compendia in the second stratum:

- The episode in the Zangyü kitchen (*bzang rgyud phyag tshang gi skor*, corresponding to Tsangnyön’s Chapter 24, where Milarepa performs an elaborate Bön ritual for a dying Bön po)⁸²
- The episode with the old grandma (*a phyi rgan mo 'i skor*, the first song included in Tsangnyön’s Paldarbum Chapter 14)⁸³
- An episode with minor songs (*mgur phran*), a medley of different songs put together without constituting a particular episode).

Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu share the first two additional episodes. These two versions also include most of the songs of the *mgur phran* episode, inserted as an extension in a different song cycle – *dbus gtad zhal ta 'i skor*, the advice to Ras chungpa

⁸² For a translation of this episode, see Chapter 10, *The Episode at the Zangyü Kitchen*.

⁸³ See Chapter 10, *Meeting Paldarbum*.

before his final departure to Central Tibet.⁸⁴ At the end of this extension, there is mention of the transmission of the Demchok Nyengyü to Rechungpa (in a single sentence), which is not the case in any of the other RBC versions.

Besides the three chapters mentioned above, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu include two extensions to the Lhajé Yangé cycle⁸⁵ – both untitled in Ms-Drukpa, in Ms-Gansu titled *sKor la thog gi bskor* (the cycle at the Kora pass) and *La stod rgyal gyi rtsibs ri skor* (the cycle at the Tsibri mountain in Latö), with songs also included in the second-stratum compendia. Moreover, they both contain the *gSal le 'od kyi zhus lan*, (Answers to the Questions of Sahle Ö)⁸⁶ as well as a long untitled chapter with miracles and songs to Rechungpa, similar to the ones in the wild-asses episode. However, here, instead of the miraculous view of the wild asses, Rechungpa explains the marvels he has seen on his trip to India.⁸⁷ The great number of extra songs regarding Rechungpa firmly collocates the latter two versions in the Drukpa lineage.

⁸⁴ Tsangnyön's Chapter 56, Stagg 2017: 653-61.

⁸⁵ The first cycle (Ms-Drukpa 163a, Ms-Gansu 24: 36) includes the narrative frame of Tsangnyön's Chapter 20, with three songs from that chapter also included in the second-stratum compendia. The second episode, at Tsibri, (Ms-Drukpa 165b, Ms-Gansu 24: 41) narrates Milarepa's meeting with Drigom Repa (Tsangnyön's Chapter 16; the latter replaced Tsibri with Śrī ri, Stagg 2017: 155), but it also includes songs from his Chapter 44 (Stagg 2017: 542) and part of the episode of the broken clay pot in *The Life of Milarepa* (Quintman 2010:151). These songs also appear in the second stratum. For a translation of the Tsibri episode, see Chapter 10.

⁸⁶ Ms-Drukpa 153b, Ms-Gansu 24: 28. The episode includes only two songs from gTsang smyon's Sahle Ö Chapter 37, Stagg 2017: 431; also the second-stratum compendia include only these two songs.

⁸⁷ Ms-Drukpa 260a, Ms-Gansu 24: 236.

Thus, in contrast to Ms-Newark and the three ‘variants’, Ms-Oxford, Ms-Drukpa, and Ms-Gansu contain some of the extra content we also find in the second-stratum versions. However, as we will see, these three versions do not have the typical characteristics of the ‘variant’ versions nor the second-stratum compendia. This absence confirms that these three versions belong to group A of the first-stratum compendia – the ‘regular’ versions of the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Considering the slight differences between Ms-Oxford and Ms-Drukpa/Ms-Gansu, I think that Ms-Oxford might be dated slightly earlier than the latter two.

In group B of the first-stratum compendia – the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Bordier, Ms-BDRC and Ms-Lhasa) – we find the following typical characteristics absent in the versions described above.

- The episode of Rechungpa arriving at Mila’s cremation site. It is missing in the other *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* versions as well as in DNM-RD, but it comes in *A River of Blessings* and the British Library manuscript (Ms-BL).⁸⁸
- The *bardo* song in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 41⁸⁹ appears here for the first time.
- After the Jetsün has bestowed all his blessings and empowerments on Gampopa, suddenly Tārā, who is helping the Jetsün take care of his texts, exclaims joyfully how marvellous all this is. Milarepa then places a *torma* on Gampopa’s head and tells him that he will

⁸⁸ Ms-Bordier 310b, Ms-Lhasa 237a. (The page is missing in Ms-BDRC). See below for DNM-RD, *A River of Blessings*, and Ms-BL (British Library).

⁸⁹ Ms-Bordier 287b, Ms-BDRC 374a, Ms-Lhasa 275b. (the song is also included in Ms-Drukpa 265a and Ms-Gansu 24: 228). Song 41.6, Staggy 2017: 515.

be of enormous benefit to sentient beings, more than himself, because of all the unmistakable signs he has seen before Gampopa's arrival and because of a dream in which Gampopa resulted as the winner in a contest with the Jetsün.⁹⁰

As these elements are present in all three 'variant' versions, it seems these could belong to an independently circulating later version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Ms-Lhasa, a copy of the text supposedly compiled by Rangjung Dorje, contains the following supplementary chapters as compared to the other versions:

- The episode at Drakya Dorje (*brag skya rdo rje'i skor*, found only in this text and DNM-RD)⁹¹

⁹⁰ This episode is not included in DNM-RD, but it comes in the 'variant' editions of *The Twelve Repa Disciples* (e.g., Ms-Lhasa f. 278b), in *A River of Blessings* and in the Ms.BL-*de yang lcam lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron ma rje btsun gyis phyag dpe'i gnyer mdzad pa yin ste / bla ma rin po che la de shin tu dgyes pas / chos kyi nang byan mdzad / gsang sngags bla med kyis rgyud thams cad dang / gdam pa lhag lus med par rdzogs pa'i mthar/gtor ma chen po zhig dbu thog tu bzahag nas / mkha' 'gro chos skyong gi dbang bskurnas / bu khyod kyis sems chen dpag tu med pa'i don 'grub par 'dug gsungs / de cir lags zhus pas / dang po khyod 'ong khar yang rtags mtshan gsal po byung la / 'di na yod pa'i tshe yang nga dang khyod sang 'gren pas khyod ngon la thal ste / nga bas khong(?)sems chen gyis don rgya che bar 'dug byas pa cig rmis.*

Whether lCam lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron ma is the goddess Tārā or a female disciple of the Jetsün with that name is not sure. There are two instances in which she appears in the sky (see below, p.90); at least these two cases seem to refer to a supernatural being. The detail of the *torma* and the Jetsün saying that Gampopa would be better than himself appears for the first time in an autobiographical fragment by Gampopa included in *Dag po bka' 'bum*, in the chapter *Answers to the Questions of Dusum Khyenpa* (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*). See Kragh 2015: 96-7 and Chapter 7 in this book.

⁹¹ Ms-Lhasa 60a-61a; DNM-RD 2006: 122.

- The question-and-answer chapter between the Jetsün and a beautiful girl (*rje btsun dang bu mo yid phrog ma gnyis kyi zhus lan*, included in the texts of the second stratum)⁹²
- The extension of the chapter of the hunter Khyira Repa, with songs to his wife (included in the texts of the second stratum)⁹³
- The episode with the goat herder Radzi Repa and the sheep herder Lugdzi Repa (included in the texts of the second stratum)⁹⁴

The last two supplementary chapters are also found in the Ms-BDRC, while all four are missing in Ms-Bordier.

In the cycle at Drakya Dorje, a short episode (only 2 folios) not found in the other *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – a rabbit riding a fox – appears,⁹⁵ followed by two songs by Milarepa and an interesting definition of the term mahāmudrā:

phyag: non-dual primordial wisdom;
rgya: uncontaminated by the errors of saṃsāra;
chen po: the union of both;
 realising this is *phyag rgya chen po*.⁹⁶

This definition of *mahāmudrā* is very close to a quote in the *phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed*, “Mahāmudrā,

⁹² Ms-Lhasa 124b-132a.

⁹³ Ms-BDRC 189b, Ms-Lhasa 145b.

⁹⁴ Ms-BDRC 191b-193b; Ms-Lhasa 147b-149b

⁹⁵ This detail is similar to the monkey riding a rabbit (instead of a rabbit riding a fox) found in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 6, Kyangpen Sky Fortress (Stagg 2017: 67). The detail cited above is found also in the late Zhepé Dorje Compendia. Surprisingly, Tsangnyön Heruka changed this.

⁹⁶ Ms-Lhasa 60b; DNM-RD 123; *phyag ni ye shes gnyis med / rgya ni 'khor ba'i skyon ma gos / chen po ni zung du 'jugs pa ste/de rtogs pa phyag rgya chen po yin*.

Illuminating Primordial Wisdom,” an instructional text on *mahāmudrā* attributed to Milarepa.⁹⁷ That this definition is later found only in DNM-RD and in group B of *A River of Blessings* seems to indicate that it could possibly be one of the original contributions of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.

In summary, both groups of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* have a distinctive identity based on specific added content – whether narratives, songs, or cycles – most of which also comes in the second-stratum compendia. However, if we remove these supplementary elements from the first-stratum texts, a common ‘core’ remains, identical in all versions. This common core could hypothetically correspond to the ‘original’ *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* from which all these texts derive.

[ToC](#)

⁹⁷ In the *ye shes gsal byed* we read: *phyag gnyis med kyi ye shes ngos bzung ba / rgya 'khor ba'i rgya mdud grol ba dang / chen po zung 'jug gi sgron me bltams pa'o* (Jangchup Zangpo 1973, 2: 469; Pema Karpo 1992, 2: 74) The basis of these verses seems to be the *sNyan br-gyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, the Vajra Verses of the Samvara Aural Transmission: *phyag ni gnyis med ye shes ngo yis zin / rgya ni 'khor ba'i mdud pa dral bas bde / chen po zung 'jug sgron me bltams pa las/* For translation of the *rdo rje tshig rkang*, see Torricelli 1998 and Sernesi 2007:4.

*IC – LIFE STORIES OF MILAREPA AND GAMPOPA IN THE
GOLDEN ROSARIES OF SHAMAR KHACHÖ WANGPO, MÖNTSEPA
AND THE DOCHEN GOLDEN ROSARY*

Before proceeding with the second-stratum compendia in the Zhepé Dorje literary corpus, it is worthwhile to consider another group of life-and-song stories of Milarepa. These three fourteenth/fifteenth-century *Golden Rosary* texts are responsible for much of the narrative in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life* and new content in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia.

The *Golden Rosary* collection included in the second **Shamar Khachö Wangpo's** *Collected Writings* contains a liberation story of Milarepa called *Clouds of Blessings* and a liberation story of Gampopa called *Banner of All-pervading Fame*.⁹⁸ (it has no life story of Rechungpa). Both texts, unique in their own right, include various songs from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – mostly song excerpts with only a few verse lines but also a fair number of complete songs.⁹⁹

The “History of the Dark/Black Treasury, the Collected Songs of Milarepa, King of the Jetsüns, transmitted by the Karmapas,” narrated in three versions of *A River of Blessings* (see below),

⁹⁸ The Collected Writings (*gsung'bum*) of the Second Zhwa dmar Mkha' spyod dBang po, 1978: *Byin rlabs kyi sprin phung* (Ka, 187-317) and *Kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan* (Ka, 319-434). Also, in Bod kyi lo rgyus nram thar phyogs bsgrigs 2010, 24: 327-486 and 487-588.

⁹⁹ See Song Chart 1; Mila and Gampopa's biographies contain twenty-nine complete songs. For a comparison of songs included in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's *gsung'bum* with those included in Möntsepa's collection and the Dochen Golden Rosary, see Song Chart 6 (only the songs after Mila's departure from Marpa are listed, even though there are also various songs in the first part of Mila's life. The Gampopa biography includes only the songs during his stay with Milarepa).

mentions the second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo (1350–1405), a disciple of the fourth Karmapa, as one of its single-transmission holders. Therefore, if there is any ground to the story of that lineage transmission, Khachö Wangpo would have been well acquainted with *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Nevertheless, he follows the Gampopa presentation style in his *Golden Rosary* and does not use a quality structure like *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. He recounts most of the episodes from the Gampopa-strand Golden Rosaries, adding several details from the stories and songs in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Some pages from both biographies are missing in his *Collected Writings* preserved at Rumtek monastery. These “missing pages” sometimes contain important but controversial information, e.g., the *karmamudrā* chapter (TN Chapter 31) and the conversation between Mila and Gampopa during the latter’s first meeting with the Lama.¹⁰⁰ Still, a complete *dbu med* version is available on the BDRC database. The *bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar* version is also complete.¹⁰¹ Therefore, in Song Chart 6, I mention the page numbers from the Rumtek collection and those in the *bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar* version (the latter in bold). I indicate the missing songs with the page number of the *dbu med* version on BDRC.

Compared to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, the story of Mila’s early life is more detailed. As an example of this

¹⁰⁰ For this last point, see Chapter 2 – about Tsangnyön’s omissions – and Chapter 7, *Gampopa Sönam Rinchen meets Jetsün Mila*.

¹⁰¹ *Byin rlabs kyi sprin phung*, (W23928); *dbu med* BDRC version (W2CZ7838); *bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar version* (MW1KG10687_7B4AD9)
Kun khyab snyan pa’i ba dan, (W23928); *dbu med* BDRC version (W2CZ7975).

evolution, see Chapter 5, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Milarepa*.

The *Life of Milarepa* in **Möntsepa**'s *Golden Rosary* collection (*dKar brgyud gser 'phreng*) is peculiar¹⁰² because it is incomplete. The author elaborates the early part of Mila's life in great detail, expanding further on Khachö Wangpo's narrative. He includes all the early songs from Khachö Wangpo's Milarepa biography and adds a few new ones. However, the narrative stops before Mila starts his career as a teacher. There is a brief mention of Mila's meetings with his principal disciples and the places where these happened. The biography includes only one chapter from Tsangnyön's *Songs* – the chapter in which Mila assists a dying Bönpo and gives teachings to his sister Peta to bring her toward enlightenment (Tsangnyön's Chapter 54).¹⁰³

There are two important points to note in this hagiography. First, the biographies of Milarepa considered so far do not contain the term *grong 'jug* (transference in another body) – used in Mila's query to Marpa regarding the missing teachings suggested to him by a *ḍākinī*.¹⁰⁴ This particular episode that would become the reason for Marpa's so-called third journey to India appears for the first time in Khachö Wangpo's biography of Milarepa (in the missing pages, BDRC 24; bod kyi lo rgyus 362) and later in *A River of Blessings*. However, both instances

¹⁰² Mon rtse pa Kun dga' dpal ldan, *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam par thar pa* In *dKar brgyud gser phreng*. 1970: 104-66.

¹⁰³ TN-Dha 760-68; Stagg 2017: 637-45. For a translation of this episode in the different hagiographies, see Chapter 9.

¹⁰⁴ The episode and the term *grong 'jug* appear for the first time in Gyalthangpa's *Life of Marpa* (see Chapter 5).

use the term *khyad par gyi 'pho ba'i gdams pa* (instructions on the special consciousness transference).

Second, this biography is the first to mention that Rechungpa interrogates the Jetsün about his life, and the Jetsün replies in the first person. In Möntsepa's text, there are only a few instances of this type of query by Rechungpa, and the use of the first-person reply is not consequently maintained.

The *Life of Milarepa* included in the **Dochen Kagyü Golden Rosary** collection is also strongly influenced by Khachö Wangpo.¹⁰⁵ It has a remarkable title: *Life of the Great Jetsün, presented as an exchange of questions and answers with Rechung Dorje Drak*. Here we see a further elaboration of what initiated in the *Life of Milarepa* in Möntsepa's *Golden Rosary* collection, although not yet as complete as in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life*. The first part of the hagiography is almost identical to Möntsepa's text. After that follow several briefly mentioned episodes from Gampopa's lineage in Khachö Wangpo's text.

Although following the trend of the biographies in Gampopa's lineage, there are two instances in which we notice the influence of the Rechungpa-strand. At the beginning of the hagiography, there is mention of two "qualities" into which to divide Mila's story, but the two qualities are not named and further in the text, there is no more mention of a second quality.¹⁰⁶ This is a clear influence of the Rechungpa-strand, as

¹⁰⁵ mDo chen rosary, *rJe btsun chen po'i rnam thar ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i zhus lan dang bcas pa zab par bdog go*, In: *bKa' bgyud kyi rnam thar thog mar rdo rje 'chang gi rnam thar nas rim par bzugs*, n.d., 47b-125a.

¹⁰⁶ mDo chen rosary 48b: *Skyes bu de nyid kyi yon tan gnyis las / rJe btsun de'i rigs ni...*

it introduces a narrative structure that is not commonly found in Gampopa's lineage.

At the end of the life story we read,

Among the many heart sons of this Jetsün, the venerable Rechungpa had become the most powerful. Gampopa was an emanation of a bodhisattva. (...) Among those who had realised the meaning of *dharmatā*, Jetsün Gampopa had become the superior one.¹⁰⁷

After Mila's hagiography, the next liberation story in this collection is Rechungpa's. It does not include a Gampopa life story.

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¹⁰⁷ mDo chen rosary 124b: *rJe btsun de la thugs gi sras mang po'i nang nas mthu bor gyur pa rje ras chung pa / sprul pa'i byang chub bsempa'i sgam po pa* (...) *chos nyid kyi don rtogs pa mams kyi nang nas rje btsun sgam po pa de mchog tu gyur pa lags so.*

*1D – THE DARK/BLACK TREASURY, A RIVER OF BLESSINGS,
AND A MANUSCRIPT AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY*

1. General description of the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia

As indicated above in the introduction to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, in the present study, I make a clear distinction between an earlier literary stratum of Zhepé Dorje Compendia consisting of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its variants and a second stratum gathering different versions of a work called *A River of Blessings*, the so-called *Dark/Black Treasury* and a similar Life-and-Song compendium kept at the British Library.

These compendia, written throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, further expand on the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. In the 14th century, other texts had become part of the literary corpus of Milarepa – E.g., *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*, Zhijé Ripa’s *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, Khachö Wangpo’s *Clouds of Blessings*, and another unknown text supposedly written at Gungthang Pelkyi Tsuklakhang, mentioned as one of the sources of the second-stratum compendia.¹⁰⁸ The Zhepé Dorje Compendia integrated elements from these texts, thus creating new narratives, in some cases quite different from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

¹⁰⁸ For examples of the impact of these texts in the narrative of the teaching transmission from Marpa to Milarepa, see Chapter 7, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Mila in the Hagiographies*.

In the present research, I apply the *Dark/Black Treasury* designation only to the compendium in the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's *Collected Works*. In *A River of Blessings*, we find this designation in the colophon, but Rangjung Dorje is mentioned only as the compiler of one of the sources of the new compilation. Even though a few title pages mention that Karmapa Rangjung Dorje compiled the compendium, this claim does not seem plausible considering the new content found in these second-stratum compendia as compared to the Ms-Lhasa mentioned above. Not only are there several new songs and song cycles, but there are also significant changes in presenting some events. Therefore, these attributions are untrustworthy, as Étienne Bock explained in detail.¹⁰⁹

2. Versions of the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia

In *The Yogin and the Madman* Quintman categorises five [recognised]¹¹⁰ versions of *The Black Treasury*, divided into two strata. An earlier stratum, closer to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, includes DNM-Lhasa (the already mentioned manuscript that was kept in the Drepung Archives, here Ms-Lhasa) and DNM-RD (in the *Collected Works* of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje). As a later stratum, he indicates the following works:

- DNM-I (a two-volume edition published in India);

¹⁰⁹ Bock 2024: 74-79.

- DNM-S (a manuscript in the private collection of E. Gene Smith); and
- DNM-D (published as part of the extensive collection called *The Drikung Kagyü Great Dharma Treasury*).

As I explained above, there is no reason to consider DNM-Lhasa (here, Ms-Lhasa) a *mdzod nag ma* text. Applying the criteria I use in the present study – based upon the differences in content and time – it should rather be considered a ‘variant’ version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

The following texts constitute the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje: the *Dark/Black Treasury*, the texts identified in the colophon as *A River of Blessings* and the Life-and-Song text kept at the British Library (Ms-BL).¹¹¹

The *Dark/Black Treasury* text studied here (DNM-RD) is a 2006 modern edition with the title *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdor je 'i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma zhes pa karma pa rang byung rdo rjes phyogs gcig tu bkod pa*, “Songs of the Powerful Lord of Yogins Mila Zhepa Dorje called *The Dark/Black Treasury*, Compiled by Karmapa Rangjung

¹¹¹ For an outline of these compendia and the songs contained in them, see Song Chart 8.

Dorje.”¹¹² The text ends with the sentence *dPa* ’¹¹³ *bzhad pa rdor je’i rnam thar mgur chos zhal gdams dang bcas pa rdzogs so*, “Herewith the life story of the hero Zhepa Dorje, with his songs, teachings and oral instructions, is completed.” Then follows a succession of different colophons. It repeats the same elements of the colophon in Ms-Lhasa.¹¹⁴ However, it is noteworthy that the expression *mdzod nag ma* is absent from the text and the colophon. It appears only in the title.

According to the colophon, Karmapa Rangjung Dorje entirely compiled the compendium, an assertion that raises multiple issues. First, this directly contradicts the statement that the twelve *repa* disciples compiled the text. Second, Ms-Lhasa already mentioned this very same colophon, but, as can be seen

¹¹² At the moment 3 editions of this text are known.

(1) a one-volume computerised *dbu can* pecha published in Ziling in 2006, 774 pp.

(2) An edition of the same text in 2 book volumes published by the Paltsek publishing house in 2011, as the second and third volumes of the *rJe btsun mi la ras pa’i gsung ’bum*. (MW1KG14335). The title of the second volume is *rNal ’byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdo rje’i mgur ’bum mdzod nag ma zhes pa karma pa rang byung rdo rjes phyogs gcig to bskod pa*; the title of the third volume is identical, except that *mgur ’bum* is replaced by *gsung mgur*. After verifying a sample of this edition I noticed the content is identical to the below 2013 edition; therefore I do not include a detailed analysis of it in Song Chart 8.

(3) A 2013 edition published by Paltsek as the 23rd volume of the *Karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung ’bum phyogs bsgrigs*, 862 pp, with title *Mi la ras pa’i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma* (MW3PD1288). One song cycle – the *bzang rgyud phyag tshang gi skor* – as well as a number of songs have been added to the Ziling edition, to include as many Milarepa songs as available. This additional content is included also in the 2011 edition. See Bock’s outline of the text in his Appendix A: 189, and my Song Chart 8.

¹¹³ *Sic* in all three versions.

¹¹⁴ For a detailed analysis of the colophon see Bock 2024: 84.

from the song charts,¹¹⁵ here we find many new elements that are not present in Ms-Lhasa but are in common with *A River of Blessings* – and Ms-BL. The latter does not mention Rangjung Dorje. Therefore, it is likely that the colophon omitted at least one additional source. The text has a final colophon explaining Lodrö Gyatso, the main scribe (*dpon yi ge pa*) of the Fourth Shamarpa Chödrak Yeshe (Zhwa dmar Chos grags Ye shes, 1453–1526) wrote the original manuscript. Therefore, the work is datable to the last quarter of the fifteenth or the first quarter of the sixteenth century, around or shortly after Tsangnyön Heruka published his *Life and Songs*. The colophon specifies it has been edited like a beautiful gem, which probably means it was an illustrated manuscript. The text was consecrated with empowerment and revised by two experts in scriptures and reasoning.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ See Song Charts 7 and 8.

¹¹⁶ DNM-RD 2006: 772-73: *de lta bu 'i skyes bu dam pa de 'i rnam par thar pa mdo sngags kyi lam gnad mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa 'i glegs bam 'di ni / de nyid la mi phyed pa 'i dad pa 'i blo gros gser gi sa gzhi / 'khor 'bangs rgya mtsho 'i dbus su / rigs rus cho 'brangs kyi mngon par tho ba gtong ba sogs kyi kha bzang gis spras zhing / yi ge 'bri mchod sogs kyi rol mtshos rnam par brgyan pa / lha bran srid sde ris bdun gyis gus par 'dud pa / 'phags nor bdun gyi shing yongs 'dus legs par spud pa 'i ri dbang mi dpon bzhed rtsa blo gros rgya mtshos lhag bsam rnam par dag pas yang yang bskul nas / cha rkyen thams cad phun sum tshogs par byas te / gar dbang rdo rje chang gi rnam 'phrul / zhwa dmar cod pan 'dzin pa bzhi pa chos kyi grags pa ye shes dpal bzang po 'i dpon yig pa blo gros kyi nyi 'od kyis legs par bshad pa sum rtags gnyis / dag yig gnyis / ka la pa sogs sgra yi bstan bcos rgya mtsho lta bu rnams kyi pad tshal / mkhas pa 'i dbang po śākya ku mā ra yi bka' drin la brten nas legs par kha 'byed par gyur pa / blo gros rgya mtshos sdebs legs nor bu 'i rgyan gyis rnam par brgyan te / lha lam shog bu 'i ngo la / rab gsal dbang zhu ba 'i bdud rtsi mkho la snag gis mdzes par bkod de shar ba 'o / zhu dag mkhan ni lung rig smra ba śākya 'i dge slong rin chen bzang po dang / śākya seng ge gnyis kyis mdzad pa 'o.*

The next group of second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, called *A River of Blessings*, is available in multiple versions, out of which five are studied here.

- Ms-Smith, a single volume *dbu med* manuscript with title *rJe mal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dpal bzhad pa'i rdo rje'i 'gur tshogs tshad phyog gcig tu bsgrigs pa lo rgyus kyis spras pa*, “The Collected Songs of the Powerful Lord of Yogins, the Glorious Zhepé Dorje; a compilation embellished with historical anecdotes.” There is no mention of the Karmapa or *The Dark/Black Treasury* on the title page. The illustrations in the manuscript seem to indicate its transmission in the Upper Drukpa Kagyü lineage.¹¹⁷
- Ms-India, a two-volume *dbu med* manuscript published in India in 1978, with the same title as the DNM-RD mentioned above (including the name of the Karmapa Rangjung Dorje as the compiler and the name *mdzod nag ma*). The English title page claims the text was “reproduced from a rare manuscript from the library of Dbon-sprul Rin-po-che.” It seems to be a copy of the above Ms-Smith or of a common source.¹¹⁸
- Ms-Drepung,¹¹⁹ a two-volume *dbu med* manuscript reproduced in facsimile in the *Bod kyi lo rgyus nam thar phyogs bsgrigs* series

¹¹⁷ Quintman 2014a: 254n83. According to the BDRC database, this manuscript was among the text collections at The Sixteen Arhats Temple (*gNas bcu lha khang*) in Drepung monastery. For the importance of these text collections, see Ducher 2020.

¹¹⁸ So far, we have not been able to fully access another version of this text filmed in Boudhanath, with reel number NGMPP E/2511/12. A written conversation by Étienne Bock with the Berlin State Library and the inspection of four pages of the text resulted in the conclusion it is a copy of Ms-India.

¹¹⁹ This text might also have been found in The Sixteen Arhat Temple at Drepung monastery. Its 2015 reproduction as a facsimile is in Volumes 111 & 112 of *Bod kyi lo rgyus nam thar phyogs bsgrigs* (91-120). I thank Étienne Bock for pointing out this text to me
<https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:I4PD3130#open-viewer>

of the Paltsek publishing house. The discovery of this text is fascinating because it is from this manuscript that the subsequent two editions – BCG-D and BCG-Si, see below – seem to be copied. BCG-Si opens with a discrete watermark reproduction of 4 pages of that manuscript’s illustrated folios on its flyleaves.¹²⁰

Ms-Drepung has no title page, but the text is catalogued as *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rdo rje'i glu dang mgur nams phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa*, “Life of the Jetsün Milarepa together with his Spiritual Vajra Songs.” The cataloguers attribute it to Rangjung Dorje. The manuscript counts many illustrations. Among these, there are ten lineage masters from the Riwoché branch of the Taklung lineage, the last being Chöjé Jikten Wangchuk (Chos rje 'jig rten dbang phyug, 1454–1532). The latter image allows us to date the manuscript to the sixteenth century. Interestingly, there is no reference to these Lamas in the recent editions of the text.

- BCG-D (Drikung), a 2004 two-volume *dbu can* handwritten edition titled *rJe mi la'i rnam thar mdzod nag ma*, “Lord Mila’s Life Story [called] The Dark/Black Treasury,” included in the ‘*Bri gung bKa’ brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* collection (vols.7&8).¹²¹
- BCG-Si (Si khron), a 2008 computerised edition of Ms-Drepung by Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, in two book volumes, with title *rJe rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdo rje'i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma zhes karma pa rang byung rdo rjes phyogs gcig tu bkod pa*, “The Collected Songs of Mila Zhepa Dorje, Lord of Yogins, [called] *The Dark/Black Treasury*, compiled by Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.” The two books contain various colour-

¹²⁰ See Vol 111: 145-149-154 and 168 for the images.

¹²¹ Ducher 2020: 15 mentions: “According to the present Che tshang Rinpoche there were around 40 boxes of ‘Bri gung Bka’ brgyud texts in the Sixteen Arhats Temple. He personally heard about their presence within ‘Bras spungs in the 1980s and organized the reproduction of several volumes he was interested in. A large part of what is now called the ‘Bri gung bka’ brgyud chos mdzod chen mo comes from there [...] this collection has been completely rewritten by hand.”

printed illustrations and black-and-white drawings that refer to the song episodes.

These five versions are similar but different. As seen from Song Chart 8, they form two distinct groups: A – Ms-Smith & Ms-India – and B – Ms-Drepung & BCG-D & BCG-Si. All the versions end with the following sentence,

The Collected Songs of the Powerful Lord of Yogins, Glorious Zhepé Dorje; a Compilation Embellished with Historical Anecdotes. A River of Blessings Relieving the Tormenting Heat of Mental defilements.¹²²

Hence the name *A River of Blessings*.

At the end of the texts is an elaborate list of disciples (different from that in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*). There is no mention of the original colophon of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – and thus the reference to the 12 *repas* as well as the claim of the text being the “Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem” of the Saṃvara Aural Transmission. All five versions mention the following three sources:

- (1) “Regarding this life story of the great Jetsün Milarepa together with his spiritual vajra songs, the Dharma Lord Karmapa has said”¹²³ ...and then follows a slightly modified version of the Ms-Lhasa colophon about Karmapa Rangjung Dorje writing

¹²² Ms-Smith 318a, Ms-India 2: 551, Ms-Drepung 112: 367, BCG-D 2:855, BCG-Si 1133. *rJe rnal byor gyi dbang phyug dpal bzhad pa'i rdo rje'i 'gur tshogs tshad phyog gcig tu bsgrigs pa lo rgyus kyis spras pa / byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun gyis nyon mongs pa'i tsha gdung sel bar byed pa.*

¹²³ *rJe btsun chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rdo rje'i glu dang mgur rnam phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa 'di / chos rje karma pa'i zhal nas,*

the text.¹²⁴ A major difference though is that Rangjung Dorje's text is here clearly identified as *mdzod nag ma*, whereas the colophon in Ms-Lhasa does not mention this designation.

- (2) "[A text] said to be a compilation of seventeen different collected songs excellently completed in the Gungthang Pelkyi Tsuklakhang." So far, this source has not been identified, except for the place of the compilation: "Gungthang Pelkyi Tsuklakhang, a monastery near Lhasa established by Lama Zhang in 1187 as a seat for the Tselpa Kagyu tradition. The author was likely a member of this lineage, perhaps an abbot or prominent monk, after the fashion of Sangyé Bum."¹²⁵
- (3) "[A text] said to be a compilation [made] having seen one hundred and twenty-seven different biographies of the Jetsün. These [versions] have been compiled and supplemented with as many of the Jetsün's song collections as could be found."

Roberts and Quintman suggest this third source could refer to Zhijé Ripa's *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, completed in 1381, because he also states he composed his text based on 127 biographies. As mentioned above, the short biography of Milarepa included in the *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams* is almost identical to the *Golden Rosary* life story of Milarepa in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*. It could be responsible for the addition of elements from the

¹²⁴ Ms-Smith 318a, Ms-India 2:554, Ms-Drepung 112: 366, BCG-D 2:508, BCG-Si 1033: *rJe btsun chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rdo rje'i glu dang mgur rnam phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa 'di/ chos rje karma pa'i zhal nas...* (see the detailed analysis of the colophon, Bock 2024: 85).

¹²⁵ Quintman 2014a:110. *Gung thang dpal gyi gtsug lag khang*. On page 205, he gives the complete transcription of the colophon.

biographies in Rechungpa's lineage omitted in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.¹²⁶

The British Library has an illustrated manuscript catalogued as *The Life and Songs of the Yogi Milarepa (Mi la'i rnam mgur bris ma)* [Ms-BL].¹²⁷ It contains a great number of illuminations with various life scenes.¹²⁸ At the end of the text some images of lineage masters are included, collocating the manuscript in the Riwoché branch of the Taklung Kagyü school.¹²⁹

This lineage was founded in 1180 by Taklung Thangpa Tashi Pal (sTag lung thang pa bKra shis dpal, 1142–1210), a disciple of Pagmo Drupa Dorje Gyalpo (Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po, direct disciple of Gampopa, 1110–1179). The fourth lineage holder – and the third source for the collection, see below – was Sangyé Won (Sangs rgyas dbon, 1251–1296).

This manuscript does not seem to be another edition of the second-stratum compendia connected with Rangjung Dorje, for two reasons.

- The manuscript ends as follows (f. 392v): *dPal bzhad pa rdo rje'i rnam thar 'gur ma 'chings dang bcas pa rdzogs so*. This

¹²⁶ For a description of the content of this text, see Chapter 8.

¹²⁷ There was an online sample of this manuscript on the British Library website that is not available for the moment (<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-life-and-songs-of-a-famous-tibetan-yogi>, shelfmark Or 16756). I thank Marco Passavanti for drawing my attention to this online sample. My greatest thanks to Burkhard Quessel and Charles Manson for giving me access to the manuscript.

¹²⁸ For a description of the illuminations see Bock 2024: 56-68 and his Appendix A: 207-15.

¹²⁹ See Bock 2024: 75-77 for a detailed description of the lineage masters in the text. The last two depicted masters are 'Jig rten dbang phyug (1454–1532) and mChog sprul bKra shis dpal (1461–1508).

corresponds to the final sentence of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – e.g., Ms-Oxford f. 191b.

- There is no mention of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje as a contributor to the text.

Instead, in the same way as in the case of the different editions of *A River of Blessings*, this compendium also states it is based on multiple sources. Unfortunately, the relevant page is slightly damaged and some words remain difficult to decipher.¹³⁰ The following sources are mentioned:

- “Taking as the basis the text of *The Twelve Great Disciples*”¹³¹
- “Dorje Dzinpa Jamyang (Drakpa?) gathered, organised and compiled seventeen song collections, and also summarised [elements] from Lord Marpa’s hagiography.”¹³²
- “A text of the Taklung master Drupchen Sangyé Wön rinpoché.”

¹³⁰ Ms-BL 392b: *dpal bzhad pa rdo rje'i rnam thar / 'gur ma'i chings dang bcas pa rdzogs soha // [rnam thar 'di dad] dang ldan pa dpag tu med pa'i don du / ngan rdzong ston pa bo de ra dzā la sogs pa bu chen bcu gnyis kyi dpe la dan byas nas / gzhan yangs rdo rje 'dzin pa 'jam dbyangs (...) khang du / 'gur 'bum bcu bdun bsags nas / bsgrigs zin pa'i nang nas thus pa dang / rje mar pa'i rnam thar nang nas bsdus pa dang / slar [?] yongs 'grub chen sangs rgyas dbon rin po che'i phyag dpe dang / phyogs du ma nas dpe rnyed tshad thams cad btus pa dang phyogs gcig tu mi dbang chen po ratna mangala shri (...) / bzhad pa rdo rje'i rnam thar gsungs sgros rnams / dad ldan bten pa'i mtha'can bdag cag gis / gus pa'i sgo nas 'di bzhengs / dge ba //*

¹³¹ *Bu chen bcu gnyis kyi dpe la dan byas nas*. The meaning of *dan* is unclear, but I guess it could be understood as *rtan*.

¹³² I have not been able to find out who this master is. Interestingly, the second source of the manuscript is a text based on seventeen song collections, as mentioned above in the colophon of *A River of Blessings*. Could this be the same text as the one compiled at Gunthang Pelkyi Tsuglagkhang, as well as one of the hidden sources in DNM-RD?

- Finally, the compiler (or the scribe) of the text adds that he has gathered, summarised and arranged other elements from different places, as many as he could find.

At the end of the colophon there is a partially truncated name, *mi dbang chen po ratna mang gha* (...). It seems to indicate Ratna Mangala.

Although it is not clear who is the final compiler of this manuscript, it is fascinating to see another life-and-song compendium of Milarepa, transmitted in the Riwoché branch of the Taklung Kagyü lineage and enriched with new contents – very similar to the new contents in the other second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia.

3. Content of the Second-Stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia

All the texts in this second stratum follow the quality structure of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, except for the last chapter. In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (save Ms-Bordier and RBC-Pt), the seventeenth quality – introducing mahāmudrā – is the last chapter and includes the death episode. By contrast, DNM-RD¹³³ and *A River of Blessings* place the last part of Mila's life in an eighteenth chapter – the quality of realising the unified vajra body in one lifetime and showing how it dissolves in a rainbow body (*tshe gcig gis zung 'jug rdo rje'i sku 'grub*

¹³³ In the 2006 Ziling version, the 16th quality is mistakenly numbered as 17th, the 17th as 18th, and the 18th again as 18th (see Bock 2024, Appendix A, 190-94).

cing 'ja' lus su yal ba'i tshul bstan pa'i yon tan)¹³⁴. Apart from this difference, these texts include all the songs in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, indicating the compendium as their basis.

The first chapter shows a few major differences between all versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum compendia.

For instance, on the occasion of the first meeting between Mila and Marpa, when the latter is ploughing his land and tells Mila he should dig his field while he goes to call for the Lama, he pronounces three oral instructions, which Mila does not understand:

- The essence of the Lama's oral instructions [is as follows]: when you gather the subtle-body elements in the central channel, you subdue the defilements, and the result quickly ripens.
- With the blessing of a lineage-holding Lama, the mind's nature rests spontaneously in its essence; through mindfulness, you subdue the defilements, and the fruits of the autumn harvest quickly ripen.
- When you are satisfied with the beer of great bliss – this secret intrinsic reality – you fully subdue the defilements, and the fruit quickly ripens.

With these, Marpa gave *mahāmudrā* pointing-out instructions for beings with higher, middle and ordinary capacities to Milarepa, but he did not understand them.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Ms-BL does not mention the 17th or the 18th qualities as separate chapters, although the text contains the same content as the other second-stratum compendia.

¹³⁵ DNM-RD 2006: 10; BCG-D 7: 30, BCG-Si 1: 37; Ms-Smith: 11b; Ms-BL 8b; there are some differences between the versions; the main transliteration is from DNM-RD, between brackets BCG and Ms-BL.

Further changes in the first chapter are the following:

- At the time of Mila's initiation, he sees the maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara in the sky.
- During his retreat, Mila has a vision of a *ḍākinī* who tells about the possibility of becoming enlightened by using a particular *phowa* practice without the need to meditate. After Mila refers this to Marpa, his teacher makes a third trip to India to receive the teachings for entering another body (included in *A River of Blessings*, but not in DNM-RD or Ms-BL).¹³⁶
- Mila has the dream of the Four Pillars, which Marpa explains in a song. By contrast, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* Marpa has a dream, which he then explains in a song.

The second-stratum compendia contain new stories, sometimes with variations between DNM-RD and *A River of Blessings*. The contents are often switched around in the various song cycles.

-
- (1) [DNM-RD 2006] *bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gnad* [BCG+Ms-BL *bla ma dam pa'i gdams ngag gis*] / *rtsa khams dbu mas* [BCG *dbu mar*] *bsdus byas ste / nyon mongs tha ba* [BCG+Ms-BL *nyon mongs kyi tha ba*] 'dul lags na / 'bras bu myur du smin te mchi.
 - (2) *brgyud ldan bla ma'i byin rlabs kyis / sems nyid lhug pa ngo bor gnas / dran pas tha ba* [BCG+Ms-BL *dran pa'i tha ba*] 'dul lags na / ston thog 'bras bu myur du smin.
 - (3) *bde ba chen po chang gi ngom* [BCG+Ms-BL *dnogs*] / *yang dag don chen gsang ba 'di* [BCG+Ms-BL *dis*] / *yang dag gi tha ba [tha ba]* 'dul lags na / 'bras bu myur du smin te mchi [...] *de'i dus su mar pas mi la ras pa la phyag rgya chen po dbang po rab bring tha ma gsum du ngo sprod par 'dug ste ma go bar 'dug* [BCG, *dbang po rab 'bring gi chos khrid byas pa yin*] [Ms-BL *dbang po rab 'bring gnyis du ngo sprod pa yin par 'dug*] (in both versions ordinary beings are cut from the sentence!).

¹³⁶ This detail appears for the first time in Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*. See Chapter 7, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Mila in the Hagiographies*.

The content covered in this group needs further study. Looking at Song Chart 8, we notice that each text group uses a different order in presenting the episodes. By contrast, Song Chart 7 indicates that in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* the content is consistent in all versions except for a few added chapters. However, on the whole, both strata are similar. Here, I mention a few differing elements:

- In DNM-RD, we find the entire chapter recounting Mila's meeting with Naro Bönchung and the conquest of the Kailāśa as a holy place for Buddhists (identical to Tsangnyön's Chapter 22). This chapter is missing in the early *Golden Rosary* biographies, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Ms-BL. In *A River of Blessings*, there is but a brief mention in prose of a dispute between Jetsün Mila and Naro Bönchung, with Mila's victory through miraculous powers; there are no songs.¹³⁷
- In the second stratum, we find part of the story of Sahle Ö, with only two songs.¹³⁸ The entire chapter is missing in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.¹³⁹ Ms-BL adds two extra songs not found anywhere else.¹⁴⁰ By contrast, in Tsangnyön's work, this chapter contains four additional songs.
- All second-stratum compendia include various songs dealing with details about meditation practice. One example is the song on the

¹³⁷ DNM-RD 440-48; TN-Dha: 378-85; Stagg 2017: 224-30. The passage in BCG-D is translated in Quintman 2014a: 257n101. For a detailed discussion, see Bock 2024: 117-22.

¹³⁸ Songs 37.5 and 37.6, DNM-RD 593-95; BCG-D 8: 67-69; TN-Dha: 575-76; Stagg 2017: 441-42.

¹³⁹ As mentioned above, it appears in the later versions Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.

¹⁴⁰ Ms-BL fols. 234b-237b.

dividing line between happiness and misery.¹⁴¹ As this song is quite different from the “usual” song style, it might be a later addition. In particular, DNM-RD includes several new songs about view, meditation, conduct, and fruition.

- All second-stratum compendia include the entrustment of the Demchok Nyengyü lineage by Mila to Rechungpa, while it is missing in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Tsangnyön Heruka’s *Songs*.¹⁴²
- DNM-RD includes a list of “fortresses” (*dzongs*) and some “special places.” Group A of *A River of Blessings* – Ms-Smith and Ms-India – does not mention them, whereas group B – Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si – places them in the first appendix.
- The second-stratum compendia contain elaborate lists of disciples. They also specify a particular group of followers.
 - DNM-RD and Ms-BL mention “three supreme yogins and yoginīs”:¹⁴³
 - Gampopa, the supreme one to subdue human beings;
 - Tashi Tseringma, the supreme one to subdue non-human beings;
 - The co-emergent mantra-born Tārā (*sngags skyes lhan cig skyes pa’i sgron ma*), the supreme one to subdue *ḍākinīs*.
 - In *A River of Blessings*, the particular group of followers consists of four “special great sons”:

¹⁴¹ Song 40.4, DNM-RD 150; BCG-D 7: 308; TN-Dha: 616; Stagg 2017: 485. The song is missing in Ms-BL and *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (except in Ms-Drukpa: 225a and Ms-Gansu 24: 158).

¹⁴² See Chapter 6, *The Entrustment Of The Saṃvara Aural Transmission To Rechungpa*.

¹⁴³ DNM-RD 769; Ms-BL fol.392a. DNM-RD 2006: 769; Ms-BL 392a: *mchog gi rnal ’byor pho mo gsum ni / mi rnam ’dul ba’i mchog sgam po pa / mi ma yin rnam ’dul ba’i mchog bkra shis tshe ring ma / da’ki rnam ’dul ba’i mchog sngags skyes lhan cig skyes pa’i sgron ma* [in Ms-BL *sgron me*]. This list appears for the first time in Khachö Wangpo’s *Clouds of Blessings*, Zhwa dmar 02 1978: 316.

- The local guardian *dākinī* Tseringma subdued gods and demons with a mental body;
- The co-emergent mantra-born Tārā subdued hidden beings of superior capacities;
- Dakpo Chandrakumāra subdued real human beings;
- Rechungpa was the holder of the essence of the oral instructions of the Aural Transmission.

These four are the foremost among all the great sons.¹⁴⁴

- *A River of Blessings* offers the most extensive compilation of Milarepa stories.¹⁴⁵ These versions are more inclusive, and except for the entire Naro Bönchung episode, they seem to collect all the available material about Milarepa, first narrating one version and then another, as noted by Roberts and Quintman.¹⁴⁶
 - The first chapter about Mila's hardships ends with an 'alternative story,' clearly inserted from another source. It includes elements of Mila's later return to his village, a later

¹⁴⁴ BCG-D 8: 505-6, *Bu chen bzhi ni / yid gzugs kyi lha 'dre dbang du sdud pa zhing skyong gi daki tshe ring ma / lkog gyur dbang po yang rab kyi skye bo dbang du sdud pa sngags skyes lhan cig skyes pa 'i sgrol ma / mngon sum mi 'i 'gro ba dbang du sdud pa dwags po zla 'od gzhon nu/ snyan rgyud kyi gdams ngag gi bcud 'dzin pa 'i skyes bu ras chung pa ste / bzhi po 'di bu chen thams cad kyi gtso bo yin no.* The presence of Tārā in this particular group is intriguing because Tsangnyön does not mention her in his work. We find her in a few more instances, in both *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum compendia:

- (1) When Mila, after his stay with Ngok, is ready to return to Marpa, he has nothing to offer. Ngok presents him with a small gift, but he tells Mila to pronounce a dedication prayer when offering it. When Mila admits he does not know how to do that, Tārā appears in the sky and makes the dedication prayer, and Mila becomes very good at it.
- (2) When the patroness Chammé needs to pronounce a dedication prayer, unexpectedly Tārā comes into the sky and sings a dedication song.
- (3) The third instance is the question-and-answer episode between Mila and Gampopa. (See above, p. 65).

¹⁴⁵ See Song Charts 7 and 8.

¹⁴⁶ Quintman 2014a: 111; Roberts 2007: 140.

visit to Marpa and Ngok and a meeting with Marpa's son Dode. We find the episode in a similar but different – and more plausible – way in Ms-BL.¹⁴⁷

- The Jetsün grants his last instruction – showing the calluses on his buttocks – to the two main disciples, Rechungpa and Gampopa.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, the liberation stories in Rechungpa's lineage and DNM-RD, it is granted only to Rechungpa – although in some texts someone removed the page with this compromising detail!¹⁴⁹ Instead, in the narratives in Gampopa's lineage – and in Tsangnyön's work – only Gampopa receives this particular instruction.
- A River of Blessings contains two chapters regarding ordained monk-scholars, also found in Tsangnyön's *Songs* (Lotön Gendün and Likor Charuwa, Chapters 42 and 44).¹⁵⁰ These chapters, which are missing in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*,¹⁵¹ DNM-RD and Ms-BL, might come from an unknown text in Gampopa's lineage.
 - Sub-group B includes the narrative of Rechungpa's strange illness and his first trip to India to get cured, mentioned by Tsangnyön Heruka.¹⁵² The episode is missing in DNM-RD, sub-group A and Ms-BL.
 - Sub-group B includes three additional pieces of information after the colophons.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter 7, *Gampopa Sonam Rinchen Meets Jetsün Mila*, where the episodes of both texts are translated.

¹⁴⁸ See Song Chart 8, the episode of Q&A between Lord Milarepa and the incomparable rinpoché from Dakpo (Gampopa), and the episode of advice before departure to Central Tibet (Rechungpa).

¹⁴⁹ See Song Chart 7; the pages are missing in Ms-Oxford and Ms-BDRC.

¹⁵⁰ E.g., BCG-D 7: 492, Stagg 525-26; BCG-D 7: 139, Stagg 546; BCG-D 8: 78, Stagg 542.

¹⁵¹ Some songs are found in the later versions Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.

¹⁵² E.g., BCG-D 7:213, Stagg 106-107.

-A list of the dwelling places of Milarepa that are identical to those of DNM-RD.

-A short text in which Barompa Darma Wangchuk ('Ba' rom pa Dar ma dBang phyug, 1127–1194), explains some visual appearances of gods and demons present in Mila's life stories in terms of interconnections with Mila's meditation practice on the channels, winds and drops.¹⁵³

-The *History of the Dark/Black Treasury, the Collected Songs of Milarepa, King of the Jetsüins, transmitted by the Karmapas*.¹⁵⁴

- Ms-BL shows significant differences not contained in any of the other second-stratum compendia – a possible indication that it was not depending on these: even though its colophon cites mainly the same sources, some specific Taklung input provides for a slightly alternative account.¹⁵⁵ To give just a few examples:
 - When Mila leaves Marpa, the teacher tells him that he should return after he obtains some success in his meditation practice. Thus, after he has been to his village and has practised alone, he returns to meet Marpa.¹⁵⁶ Only at that time does he receive supplementary instructions, together with the advice

¹⁵³ E.g., BCG-D 8: 508. For an English translation of this fragment, see Chapter 13.

¹⁵⁴ e.g., BCG-D 8: 513. *rJe btsun gyi rgyal po mi la ras pa'i 'gur 'bum karma pa nas brgyud pa'i mdzod nag ma yi lo rgyus ni*. See Quintman 2014, 105-6. For a comparison between this lineage transmission and the one included in the Bordier manuscript, see Bock 2024: 87-93.

¹⁵⁵ Strangely enough, although there is no reference in the text to Rangjung Dorje or the *Dark/Black Treasury*, we also find all the typical characteristics mentioned in Ms-Lhasa and the other 'variant' versions in this compendium.

¹⁵⁶ The episode comes in the first cycle of the third quality chapter, the quality of recognising blissful heat (Ms-BL fols. 34a-42b). Zhijé Ripa also describes a similar return by Mila to Lhodrak. In this case, two visits take place after Marpa's death. (See Chapter 8)

to go to India. As mentioned above, this same episode appears partially in *A River of Blessings* as an alternative narrative at the end of the first chapter. In the latter case, the second visit is merely an account of Mila's progress made on the path and Marpa's acknowledgment of it.¹⁵⁷

- Fol. 83b mentions a short biography of Ngendzong Tönpa, lacking in all other texts.
- Ms-BL mentions Rechungpa as having received most oral instructions and Ngendzong Tönpa as the holder of the Aural Transmission Lineage.¹⁵⁸

Surprisingly, Ms-Drepung, also transmitted in the Taklung lineage – as the illustrations of the lineage masters show – does not include these alternative elements. This could mean that Ms-Drepung is a copy of a text transmitted in the Karma Kamtsang lineage, as Rangjung Dorje results as the compiler of part of the text. The same may be true for Ms-Smith. Although the masters illustrated in the manuscript belong to the Upper Drukpa lineage, the colophon references Rangjung Dorje's text.

* * *

As demonstrated, all the versions of Zhepé Dorje Compendia discussed above maintain the same basic structure, namely a division into two main chapters: Milarepa's difficulties in his

¹⁵⁷ Chapter 7, *The Teaching Transmission from Marpa to Mila in the Hagiographies* includes the translation of the episode in both texts.

¹⁵⁸ Ms-BL fol. 391a, *Thugs kyi sras bzhi ni / gdam pa che bar grags pa gung thang gi ras chung rdo rje grags / snyan rgyud gdam pa'i rgyud 'dzin lcim lung gi ngam rdzongs ston pa byang chub rgyal po / sgrub pa mthar[...]*stag mo'i gling kha ba 'bri sgom pa / bde gsal mi rtog pa la nus gyur pa mdo bkra'i se ban ras pa dang bzhi'o.

early life and the 17 or 18 qualities he developed through meditation. This method of life writing was seen earlier in the *Golden Rosary* biographies in Rechungpa's lineage, which suggests that the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* originated from that lineage. First presented as the words of Ngendzong Tönpa and the other cotton-clad disciples of Milarepa and connected with the Samvara Aural Transmission, later a great deal of the authorship is attributed to the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.

From the study of detailed song charts, it becomes clear that the most significant distinction between the two strata of Zhepé Dorje Compendia lies in the narrative developments introduced in the new 'variant' compilation of the *Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples* attributed to the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje. That new compilation became the primary source for the second-stratum compendia. All its specific elements appear in the second stratum, together with new inputs coming mainly from an unknown text in Gunthang Pelkyi Tsuklakhang and other sources mentioned in the colophons, from a later time than the hypothetical 'original' *Twelve Great Ras pa Disciples*. However, as explained above when discussing the late versions of *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Oxford, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu), which also contain many later elements, it is not the time factor that makes the difference between the first and second stratum but rather the reliance on the Karmapa's 'variant' compilation. Intriguingly, a compendium compiled within the Rechung Nyengyü tradition in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage becomes almost exclusive to the Karma Kamtsang lineage. The creation of new titles and colophons that include the designation *Dark/Black Treasury* and the presumed authorship of Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, reinforced with the addition of a transmission history of the text in the Kamtsang lineage, all

strengthen this impression.¹⁵⁹ By contrast, the ‘original’ *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, including its later versions, remained part of the Rechung Nyengyü tradition transmitted in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage, passing on the one hand through Tsangnyön Heruka and his disciples, and on the other hand through the Third Drukchen Jamyang Chödrak (’Jam dbyangs Chos grags, 1478–1523) and the Fourth Drukchen Pema Karpo.¹⁶⁰

The numerous copies of the compendia that are still available show their importance. Despite Tsangnyön Heruka’s more attractive version from a literary point of view, these works continue to be reproduced.

Concerning the relationship between the second-stratum compendia and Tsangnyön Heruka’s *Life and Songs*, it is not easy to reach precise conclusions regarding dates and evolutions. One could speculate that the plethora of extended biographies witnessed in the early sixteenth century might indicate an attempt to protect this particular corpus of the Zhepé Dorje literary tradition as a reaction against some narrative changes introduced by Tsangnyön Heruka.

The Fourth Shamarpa Chödrak Yeshe played a crucial role in preserving this particular literary tradition. In a short biography of the Fourth Shamarpa hosted on the BDRC database,¹⁶¹ it is said that Chödrak Yeshe, at some point in his life, gave a reading transmission (*bka’ lung*) of his predecessor Khachö Wangpo’s

¹⁵⁹ For details about the transmission line, see Quintman 2014a: 105-106 and Bock: 2024.

¹⁶⁰ For charts regarding these lineage transmissions, see Callahan 2023: 891-99. See also Sernesi 2021.

¹⁶¹ *Zhwa dmar chos grags ye shes kyi nam thar mdor bsdus*, a recent biography by Minyag Gönpö (Mi nyag mGon po 1923–2008). (W25268).

Collected Works. Khachö Wangpo wrote an elaborate life story of Milarepa and Gampopa in the episodic style of Gampopa's lineage. Therefore, one could wonder why Chödrak Yeshe would authorise a new compilation based on *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* if his predecessor had not done so. His efforts in preserving this literary tradition are of utmost importance.

According to Götsang Repa,¹⁶² Tsangnyön had sent all his written materials to the Fourth Shamarpa. In the latter biography mentioned above, we read that in his fifties – meaning in the early sixteenth century – Chödrak Yeshe gave teachings on the *Mi la'i mgur 'bum*. Would this have been Tsangnyön's *Songs* or the work compiled under his authority?

Interestingly, there seemingly was a strong connection between the Fourth Shamarpa and the Riwoché branch of the Taklung lineage. Among the texts in his *gsung 'bum* we find a prayer of praise to Chöjé Jikten Wangchuk – the last Taklung master mentioned in Ms-Drepung and the second-last in the Ms-BL – written by the Fourth Shamarpa.¹⁶³ More historical information about this particular period and the relations between the different Kagyü schools at that time could shed some more light on this question.

[ToC](#)

2 – TSANGNYÖN HERUKA'S LIFE AND SONGS OF MILAREPA

¹⁶² See Quintman 2014a: 132 and Sernesi 2021: 145 and 203n63.

¹⁶³ *dPal stag lung thang po'i gdung rgyud ri bo che'i chos rje 'jig rten dbang phyug la bstod pa bzhugs so*, 4: 203. I thank Étienne Bock for pointing out this text of praise to me.

Tsangnyön Heruka – gTsang smyon He ru ka, 1452–1507 – and his literary masterpiece *Life and Songs of Milarepa* are well-known through the excellent work of previous researchers.¹ In this chapter, I will examine how this brilliant author, the Madman of Tsang, crafted a “new” narrative of Mila and the world he lived in, skillfully weaving all the available material from the literary traditions discussed above into a coherent, well-written and appealing piece of literature. For the *Life*, he mostly used elements from Gyalthangpa’s text and those connected with Khachö Wangpo. By contrast, he predominantly relied on *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* for the *Songs*.

What makes Tsangnyön’s version so unique? According to Quintman:

Life writing entails more than the accumulation of biographical data; it requires narrative structure, thematic development, plotting and pacing—that is, the elements of fiction. The power of Tsangnyön Heruka’s work comes at least in part from the fictionalizing of his subject. “Fictional” in this context does not necessarily refer to a story’s falsity, but to its forming, shaping and moulding elements, crafting a narrative that most powerfully captures the enduring truths of Milarepa’s life.²

¹ Larsson, 2011a+b, 2012, 2016, 2021; Larsson & Quintman 2015, Quintman 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b; Roberts, 2007, 2010; Sernesi 2007, 2011, 2021.

² Quintman 2014a: 135-36.

In Tsangnyön's biography, we read that his reason for writing yet another life story of Milarepa was to propagate it to all kinds of people – kings, ministers, influential leaders and ordinary people alike – as a means to teach the profound Dharma instructions, bring disciples to liberation and inspire other people to follow the same path.³ To reach this effect, Tsangnyön used a variety of literary expedients, re-creating the structure of the texts and re-organizing different episodes. To “spice up” his accounts, he added some “popular” notes using elements from oral tradition or his imagination. He also took the opportunity to insert some of his ideas and opinions.

Regarding the structure of *Life and Songs*, Tsangnyön Heruka clearly separates *Life* and *Songs* (*mgur 'bum*). As seen above, some previous hagiographies also made a similar division, by describing Mila's story relating to two main qualities – overcoming the hardships in early life and his meditation experiences.

Tsangnyön slightly extends the first part. Previously, the second quality started as soon as Mila left Marpa. In this case, *Life* also includes the first period of his independent practice, when he struggles to overcome hardships. By contrast, the *Songs* show a yogin already capable of conquering hindrances, thus becoming a teacher to all. In Tsangnyön's work, the *Songs* form a supplement to read separately, a commentary expanding the life story.

Furthermore, in *Life*, Tsangnyön Heruka perfects the question-and-answer style (*zhus lan*), already observed in a

³ Ibid., 128, contains the full quotation of Tsangnyön's intentions contained in Götsang Repa's biography of Tsangnyön Heruka.

limited way in Möntsepa's and the Dochen Rosary's life stories. The narrative centres around Rechungpa questioning Mila on various aspects of his life. Mila then replies in the first person, thus giving a more direct character to the story – almost transforming it from a biography to an autobiography.

Moreover, Tsangnyön Heruka frames the life story in terms of “twelve deeds,” modelling his subject's status after representations of the Buddha's life, thus elevating his creation and representing it as canonical scripture.

He also simplifies the *Songs*' organisational structure, replacing the seventeen/eighteen sections division with a tripartite thematic arrangement – the cycles of binding under oath non-humans who inflict harm, the cycles of accepting the great heart disciples, and various assorted cycles.⁴

Another significant change in Tsangnyön's presentation of the yogin's life is to shift the yogin's status from a miraculous emanation to an ordinary human being.⁵

Furthermore, through printing and spreading his literary work to all categories of people and using thangkas to portray episodes of the story, Tsangnyön Heruka enormously contributes to developing a devotional cult of Milarepa. Earlier, the stories and songs aimed to inspire only practising yogins and monks. By contrast, Milarepa has now become a popular example of a true practitioner. For this purpose, the spiritual songs had to acquire an almost “ritual” aspect. In his *Opening the Eyes of Faith* – a catalogue of spiritual songs – Tsangnyön describes the proper form *mgur* should take: they should be graceful and contain three essential elements,

⁴ Quintman 2014a: 137-40.

⁵ Ibid., 142-51.

- (1) an opening expression of supplication and praise described as the song's "opening support" (*mgo 'dren*);
- (2) a middle framework consisting of "stories and their rationale" that contain the song's principal scope and themes; and
- (3) concluding prayers of auspiciousness and aspiration.⁶

In this way, the recitation of spiritual songs at once becomes a performance and an act of devotion.

Comparing the songs in Tsangnyön Heruka's work with those in earlier liberation stories shows how Tsangnyön accentuates these stylistic elements. For instance, whereas in previous texts, a song would start with a simple "I bow down to the Lama," Tsangnyön's introduction usually consists of four or five verse lines.

Besides, as can be seen in the translation chapters and the song charts in this book, Tsangnyön mixes songs and stories, altering their order, the disciples to whom some of the songs are directed (e.g., Gampopa instead of Rechungpa) and the place where the encounters take place. The stories in the yogin's life thus become a powerful vehicle for promoting personal, institutional, or doctrinal considerations, including the claiming, demarcating, and mapping sacred space. The catalogue of places codified in the standard *Life and Songs* led to a thriving pilgrimage tradition among innumerable retreat sites and meditation caves. Tsangnyön Heruka has Milarepa empower the places associated with his life story, thus completing the landscaping process. The yogin states:

⁶ For details on this catalogue, see Larsson and Quintman, 2015.

“If you meditate in these places, favorable conditions will gather in your solitude. Since they have been infused with the blessings of my lineage, go and meditate [in them].”⁷

While previous researchers have thoroughly studied all these elements, I will focus on a few personal positions Tsangnyön Heruka took that significantly alter the narrative of Mila’s life. By illustrating my arguments with examples from the *Songs*, I aim to highlight the author's unique perspective and its profound impact on the story.

[ToC](#)

TSANGNYÖN HERUKA’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MONK SCHOLARS

Chapter 34 of Tsangnyön’s *Songs* bears the title “Winning the debate arisen through jealousy with power and magic.”⁸ This chapter refers to the tension between wandering yogins and Kadampa monk scholars. Tsangnyön talks about “teachers of dialectics in a monastic school.”⁹ By contrast, in the previous liberation stories, the teachers are “Kadampa monks.” Analysing the episode in different hagiographies of Milarepa and Rechungpa, Roberts supposes that these variations are due to a difference in the importance attributed by the author of each life story to the intellectual approach versus meditation, thus reflecting the point of view of the particular school to which the

⁷ Quintman, 2008.

⁸ TN-Dha 531-55; Stagg 2017: 395-418.

⁹ *mtshan nyid kyi grwa sa yod pa de’i ston pa rnams*; TN-Dha 531, Stagg 2017: 395.

author belongs. Therefore, the condemnatory portrait of the Kadampa monks is absent or at least mitigated in the hagiographies of the Dakpo Kagyü school. Although being a lay practitioner of the Rechung Nyengyü, Tsangnyön Heruka had to act in such a way as to avoid creating displeasure to the monastic Dakpo Kagyü lineage founded by Gampopa – himself a Kadampa monk – that was to be his primary audience.¹⁰ Even without using the name “Kadampa,” Tsangnyön shows a rather polemic vein regarding a scholarly approach to Dharma. It is helpful to check how earlier works rendered the same stories. Here is how his Chapter 34 and Chapter 42 first appeared in Ngendzong Tönpa’s life story of Milarepa:¹¹

Ten, the quality of becoming unobstructed by external objects¹²

One time, he came to a monk’s residence. Some monks said: “We want this yogin to be the object of our offerings for some days.”

To deride him, they brought him into the main shrine room of the temple and bolted the door, leaving him there. However, as soon as they went outside, he was also there. They looked inside, and there he appeared. So they offered their services and asked for forgiveness.¹³

¹⁰ See Roberts 2007: 130-41.

¹¹ For the complete translation of this life story, see Chapter 4.

¹² PT *phyi rol gyi lus la thogs rgyug med par shar ba'i yon tan*; RD *phyi rol gyi yul la thog rdugs med par shar ba'i yon tan*. In Rechungpa’s lineage the title of this quality is *rtsod pas mi rdzi ba'i yon tan*, “The quality of not being oppressed by a debate.”

¹³ Until this point, the fragment corresponds to the introduction in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 44; see below.

While they offered prostrations to him, a teacher called Darlo arrived who was ready for a bit of Nyingma epistemology.¹⁴ They engaged in a debate, and [Mila] could not withstand the teacher. Then the Jetsün sang about the quality of not being harmed by the debate:

Without loosening the knots of avarice,¹⁵
 What benefit is there from generosity?
 Without abandoning hypocrisy in one's mind,
 What benefit is there from protecting discipline?
 Without being able to cope with the play of words,
 How can one firmly hold the small shield of patience?¹⁶
 If it is not to be liberated from the narrow path of *samsāra*,
 Why should one ride the horse of diligence?
 Without transforming all appearances in *dharmakāya*,
 What benefit is there from practising meditation?
 Without beheading ego-fixation,¹⁷
 What will the sword of discriminating wisdom cut?
 Without catching the poisonous snake of one's mind,
 Why should one hold the lasso of skilful means?

The Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage expand this song about the six pāramitas (part of Tsangnyön's song 34.8) with part of the song about the ten pāramitās (Tsangnyön's song

¹⁴ PT *tshad ma snying ma dga' tsam brtanpa gcig byung ste*; in RD *tshad ma rnying ma 'ga' tsam nyan par gcig byung ste*.

¹⁵ TN 1990: 547, song 34.8; Stagg 2017: 408.

¹⁶ These two lines are different from later versions; *tshig gi rtse mo mi thub pa'i / bzod pa'i phub chung ci la 'dzugs*; in Zhijé Ripa: *tshig rtsub mtshon cha mi thub pa'i / bzod pa'i phub chung ci la tshugs* “without being able to withstand the weapons of harsh words, how can you firmly hold the shield of patience?”

¹⁷ PT *ngar 'dzin mgo lo mi chod pa'i*; RD *ngar 'dzin 'gong po mi chod pa'i*.

34.9).¹⁸ The narrative frame in all Golden Rosaries is almost identical to the one above, and this is true also for Shamar Khachö Wangpo's version.¹⁹ As a result, Darlo develops faith in the Jetsün and all jealousy towards Mila by the monks is pacified.

By contrast, the narrative becomes more elaborate in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*²⁰ and the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia. It includes all the songs found in Tsangnyön's version – except song 34.11, addressed to Cham Lhencikyepé Drönma, placed in a different context.²¹ Also here Darlo develops faith in the Jetsün and becomes one of the six “teacher-meditators”.²²

Tsangnyön Heruka uses almost the same narrative as *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. However, he introduces a significant “innovation,” adding two episodes in prose. The first passage recounts a contest in dialectics won by Mila by resorting to a miracle.²³ The second passage is a discourse on logic that ends with another miracle, in which Mila reveals a secret love

¹⁸ See Song Charts 3 and 4.

¹⁹ Here, the two songs included are 34.8 and 34.6 (Zhwa 2010, 24: 456-57).

²⁰ The episode comes in the 9th quality, “not being hindered by debate”, in the *dar blo'i skor* cycle. E.g., RBC-Pt 114-24.

²¹ *lCam lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron ma*. This song is missing in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (except in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu); it comes in all second-stratum compendia, although in different locations. E.g., DNM-RD 2006: 242; Ms-BL 316b, BCG-D 7:207.

²² *ston sgom rab byung drug gi ya bar gyur ba gcig byung skad do*. Note that the notion “*ston sgom*,” mentioned here and in Tsangnyön's *Songs*, does not appear among the disciples of Milarepa. The *tönpas* in most texts are called *sku gshegs kha'i slob ma drug* (the six disciples when he was near to die) or as *ston pa drug* (the six teachers).

²³ TN-Dha 542-46; Stagg 2017: 405-8.

affair between the master Darlo and a young lady.²⁴ The culmination point of the story reads:

The teacher said: “Incredible! If everyone has reason to believe my mind is given over to demons, then let them show it. I am better than those who spend their lives in deceit doing tricks and singing dirges to deceive others!” The Jetsün smiled: “Well, if you say it’s OK to try and convince you, then I must. Listen and understand what I have to say! There is something besides this side of meat you brought that belongs to someone else. Is its purpose not a sign of your mind being given over to demons?” The teacher’s face turned black. Although the Jetsün told him not to, Rechungpa, without listening, went and laid out the meat, and there appeared the bracelet of a beautiful young girl who had little devotion toward the Jetsün but did have devotion toward Rechungpa. At this, the teacher Darlo was embarrassed and ashamed; he vehemently denounced the Jetsün and his sons and then left. Rechungpa was pleased, showed everyone the bracelet, and then went over to where the young lady worked. He took the teacher Darlo’s rosary off her wrist and brought it for the people to see, and then everyone believed in his corruptness.

Then follows a second miracle, a sign of the Jetsün’s clairvoyance:

Lotön thought: “If Milarepa was not made aware of the situation by others, then he must be who he says he is. But, I should test him.”

Then he said: “The debate is sufficient,” and with that, he took the texts and went back. That evening Lotön poured blood into

²⁴ TN-Dha 548-53; Stagg 2017: 411-14.

the Buddha's begging bowl, filled the kapala with milk, and took the pictures of the Buddha and his retinue that sat on his shrine and turned them upside down. Then he thought: "If Milarepa knows about this, then I can be sure that he genuinely has the higher perceptions and can perform miracles."

The next day, he went to see the Jetsün. First, he met Rechungpa, who said to him: "Well, teacher, since you have disgraced yourself and the teachings, have you come to have your faults brought to light?"

"Since I have faith in the guru, I have come to meet the Jetsün," he said and went in.

The Jetsün, smiling, said: "Teacher, you do not have to test me like this. All of the things that you wish to keep hidden, I know directly. I know that you have poured the nectar of the five poisons in the bowl of the golden *rupa*, and poured what is to go in the begging bowl in the kapala. Disregarding the way you know to do things, you have also turned the pictures of the Buddha Shakyamuni and his retinue on their heads. Do not do such things that a dharma practitioner would never do. Don't put the contents in the wrong containers, and without disregarding what you know, put the Buddha's picture back correctly!"

Lotön was overwhelmed, shrunk with fear, and gave rise to special, uncommon faith in the Jetsün.

After this follow two more songs. Lotön is now thoroughly convinced. He tries to convince also Darlo, who replies:

"Your belief in him makes you truly gullible. You have become a lord of evil dharma. But as for me, I only think of his higher perceptions and miracle-working as the act of a great spirit to be accepted as a disciple and to be tamed; I don't see him as someone who has a hair's worth of dharma. Furthermore, I did not have inappropriate relations with that girl!" Holding such

incorrect views, he died. Having attachment to his own errant views, he took rebirth as a fearsome great demon who acted as a witness to oaths.²⁵

* * *

Tsangnyön Heruka dedicates three more chapters to monk scholars – Lotön Gendün, Dretön and Likor Charuwa.²⁶ In the *Golden Rosary* collections, the first two of these chapters do not appear. The Zhepé Dorje Compendia contain a few of the songs included in Tsangnyön's chapters, although in entirely different contexts. In these cases, there is no specific mention of either Lotön or Dretön.²⁷

Tsangnyön's Chapter 44, Likor Charuwa, serves as a captivating example of how this author weaves together stories and songs to craft his narrative. He commences the chapter with

²⁵ In the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, Darlo is the one who develops faith, and there is no mention of Lotön's fate; he appears as just one among the monk scholars.

²⁶ Chapter 42, Lotön Gendün, TN-Dha 659-66; Stagg 2017: 525-33. Chapter 43, Dretön Repa, TN-Dha 660-71; Stagg 2017: 535-40. Chapter 44, Likor Charuwa, TN-Dha 672-77; Stagg 2017: 541-46.

²⁷ See Song Charts 1, 7 & 8. E.g., Songs 42.3, 4 & 5 come in Ms-Drukpa 277b-279b. Here, Ngendzong Repa and Chödor (*chos rdor*) intercede with the Jetsün on behalf of a group of patrons, whereas in Tsangnyön's version Rechungpa and Seban Repa intercede for Lotön. Songs 42.1 and 42.6 also appear in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, without any mention of Lotön. In the second-stratum compendia, we find 42.1, 2 & 5. Ms-BL does not include these songs.

E.g., Song 43.1, Ms-Oxford 120a; Song 43.2, Ms-Oxford 164a; DNM-RD 656; BCG-D 8: 377; 43.3, BCG-D 8: 185. However, in the compendia, Mila sings this song to announce the arrival of Gampopa! There is no mention of the name Dretön (except as the name of the Dzogchen teacher in Mila's youth, known as 'Bras ston lha dga').

a fragment that first appeared in the life of Milarepa attributed to Gampopa:²⁸

At one time, the monks of a minor religious center in Gungtang became jealous of the lama's great merit. Intending to disgrace [Milarepa], they invited him [to their center]. When he arrived, the monks said, "Since you are an accomplished master, you will serve as our resident priest." They placed him inside the chapel and drew the lock. When they went outside, the lama was there. Not believing it was him, they looked inside and saw him inside too. The monks understood he was indeed an accomplished master, and they all begged him for forgiveness.

Gyalthangpa, and most of the other life stories, also describe the episode.²⁹ In Tsangnyön's work, the plot is very similar to the one in the different texts (the monks accuse him of being a nihilist; they first lock him up inside the temple but he comes out; they beat him and he reappears inside the temple; they tie him up to push him out, but he does not move.) On their request why they could not move him, here is what he says:³⁰

"Since I am a nihilist, when I'm killed, it doesn't exist; when I am beaten, it doesn't exist; when I'm dragged inside, it doesn't exist; when I'm kicked outside, it doesn't exist. All of this is because fixation on samsara and nirvana as two different things doesn't exist!"

²⁸ *Selected Writings of sGam po pa*, The Gemur manuscript, 1974: 24; Quintman 2014: 193.

²⁹ rGyal thang pa bDe chen rDo rje, *dKar brgyud gser phreng* 1973: 250-51; Tiso 2014: 231-32. See Chapter 10, *The Episode at the Tsibri Mountain in the Gyal Region of Latö*, where I analyse this fragment in all the hagiographies.

³⁰ TN-Dha 672; Stagg 2017: 541.

Some of the better monks said, “We confess that we have antagonized someone who is a true siddha-yogi. Now, please leave.”

The Jetsun said, “I am not a siddha, I have no such attainment. You do not know who is a siddha and what siddhas do. Give up mistaken views of others and thinking so highly of yourselves. Having such wrong views is to be more scorned than the ten nonvirtues. To think highly of yourself is self-clinging and therefore a cause for falling into samsara.”

The monks replied, “You are certainly a siddha. Please tell us, why have you come and said these things to us?” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply...

Then follow the two songs included in the other works. However, Tsangnyön’s chapter does not finish here. He adds two more songs in which the monks interrogate him on the importance of studying. This interrogation, which serves as a platform for Mila to express his views on learning and knowledge, is a key part of the narrative. In the first song, 44.3, Mila says that forgetting what one has learned is fine. As an example:³¹

When you realize all appearances as your texts,
It’s fine to forget about the texts with black letters.
It’s also good to forget about dharma that’s heavy to carry.

I did not find this song elsewhere.

The second song, 44.4, replies to the monk scholars who disagree with him. It comes only in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-

³¹ Stagg 2017: 543.

Gansu,³² where it addresses Rechungpa instead of a group of monks. Example:³³

I've not trained in scholarly terms;
All tenet systems are intellectual dharma.
It has little benefit for stopping the afflictions.

At this point, the monks develop faith. Likor Charuwa becomes an attendant of the Jetsün. Later, he asks the Jetsün why he does not act more conventionally to attract more people. The Jetsün replies with songs 44.5 & 6 (in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu and some of the second-stratum compendia),³⁴ addressed to a group of benefactors. No separate chapter mentions Likor Charuwa.

By devoting four consecutive chapters to monk scholars,³⁵ Tsangnyön Heruka appears to underscore the importance of stories about monk scholars evolving into “teacher-meditators.” He seems to be making a profound statement about a scholarly approach to Dharma: he demonstrates his understanding of the terminology and the functioning of debate, while also highlighting the supremacy of meditative experience over knowledge acquired through scriptures and logic in the pursuit of spiritual realisation.. Did Tsangnyön aim to defend the Dakpo Kagyü against the criticisms by Sakya Paṇḍita and his followers regarding the doctrinal innovations introduced by Gampopa and his followers, who did not hesitate to ridicule and reject the

³² E.g., Ms-Drukpa 273a.

³³ Stagg 2017: 544.

³⁴ E.g., Ms-Drukpa 280b; BCG-D 44.5, 8: 8; 44.6, 7:139; Ms-BL 44.6, 90b.

³⁵ Chapter 41, “The Noble Gampopa,” plus 42-43 and 44 (all three inexistent as separate stories).

methods of inference and accurate definition of terminology held in such high esteem by scholars and paṇḍits?³⁶ It is indeed noteworthy that the interrogation method used to ascertain the authenticity of Mila's realisation by these two scholars bears a striking resemblance to Sakya Paṇḍita's approach to determine whether a particular tenet is genuinely Buddhist or not as described in his "*Entrance Gate for the Wise*" (*mKhas pa rnam 'jug pa'i sgo*).³⁷

[Toc](#)

TSANGNYÖN HERUKA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS BÖNPOS

In the *Songs*, Tsangnyön Heruka dedicates three chapters to the relationship between Mila and the Bönpos.³⁸

Chapter 22, *Taming Naro Bönchung*.³⁹ *The Dark/Black Treasury* (DNM-RD)⁴⁰ is the only text that includes this episode identically. Instead, *A River of Blessings* mentions the episode as follows:⁴¹

³⁶ See Jackson, D., 1994.

³⁷ Ibid. Chapter 5, 97 onwards, "Procedures and principles of debate."

³⁸ Chapter 22, "Taming Naro Bönchung." TN-Dha 376-87; Stagg 2017: 223-32; Chapter 24, "Meeting Shengom Repa." TN-Dha 399-415; Stagg 2017: 247-65; Chapter 54, "The hook of compassion for the dead, and establishing his sister Peta in enlightenment." TN-Dha 760-68; Stagg 2017: 637-45.

³⁹ Regarding this episode see Dmitry Ermakov 2022, *The Magical Dual between Milarepa and Naro Bönchung: Who Really Won?*
See also Bock 2024: 125-31, *The Na ro bon chung affair*.

⁴⁰ E.g., DNM-RD 2006: 440-49. We ignore who copied the episode from whom. That both episodes are identical excludes the existence of an independently circulating story that inspired both authors.

⁴¹ Quintman 2014a: 256n101. See Song Chart 8: Ms-Smith: 181, Ms-India 2: 88, Ms-Drepung 1: 506; BCG-D 8:45; BCG-Si 2: 600.

Mi la reached the snows of Ti tse and, having opened the entrance gate to the sacred site, thereby had a visionary encounter with Cakrasamvara and his divine assembly on the Ti tse snows. Previously, Bon pos ruled over this sacred site, but the Rje btsun said: “This sacred site is a Buddhist location. It is the place where the Blessed One, accompanied with an assembly of five hundred arhats, once came and taught Dharma. These snows are Cakrasamvara’s palace.” An accomplished [Bon po] master called Na ro bon chung who lived there said: “This sacred site is a place blessed by the Bon po teacher Gshen rab and its snows, the divine face of Ge god. You yogin, don’t stay around here.” He then laid down a wager on the site (*gnas skug*) and drew the Rje btsun into a contest of miracles. But due to the power of [Mi la’s] mastery of miraculous display, [Na ro bon chung] was not able to [defeat him] and offered the site to the Rje btsun.

Gyalthangpa’s life story of Milarepa is the first mentioning the yogin’s visit to the Kailash area.⁴²

Then, he went to these three (the glacier, the mountain and the lake): Tise, king of glaciers; Mapham, king of lakes; Hundred Summits, king of mountains. He established the teachings of the practice lineage, expanded the experiences born in him, and greatly benefitted all beings staying in that place.

⁴² Gyalthangpa 1973: 256; *de yang gangs ri mtsho 3 la byon te / gangs kyi rgyal po ti se / mtsho'i rgyal po ma pham / ri'i rgyal po rtse rgya la sogs pa nams su byon cing / sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa rtsugs te / nyams dang skye pa rgyas / gnas de nams la gnas pa'i sems can tshed pa'i don yang mang du mdzad do /*

This citation does not mention a contest with Naro Bönchung. The earliest such mention known at present comes from Zhijé Ripa:

When the Jetsün went to chase the Bönpo from Tisé mountain, [seven] disciples accompanied him: Shengom Repa, Likor Charuwa, Zangmo Rema from Chungpa Trechag, and four Geshe Zaremas from upper Gungthang; [in total] they were eight, master and disciples. He sent Likorwa and Dzangmo down to Lowo, and six went up. With a challenge of magical powers, he sent the Bönpo away. The story of stealing Tisé is explained separately.⁴³

By considering the episode as “stealing Tise” (*ti se phrogs pa*), Zhijé Ripa’s narrative becomes highly negative. Later in the text, he analyses and questions the authenticity of this story.⁴⁴

The Blue Annals,⁴⁵ dated 1478, gives a more detailed account, confirming the existence of such a narrative element a decade before Tsangnyön. This historical context provides a deeper understanding of the evolution of the relationship between Buddhism and Bön religion:

⁴³ Zhi byed ri pa 2012: 339; *gangs ti se na bon po bton pa la byon dus rje btsun la sku 'khor ni / bshen sgom ras pa dang / li khor phyas ru ba dang / cung pa'i kre phyag gi 'dzang mo ras ma cig dang / gung thang byen lang gi dge bshes za ras ma bzhi dang / dpon slob brgyad byon pa la / li khor ba dang mdzangs mo gnyis blo bo na mar biang nas / dpon slob drug yar byon nas / rdzu 'phrul sna tshogs kyis rtsod pa mdzad nas bon po bton nas / ti se phrogs pa'i lo rgyus zur na gsal*. Unfortunately, the text does not include this separate explanation.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 8, Zhijé Ripa – *The Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*. – *some Interesting Details*.

⁴⁵ Roerich 1976: 434

After nine years had passed, he realized the trance of self-realization, and in order to labour for the benefit of the crowds of nomads, he went towards ti se (Kailāsa).

There was a bon po adept who had mounted a drum, and was about to proceed to the snowy summit. The Venerable One reached the snowy summit within a single moment, and then, having spread his linen garment, he sent the bon po adept down with his drum, and showed many other similar miracles. After that, he came down (from the summit) and numerous supporters, such as rdor mo and others, attended on him.

From the above and a few other instances mentioned by Bock, it becomes clear that such a story did exist before Tsangnyön's time. However, this chapter depicts Mila in a rather arrogant way. He becomes a caricature in the quest for supremacy between Buddhists and Bönpos. In the sixteenth chapter of the "Six Vajra Songs" (*rDo rje'i mgur drug*), the caricature is even more accentuated.⁴⁶ Note that Tsangnyön, in a song to Naro Bönchung, uses a metaphor of the Kailāsa corresponding roughly to the same metaphor in Chapter 25, *Meeting Rechungma*.⁴⁷

In Chapter 24, *Meeting Shengom Repa* – an ailing Bönpo for whose benefit Mila celebrates a Bön rite with Buddhist content – the tone is less polemical. Even though the result is the supremacy of Buddhist Dharma over Bön, Mila uses a Bön

⁴⁶ Lha btsun Rin chen rNam rgyal, *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rdo rje'i mgur drug sogs gsung rgyun thor bu 'ga'* 1985: 114-20. Translation by Lama Kunga Rinpoché and Brian Cutillo, *Drinking the Mountain Stream*, Chapter 16: "Confrontation with a Bön Priest." 1995: 161-70,

⁴⁷ Songs 25.1 and 2, TN-Dha 416-18; Stagg 2017: 267-70.

healing ritual, demonstrating his profound understanding and respect for the Bön religion. A comparison of the episode in Tsangnyön's *Songs*, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*,⁴⁸ *A River of Blessings* and the later versions of *The Black/Dark Treasury* shows Tsangnyön's attitude to be slightly more pungent than the other versions, where there is no trace of antagonism:

In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and *A River of Blessings*:⁴⁹

"Now, in whom do you have faith?" asked [the Jetsün].

He replied: "I have faith in Bön."

"Well then, let the Bönpos and the healers leave!" The healers and the Bönpos left, and, as [the man] had faith in Bön, Lama Jetsün chanted a Dharma song with Bön words.

In Tsangnyön's *Songs*,⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The episode, titled *bZang rgyud phyag tshang gi bskor*, "The episode in the kitchen of a good family," appears only in the later versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Oxford 114a-118b; RBC-Pt 300-13; Ms-Drukpa 172b-170a; Ms-Gansu 24: 59-74; see Song Chart 7). That only the later versions include the episode seems to indicate its more recent origin. In *A River of Blessings*, the episode does not appear in group A (Ms-Smith and Ms-India), but only in group B (Ms-Drepung, 1:486-98; BCG-D 8: 20-35 and BCG-Si, 2: 574-87). Furthermore, Ms-BI and DNM-RD 2006 do not contain it; it appears in the later versions of *The Dark/Black Treasury* (e.g., DNM-RD 2013: 546-63; see Song Chart 8). See also Chapter 10, *The Episode at a Zangyü Kitchen*.

⁴⁹ Ms-Oxford 115a; BCG-D8: 23: *da khyod rang gang la mos byas pas / kho na re / nga bon la mos zer ro / o na bon po dang sman pa rnams gyis* [I read:gyes] *cig gsungs pas gyes pas / sman pa dang bon po gyes pas / der kho bon la mos par 'dug pa la / bla ma rJe btsun gyis chos glu bon skad du 'gyer ba*.

⁵⁰ Stagg 2017: 249, TN-Dha 403: *khyod rang gang la mos gsungs pas / bdag chos la mi mos pa med pa'i steng du bon rang la mos zer / o na bon po dang sman pa 'di rnams rdzongs shig / ngas khyod la phan pa'i bon chog bya'o gsungs pas / kho'i bu che ba na re bon po gzhän tsho yang bzhugs bla mas kyang cho ga mdzad pas mi chog pa lags sam zer bas / rJe btsun gyi zhal nas de skad byas kyang chog ste / khyed kyi nad rigs 'di zang zing gi rim gro dang sman dpyad mang bas phan rgyu med / nad pa drag pas chog mod / thams cad rdzongs shig gsungs pas..*

[The Jetsün] asked: “To what religion are you devoted?”

“I do not disbelieve in the Buddhist dharma, but I am a devotee of Bön.”

“Very well, send away these Bönpos and healers, and I will do a Bön ritual that will benefit you.”

His oldest son said: “Is it permissible for the guru to perform a ritual while the other Bönpos are here?”

The Jetsün replied: “That would be fine. However, the type of illness you have will not be helped by any kind of rites with material offerings or many examinations by healers. You can recover from the illness, but everyone should be sent elsewhere.”

The following detail describes the outcome of the ritual. In the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, the father and his sons, now convinced, go to meditate and become holders of Mila’s Nyengyü Transmission. By contrast, Tsangnyön further elaborates on the difference between Bön and Buddhist Dharma, laying words of trust in Buddhist Dharma in the mouth of the Bön disciples. In particular, here is what one of the sons, who would become the disciple Shengom Repa, has to say:⁵¹

Generally, the words and appearances of the genuine dharma and the Bön religion are similar. However, there is a difference in compassion and activity. In particular, when performing the rituals of the Way of Shen, in the end at least one sentient being will be slaughtered. The sources of refuge and objects of veneration are only worldly deities. From doing these practices, at the moment of death one has no confidence at all and one dies with a sense of fear and terror. Therefore, now, I too will turn from Bön and practice the dharma.

⁵¹ Stagg 2017: 264.

In Chapter 54, *The Hook of Compassion for the Dead and Establishing his Sister Peta in Enlightenment*, a dying Bönpo had secretly nurtured faith in Milarepa. At his death, the Jetsün liberates him.⁵² Tsangnyön uses this episode to ridicule the Bönpos, who claim they can call back deceased persons and show them the path to liberation.

Chapter 9 of this book examines the episode in all the different hagiographies. Here we see the confrontation with the Bönpos and the derision of their doctrine growing more exacerbated over time. The antagonism becomes evident in Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings* and even more so in the *Golden Rosary* of Möntsepa and the Dochen Rosary. Here, the Bönpos compete with Mila by setting up their ceremony; a demon appears, but Mila defeats him. The importance of this conflict is all the more evident considering this is the only episode from Tsangnyön's *Songs* included in Möntsepa's liberation story – the other episodes in that collection all belong to the *Life* of Milarepa.

However, Tsangnyön Heruka's depiction reaches the apex of the contention. Here follows a detail mentioned only in his work:⁵³

The Jetsün said: "Your dharma shows the path for Yama's messenger. But I show the way for those who have died."

The relatives of the Bönpo who had died said: "Does the Jetsün see the one who has died? If you can't see him, how can you show him the path?"

"I see him. Because of the negative karma that he had previously committed, and by missing just a slight bit of virtue,

⁵² TN-Dha 760-68; Stagg 2017: 637-45.

⁵³ TN-Dha 762-63; Stagg 2017: 638-39.

he has been born as a small, long-bodied bug in the upper valley, under a mound of yellow dried dung. I will now take him to the place of liberation.”

“Then, let us be witness to this so that we may believe you; show us how you take a bug to liberation.”

“Very well, let us proceed,” the Jetsün said.

Then all of the people who were gathered there together went to the mound of dried yellowish dung. First, Milarepa called out the man’s secret name: “I am your guru Milarepa! Come here!” he said. Then out from under the dung came the bug who then coiled up in the Jetsün’s lap and lay there. The Jetsün taught some dharma and then performed transference, ejecting the bug’s consciousness. The dead body of the bug gave off subtle rays of light that dissolved in the Jetsün’s heart center. After mingling with the Jetsün’s mind for a while, the consciousness of the man became a brilliant glowing white A syllable. It was ejected from the Jetsün’s heart center into space and went higher and higher in the sky. Then he uttered: “The precious Jetsün has placed me in the bliss of liberation. Thank you!” Seeing this, everyone believed what had happened.

From these three episodes regarding Bön, it seems clear that Tsangnyön exacerbated the confrontation between Buddhism and Bön religion in his work. This more significant exacerbation could mean that, in the twelfth century, the two religions were less antagonistic than people thought in the fifteenth century, which would be in line with findings from other researchers.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See, for example, Vitali 1996: 10, “The improbable account of a ferocious persecution of Bon by Ye.shes.’Od, according to which all bon.po’s were burned alive and their books thrown into rivers, does not correspond to my understanding of the religious situation prevailing in sTod during *bstan.pa phyi.dar*, and is, in my view, another case of 15th-century vision applied to earlier times.”

*TSANGNYÖN'S DEPRECIATION/DEMOTION OF RECHUNGPA IN
FAVOUR OF GAMPOPA*

In Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs*, Rechungpa appears as a "rebellious" or "unruly" disciple. Often, he goes against his teacher's advice and even comes into open conflict with him. These are considered severe infringements in the Vajrayāna tradition, in which the master-disciple relationship is of primordial importance for the successful outcome of spiritual practice.

In the chapters dealing with Rechungpa's return from India or the chapter regarding his relationship with Princess Dembu, Rechungpa appears as one all-but-perfect character.⁵⁵ Not that he does not receive any importance – this would have been impossible since Mila practically raised him from the age of ten. Rechungpa spent half of his life with his teacher. Therefore, we meet him in many episodes, and he has the honour of interrogating Mila about his life. However, Tsangnyön depicts him as a very "human" character with many shortcomings, far from being or becoming a great teacher.

By contrast, he introduces a very different picture of Gampopa to the reader. Already from his first appearance, we learn that he is the emanation of a Bodhisattva and that in this

⁵⁵ Chapter 38, *The Story of the Yak Horn*. TN-Dha 578-97; Stagg 2017: 445-63; Chapter 39, *The Story of the Wild Asses*. TN-Dha 597-612; Stagg 2017: 465-79; Chapter 57, *The Later Journey to Central Tibet*. TN-Dha 779-90; Stagg 2017: 661-72.

life, he is a model monk who will unquestionably be the principal among Mila's disciples and his legitimate successor.⁵⁶ This corresponds with a prophecy of a *ḍākinī*, which compares Gampopa to the sun and Rechungpa [only] to the moon.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, this presentation first appears in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. By contrast, in the early hagiographies in Rechungpa's lineage, Rechungpa is an entirely successful disciple who becomes the lineage holder of the *Rechung Nyengyü*, as Mila entrusts the Saṃvara Aural Transmission Lineage to him only. Surprisingly, the authors from the other lineages – and Tsangnyön Heruka – do not mention this crucial aspect (see Chapters 6 & 8).

In the early biographies of Milarepa, there is no mention of the yak-horn and the wild-ass episodes. The early biographies of Rechungpa include only three songs from these episodes – 38.3 and 39.9, under the quality “practising according to the [teacher's] command,” and 39.10, under the quality “resolving a debate” (see Song Chart 5). In these cases, no tension appears between Mila and Rechungpa. *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum compendia include both episodes (yak horn and wild asses). However, the image of a “surly” Rechungpa is also not as strong as in Tsangnyön's work.

Tsangnyön Heruka replaces Rechungpa with Gampopa on a few occasions.

First, in the farewell episode from the teacher, the Jetsün shows his callous buttocks as his last instruction, thus indicating that the most crucial instruction consists of being assiduous in

⁵⁶ Chapter 41, *The Noble Gampopa*. TN-Dha 618-58; Stagg 2017: 487-523.

meditation. *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum compendia reserve this particular instruction for Rechungpa.⁵⁷ By contrast, Sangyé Bum, Gyalthangpa, and Tsangnyön Heruka mention it on the occasion of Gampopa's departure. Zhijé Ripa, for his part, uses the same detail in an episode with Mila's sister Peta!⁵⁸

Second, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, the second-stratum compendia and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's biography of Milarepa, Mila addresses one song to Rechungpa, in which he talks about his life. By contrast, in Tsangnyön's *Songs* this becomes a welcome song offered by Mila to Gampopa, and it Mila sings it together with Rechungpa and Zhiwa Ö.⁵⁹

Tsangnyön Heruka adjusts the material from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* in various ways, changing the narrative frames of the songs. As will be seen below in the paragraph about his attitude towards women, he uses three of the songs in the chapter of the first encounter between Milarepa and Rechungpa in the compendia⁶⁰ in a different context. For instance, during the first meeting between Rechungpa and the Jetsün, in the compendia, in song 7.3, the Jetsün exhorts Rechungpa to become self-sufficient. By contrast, Tsangnyön addresses the song to "five young nuns." Two more songs from the same chapter appear

⁵⁷ In all editions of *A River of Blessings*, the instruction is given to both Rechungpa and Gampopa (see Song Chart 8).

⁵⁸ DNM-N 226a; DNM-RD 729; BCG-D8: 452; Gyalthangpa's life story of Gampopa 322; Zhijé Ripa 392. This callus-instruction must have been a particularly appealing detail from the oral tradition.

⁵⁹ Song 41.2, TN-Dha 634; Stagg 2017: 499; Ms-Oxford 149a; BCG-D 8: 321; Zhwa 237.

⁶⁰ In the fifth quality, "experience arising as bliss" (see Song Charts 7 and 8).

much later in Tsangnyön's work, in a chapter titled *Preparing to have joy at death*.⁶¹ By doing so, Tsangnyön diminishes Rechungpa's importance.

How should we understand Tsangnyön's point of view, given that he was a holder of Rechungpa's lineage? As suggested by Roberts:

Long before Tsangnyön's time the Dakpo Kagyü had taken on a powerful role in Tibetan religion, so that Gampopa was retrospectively and historically by far the more significant figure. Tsangnyön's depiction of Gampopa's relationship with Mila, from the perspective of members of the Dakpo Kagyü traditions, confirms his superiority. They would certainly not find it pleasing to see their founder represented as secondary in status to Rechungpa. This new account dovetails perfectly with Tsangnyön's portrayal of Gampopa as Milarepa's principal successor. This may seem a perverse move by an author who was a holder and transmitter of the Demchok Nyengyü, but it appears that this lineage identity had been superseded or absorbed into that of the Drukpa Kagyü. The latter lineage already had Rechungpa's transmission as its kernel since the time of its first masters: Ling Repa was a pupil of Khyungtsangpa and Sumpa – disciples of Rechungpa – but also of Phagmo Drupa – Gampopa's disciple – and Tsangpa Gyaré, the discoverer of Rechungpa's concealed instructions.⁶² Thus the Rechungpa lineage, together with its lineage biographies, were already contained within it, and the Drukpa Kagyü could

⁶¹ Song 7.3, Ms-Oxford 30a; DNM-RD 96; BCG-D 7: 216; TN-Dha 257; Stagg 2017: 76. Songs 49.3&4, Ms-Oxford 31a; DNM-RD 99-100; BCG-D 7: 99-100; TN-Dha 710-12; Stagg 2017: 583-86.

⁶² For a fascinating narrative of Ling Repa's life, torn between the yogic and the monastic approach, see Ewing 2017: 15-19.

also claim, because of the size of its tradition, to be the principal propagator of Rechungpa's teachings.⁶³

ToC

TSANGNYÖN HERUKA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

Throughout the song episodes, also the very early ones such as those attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa, instances abound with explicit statements of the disadvantages for women along the spiritual path, considered of inferior birth because of their social role and psycho-physical condition. Tsangnyön Heruka accentuates this theme with every female disciple we meet.⁶⁴

For instance, the biographical compendia contain most of the songs in Tsangnyön's Chapter 14, *Meeting Paldarbum*, except the instruction about 'Phat'.⁶⁵ However, Tsangnyön Heruka adds two more songs about the female condition, 14.10 and 14.11.⁶⁶

⁶³ Roberts 2007: 206. See also Roberts 2010.

⁶⁴ See, for example, TN Chapter 29, *Garland of the light of Amrita*, TN-Dha 488, *khyad par du yang bud med skye ba dman zhing blo gros zhan pas*; Stagg 2017: 346: "In particular, we have taken the low births of women, and have low intellect."

⁶⁵ Note that the *Phat* instruction appears only in Ms-Drukpa 148b and Ms-Gansu 24: 19. This could be a sign that these compendia relied on Tsangnyön's text.

⁶⁶ TN-Dha 309-11; Stagg 2017: 139-41. See Chapter 10 in this book, *Meeting Paldarbum*. In *A River of Blessings*, Song 14.12 – about having no time to practise – has become very long, and it incorporates the issue of the female condition, similar in structure to Tsangnyön's Song 14.1. In *A River of Blessings*, it is Paldarbum who sings it. By contrast, in Tsangnyön's case, it is Mila who describes the women's fate to an old lady. That this type of song regarding

In comparison with the biographical compendia, Tsangnyön adds four songs in his Chapter 25, *Meeting Rechungma*, two of which express the inferior position of women.⁶⁷

In Tsangnyön's Chapter 37, *Sahle Ö*, the first four songs reenact the same kind of dialogue as between Mila and his female disciple Paldarbum.⁶⁸ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* does not include the chapter (except Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu), and only the last two songs (37.5&6) appear in the second-stratum compendia and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's life story of Milarepa.⁶⁹

Even though Tsangnyön Heruka accentuates women's difficulties in becoming serious practitioners, this does not necessarily make him more of a male chauvinist than the authors of the other texts. It might be his own expedient to accentuate the capacities of women, who, although starting from a more disadvantaged position, eventually attain enlightenment. It all depends on the capacity of women to forget or to distance themselves from their sexual identity: as soon as women stop being "women" and become "practitioners," they are at par with men and even obtain better results than men. Rather than women

women appears for the first time in Tsangnyön's work, could mean that the issue of the female condition had become popular in his time.

⁶⁷ Song 25.3, TN-Dha 422; Stagg 2017: 275, "We five sisters assembled here / previously have not accumulated much merit. / Though we've human bodies, we've an inferior birth / without any freedom to practice the sublime dharma."

Song 25.6, TN-Dha 426; Stagg 2017: 279, "We five sisters assembled here / Have obtained an inferior birth in this life / But Bodhicitta is beyond male or female."

⁶⁸ Compare Song 37.1, Stagg 2017: 432 with Songs 14.10 & 14.12, Stagg 2017: 139 & 141; and especially Song 37.4, Stagg 2017: 438 with Song 14.14, Stagg 2017: 143.

⁶⁹ TN-Dha 565-78; Stagg 2017: 431-44. See Song Charts 6/7/8.

as persons, what he ill-treats is the female model or stereotype. The same is true with the role of “monks”, “sponsors”, or “scholars,” all of which he casts in a bad light, without necessarily precluding single persons belonging to those categories from becoming excellent practitioners once they discard the role to which they identify. In the lay practitioners’ communities of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it seems that the female followers of a charismatic teacher who transmitted tantric practices had more freedom than their fifteenth-century sisters, the latter living in a time when religious orders had established monasteries led by exclusively male clergy.⁷⁰ From this point of view, one could think that Tsangnyön Heruka takes a stand in favour of women, encouraging them to take part once again in the religious context and go back to make mountain retreats and meditate to reach realisation.

⁷⁰ Gianotti 2019 & 2020; Lo Bue 1994: 485-86; Martin 2005: 49-82; Sernesi 2007: 10-12. Gianotti, 2019, writes: “An interesting example is a hagiographic text from the late thirteenth century entitled *Jo mo nyis shus rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus*, The Stories of the Twenty-four Jo mo, has preserved the short life stories of twenty-four female Tibetan adepts (Tib. jo mo) of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, disciples of the Indian Tantric master Pha dam pa sangs rgyas (d. 1117).” She translated this text in Italian in 2020. In <https://tibeto-logic.blogspot.com/2024/06/women-disciples-of-padampa-very-early.html>, Martin states: “Nowhere are more 12th-century women’s life stories told than in the immediate circle of Padampa and the early Zhijé school.” In *The Woman Illusion?* he remarks: “It would be fair to say that Pha-dam-pa himself (along with some members of his immediate circle), *more than any of his contemporaries in Tibet*, advocated a particular kind and degree of women’s liberation with strongly Buddhist characteristics. His ‘feminism,’ unlike most modern feminisms, was not aimed at emancipating all women from a socially endemic inequality, nor did it demand for women economic or occupational parity with men. It simply made individual emancipation from women’s social conditions prerequisite for spiritual emancipation.”

There is a remarkable anecdote about this in the biography of Tsangnyön Heruka by Götsang Repa. This author includes biographical information about Kuntu Zangmo, the consort of Tsangnyön Heruka, who was instrumental in the printing of Tsangnyön's works:

When she heard about gTsang smyon, "an almost intolerably strong faith arose," and she immediately decided to go to 'Na dum Shel phug to meet him. The night before Kun tu bZang mo's arrival, one of the around hundred female practitioners who were among gTsang smyon's retinue dreamt that a woman with bone ornaments and dressed with silk clothes came to visit gTsang smyon.⁷¹

About Kuntu Zangmo's role in Tsangnyön's school after the master's death, Sernesi writes:⁷²

Moreover, she achieved the role of master herself, guiding the young disciples of the Madman after the latter's demise, and attracting her own pupils. She thus exerted a great influence on the community of gTsang smyon Heruka's followers, bringing it together after the master's death and effectively taking its lead in the early period, strengthening its presence in La stod and dBus. She also initiated and directed the school's early book production, which was seen as a way of both fostering the master's work and commemorating his deeds, thus planting the seeds of his long-lasting fame.

⁷¹ Larsson 2016: 325.

⁷² For the role of Kuntu Zangmo in Tsangnyön Heruka's school, see Sernesi 2021: 139-44.

A fascinating example of Tsangnyön's endeavour to encourage women to practise Dharma is the song 7.3 mentioned above. In the compendia, Mila sings it to Rechungpa on their first encounter.⁷³ By contrast, in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs* it comes in the chapter *The Yolmo Snowy Range*, where Mila addresses it to "five young nuns."⁷⁴ This is a particular song, in which Mila exhorts his listener(s) to abandon worldly life and become self-sufficient. By substituting Rechungpa with five young nuns, Tsangnyön Heruka obtains a double effect: he diminishes Rechungpa's importance, which is in line with the point mentioned in the previous paragraph, and he accentuates his rationale in favour of women, telling them to become "self-sufficient" – quite a strong statement in fifteenth-century Tibet! Thus, Tsangnyön Heruka uses an existing song, placing it in a new narrative context. The other songs in the Yolmo chapter also appear in the biographical compendia, but Mila sings them to five male monks instead of five nuns!⁷⁵

Besides adding some juicy notes to the stories – such as the ones mentioned above regarding the relationship with the teachers Darlo and Lotön and regarding the liberation of the

⁷³ See my Italian translation of the episode, Blancke 2021.

⁷⁴ Song 7.3, Ms-Oxford 30a; DNM-RD 96; BCG-D 7: 216; TN-Dha 257; Stagg 2017: 76.

⁷⁵ As noted by Stagg 2017: 746n19, in the course of the chapter, Tsangnyön makes a shift from addressing the "nuns" to the "disciple-sons," a small oversight indicating that he could have taken the song from another context. Quintman (2014b) analyses this Yolmo chapter as a site-specific case study documenting how Tsangnyön Heruka promoted a new sacred site in the Nepalese region of Yölmo by fusing together three song cycles from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the geographic locations they describe – Meeting Rechungpa, the Story of Singala Forest and the Story at Paro Taktshang – yet another purposeful intervention from the author in his styling a new biography.

Bönpo – and modifying the importance of Gampopa and Rechungpa, Tsangnyön Heruka also enriches his text with doctrinal fragments not found in any of the other hagiographies. Also, he omits to mention other included doctrinal elements. Therefore, Chapter 3 will examine some doctrinal topics in the different hagiographies.

[ToC](#)

3 – DOCTRINAL ELEMENTS IN THE MILAREPA HAGIOGRAPHIES

What did Milarepa practise and teach? Which doctrinal points do we find in his and his disciples' hagiographies? Conforming to the same sequence as presented until now, I examine the following texts:

- the early hagiographies of Marpa, Milarepa, Rechungpa and Gampopa,
- the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*,
- the hagiographies influenced by Shamar Khachö Wangpo,
- the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia,
- Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life and Songs*.

This analysis reveals a few doctrinal developments from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries.

First, **Ngendzong Tönpa**'s *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*.¹

Summarising the doctrinal content in this liberation story, here is what we find. First, Mila learned black magic and received Dzogchen teachings. From Marpa, he received teachings and explanations on the tantras of Hevajra and the five Guhyasamāja families, empowerments and blessings from the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara, including oral instructions of the Co-emergent Lady, and five of the formless *dākinī* teachings. From Ngok, he received inner heat instructions (*gtum mo, caṇḍālī*). He

¹ See the complete translation of this text in Chapter 4. This paragraph overviews the doctrinal aspects contained in Ngendzong Tönpa's liberation story of Milarepa.

understood the impermanent nature of samsaric existence and the illusory nature of all phenomena. Through solitary meditation, he experienced bliss and happiness and overcame all attachments. He developed equanimity free of the eight worldly concerns and the bodhicitta aspiration of loving kindness and compassion and realised the true nature of the pāramitās.

Regarding practice, he followed the path of means and insight (*thabs dang shes rab*). He practised the two stages of deity meditation (development and completion stage) of the Secret Mantra path. Following the guru's key instructions, he dedicated himself to inner heat practice, to the practice of blending and ejection of consciousness, the development of the network of nāḍī, prāṇa and cakra, and practice with a qualified mudrā. The result was *mahāmudrā*, understanding emptiness and the essence of mind, the nondual view, the realisation of awareness and luminosity, and the union of bliss and emptiness.² Mila also explained the intermediate state of perfection (*phu yul rdzogs pa'i bar do*) – the notion of being welcomed in the *bardo* at the moment of dying – and the intermediate state with complete qualities (*yon tan rdzogs pa'i bar do*) – the intermediate phase in which the *bardo*-being goes through all sorts of experiences with an unlimited mental body.³

* * *

² Mila's approach to *mahāmudrā*, as the outcome of tantric practice, is quite different from the later approaches to *mahāmudrā* in the 15th-16th-century Kagyü lineages. This is clearly seen in a text attributed to Milarepa, titled *phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal 'debs par byed pa'i gdams pa zab mo*. See below.

³ For a translation and explanation of Mila's *bardo* teachings, see Chapter 13.

Besides all the same points as above, the biographies in **Rechungpa's lineage** lay a strong emphasis on the **Aural Transmission of Saṃvara** (*Demchok Nyengyü*, also translated as “whispered lineage” or “hearing lineage”).

The primary features of this Aural Transmission are Three Wish-fulfilling Gems: the ordinary Wish-fulfilling Gem (*thun mong yid bzhin nor bu*), the commitment Wish-fulfilling Gem (*dam tshig yid bzhin nor bu*), and the true nature Wish-fulfilling Gem (*gnas lugs yid bzhin nor bu*). The Aural Transmission belongs to the Cakrasaṃvaratantra; in particular, this tradition regards instructions carrying the blessing coming from Vajradhara/Vajrayoginī to Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, and then to Milarepa. We find mention of it in Ngendzong Tönpa's life of Milarepa. The authors in Rechungpa's lineage, especially Ogyenpa, the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* and Zhijé Ripa, explain it in greater detail.

The *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* clearly distinguishes this “path of blessing,” transmitted only to Rechungpa, and the “path of means,” transmitted also to the other disciples:

“This is this” refers to the oral instructions of the path of means connected with tantra. These are the explanations I have given to you before. All four of Marpa's great sons have nothing else but these. “This is not the essence” refers to the oral instructions of the Aural Transmission connected with the blessing.⁴

⁴ *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies* 153. See details in Chapter 6, *The Entrustment Of The Saṃvara Aural Transmission to Rechungpa*.

An essential element in this lineage is the entrustment of this Aural Transmission in a single transmission to Rechungpa.⁵ The entrustment episode does not appear in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (except in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu). The only reference in that compendium is the following sentence, addressed to Rechungpa before his departure to Central Tibet:

After conferring the authorisation regarding the Aural Transmission, he said...⁶

Nevertheless, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* mentions the Aural Transmission many times in the songs, primarily as “The key instructions of the whispered lineage” (snyan *brgyud kyi gdams ngag*) or as “the path of means of the whispered lineage” (snyan *brgyud kyi thabs lam*).

The second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia briefly mention The entrustment to Rechungpa.⁷

Zhijé Ripa (fourteenth century) adds some interesting details to the above general outline of the Aural Transmission.⁸ In a conversation with Gampopa and Likor Charuwa, Milarepa explains that the path of means contains “six teachings/dharmas/doctrines” (*chos drug*) and belongs to the Hevajra Tantra. By contrast, the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara is associated with Cakrasaṃvara and Vajra Vārāhī. It has the same meaning as the root tantra in 51 chapters and the mind instructions that he gave them [Gampopa and Likor Charuwa],

⁵ See Chapter 6 and Song Chart 5 (third quality in Martön, seventh quality in the other texts).

⁶ MS-Oxford 179b, sNyan *brgyud kyi rjes gnang rdzogs par gnang nas di gsungs*.

⁷ See Chapter 6 and Song Chart 8.

⁸ See Chapter 8, Zhijé Ripa, *the Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams: some interesting details*.

such as consciousness ejection and the like. When they ask him which are the specific instructions of this Aural Transmission, Mila replies:

There are six teachings (*chos drug*) regarding great bliss from the lower door (*'og sgo bde chen gyi chos drug*), and the instruction method (*khrid lugs*) is similar to the meaning of the six teachings of the path of means (*thabs lam gyi chos drug*).

In Zhijé Ripa's text, there is a further conversation about this topic with eight Rechungpas (cotton-clad junior lay disciples) who want more details about the Aural Transmission. The Jetsün explains,

There are three root features (*rtsa ba'i chings gsum*): on the outer level, [there are] *nirmāṇakāya* oral instructions that are crucial to clear doubts regarding the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the lineage (*rgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu*). On the inner level, [there are] *sambhogakāya* oral instructions that are crucial to clear doubts regarding the Wish-fulfilling Gem of dreaming (*rmi lam yid bzhin nor bu*).⁹ On the secret level, [there are] *dharmakāya* oral instructions – the pointing-out Wish-fulfilling Gem (*ngo sprod yid bzhin nor bu*) – [that are] crucial

⁹ In Zhang Lotsāwa's *thim yig* – the summary/survey of the contents of the *Demchok Nyengyü* teachings (Jangchup Zangpo 1973: 1-5; see below, note 12) – the second Wish-fulfilling Gem is called *smin lam yid bzhin nor bu*, “the Wish-fulfilling gem of the path of ripening.” Calling it *rmi lam yid bzhin nor bu* cannot be a mere mistake by Zhijé Ripa or his scribe, because the same “mistake” appears also in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (song 17.1, e.g., MS-Oxford 92b; [RBC-Pt has corrected it to *smin lam*], Ms-Newark 122a, and even in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*, 1978: 274). Instead, in the ‘variant’ versions of RBC we find *smin lam*: Ms-Bordier 156b, Ms-BDRC 206b, Ms-Lhasa 157b.

to clear doubts regarding the real nature of things, the fundamental reality of the path (*lam gyi gnas lugs de kho na nyid*).¹⁰

Further in the conversation, Mila gives a more detailed comment on these Three Wish-fulfilling Gems. The narrative is confusing. Whereas Mila had said to Gampopa and Likor Charuwa that the *thabs lam* belongs to the Hevajra Tantra, in this conversation with the Rechungpas he explains that the third Wish-fulfilling Gem – the true nature Wish-fulfilling Gem – has again two parts: the path of means (*thabs lam*) that contains instructions for liberation through the upper door, and the path of liberation (*grol lam*) that contains instructions on the intermediate states that lead to the recognition of primordial wisdom,¹¹ as well as [instructions on] *Mahāmudrā*, Illuminating Primordial Wisdom. It seems odd that Zhijé Ripa does not precisely follow Zhang Lotsāwa’s codification,¹² given that,

¹⁰ Likewise, in Zhang lo’s *thim yig* the third Wish-fulfilling Gem reads: *gsang ba ngo sprod chos sku’i gdams ngag grol lam yid bzhin nor bu*, “Secretly, the oral instructions pointing-out dharmakāya, the Wish-fulfilling gem of the path of liberation.” In Zhijé Ripa’s text we find *lam*, not *grol lam*, which could mean that both terms, *smin lam* and *grol lam*, are codifications from a later time, or else that both Zhijé Ripa and Khachö Wangpo were unaware of Zhang lo’s *thim yig*.

¹¹ For the *bardo* text, see Chapter 14.
For “Mahāmudrā, Illuminating Primordial Wisdom” (*phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed*), see Sernesi 2007, Chapter 4.

¹² About the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara, see Sernesi 2011: 179-209. On page 186 she inserts the following outline of Zhang-lo’s *thim yig*:

“The Teachings of the Aural Transmission with their fixed set of definitions. KT refers to the lines of the Root-text (*snyan brgyud rdo rje’i tshig rkang*). Italicised definitions are extracted directly from lines of the Root-text.

1. brgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu (phyi sgro ’dogs gcod par byed pa sprul sku’i gdams ngag)

1.1 ston byed slob dpon gyi mtshan nyid (KT: 7)

throughout his work, he repeats time and again that Zhang Lotsāwa is one of his two primary sources of information. Could it be that Zhijé Ripa refers only to a presumed biography of Milarepa by Zhang Lotsāwa? Could he and Khachö Wangpo have been unaware of Zhang lo's *thim yig* – or at least the form in which it appears in Jangchup Zangpo's collection? Could this *thim yig* be wrongly attributed to Zhang Lotsāwa? And, finally, could doctrinal texts such as Zhang lo's *thim yig*, or for that matter also the four principal texts attributed to Jetsün Mila – *steng sgo nam 'grol gyi chos drug*, *'og sgo bde chen gyi chos drug*, *phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed* and *bar do'i ngo*

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- 1.2 bstan pa slob ma'i mtshan nyid (KT: 8-9)
 - 2. smin lam yid bzhin nor bu (nang nyams len long spyod rdzogs pa sku'i gdams ngag) (KT: 10-13).
 - 3. grol lam yid bzhin nor bu (gsang ba ngo sprod chos sku'i gdams ngag)
 - 3.1 thun mongs yid bzhin nor bu (KT 14-15a) (bum dbang dang 'brel ba sgom bya bskyed rim gtso bor ston pa)
 - 3.2 dam tshig yid bzhin nor bu (KT 15b) (dbang bzhi spyi dang 'brel ba bsrung bya gtso bor ston pa)
 - 3.3 gnas lugs yid bzhin nor bu (mchog dbang gsum dang 'brel ba de kho na nyid gtso bor ston pa)
 - 3.3.1 chos drug (KT 16-60) (gsang dbang dang 'brel ba rdzogs rim rtsa rlung gi gnad gtso bor ston pa steng sgo nam par grol ba)
 - (1) *gtum mo bde drod rang 'bar* (KT 16-25)
 - (2) *sgyu lus chos brgyad rang grol* (KT 26-35)
 - (3) *rmi lam 'khrul pa rang sangs* (KT 36-41)
 - (4) *'od gsal ma rig mun bral* (KT 42-49)
 - (5) *'pho ba gser 'gyur ma bsgoms sangs rgyas* ('pho ba gser 'gyur gyi rtsi) (KT 50-55)
 - (6) *grong 'jug sprul lpags 'dor len* (KT 56-60)
 - 3.3.2 *mkha' 'gro gsang lam bde ba chen po* (KT 61-79) (shes rab ye shes kyi dbang dang 'brel ba mkha' 'gro'i gsang sgrog pa 'og sgo)
 - 3.3.3 *phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed* (KT 80-103) (tshig dbang dang 'brel ba phyag rgya chenpo ye shes gsal byed)
 - 3.3.4 *bar do ngo sprod* (KT 104-23) (lam blo nas gcod pa)
 - 3.3.5 *bya spyod tshogs su bsgyur ba* (KT 124-42)

sprod – be later compositions, based on songs or writings from the past?

* * *

The second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Dark/Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings* and Ms-BL – mention that Mila bestowed the Saṃvara Aural Transmission to thirty disciples. He bestowed the ordinary Wish-fulfilling Gem connected with the vase-empowerment; the six teachings leading to liberation through the upper door (*steng sgo rnam grol gyi chos drug*) connected with the secret empowerment; great bliss of the lower door connected with the third [empowerment] (*'og sgo bde ba chen po*), and *mahāmudrā*, illuminating primordial wisdom, connected with the word-empowerment (*phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed*). After giving these teachings and empowerments, he entrusted the transmission only to Rechungpa. He said these four empowerments, explanations and instructions should be kept secret to all those who had not received the complete explanations, even though they had received the text and the scriptural authorisation (see Chapter 6, with the translation of “Jetsün’s Entrustment”, *rJe btsun gyi gtad rgya*).

Tsangnyön Heruka’s *Life and Songs* does not mention the entrustment of this particular lineage exclusively to Rechungpa. In *Life*, two instances refer to it:

- During that period, the lady Vajrayogini predicted in a general way how the Jetsün would meet his disciples. In particular she prophesied Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa, the disciple who would receive the oral instructions of the *ḍākinī* aural transmission.

- Gampopa invited Rechungpa to his residence and received from him the dharma cycles of the Cakrasaṃvara aural transmission in their entirety.¹³

In Chapter 47 of *Songs*, “Bestowing Abhisheka and Consecration,” Tsangnyön Heruka inserts the following new detail,

When the Jetsün Milarepa was staying at Nyanang Belly Cave, he had a direct vision of Vajrayogini. In a prophecy, she released the command-seal of the single-lineage key instructions of the dakinis’ whispered lineage and gave him permission to teach them to a few worthy vessels. While he was bestowing the vase abhisheka that grants the abhisheka of the whispered lineage to a few of his heart-like disciple-sons such as Rechungpa and Ngendzong Tönpa, he said...¹⁴

In Tsangnyön’s work, the whispered lineage and its instructions are also considered very important and references to it return in almost all the same songs as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. However, Tsangnyön Heruka’s ambiguous position regarding Rechungpa in *Life and Songs* and the omission of the exclusive entrustment of the Aural Transmission to Rechungpa seem to be odd, all the more so considering that ten years after the publication of *Life and Songs*, Tsangnyön Heruka published a *yig cha* (complete compendium) of the Aural Transmission of

¹³ Quintman 2010: 172 and *ibid.*, 230.

¹⁴ TN-Dha: 702; Stagg 2017: 575.

Samvara with the root texts and its commentaries, as a practical guide for the use of his disciples.¹⁵

* * *

Regarding the path of means (*thabs lam*), we usually understand this term to contain the so-called “Six yogas/dharmas/doctrines/teachings of Nāropa” (*n’a ro’i chos drug*), namely inner heat, illusory body, dream yoga,¹⁶ clear light, consciousness ejection and intermediate state. These six yogas, attributed to the Indian Buddhist master Nāropa, are significant in the path of means as they represent a comprehensive system of spiritual practices that lead to enlightenment. However, from the comparison in the different hagiographies studied here, we see that the path of means at times is said to contain also the transference of consciousness in another body (*grong ’jug*), great bliss and *mahāmudrā* (see comments in Chapter 5). Moreover, the first association of the six dharmas with Nāropa in Mila’s hagiographies comes in the one by Dönmo Ripa (mid-thirteenth century); in other instances, these practices are called “six dharmas.” Even Tsangnyön Heruka uses this term only seven times, and in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, it appears only two times. Therefore, we should be aware that the designation “The six yogas of Nāropa”

¹⁵ *bDe mchog mkha’ ’gro snyan rgyud (Ras chung snyan rgyud)*. “Two Manuscript Collections of Texts from the Yig cha of gTsang smyon He ru ka.” For the importance of Tsangnyön Heruka as a teacher of the Aural Transmission and his influence in spreading this tradition, see Sernesi 2021.

¹⁶ For dream yoga, see Holecek 2016 and Tenzin Wangyal 2022.

may be the result of later codification not used as such at the time of Milarepa.

* * *

In the different hagiographies, we note a significant development in the approach to *mahāmudrā* – the recognition and realisation of the mind’s true nature. In the early hagiographies, we read that, after receiving empowerments and instructions from his teacher, Milarepa practised Secret Mantra based on tantric forms of meditation, the outcome of which was the realisation of *mahāmudrā*. He did not follow a “gradual” approach to *mahāmudrā*. For Mila, *mahāmudrā* was the outcome of his tantric practice. This approach is evident in the *mahāmudrā* text attributed to Milarepa, titled “*Mahāmudrā: Illuminating Primordial Wisdom*” (*phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed*). In her 2007 doctoral thesis Marta Sernesi writes: ¹⁷

The Phyag chen ye shes gsal byed reflects an understanding and a practice of *mahāmudrā* in an overtly tantric context, as the culmination of the four consecrations, thus as the culmination of the perfection stage. It does not instruct on the preceeding tantric path because it is not its scope — which is delivering technical meditation instructions to very advanced disciples — but it does imply that the path of the Aural Transmission

¹⁷ In the *Rechung Nyengyü*, the text appears in the collections of Pema Karpo’s *bDe mchog snyan brgyud nor bu skor gsum* (2: 71-96), Jangchup Zangpo, (2: 467-479) and Jamgön Kongtrül’s *gdams ngag mdzod*. (8:121-133) In the *Ngendzong Nyengyü* we find it in the collection *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud kyi skor* (231-246). In her doctoral thesis, Sernesi 2007: 210, dedicates a full chapter (Chapter 4, 193-218) to this text; in Appendix B (297-325), she provides a translation, both in the *Rechung Nyengyü* and the *Ngendzong Nyengyü*.

(through the generation stage, vows, consecration, the six yogas, and the great bliss practices) has already been fulfilled up to this point.

From the thirteenth century onwards, other elements come to the foreground in the hagiographies, precursors of what would become the typical approach to *mahāmudrā* in the Dakpo Kagyü lineages – consisting in the ordinary and extraordinary preliminary practices, *śamatha* (*zhi gnas*, serenity, calm abiding) and *vipaśyanā* (*lhag mthong*, deep insight), and the pointing-out instructions to recognise mind's nature.

Gyalthangpa, in his Gampopa biography, is the first to mention the **preliminary practices**, a significant development in the hagiographies that we should appreciate for its role in shaping the narrative:

After some days, [the Jetsün] bestowed the complete empowerment. [Gampopa] practised the preliminary teachings in four sessions. The Jetsün called him and said: “Although devotion and prayers are indeed excellent teachings to practise, it would not be appropriate that you have come to my place without me giving you oral instructions.” At that time, he bestowed the complete empowerment of Cakrasaṃvara based on a powder maṇḍala and told him that he should practise the four preliminary practices. He then gave him the four preliminary practices, which Gampopa practised in four sessions. In the early morning, for the accumulation of merit, he continuously made maṇḍala offerings to the Lama. In the morning session, to purify obscurations and veils, he recited the hundred-syllable mantra and made confessions and purifications. In the afternoon session, he meditated on death and impermanence and turned the mind away from worldly desires. In the evening session, he prayed to receive blessings

from the Lama, the manifestation of the Buddha.¹⁸ He practised this way. As a first sign of the purification of negativities, an ocean of milk washed away the stains of his outer and inner body, and he thought of his body as being completely pure and clean. As a sign of the accumulation of merits, he vomited jewels. As a sign of the meditation on impermanence, from the most profound of himself, his mind turned away from worldly samsaric desires, and he did not have any aspirations for this life for a moment. As a sign of his prayers, as soon as he thought of the Lama, the meaning of unified *mahāmudrā* took hold of his mind and all phenomenal existence turned into the Lama (see Chapter 7).

In none of the other studied hagiographies is there any mention of preliminary practices.¹⁹

Tsangnyön Heruka also does not mention preliminary practice as such. In the *Songs*, one instance describes the ordinary preliminary practices in the chapter *Meeting Shengom Repa*. Here, Mila meets a shepherd and teaches him:

¹⁸ Gyalthangpa 309. To my knowledge, this is the first reference to the preliminary practices in the hagiographies. Roberts (2014: 14-36) translates a doctrinal text of Shönu Lha (thirteenth century, a disciple of Lama Zhang) called *The unrivalled instructions of Zhang Rinpoché: the preliminaries and main practice of the great meditation of Mahāmudrā*, which describes the preliminaries and main practices in the thirteenth century. Later, a distinction would be made between ordinary and extraordinary preliminary practices, with the ordinary ones being “The four dharmas turning the mind away from worldly pursuits,” which include the meditation on death and impermanence. The extraordinary practices would be four: taking refuge and doing prostrations – the latter missing in all early texts I have seen – recitation of the Vajrasattva mantra, maṇḍala offering and guru yoga.

¹⁹ Different songs attributed to Milarepa are included in the *rDo rje mgur drug*, but this text being of later date I have not included it in my research.

The dharma of karma, cause and effect; the faults of samsara; the difficulty of finding the freedoms and resources; and the uncertainty of when death will come; the Jetsün also gave him an object on which he did śamatha meditation.²⁰

There is an example of the **śamatha-vipaśyanā practice** in Tsangnyön Heruka's chapter *The Later Visit to Rakma*, where Milarepa meets another young herdsman, Repa Sangyé Kyab. Mila engages in a dialogue about the search for the mind and gives him pointing-out instructions.²¹

The above episodes do not appear as separate chapters in all the other versions checked.

Moreover, Tsangnyön Heruka inserts a long passage in *Life*, describing Mila's comprehension after he came out of his first retreat.²² Tsangnyön's text explains: first comes the preparatory path to meditation – taking refuge, pondering on the four thoughts that turn the mind away from worldly life, taking vows, and developing bodhicitta. After, one takes empowerment and proceeds with śamatha meditation and analysis through profound discriminating wisdom to reach profound insight (*lhag mthong*, vipaśyanā). Mila concludes:

In short, I have now understood that the experiences of emptiness, evenness (*mnyam nyid*), ineffability, and non-

²⁰ Chapter 24, *Meeting Shengom Repa*, TN-Dha 400, Stagg 2017: 247-48. For a comparison with earlier versions of this episode, see Chapter 10 in this book, "The episode at the Zangyü kitchen" (*bZang rgyud phyag tshang gi skor*)

²¹ Chapter 12, *The Later Visit to Rakma*, TN-Dha 289-97; Stagg 2017: 118-26. In "The episode at the Zangyü kitchen" the detail of Mila's meeting with the shepherd appears in a brief fragment of a few lines.

²² TN-Dha 102-4; Quintman 2010: 89-92. Chapter 7 of this book, "Gampopa Sönam Rinchen meets Jetsün Mila," contains the complete translation of the fragment.

conceptuality gained by yogins through practice are the view of the stages of the path of the Secret Mantra Vajra Vehicle, which correspond to the four initiations.

What we read here describes the approach towards enlightenment followed in the Kadampa teachings of the stages of the path to awakening according to the standard mahāyāna-parāmitā method, brought on par with mantrayāna by involving some tantric elements – such as instructions on the nature of the mind – but without the need for initiations. This approach, which later would be called *sūtra mahāmudrā*, corresponds to one of the three approaches to *mahāmudrā* taught by Gampopa. Although some scholars sustain that Maitrīpa transmitted a similar approach to Marpa which thus came down to Gampopa through Milarepa,²³ recent scholarship has discussed a so far neglected manuscript by Atiśa called *Stages of the Path to Awakening* (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*), that says:

[Atiśa] adapted his Mahāmudrā teachings to the contextual circumstances of his disciples in Tibet, providing instructions on the nature of the mind either as the culmination of the stages of the path or as a technique to recognize the co-emergent mind as the dharmakāya. Both sets of teaching were only given to his advanced students and in private. These teachings on pointing out the nature of the mind as the apex of the stages of the path teachings, concluding with calm abiding and special insight, were adapted by subsequent Kagyu based lineages of instruction. Along these lines, the Co-emergent Union (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*) instruction on four yogas was taught by Atiśa in

²³ See Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoché's introduction to the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje's *Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, 2001: xxv, and Mathes 2006 & 2019.

Tibet, and not, as some would assume, created by Gampopa. There is no evidence that Atiśa received any teachings on Mahāmudrā from Maitrīpa, nor that Atiśa’s teaching on Mahāmudrā resembles Maitrīpa’s system.²⁴

Moreover, *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* contains a commentary called “Pointing-Out Instructions in Sets of Five” (*Ngo sprod lnga tshom*). This commentary is structured in the same way as the later Kagyü meditation manuals on *mahāmudrā*.²⁵

Therefore, Tsangnyön’s added fragment might not reflect the words of Milarepa, who, as said above, followed an exclusively tantric path. Instead, it echoes developments that had taken place after Gampopa – who was, first of all, a Kadampa monk who had studied Atiśa’s teachings with his previous Kadampa teachers.

Moreover, in none of the previously studied hagiographies is there any mention of Milarepa explaining his experiences to Marpa in the first place, and certainly not in these terms. This fragment is an example of post-Milarepa content integrated into *Life and Songs*.

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Together with the above elements, we should also consider Tsangnyön Heruka’s “omissions,” as seen in Chapter 7 of this book, *Gampopa Sönam Rinchen Meets Jetsün Mila*. In general, Tsangnyön Heruka closely follows the version of *The Twelve*

²⁴ Apple 2017: 27; Apple 2018.

²⁵ Apple 2020: 188-89.

Great Repa Disciples, most probably composed in Rechungpa's lineage. However, remarkably, he omits some significant details mentioned in this and other previous texts regarding the questions of Gampopa to clear his doubts about the differences between the approach of his Kadampa teachers and Milarepa. Here is what Tsangnyön left out:

(1) The reference to the "restrictions" imposed on Atiśa by "a Tibetan demon" regarding the spreading of the tantric doctrine in Tibet.²⁶

(2) The reference to the supremacy of the path of means versus the gradual path, based on understanding the nonexistence of an individual self with which one develops no more than a "conceptual samādhi."

(3) The discussion about the differences in the views of the Kadampa teachers and Jetsün Mila, and the emphasis put by the latter on tantric practice consisting of the two phases of deity meditation and on the supremacy of his tradition, the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara (*bDe mchog snyan brgyud*).

(4) The urging not to follow people who only talk and to remain with those who practise meditation.

(5) The passage about the possible ways of misunderstanding emptiness.

²⁶ Note that Padma dKarmo (1973: 213), in his *Gan mDzod*, states Atiśa himself had said that, had he taught Vajrayāna, Tibet would be filled with Mahāsiddhas, but as Dromtön was horrified by the inappropriate talks regarding the sources of Buddhahood, he allowed Atiśa to teach tantra only partially. Moreover, as he (Dromtön) had obstructed the Secret Mantra teaching through this limitation, as a consequence, he contracted leprosy at the end of his life.

(6) The passage about the best way to accumulate merit which, according to Mila, consists in the close relationship between the Lama and the disciple.

The omission of all these points seems to indicate that Tsangnyön Heruka took a cautious position concerning the difference between the common Kadampa *mahāyāna* and Jetsün Mila's approach. One could speculate that he omits this fragment mentioned in the previous texts because of his wish to avoid discussions and criticisms between lineages and that he presents a version that all could accept. Of course, one might argue that a hagiography is not supposed to contain all the doctrinal points and that a life story's compiler may cut out some passages to make his account more lively and understandable to all readers.

Moreover, it is also striking that the editorial interventions of Tsangnyön Heruka seem to ignore references to what was to become Gampopa's "third path" towards enlightenment – the *mahāmudrā* method for those who can deal directly with the true nature of the mind – besides the *parāmitā* path of the Kadampas and the *vajrayāna* path of Secret Mantra.²⁷ Precisely this "third path" was the topic in question in the Sakya Paṇḍita controversy.

[ToC](#)

²⁷ For an explanation of Gampopa's *mahāmudrā* meditation path, see, for example, Kragh 2015: 39-42.

CONCLUSIONS

In Part One of this book, I present an overview of the developments in the different liberation stories of Milarepa and his disciples from the twelfth through the early sixteenth centuries. The research first examines short life stories in the *Golden Rosary* collections and proceeds with elaborate biographical compendia, thus arriving at Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life and Songs*.

The first point to note from this comparative study is that there are significant differences in the narratives in the early *Golden Rosary* life stories, depending on the transmission lineages – whether originating from Gampopa, Ngendzong Tönpa or Rechungpa. Each lineage considers the teacher it refers to as Mila's preeminent disciple and spiritual heir. The biographies in the latter two lineages share a similar structure and include almost the same short narrative frames and songs. The particular importance of these early biographies lies in the very presence of these songs in the early times: brief and limited in number as they may be, these songs are presumably our closest witnesses to Mila's way of living and singing.

The creation of the first biographical compendium – *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, presumably written in the thirteenth century – forms a turning point. From now on, the three lineage strands come together, and Gampopa becomes Milarepa's preeminent disciple and heir. Maintaining the same structure as the liberation stories in Rechungpa's lineage, we see a profusion of new narrative cycles, with detailed accounts of Mila's coping with difficulties and demons and his encounters with benefactors and disciples. Each cycle is not limited to presenting only one particular situation illustrated with a song,

as in the *Golden Rosary* stories. By contrast, we find interactions with people, sketches with mutual exchanges and various elaborate songs.

From the analysis of different versions of the first compendium, we learn that, in addition to the identical core narrative in the texts, a slightly ‘variant’ version emerged, presumably endorsed by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.

In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, new life stories appeared – among which biographies by Khachö Wangpo and Zhijé Ripa and one text at Gungthang Pelkyi Tsuglakhang – with new details to integrate into the late *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Oxford et al.) and the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia. By contrast to the first group – based on the ‘original’ *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – the latter group takes the ‘variant’ version presumably compiled by Rangjung Dorje as its basis. Besides adding the specific characteristics of this ‘variant’ version, the second stratum is also enriched with further elaborations on the early part of Mila’s story. Moreover, it includes the new details encountered in the fourteenth-century life stories.

Tsangnyön Heruka’s contribution to the life-and-song tradition is crucial. He skillfully integrates all the available information, presenting a well-written novel-like image of the yogin. However, he also significantly alters the narrative, accentuating socio-cultural and doctrinal changes. Tsangnyön’s work, while maintaining the essence of Milarepa’s teachings, also reflects his own interpretations and the socio-cultural context of his time, thereby shaping the narrative of Milarepa for future generations.

Thus, we could view Milarepa’s and his disciples’ liberation stories as a window through which we can glance at various depictions of the yogin’s life and also at the gradual buildup of

doctrinal systems accentuating different aspects of the path to enlightenment, related to the lineage to which they belong.

It seems evident that Mila was essentially a tantric practitioner who relied on *gtum mo* practice with physical exercises and the other methods of the so-called “yogas.” His primary focus was the development of the network of *nāḍī*, *prāṇa* and *bindu* that allowed him to transform his mind and reach the complete realisation of *mahāmudrā*. After Gampopa’s time, in the Dakpo Kagyü lineages, the accent on a purely tantric approach gradually shifted in the direction of the typical *mahāmudrā* approach that would become preeminent from the sixteenth century onwards.

This research shows that this evolution started in the thirteenth century. On the one hand, we see references to elaborating the doctrinal corpus of the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara – presumably first systematised by Zhang Lotsāwa. Nowadays, this corpus is hardly studied or practised and is preserved only in the different text collections in the Rechung and Ngendzong Nyengyü lineages. On the other hand, we notice a growing interest in formulating the *mahāmudrā* approach to spiritual development in terms of ground, path and result and of view, meditation, conduct and fruition. Especially in the biographical compendia and the later hagiographies up to Tsangnyön Heruka, we see a blend of these evolutions in the new songs added to those found in the earliest life stories.

Tsangnyön’s work is not the end point of this process of changes in presenting Milarepa and his life and songs. To quote just a few examples of further developments, we already find new stories and songs that further alter the image of Milarepa in

the song collection of the “Six Vajra Songs”²⁸ attributed – at least in part – to the work of Tsangnyön’s direct disciple Lhatsün Rinchen Namgyal. This collection, known for its unique perspective and additional narratives, significantly contributes to the evolution of Milarepa’s image. For instance, in “Drinking the Mountain Stream,” there is a story where we hear Milarepa make very denigratory remarks towards Bön priests (far more explicit than Tsangnyön), and in “Miraculous Journey” we find several songs outlining the gradual path to enlightenment.²⁹

In more recent times, in his book on Milarepa’s teachings, Chögyam Trungpa, taking Tsangnyön’s work as his reference, further accentuates Rechungpa’s immature nature when compared to Gampopa: in the same way as Tsangnyön, Trungpa does not hesitate to mix elements from different episodes (e.g., Chapter 27: 207, in which he places the Lhacham Dembu episode during Rechungpa’s visit to Nepal).³⁰

Similarly, Karl Brunnhölzl, in his brilliant book titled “Milarepa’s Kungfu. Mahāmudrā in his Songs of Realization,”³¹ following Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso’s indications, selects those songs that advocate the present-day approach to *mahāmudrā*. The book centres around the explanation of a song called “Milarepa’s Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition,” the last song in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 39 (in Stagg’s “Song of the Wild Asses”, p. 478). However, the whole chapter

²⁸ *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rdo rje'i mgur drug sogs gsung rgyun thor bu 'ga'*. (W00EGS1017352).

²⁹ Kunga & Cuttillo, *Drinking the Mountain Stream*, 1995: 165-69, in the chapter “Confrontation with a Bon Priest.”

Miraculous Journey 1986: 62-66, in the chapter “Rechungpa’s Pride”.

³⁰ Trungpa, 2017. *Milarepa. Lessons from the Life and Songs of Tibet’s Great Yogi*.

³¹ Brunnhölzl 2021.

on the wild asses, as well as the chapter on the yak horn, do not appear in any of the *Golden Rosaries*, not even in the later ones such as Khachö Wangpo's or Zhijé Ripa's biographies of Milarepa.³² These two chapters appear for the first time in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. None of the songs commented upon in Brunnhölzl's book appears in the early *Golden Rosary* biographies. Thus, by selecting part of the songs and leaving out other more tantra-based ones, the reader sees Milarepa as a teacher and practitioner of the current Kagyü approach to *mahāmudrā*.

The new content added throughout the centuries does not diminish the value of these song collections. The "new" songs are magnificent expressions of meditation experiences developed along the spiritual path over time, and the way they are expressed is undoubtedly of great inspiration to present-day *mahāmudrā* practitioners.

Torricelli explains this as follows:³³

Like a snowball growing bigger and bigger as it rolls forwards, the new adept would elaborate and reorganise the instructions according to his own specific vision and that of the disciple who was, at that time, being instructed by him.

However, I see two problems with these changes. First, it does not seem appropriate to ascribe the songs and the narratives to Milarepa and his disciples as "individual persons." Over time, Milarepa has become an "iconic figure" standing out as a model for devotion, inspiring readers to great assiduity in practice and

³² See Song Charts 4, 5 and 6.

³³ Torricelli, 2000: 363. *Padma dkar-po's Arrangement of the bDe-mchog snyan-brgyud*.

solitary retreat. As such, his story keeps changing, and his image is adapted according to the point the author of a text or book wishes to bring home. Thus, anything Milarepa may have said or done or the songs he may have sung could have emerged to serve the purpose of the author of the stories, be it lineage purposes, legitimising doctrinal and instructional changes, or the particular needs and characteristics of the readers of the biography.

Second, we must consider that some of these changes may also be inspired by more “mundane” motives, such as power struggles between different lineages and sects, as I have somewhat illustrated in the case of Tsangnyön Heruka.

Similar “adjustments” have taken place also in other cases. Kragh offers one example regarding his study of the *Dags po ’i bka’ ’bum*, “The Manifold Sayings of Dags po.” We read:

The corpus of Bsod nams rin chen’s teachings are found in a Tibetan collection often referred to in the primary literature as the *Dags po ’i bka’ ’bum*. (...)

The meaning of the word *Dags po* in the title is twofold. On the one hand, *Dags po* may be understood as a toponym referring to *Dags lha sgam po* monastery. On the other hand, *Dags po* may be taken as the epithet of a person referring to “the precious one from *Dags po*” (*Dags po rin po che*), i.e., Bsod nams rin chen. The dual meanings of the title are actually very suitable because the nature of the textual corpus is such that it contains numerous materials that are not directly relatable to Bsod nams rin chen but that in various ways are connected with

the Dags lha sgam po hermitage and the early Bka' brgyud traditions that originated from that place.³⁴

Roesler gives another example, regarding the life story of the Kadampa teacher Potowa Rinchen Sel (Po to ba Rin chen gSal, one of Gampopa's teachers).³⁵ She explains that the most common collections containing his life story date from the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, approximately a hundred years after the foundation of the Gelukpa order by Tsongkhapa, and during a time of religious and political rivalry between the Gelukpas of Ü on the one side and the governors of Tsang and the Karma Kagyüpas on the other. These collections may arguably be seen in the context of a self-affirmation of the Gelukpa school as the dominant tradition in Central Tibet. These collections were also based on earlier life stories from which some details had been altered, such as the chronology of events and certain omissions and additions.

Therefore, I do hope that more early texts will appear and that it will be possible to study the works of disciples of Mila's disciples in greater detail – e.g., Barompa Darma Wangchuk, Sumpa, Khyungtsangpa and the great systematiser Zhang Lotsāwa. Moreover, to be able to fully appreciate the extent of the instructions transmitted in Mila's lineage, a tremendous boon would be to find original Indic texts regarding the *Samvara Karṇatantra* – *Demchok Nyengyü* – provided such a corpus of instructions ever existed!

³⁴ Kragh 2015: 165.

³⁵ Roesler 2008: 377-92.

In summary, this study indicates that, instead of *The Collected Songs of Milarepa*, it might be more appropriate to rename Tsangnyön's *Songs* as *The Collected Songs transmitted in the lineages coming from Milarepa*. [ToC](#)

PART TWO: TRANSLATIONS

4 – THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF MILA VAJRA-VICTORY BANNER

By Ngendzong Tönpa and Gung Rechen

The translation of this life story of Milarepa, titled *Mi la rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*, is based upon two modern computerised editions: the 2011 Paltsek edition included in the fifth volume of the *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum* (abbreviated PT) and the 2006 edition included in the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's *gsung 'bum* (abbreviated RD).¹ Both editions have many spelling mistakes; I sort of juggle between the two and indicate differences in spelling. I use Christopher Stagg's translation of Tsangnyön's *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*² when it corresponds to Ngendzong Tönpa's text and indicate the pages where to find each song. I also indicate the page numbers of the songs in the 1990 Dharamshala edition of Tsangnyön Heruka's Tibetan text (abbreviated TN-Dha)³ and in Andrew Quintman's translation, *The Life of Milarepa*.⁴

* * *

¹ *rJe btsun Mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum*, 2011, 5: 126-53, dPal rtsegs. Beijing. (W1KG14335); *Karma pa rang jung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, 2006, 4: 83-124. Ziling. (W30541). About Ngendzong Tönpa and this life story, see Chapter 1a.

² Stagg 2017.

³ gTsang smyon He ru ka. Rus pa'i rgyan can. *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur* 1990.

⁴ Quintman 2010.

Born in the snowy region to benefit sentient beings
The Great Jetsün primarily dedicated himself to spiritual
practice.
I bow down to his feet and write his biography
for the welfare of fortunate future beings.

Regarding the complete liberation of the great Jetsün Milarepa
– the great and mighty Lord of *Yogins* famous everywhere – I
will explain just a few of his qualities because expressing all of
them is beyond words.

*One: The Quality of Enduring Difficulties Related to His
Family*⁵

He was born in the snowy land of Tibet, in a village close to the
Nepali border, on the road travelled by all between India and
Tibet. At Tsa, a place in the Gungthang region, supreme
compassion would spontaneously arise shortly after. His clan
was Khyungpo. His father's name was Sherab Gyal, and his
mother was Drosa Dar Öd. He was born as the son of these two.
He had two sisters, Tepas and Tebchung,⁶ so there were three
children. The father's relatives exerted great power over the
father and his children. They robbed them of part of their
belongings, and they became destitute.

⁵ Tib. *dang po rigs dang 'brel ba dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan*.

⁶ PT *sring mo yang de bsdeb chung zhes bya ba gnyis ste*; RD *sring mo yang te pa teb chung zhes bya ba gnyis ste*. Further in the text, only one sister is mentioned, consistently called Te pa in RD and Pe ta in PT.

Father Sherab told him: “As long as we don’t have some qualities, there will be no happiness. Now go to Ü and Tsang in Central Tibet⁷ and learn black magic and the art of raising hailstorms.”

After [his father] had said this, [the Jetsün] went to Ü carrying many belongings. In Yarlung, he offered much of his possessions to Nyagtön Trogyal⁸ and requested him to teach how to raise hailstorms. He practised, and he and two strong men went to verify⁹ how much hail fell in his village. The first time, some hail fell, as much as generally would fall in three years. The next time, on the evening when he wanted proof of the hail,¹⁰ he exposed a magic-weapon *torma*. They went up at dawn,¹¹ and a heavy hailstorm fell when they arrived on the mountain. They hid in a cave, but a hunter saw them and called the villagers. Two fled and escaped,¹² but one of the companions got caught, so they reconciled.

That time, he made a deal with these village people,¹³ but against the others, he principally resorted to sorcery.¹⁴ In Rong [the Jetsün] requested the physician Nubchung¹⁵ [to teach him] black

⁷ PT *khyod kyis dbus rtsa thil na mar la song la*; RD *khyod kyis dbus btsang mthil na mar la song la*.

⁸ PT *mngogs ston khro rgyal*; RD *snvag ston khrom rgyal*. TPNI Gnyags G.yung ston KHRO RGYAL – Magic teacher of Mi la ras pa.

⁹ PT *ser ba’i brda skyel ba la*; RD *ser gta’ skyel ba la*.

¹⁰ PT *ser ba’i brda*; RD *ser gta’*.

¹¹ PT *mtha’ gnyis yar ’ongs te*; RD *tho rangs yar ’ongs ste*.

¹² PT *rtis po bro pas thar*; RD *gnyis po bro pas thar*.

¹³ PT + RD *der yul gyi mi dang ’cham byas*.

¹⁴ PT + RD *gzhan tsho la sgos su mthu byas*.

¹⁵ TPNI Gtsang rong Lha rje GNUBS CHUNG — Snub chung. Teacher of Mi la ras pa.

magic. Thus, he eliminated his enemies and perfected the art of both life-taking and raising hailstorms.

Then he repented and thought: “These hailstorms are negative deeds. I need to practise a *dharma* teaching.” He went to a physician called Rongtön Lhaga active in Latö and Rong.¹⁶ This was a *Dzogchen* practitioner who knew six of the greatest Secret Mantra Nyingma tantras. [Rongtön] made a presentation. While they were listening to the *Dzogchen* teaching, Dretön said: “My precious *dharma* called *Dzogchen* is the pinnacle of the nine vehicles [of the ancient Nyingma teachings]¹⁷ It is called *Dzogchen Atiyoga*. Nowadays nobody in Tö¹⁸ is more expert than I am in expounding it. This [teaching] of mine has firmly planted roots, the ground is ascertained, the pinnacle is spontaneously present, and the result is determined. Its colour is golden and turquoise. This is its depth:¹⁹ It is the four corners, the sides and the like; it is the roof [vast] like the sky raised from below. Regarding karma, cause and effect, one does not have to do anything deliberately.” As he said this, he was joyful. However, sometimes he admitted: “I did not reach all this. I remain stuck on the ground itself. The view has become empty talk.²⁰ I have not obtained perfect results from meditation. My conduct lacks the strength of experience²¹ and the result of awakening did not manifest. I might fail.” Thus he spoke, so it

¹⁶ Pt *lha rje rong gi bstan 'dzin lha dga' zhes bya ba*; RD *lha rje rong ston lha dga' zhes bya ba*; TPNI 'Bre ston LHA DGA' — Also, (Rong gi 'Dre ston). Rdzogs chen teacher of Mi la ras pa at Rong.

¹⁷ PT + RD *theg pa rim pa dgu*.

¹⁸ PT *stod la*; RD *btod la*.

¹⁹ PT *'di thabs*; RD *'di zabs*.

²⁰ PT *kha 'jams su song*; RD *kha 'byams su song*.

²¹ PT *nyams kyi rtsal dang bral*; RD *nyams kyi rtsi dang bral*.

is said. Then again [the teacher] would say: “Regarding my *Dzogchen Atiyoga*, the pinnacle of the nine vehicles, if you comprehend it in the morning, you awaken in the morning; if you comprehend it in the evening, you awaken in the evening. There is no higher teaching than this, so they say. However, boy, it is not like that; all these are but figures of speech of the Lamas. The approach of the view is good, but I miss the essence, the lineage blessing.²² For me, how should I say, it did not work!”²³ This he said. [Then he added]: “There, in so-called Lhodrak, lives the one called Marpa Lotsāwa. He has travelled to India thrice and physically encountered the great Lord Nāro. Now he is there [in Lhodrak], they say. He holds instructions from all the Secret Mantra Father-and-Mother Tantras to become awakened in one lifetime, in one body. With these [instructions] the body becomes suitable through the interconnections between channels, winds and *bodhicitta*. One obtains both ordinary and extraordinary *siddhis* through the so-called merging and transference. Furthermore, the Lotsāwa’s speech never separates from singing songs of realisation, his hands do not separate from dance gestures transformed into *mudrās*, his mind does not separate from *samādhi*, and luminosity continuously arises. [For him] there is no difference between meditation and post-meditation. Such a one he is! I also thought of going there, but he will want both of us to meditate, and I cannot do the yogic *prāna* practices.”²⁴ Thus he said.

²² PT *nged kyi snying po 'di byin rlabs kyi rgyud la chad pas*; RD *nged kyi rnying pa'i 'di byin rlabs kyi rgyud pa chad pas*.

²³ PT *nga rang la yang ci la zer bag med pa*; RD *nga rang la yang ci la zer bab med*.

²⁴ PT *ngas brog rtsol bsgom mi nus*; RD *ngas srog rtsol bsgom mi nus*.

“However, with nothing but devotion to the Lama, doing whatever the Lama says without needing anything else but perseverance, all obscurations and negativities are purified at once, and realisation arises. As in our own *Dzogchen*, [within me] a generic image has been determined and realised through understanding,²⁵ learning and contemplating. Sometimes I have meditated sheer abiding,²⁶ and although I say I have realised profound insight, for all yogins [like me] who misunderstand view and conduct, that means something different.” Thus he said. Both said they would go there, and both made preparations. [Later] Dretön said: “Now I am too old;²⁷ I will not meet him in this life, but I pray that it may happen in my next life.” So it is said.

Mila thought: “What is this? These teachers all have nothing but nice words. The teacher himself does not seem to want to go anywhere. Instead, I’ll ask him to let me go anyway to this Lotsāwa.” He developed a yearning devotion²⁸ and asked the teacher for permission to go to the Lotsāwa in Lhodrak. “Son, you may go. It is good for you to go there, but I will not come,” he replied – so it is said.

Then he [Mila] went to Lhodrak. Later, Jetsün Mila said: “Dretön was anyway a good Lama. He could not have permitted it if it had been someone else.” Thus, it is said.

²⁵ PT *go mul*; RD *go yul*.

²⁶ PT *zhi gnas stong pa gnyis la bsgom pa byas nas*; RD *zhi gnas lteng po re la bsgom pa byas nas*.

²⁷ PT *da nga dag pas*; RD *da nga rgas pas*.

²⁸ PT *chos pa nyung rung ba gcig byung nas (?)*; RD *mos pa dung dung ba gcig byung nas*.

Then he met Lama Marpa Lotsāwa at Khenlung monastery.²⁹ He requested both *dharma* and sustenance. “You can’t have both; choose one!” he is said to have said. “As a gift, I have one piece of cloth and a sugar ball,” [Mila] replied. [Then] he went through the valley singing songs. It was autumn, and he gathered seven loads of barley in one day. “Whatever you don’t need, I will need it to ask for teachings,”³⁰ he said [to the villagers]. Thus, in four days he obtained twenty loads of barley. The Lama was pleased, so it is said.

In the village below, there was a disagreement with Marpa. [Mila] cast hailstorms on them as a service [to Marpa].

At that time, Metsönpa came from Tsang carrying many offerings, yoghurt and a sitting mat,³¹ spread out like a whole lake, with skin bags full of butter and as many as thirty-one *sūtra* volumes. Meanwhile, Mila carried stones to build the first floor of a nine-storey tower. The rocks made sores appear on his back, and the sores broke open. There were thirteen bricklayers, and every year they finished one storey. The others said: “You will get teachings after you finish three storeys.” After completing the fifth storey, he received numerous commentaries, explanations on tantra, and many empowerments and blessings. After he finished the seventh floor, the Lady, the Mother, said: “This boy has suffered numberless trials, just as many as the Jetsün [Marpa] himself suffered, and many years have gone by. I request you to grant him instructions.” So [Marpa] gave teachings on the cycles of the path of means and many essential teachings on merging and transference. Five times, he also

²⁹ PT *mkhan lung dgon par*; RD *mkhyen lung dgon par*.

³⁰ PT *khyod mi dgos chos dgos 'ong ba gcig 'dug*; RD *khyod mi dgod*.

³¹ PT *zhe gcig mal gcig*; RD *zho gcig mal gcig*.

obtained complete initiation. He received the secret names “Laughing Vajra” and “Vajra-Victory Banner.”

As the Lotsāwa knew Lord Mila’s thoughts, he said: “Son, accompany Ngok and request instructions from him. Then come back here soon.” [Mila] followed Ngok, carrying his offerings. Later, he requested instructions and meditated on the mountain, in a cave still now called “Mila’s mountain cave.” Meanwhile, the people from Yalmo in Dol carried away Ngok’s *dris* and *yaks*. [Mila] cast a hailstorm on them. Because they doubted whether this hailstorm had come from Ngok, he destroyed their entire crop. Corpses of dead birds and their fledglings covered each destroyed wood thicket. [Mila] lamented to the Lama: “What I want is liberation,³² but now I have collected so much negativity!” Ngok replied: “Son, I have instructions Lama Marpa received from Nāropa after requesting them three times before he finally got them. He has not given these to anybody, and now I give them to you.” And he bestowed the ‘short a’ *chaṇḍalī* on him.³³

Then, from Lhodrak, the Lady sent a message saying that he should once more carry Ngok’s offerings to her as his servant, and when he arrived in Lhodrak, he should once again request instructions. So he accepted to go South and stayed in Lho.³⁴ Marpa gave him empowerments and blessings from the Precious Secret,³⁵ The Aural Transmission of Saṃvara, and instructions on the Co-emergent Lady [Vajrayoginī].³⁶ He gave teachings

³² PT *’dod pa’i thar pa ’dod pa la*; RD *’dod pa’i dge ba ’dod pa la*.

³³ PT *a rung gnang ngo*; RD *a tung gnang ngo*.

³⁴ PT *lho nas rnam zhag byas*.

³⁵ PT + RD *gsang ba rin po che*.

³⁶ PT *jo mo lhan cig skyes padma dang bcas pa*; RD *jo mo lhan cig skyes ma dang bcas pa*.

and explanations on Hevajra and completed the five families of Guhyasamāja, meditation in one seat.³⁷ In particular, he gave five of the nine formless *ḍākinī* teaching cycles, and said that the other four remained in India and that he should go to look for them.³⁸ Lord Marpa said: “You are someone with great perseverance who does whatever the Lama orders to you; you should primarily apply yourself to practice. Take this advice seriously!”

Then [Mila] went to Tsang. He thought of going to India. However, as he possessed no gold, he did not go. He continued to practise, given that the Lama’s words stressed the importance of practice.

*Two: The Quality of his Spiritual Experiences related to Samādhi*³⁹

He returned to his village. His father and mother had both died [a long time] before; the entire field was barren;⁴⁰ grass grew on the roof of the house; the door was destroyed.⁴¹ That night, he slept inside the house and thought: “Alas, the essence of *saṃsāra* is like this!” and he sang:⁴²

³⁷ PT + RD *gdan gcig la bsgom pa*.

³⁸ PT *cho lo gcig*; RD. *tshol gcig*.

³⁹ PT + RD *gnyis pa ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba'i yon tan*. In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa’s lineage, the song here included belongs to the first quality, called *'khor ba la snying po med pa'i yon tan*.

⁴⁰ PT *thal bar song*; RD *tha bar song*.

⁴¹ PT *sgo yang zhig sdang bar 'dug pas*; RD *sgo yang zhig dang bar lug pas*.

⁴² The song is similar (but not identical) to TN-Dha: 133, Quintman 2010: 119. In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa’s lineage, it belongs to the first quality, called *'khor ba la snying po med pa'i yon tan*.

Alas, there is no essence in saṃsāra;
 When the people are there, there is no wealth; no essence;
 When there is wealth, there are no people; no essence;
 When the mother is there, the son is not; no essence;
 When the son is there, the mother is not; no essence;
 Even when all comes together, still no essence;
 Even when all one desires is complete,⁴³ still no essence;
 At this time when all is essence-less
 Why not give rise to the essence of yoga?

Thus he sang, it is said.

The following day, he offered all [his belongings] to a teacher, the house and the field. That summer, he meditated in the “black cave”⁴⁴ on the mountain near the village. As he had no provisions, he ate and drank vegetables. As he had no clothes, he covered himself with animal skin, starting from the lower body and patching it over the upper body.⁴⁵ His sister Peta⁴⁶ gave him a piece of cloth. He fixed it to the outside (of the cave? of the body?).⁴⁷ At one time, his aunt and his sister Peta brought him a jug filled with *chang*, but he could not drink it. Looking at him, both relatives lamented:⁴⁸ “How has our brother become like this?” His bones stuck out, covered only with skin!

He fled again, to meditate on the mountain. At that time, the *dākinīs* prophesied how to practise the so-called “inner heat of

⁴³ PT *’dod dgu tshang*; RD *dgos rgu tshang*.

⁴⁴ PT + RD *brag nags*.

⁴⁵ PT + RD *smad nas brags nas stod du klan pa byas*???

⁴⁶ PT *pe tas*; RD *te pas*.

⁴⁷ PT + RD *phyir la gtad*.

⁴⁸ PT *der nyi mtshan gnyis po na re*; RD *der ni mtshan gnyis po na re*.

experience.” He adopted the squatting posture, and his body experienced bliss. Controlling the subtle life energy, his speech was ablaze with bliss. Releasing the knots in their natural position, his mind meditated blissfully.⁴⁹ Unmeasurable experiences and realisations⁵⁰ arose from then onwards, so it has been said.

One day, he reached a nomadic village in the lower part of the valley, where there was an old lady.⁵¹ His waist had become very slender through the lack of provisions. As he walked down towards the tent to ask for alms,⁵² that aunty picked up a stick and chased him.

He fled again and meditated inside a cave. Sometimes, people collecting vulture feathers or some hunters saw him.⁵³ He [primarily] lived on cooked nettles.⁵⁴

One time, he went to beg for food at a place where some hunters were sowing wheat. His body was covered with small hairs from eating nettles. The hunters thought he might be a ghost and chased him. “I am Mila Töpaga,” he said. They recognised his voice and gave him a fair amount of wheat flour. “We will carry it,” they said, but they got distracted and forgot.⁵⁵

One time a poor beggar lady arrived at a wedding. “Who are you?” they asked her.

⁴⁹ Tib. *srol mdud kyi gshis kyi*; for *aol mdud kyi gshis kyi*?

⁵⁰ PT *nyams rtags*; RD *nyams rtogs*.

⁵¹ PT *zul chan gcig byung ba'i nang na ni*; RD *ru ba tshan gcig byung ba'i nang na*.

⁵² PT *sprur phyin tsam na*; RD *skurur phyin tsam na*.

⁵³ PT *aen ro tsam mthong*; RD *aen re tsam mthon*.

⁵⁴ PT *za tshod byas shing bstod pa la*; RD *bsdad pa la*.

⁵⁵ PT *brjed do*; RD *brjod do*.

“I am Khyungpo Za,”⁵⁶ she replied, “I have no father and no mother. My brother, Mila Töpa, is a wandering *yogin*, but I have no idea where is.”

“Your brother is in this valley, in a cave called ‘laughter’,”⁵⁷ they said. She was pleased and went [there] carrying a bag full of the food she had begged for. This provision lasted for two months. Afterwards, his sister brought him whatever she obtained by begging, he said. He wandered only in forest hermitages.

While staying at Ragma⁵⁸ Jangchup Namkha Dzong, all phenomena became dream-like.⁵⁹ He had a dream that he was ploughing a field. About this, he sang:⁶⁰

From the ground of equanimity
Faith [arises as] the preparatory wet manure cover;
It is soaked with the moisture of the five nectars;⁶¹
I [then] sow the seeds of the absence of deluded thoughts;
Fixing the yoke to the oxen of non-duality
I plough the field of method and wisdom;
Grasping the plough arm of non-distraction from my sacred commitments,
I crack the whip of strong diligence;
The hardest clods on the earth disappear.

⁵⁶ PT *khung po za*; RD *khyung po za*.

⁵⁷ Tib. *gad bya ba'i brag*.

⁵⁸ PT *rang ma*; RD. *rag ma*.

⁵⁹ PT *rnam lam lta bu*; RD *rmi lam lta bu*.

⁶⁰ In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, this song belongs to the quality *rmi lam brda' ru shar ba'i yon tan*. The song is similar (but not identical) to TN-Dha: 145; Quintman 2010: 130.

⁶¹ PT *bdud rtsi lnga yis rlan gyi sangs*; RD *bdud rtsi lnga yi rlan gyis sbangs*.

The time of reaping fruit is nearing.⁶²

This composition, with the example of a field,
Comes from a dream of the *yogin*;
The dream is not bad, I dreamt a good dream.
But the mere words do not reveal its meaning;
By merely illustrating it, it will not be revealed.
Those who will later work towards awakening
If they practise, this is how they should do.

Thus he said.

Until here,⁶³ the quality of his spiritual experiences related to *samādhī* has been described [in general]. Now follow more details.

*Three: The Quality of Showing the [right] Approaches*⁶⁴

From that time onwards, he meditated in rocky mountains in summer and thick forests in winter. While meditating at the High White Rock [called] Dorje Dzong in the wheat-rich Gungthang region,⁶⁵ he sang:⁶⁶

On the high white mountain, the Sky Fortress
Under the centre of the Sky Fortress,
Above, clouds from the south gather in darkness;

⁶² PT *bsnyen te mchi*; RD *bsnyin ste mchi*.

⁶³ PT *'di men*; RD *'di min*.

⁶⁴ Tib. *gsum pa khyer so bstan pa'i yon tan*. In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, it is called *bde 'drod ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan*.

⁶⁵ Tib. *brag dkar po mthon rdo rje rdzong*; in the song, it becomes *brag dkar po mthon nam mkha' rdzong*.

⁶⁶ The song is a mixture of TN-Dha: 6.1 & 6.3, Stagg 2017: 67; it comes in the same form also in the other Golden Rosaries.

Beneath flow mighty clear water streams;
To the side soar the vultures, kings of the birds;
In the middle play many fierce beasts.

Such an isolated place without humans feels good.
This place free of distractions feels good.
My way of sitting without sleeping feels good.
My cotton garment free of chill feels good.
My illusory body free of illness feels good.
My sitting and walking without clinging feel good.
My austerity free of dejection feels good.
These six are my approach to the body.

Meditating means and wisdom feels good.⁶⁷
My uninterrupted meditation⁶⁸ feels good.
Realising self-awareness and luminosity feels good.
My non-dual view feels good.
In the state free of the coming and going of the breath
All thoughts have subsided; it feels good.
In the creation and completion stages of the deity
All views joined together, it feels good.
In the state of both means and wisdom
All phenomena joined together, it feels good.
These six are my approach to the mind.

With key instructions sprouting from my speech, I am at rest.
Expressing my experiences in songs, I am at rest.
Sure about the nature of things, I am at rest.
Uniting view and conduct, I am at rest.

Many explanations will bring about only a little.

⁶⁷ PT *thabs dang she rab bsgom pa med*; RD *thabs dang she rab bsgom na bde*.

⁶⁸ PT *gtam gtan*; RD *bsam gtan*.

You, the future generation of beings, holders [of the teachings]
if you practise, do it like this.

*Four: The Quality of his Fame Spread in Four Directions while
he Meditated at Lachi Snow Mountain*⁶⁹

Once, he went to Drin.⁷⁰ Many patrons and disciples were there, and the patroness Dormo and her family asked the Jetsün to become the object of their offerings. They offered him two measures of *tsampa*, a full measure of rice, one side of meat, and a portion of butter. They tried to convince the Lama to delay his departure, but he did not accept. He left early, carrying the provisions given to him.

It snowed for eighteen days and nights, so the Lama eventually had to stay there.

At that time, all the people regretted [letting him go]. They lamented: “Lama, this will have brought obstacles to your body.” Mother Lady Dormo, blaming others, even said: “The Jetsün will have died!”

The following summer, after seven months had passed, three people went to retrieve his deceased body. Mila called them.

“The Lama is there!” they exclaimed.

“Either some wild animal will have left him the remains of a deer it had killed, or else some hunter must have given him provisions so he did not die! Is this possible?” Thinking like this, they arrived and saw a huge wild animal sitting on a boulder.

⁶⁹ Tib. *bzhi pa la phyi gangs can du bsgoms pas phyogs bzhir snyan pa'i grags pas khyab pa'i yon tan*; in Rechungpa's lineage, the title is *zas gos kyi 'dun pa dang bral ba'i yon tan*.

⁷⁰ Tib. *breng* (?)

They then arrived at a cave, and hearing him sing, they believed it [was true]. When they came near him, [they saw] the body of the Lama was strikingly resplendent. He told them the *dākinīs* had offered him food. The meat, butter, rice and *tsampa* were still there, so he prepared food.⁷¹ There was no way the three people would not take him with them, so he came.

“Will the snow not blind us on the pass?” they asked.

“Proceed carefully,” he said, and so they went. The Lama kept [them] as warm as the sunlight, and they reached Drin without any harm from the snow.

The villagers asked about his well-being. To their request about his health, he replied with the Song of Lachi Snow Mountain.⁷²

On this auspicious, glorious day,
You male and female benefactors welcome me with
prostrations;

We didn’t perish and have met. Oh, how joyful!⁷³

I am an old man with a treasury of songs;

In reply to your query about my health⁷⁴ I answer with a song.

At the very end of the tiger year,
At the beginning of the year of the hare,
On the full moon of the Wagyal month,
In the remote pastures of the Lachi snow range
I went seeking a secluded retreat.
There, the land and the sky conferred together
And sent down a messenger, a strong wind.

⁷¹ PT *gro byas*; RD *dro byas*.

⁷² TN-Dha: 219 song 3.1; Stagg 2017: 31.

⁷³ PT *’gro ba dga’*; RD *glo ba dga’*.

⁷⁴ PT *smun dri med*; RD *snyun dri med*.

Black southern clouds gathered⁷⁵ in front,
The twenty constellations were strung on a wire,
The eight planets were put into shackles by edict.
The morning star was completely wrapped in dusty mist.
Wind with sleet blew, and finally
Snow fell for nine days and nine nights.
The snow fell for a total of eighteen, days and nights together.
The big flakes were big: they fell like thick layers of wool,
Like birds in flight that plummet down.
Middle-sized flakes were medium: they fell like tiny wheels,
Like bees flying around, then dropping down.
Small flakes were small: the size of peas;
Lumped together, they fell like balls of sleet.⁷⁶
Still smaller ones, like mustard seeds,
Like iron filings permeated the air as they fell.
Snow fell in more sizes than one could count.

High above, the snowy white peaks touched the sky.
Below, the plants and trees were matted and pressed.
The mountains of black donned a blanket of white.
The wavy lake was frozen over,
Enclosing the clear blue waters under a sheath.
The contour of the land was evened to a plain.
At the upper end, the head of a planted spear was invisible;
At times even the best-planted bows were not visible.
At the lower end, the notch of a planted arrow was not visible.

Because this snowfall was so great,
In general, the black-haired people were constricted in a nice
prison.

⁷⁵ PT *bsus*; RD *bsdus*.

⁷⁶ PT *khu 'phang*; RD *khum 'phang*.

In particular, the weakest among the wild animals' sustenance
was cut,
And the four-legged cattle were stricken with famine.
For people and animals alike, urgent queries were dropped.
Above, the birds' food source was depleted.
Below, marmots and mice hid in their stores.

In such a time, when happiness was so far gone,⁷⁷
The snow falling from above,
The strong winter wind of the new year,
And the cotton cloth of me, Milarepa:
The three of us fought on top of the white snow mountain.
Underneath it, my cloth captured great heat.
I was victorious over the snow, it melted to water.
Though the wind roared powerfully, it naturally subsided.
In general, internally there was no disturbance, all was made
constantly stable.
In general, to whatever I said they would listen, that was their
oath.
Both the hot and cold *prāṇas* were conducted into their essence.

I'm of the family of lions, the king of beasts;
I never lived in a place other than snow mountains.⁷⁸
I'm my grandfather's descendant, with the coat of a tiger;
I never fled wearing the coat of a fox.
To my father was born a son of the class of champions;
I watched my foe in the face, I never fled to the side.
For all this together, this *repa yogin*,
With the blessing of the *siddha* lineage

⁷⁷ PT *skyid 'dangs*; I read *skyid 'dong*; RD *skya 'dangs*.

⁷⁸ PT *gnas gang khams men par sdod ma myongs*; RD *gnas gangs khong min par sdod ma myongs*.

Will indeed spread the practice lineage teachings;
A few *siddhas* will also come;
Even in future times, this pleasant conversation will be talked
about.
Hey you, I am just joking...⁷⁹

Among other things, this is what he said. They put up a tent and
he remained there for some days.⁸⁰

In autumn, [Mila] went to a pass from where he could see his
village.⁸¹ They were harvesting, and he saw there was
abundance.⁸² The thought came up in his mind to go there, and
he did. He went to beg at a place where there was a feast.
One person said: “Mila Töpaga has become enlightened,” and
told his story.⁸³

Another person said: “I would like to make him the object of my
offerings.”

One person, recognising him, exclaimed: “This is him,”
indicating him.

“Marvellous,” the previous person repeated, “please become the
object of my offerings”.

While they were distracted, he fled and reached a place three
days away.

⁷⁹ PT *sha mod kyang bre mo bgyis pa lags* (?); RD *sho mod kyang bre mo bgyis pa lags*.

⁸⁰ PT *gur dkar phubs nas zhan kha gcig bzhugs so*; RD *gur kar phubs nas zhag kha gcig bzhugs so*.

⁸¹ PT *sdang yul*; RD *rang yul*.

⁸² PT *bde ba gzigs pa*; RD *bdo ba gzigs pa*.

⁸³ PT *lam rgyu 'chad pa la*; RD *lo rgyus 'chad pa la*.

*Five: while Meditating in the Sengala Forest, his Meditation
Experiences Became Blissful*⁸⁴

When staying in the Kanting cave at the Sky Fortress Crystal Cave,⁸⁵ he sang the following song, expressing his happiness:

This is a land where many flowers grow,
In the midst of where trees dance and sway.
It's a land where langurs and monkeys train their skills,
A mountain delighted with myriads of bird songs.

In such a solitary place
To roam in mountain retreats alone feels good;
Being without distractions feels even better still.
To be without constant conversations feels good;
The less one speaks, the better one feels.
A *samādhi* without dullness or agitation feels good;
The luminosity of mind's nature feels even better still.
When *chaṇḍalī* is ablaze in the body, it feels good;
Not sensing cold or hot feels even better still.
When the breath is free of coming and going, it feels good;
With all mental movement severed, it feels even better still.
The non-dual view feels good;
When there is union, it feels even better still.
Being free of attachment to possessions feels good;

⁸⁴ Tib. *lga pa seng gha la'i nags la bsgoms pas bsgoms nyams bde bar shar zhing*; in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, the title is *nyams myong bde bar shar ba'i yon tan*. TN-Dha: 447, song 27.3; Stagg 2017: 303 (first six verses only).

⁸⁵ *rkang ting phug gi shel phug nam mkha' rdzong*; in TN *kyang phan nam mkha' rdzong*; in Zhijé Ripa: *ku thang gi rkang mthil phug gi shel phug nam mkha' rdzong*.

With little clinging, one still feels better.
To be free of [thinking of] a higher or lower vehicle feels good;
To realise this by oneself feels even better still.⁸⁶
Sitting on a thin cushion feels good;
Nepali cloth makes the body feel good;
With self-aware bliss-emptiness the mind feels even better.
These are the ways of acting as a *yogin*.

Thus he sang.

After that, he went to stay at Happy Sun Fortress.⁸⁷

*Six: The Quality of Phenomena Arising As Skilful Means*⁸⁸

He expressed in a song how all appearances become friends.

When water and wood are naturally available,⁸⁹
To ask for attendants is but a lie.
Such eating companions are of little use.

When one realises all beings as illusory,
To ask for family relations is but a lie;
Such a suffering mind is of little use.

When self-aware luminosity arises,
To ask for logical reasoning is but a lie.
Such a collection of words is of little use.

⁸⁶ PT *gcig pur rtog na yongs kyang bde*; RD *rtogs na*.

⁸⁷ Tib. *skyid pa nyi ma'i rdzong*.

⁸⁸ Tib. *drug pa snang ba mthun rkyen du shar ba'i yon tan*; same title and song in Rechungpa's lineage; TN-Dha: 521, a small part of song 32.1; Stagg 2017: 384 (only two paragraphs).

⁸⁹ PT *chu shing ngag gis ma 'dzoms na*; RD *chu shing ngang gis 'dzom tsam na*.

When one finds the precious treasure of the mind's nature,
To ask for material possessions is but a lie.
Such silver and gold are of little use.

When meditation happens spontaneously,
To speak of conceptual thoughts is but a lie.
Such antidotes are of little use.

When *chaṇḍalī* blazes within the body,
To ask for clothes is but a lie.⁹⁰
Such woollen threads are of little use.

Thus he sang.

*Seven: The Quality of How Uninterrupted Practice
Transformed Whatever Came into his Mind into a Guide on the
Path*⁹¹

Once, when he was staying at the Remote Cuckoo Dzong,⁹² in
open land between the mountain range and the village, he sang
the following song:

The revered *siddha* guru
Is the guide on the path who clears away darkness.

Faith that is free of any weariness
Is the guide on the path that leads you to happy realms.

⁹⁰ Tib. *gos glog*; as this is unclear, I opted for Zhijé Ripa's version: *gos lag*.

⁹¹ Tib. *nyams len rgyun chad med pas dran pa thams cad lam mkhan du shar ba'i yon tan*. In Rechungpa's lineage: *rtogs pa lam mkhan du shar ba'i yon tan*. TN-Dha: 260 song 7.5; Stagg 2017: 79.

⁹² Tib. *khu byug dban sa rdzong*.

The direct encounter between the six sense-faculties
Is the guide on the path to purifying conceptual thought.

The *samādhī* in which the three spiritual bodies are inseparable
Is the guide on the path towards complete liberation.

This cotton cloth, immune to cold and heat,
Is the guide on the path to letting go of clinging.

This remote place free of distractions and diversions
Is the guide on the path to training in meditative absorption.

Following these six guides on the path,
You should enter the castle.

Fearing destruction, I built a castle;⁹³
This castle is the castle of *dharmata*'s emptiness.
Now, I've no worry over it collapsing.

Fearing sadness, I searched for a companion;
That companion is the companion of innate bliss-emptiness.
Now, I've no worry over sadness.

Fearing cold, I searched for some clothes;
Those clothes are the clothes of spontaneous existing *chaṇḍalī*.
Now, I've no worry over any cold.

Fearing to go astray, I searched for a path;
That path is entering the path of luminosity.
Now I have no worry over going astray.

Thus he sang.

⁹³ From here onwards, the song is similar to TN-Dha: 263 song 7.7; Staggs 2017: 83.

*Eight: The Quality of Subduing the Eight Worldly
Concerns*⁹⁴

While staying at the Horsetooth White Rock Vajra Palace,⁹⁵ he was surrounded by fifteen monks. One day, his wealthy aunt sent a servant with a yak loaded with meat and cheese while she arrived riding a donkey. His sister Peta said: “I won’t go there to argue with her. Before, when we had nothing, nobody was close to us. Now, I do not want her.” Thus, she did not allow her [aunt] to meet him. The Jetsün tried to find a way. He let her sit outside the curtain, in front of the rock and sang:

At the Gyalmo Tsadrang village
Our relatives became hostile, and we three, brother and sisters,
Were scattered like a heap of peas with a stick.
While we were roaming in places where we knew nobody,
Not even one so-called aunt was there.

In this place, Tshaso Uma dzong,
Exhorted by the whip of hunger and thirst
I searched but found no aunt.
“Disgraceful beggar, go away,”⁹⁶ she said,
And taking a stick she chased me.
The proper name for such an aunt would be “witch”!
I could have died, you witch!

⁹⁴ Tib. *brgyad pa chos brgyad mgo non pa'i yon tan*; in Rechungpa's lineage *nye 'brel chos brgyad rang grol ba'i yon tan*. The song vaguely resembles TN-Dha: 140; Quintman 2010: 126; it appears in the same form in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage.

⁹⁵ Tib. *brag dkar rta so rdo rje rdzong*.

⁹⁶ PT *sbrang po brla 'tshong shog gcig zer*; RD *sbrang po bslab 'tshongs*.

But, woman, I am just joking!⁹⁷
That this time you offer prostrations is good.
In general, worldly people don't have the right measure,
But I, Mila, do not need your meat and butter!

Thus he sang.

“You are right, you are right,” said the aunt as she left, crying;
so it is said.

From that time onwards, the eight worldly *dharma*s were suppressed. He sang:

In the state of equanimity, the eight worldly *dharma*s are
spontaneously liberated;
I take care of the field of the illusory body;
I milk the cow of the precious nature of mind;
I protect my qualities without any need for pretence;
I don't ride the horse of the eight-worldly-*dharma*-monasteries!

Thus he sang.

*Nine: The Quality of Repaying his Parents' Kindness*⁹⁸

While the Jetsün was staying at the Kyangpa Sky Fortress, a
bönpo requested him to perform a weekly funeral ceremony for

⁹⁷ The last four lines are missing in Zhijé Ripa and Ögyenpa.

⁹⁸ PT *yum gyi drin lan*; in RD *yab yum gyi drin lan*. TN-Dha:765, song 54.3; Stagg 2017: 641 (vaguely similar. For a comparison of this chapter in other Golden Rosaries, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and *The Late Zhepé Dorje Compendia*, see Chapter 9.

his parents. Peta [heard this and] said: “You did not perform a weekly funerary service for our parents.”

“Yes, I did,” he said and sang:

After discarding their fleshly body, their monkey-minds
Were both wandering alone
In a land where they did not know anybody.

I attracted them with my *samādhi*.
In the firepit of their illusory body,
With the firewood of the seeds of the six kinds of beings,
I planted the name card of the unborn.
I purified their corpses in a state of luminosity and emptiness.
I performed a weekly ceremony, the essence of appearance
and emptiness.
I made *tsa-tsas* of the unborn.
As food, I offered them great bliss.
As path, I showed them non-duality.
I performed a dedication as *mahāmudrā*
I uttered an aspiration prayer for *bodhicitta*.
Indeed, I repaid our parents’ kindness!

Thus he sang.

*Ten: The Quality of Becoming Unobstructed by External
Objects*⁹⁹

Once, he came to a monk’s residence. Some monks said: “We want this *yogin* to be the object of our offerings for some days.”

⁹⁹ PT *phyi rol gyi lus la thogs rgyug med par shar ba’i yon tan*; RD *phyi rol gyi yul la thog rdugs med par shar ba’i yon tan*. In Rechungpa’s lineage *rtsod pa mi rdzi ba’i yon tan*.

To deride him, they brought him into the main shrine room of the temple and bolted the door, leaving him there. However, as they went outside, he was also there. They looked inside, and there he appeared. So they offered their services and asked for forgiveness.

While they were prostrating to him, a teacher called Darlo arrived, ready for a bit of Nyingma epistemology.¹⁰⁰ They engaged in a debate, and [Mila] could not withstand the teacher. The Jetsün then sang about the quality of not being harmed by the debate:

Without loosening the knots of avarice,¹⁰¹
 What benefit is there from generosity?
 Without abandoning hypocrisy in one's mind,
 What benefit is there from protecting discipline?
 Without being able to cope with the play of words,
 How can one firmly hold the small shield of patience?¹⁰²
 If it is not to be liberated from the narrow path of *samsāra*,
 Why should one ride the horse of diligence?
 Without transforming all appearances in *dharmakāya*,
 What benefit is there from practising meditation?
 Without beheading ego-fixation,¹⁰³
 What will the sword of discriminating wisdom cut?
 Without catching the poisonous snake of one's mind,

¹⁰⁰ PT *tshad ma snying ma dga' tsam brtanpa gcig byung ste*; in RD *tshad ma rnying ma 'ga' tsam nyan par gcig byung ste*.

¹⁰¹ TN-Dha: 547, song 34.8; Stagg 2017: 408.

¹⁰² These two lines are different from later versions; *tshig gi rtse mo mi thub pa'i | bzod pa'i phub chung ci la 'dzugs*; in Zhijé Ripa: *tshig rtsub mtshon cha mi thub pa'i / bzod pa'i phub chung ci la tshugs* “without being able to withstand the weapons of harsh words, how can you firmly hold the shield of patience?”

¹⁰³ PT *ngar 'dzin mgo lo mi chod pa'i*; RD *ngar 'dzin 'gong po mi chod pa'i*.

Why should one hold the lasso of skilful means?
 Without transforming into *dharma* whatever one does,
 What benefit is there from aspiration prayers?
 Without reaching a definite understanding of one's own mind,
 What benefit is there from developing wisdom?
 Without subduing the evil spirit of clinging to a self,
 What will the hammer of power hit?
 Without searching to awaken one's own mind,
 What benefit is there from extensive hearing?
 You should extend your meditation on these!¹⁰⁴

Thus he sang.

*Eleven: The Quality of the Experience of Bearing The Torch of Wisdom*¹⁰⁵

He sang:

The one with little hearing has lost the debate;
 His meditative experience is weak, so doubts arise.
 From the four narrow paths that turn back a *yogin*,¹⁰⁶
 At first, my place of encounter was unmistakable:
 I encountered a son of Nāropa.
 In the middle, my place of meditation was unmistakable:

¹⁰⁴ PT *ma kha yang bsgom gyi nar 'khyams* (?); RD *ma la ya bsgoms kyi nang du 'khyams*.

¹⁰⁵ PT *bcu gcig pa ye shes kyi sgron me bltams pa'i nyams kyi yon tan*; RD *bcu gcig pa ye shes kyi sgron me mnyam pa'i nyams kyi yon tan*; in Rechungpa's lineage: *ye shes kyi sgron me bltams pa'i nyams kyi yon tan*. TN-Dha: 558, song 35.1; Stagg 2017: 420.

¹⁰⁶ PT *rnal 'byor ldog pa'i 'phrang bzhi las*; RD *rnal 'byor pa yi 'phrang bzhi yan*.

I meditated at the White Rock High Peak Castle.¹⁰⁷
In the end, my place of alms-gathering was unmistakable:
With no guide or friends, I gathered alms throughout the land.

Thus he sang.

While he was meditating at White Rock High Peak Castle, an army of *nāga* demons and rock demons came to attack him. He sang the song up to: “My body lives in the palace of the gods.”¹⁰⁸
Then he continued:

First, the great path of Secret Mantra;¹⁰⁹
Second, the guru’s great key instructions;
Third, one’s own great perseverance;
These are three things of greatness.

First, one needs to give service to learned ones;
Second, one needs to develop discriminating wisdom;
Third, one needs key instructions from the guru.
These are three necessities.

First, to cherish a qualified *mudrā*;
Second, to cherish the conduct that is elephant-like;
Third, to cherish inseparable bliss and emptiness.
These are three things to be cherished.

First, to be skilled in the composition of words;
Second, to be skilled in replying to questions;
Third, to be skilled in the characteristics of the mind;
These are three kinds of skills.

¹⁰⁷ Tib. *brag dkar spo mthon rdzong*.

¹⁰⁸ PT *nga lus 'ga'i rdzong la gnas*; RD *nga lus lha'i rdzong la gnas*.

¹⁰⁹ TN-Dha: 559, song 35.3; Stagg 2017: 422.

First, to gather in assemblies of people;
Second, to gather in assemblies of *ḍākinīs*;
Third, to gather assemblies of daily provisions.
These are three kinds of gatherings.

First, to see appearances vividly;
Second, to see bliss as unsubstantial;
Third, to see beyond words.¹¹⁰
These are three things to see.

First, to make vital energy penetrate its focal points;
Second, to penetrate the expanse of the mind's nature;
Third, to penetrate the mastery of *dharma*.
These are three ways of penetrating.

So, *yogin*, do not stay here!
The Lama, the Buddha, told me:
First, awareness, the torch of wisdom;
Second, the network of *nāḍī*, *prāṇa* and *cakra*;
Third, equal taste, the mirror of outer phenomena;
Fourth, great bliss, the precious jewel of speech;
These four teachings remain in India with the formless *vajra-ḍākinī*.
But I am old and could not go.
These could still be with a disciple of Lord Nāropa.
Rechung, don't stay, go to India.

He brought three measures of gold for Rechungpa and sent him off to India, so it is said.

¹¹⁰ Tib. *tshigs dang bral bar mthong* (?).

*Twelve: The Quality of being Transformed in the Body of a God*¹¹¹

One time, the Lama was staying in a forest, in a cave named Karti Cave. The king of Nepal had sent him a marvellous cloth and a piece of all-victorious myrobalan as a gift. The Lama wore the cloth and anointed his eyes with the myrobalan. As he arrived inside the *maṇḍala*,¹¹² [the disciples] asked him: “Who gave these to you, Lama?” He replied:

A king among human beings, a noble lord.¹¹³
This human king, who possesses the eye of *dharma*,
Has bestowed upon me this garment of soft cotton,
A garment of the spontaneous presence of *chanḍālī*.¹¹⁴

Further, *the quality of his fame spread in the ten directions of India and Tibet:*

The Indian *siddha* Dharmabodhi¹¹⁵ was on his way to offer prostrations to the Jetsün. The Lama knew this and went there. They met at the Nepali Fortress, and Dharmabodhi offered him a piece of cloth as a present. Later, [Mila’s] entourage asked: “After such a *siddha* has prostrated to you, should the teacher not have returned the homage?”¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Tib. *bcu gnyis pa lha'i skur gyur pa'i yon tan*; in Rechungpa's lineage *lha'i lhar gyur pa'i yon tan*.

¹¹² PT *dkyil 'khor gyi nang du byon pa la*; RD *'khor gyi nang du byon pa la*.

¹¹³ TN-Dha: 450, song 27.5; Stagg 2017: 306.

¹¹⁴ PT *gtum mo lhun grub gos su phul*; RD *gtum mo lhun grub thos su phul*.

¹¹⁵ PT *dar ma bho ddhe*; RD *dhar ma bod de*.

¹¹⁶ PT *slop dpon gyis phyag lan gyi byed pa btsal lags*; RD *slop dpon gyis phyag lan mi byed pa ci lags*.

It is said that he sang:

In the delightful Nepali Fortress¹¹⁷
To the Tibetan Milarepa
The Indian Dharmabodhi
Offered prostration with his illusory body;
Simultaneously, he joined his palms, planted his knees,
and asked about my health within *mahāmudrā*.
In that city of the inexpressible
The *yogin*'s health was excellent.
From the solitary place of non-duality
He asked if the *yogin* was feeling good.

In the meantime, hearing that the Indian Dharmabodhi had prostrated to this Tibetan, Milarepa, [Mila's] fame became great; numberless spectators gathered to offer prostrations and ask for blessings.

The people said: "There is so much noise about this one called Milarepa, but there is little substance. He is but a naked shameless man. A real practitioner is someone like Bari Lotsāwa. That one is more amazing! He wears nice *dharma* garments, gives food and wealth to the people, and speaks pleasant words in the monastery."¹¹⁸ Saying this, they lost faith in the Jetsün.

At that point, to clear the loss of faith, the Lama rode a lion in the sky; he emanated himself in a crystal *stūpa* shining with light and disappeared like a shooting star. He sang:

¹¹⁷ TN-Dha: 530, song 33.8; Staggy 2017: 393.

¹¹⁸ PT *gling la nga snyan pa brjod*. I take it to stand for *ngag snyan pa brjod*; RD *gling lang snyan pa brjod*.

Like the *bardo* mind, a deer on top of a ridge¹¹⁹
 Nothing can obscure me; I am free of hindrance;
 I cannot be caught or sent away.
 This way I moved, like a shooting star,
 was to transform your outlook devoid of faith.
 Now I shall not act anymore.

*Thirteen: The Quality of Eliminating [Obstacles to] the Conduct
 of Others*¹²⁰

Once, many disciples were ill, but they all recovered through the
 blessing of the Lama. He sang:

At Latö monastery in Drin¹²¹
 With my illusory body in lotus posture
 I rested in non-dual equipoise.
 Visualising the unborn,
 And leaving the mind without distractions,
 I cleared the malicious worries of the disciples.
 I attracted both the peaceful and the wrathful [deities]
 And leaving the mind in loving kindness and compassion,
 I cleared the malicious influence of the wicked eighty-four
 thousand demons;
 The ill patients were tilted and could now get up.
 For the ailing persons' ordinary body,

¹¹⁹ Pt & RD *she'u sgang bar do'i sems bzhin du*; [I am not sure of the meaning of *she'u sgang*. In TN-Dha: 673, *shel gong bar do'i sems bzhin du song* 44.1; Stagg 2017: 542 (mistranslated by Stagg as 'a sentient being in the *bardo*' instead of 'the mind in the *bardo*'). See Chapter 10, "The Episode at Tsibri Mountain."

¹²⁰ Tib. *bcu gsum pa gzhan gyi spyod pa sel ba'i yon tan*; in the other Golden Rosaries: *nus pa che ba'i yon tan*.

¹²¹ Tib. '*bring*'; the first five lines are found in TN-Dha: 685, song 45.12; Stagg 2017: 557. in Zhijé Ripa 2004: 346 (some lines are missing); the last part of the song is given as a separate song.

I compounded the medicine of the *yidam* deities.
For the ailing persons' grasping and their grasped objects,
I compounded the medicine of non-duality.
For the four-hundred-and-forty-four kinds of illnesses,
I compounded the medicine of precious *dharma* and
equalisation of taste.
Talking about healing: I indeed removed the illnesses!

*The quality of the samaya-being and the wisdom-being
becoming inseparable*

While [he was staying] at Kyangpa Sky Treasury¹²² the layman
Tönpa Bodhiradza,¹²³ Repa Zhiwa Ö and some others, ten in
total, came to request the consecration of a colourfully painted
thangka and a picture card of Vajrayoginī. As he did not start to
throw any flowers, they said:

“Jetsün, please throw some flowers; throwing flowers later
might not empower [the images]. Therefore, to clarify our
concern, we request you throw some flowers.”

“I, Mila, am old; I cannot throw flowers,” he replied, “but if they
want, the deities can throw some flowers themselves.”

So each one of *thangka*- and the picture-card-deities arrived,
lifted a flower in the air and let it dissolve in his heart. It took no
more than one day. All who were present developed faith; they
offered prostrations and said this was marvellous.

He sang:

¹²² In both editions *bskyangs pa nam mkha mdzod*, whereas in quality 9 it was
bskyangs pa nam mkha'i rdzong.

¹²³ Aka Ngendzong Tönpa; the episode is found in TN-Dha: 703, song 47.2; Staggs
2017: 576. In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, the episode comes in
the chapter *byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan*.

The Buddha, who possesses the reality-body,
On the rainbow-like earth
Strew immaculate form-body flowers,
But I don't think this is essential.

*Fourteen: The Quality of Developing Power over the Mind*¹²⁴

Ngendzong Repa, the benefactress Lekse and other people, ten in total, came to request an empowerment. [Mila] arranged offerings and tormas and performed the ablution and the preliminary rituals. When inviting the wisdom-being, a blessing came down that flared up spontaneously. At the time of bestowing the vase empowerment, he rubbed each person's head and said:

"I, Mila, am old; I cannot bestow the empowerment. If it wants, the vase can do it by itself."

The vase floated in the air, bestowing the initiation on their head and washing them.

"The Jetsün is marvellous!" they said.

The Jetsün sang:

In the stainless *maṇḍala* of the Aural Transmission,
Offerings were arranged without attachment.
Pointing out the wisdom of the Buddha,
The immaculate water initiation was bestowed.
It was bestowed, but I don't think this is essential!

*Fifteen: The Quality of Possessing Clairvoyance*¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Tib. *bcu bzhi pa sems la dbang thob pa'i yon tan*; in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage *byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan*. This episode and song come in TN-Dha: 702 song 47.1; Stagg 2017: 575.

¹²⁵ Tib. *bco lnga pa mngon par shes pa mnga' ba'i yon tan*.

While he was staying in the forest, a benefactor brought offerings to serve him at the Crystal Cave called Sky Fortress. On his way, a tiger arrived in the thick jungle. The Lama prayed to the *ḍākinīs* requesting: “Please see to it that the benefactor will not get hurt by the tiger.”¹²⁶ Then he sang:

For a *yogin* who wanders in solitary places
When his benefactors, while providing him with provisions,
Meet obstacles, such as the fear of tigers and the like,
The *ḍākinīs* will remove them.¹²⁷

Sixteen: The Quality of Attaining Outstanding Blessing [Power]
128

One disciple had been squeezed under a tree; he had an infected wound that did not heal. As soon as the Lama blessed him, he recovered. So the Lama sang:¹²⁹

It fell because of a gust of wind;
That mindless tree hurt him.
He could not withstand the pain of the infection,
But the *ḍākinīs* procured his medicine.

¹²⁶ This episode is not included in TN; it appears in Zhijé Ripa 2004: 347, in the chapter *byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan*.

¹²⁷ PT *bar chad mkha' 'gro ma drangs sol*; RD *bar chad mkha' 'gro ma rang sol*.

¹²⁸ Tib. *bcu drug pa byin rlabs phul du phyin pa'i yon tan*; in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, this episode still comes in the chapter *byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan*.

¹²⁹ In other Golden Rosaries and TN-Dha: 799, song 60.2, Stagg 2017: 684, Mila himself gets hurt.

*Seventeen: The Quality of Gaining Mastery over the Elements*¹³⁰

Once, when the Lama and his disciples were returning from the White Horse Tooth Cave, he fell from about one hundred steps of a building. The disciples hurried to surround him, weeping on their way. However, the Lama got up and arrived.

“Didn’t you get hurt?” they asked him.

“If it had been someone else, he would have died or gone to pieces. But I didn’t experience even the slightest bit of discomfort. My fall on the ground was nothing more than as if a bale of wool was thrown down.¹³¹ And, from now on, whoever is a holder of my lineage will not be hurt by any hindrance of spirits,” he said, “the Jetsün has now defeated the *māra* of the Lord of death and the *māra* of the aggregates.” As he said this, he opened his united vulture wings and sang:¹³²

Flying, I flew from White Rock’s peak.

Falling, I fell into a bottomless abyss.¹³³

Experiencing, I experienced inseparable bliss-emptiness.

Liberating, I was automatically liberated from *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

Recognising, I recognised bliss-emptiness.

Now I think there is nothing more to liberate!

This flower, the *yogin*’s body,

¹³⁰ Tib. *bcu bdun pa ’byung ba dbang du ’dus pa’i yon tan*; in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa’s lineage, the episode comes in the chapter *ting nge ’dzin gyi rtsal rdzogs pa’i yon tan*.

¹³¹ Tib. *brul sar bal gdab brdabs tsaṃ las ma byung* (?).

¹³² PT *gzung ’jug thang dkar gshogs bskyangs nas*; RD *zung ’jug thang kar gshog brkyangs nas*; TN-Dha 1190: 799 songs 60.3+60.4 united; Staggy 2017: 684.

¹³³ PT *rong khung shod du*; RD *dro khung shod du*.

This life [threatened] at the Red Rock by *māra*'s hangman,¹³⁴
Has been dragged along by the *ḍākinī*.
Now I don't think it will fall prey to demons.¹³⁵

*Eighteen: The Quality of not Hoping for a Result*¹³⁶

Then, when he was old, the great Lama from Dakpo¹³⁷ arrived
and asked him questions.

“At my place, we have but a few such realised practitioners.
How does this come about?” he asked.

[The Jetsün] replied:

Like an inexhaustible treasury of space
Is my *samādhi*, free from the intrigues of mind,¹³⁸
Of desire for food against hunger and thirst.
The *ḍākinīs* looked after that.
But I have no thought that this makes me a *siddha*.

When you see the essence of the mind
And clear away the darkness of ignorance,
The *ḍākinīs* show their faces.
It makes you wonder whether you see the expanse of ultimate
reality.
But I have no thought that this makes me a *siddha*.

¹³⁴ PT *srog 'dir brag dmar gshed ma yi*; RD *srog 'jigs brag dmar gshed ma yi*.

¹³⁵ PT *da yongs gud kyis khyer snyams med*; RD *da yongs bdud kyis khyer snyams med*.

¹³⁶ PT *'bras bu la nye ba med pa'i yon tan*; RD *'bras bu la re ba med pa'i yon tan*.
In the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage, the chapter comes under *ting nge 'dzin gyi tsal rdzogs pa'i yon tan*. TN-Dha: 800, song 60.5+60.6; Stagg 2017: 686.

¹³⁷ Aka Gampopa

¹³⁸ PT *ting 'dzin sems kyi g.yo bskor gyis*; RD *ting 'dzin sems kyi g.yo skor gyis*.

Everything is unborn,
Its essence is spontaneous presence and emptiness;
To see phenomena [this way] was shown [to me] by the *ḍākinīs*.
But I have no thought that this makes me a siddha.

“Just like a wish-fulfilling gem or a wish-fulfilling tree
Accomplish all one’s needs,
In this life, all the supreme and worldly accomplishments will
be realised.”
This, too, the *ḍākinīs* have said.
But I have no thought that this makes me a siddha.

Thus he sang.

*Nineteen: The Quality of Showing a Vast Range of Physical
Activities*¹³⁹

Once, a man came by while [Mila] was staying in a forest. He
stood still for a while, then looked back and went. [The Lama]
called him and asked:
“What do you want?”
“I wanted the Lama but did not see him. I thought there was a
white *stūpa*,” he said.

¹³⁹ Tib. *bcu dgu pa sku'i spyod yul bzad pa'i tshul sna tshogs su bstan pa'i yon tan*

At another time, while he was staying in a monastery, a man arrived but didn't see him.¹⁴⁰ This was while he was absorbed in the *samādhi* of exhausting space, so it is said.¹⁴¹

At another time, when he left, accompanied by many disciples, he floated in the sky, and his entourage could not keep up with him, so it is said. Later, they asked him about it.¹⁴²

"It is not that I was flying," he said, "but I went along pushing down the *prāṇa* a little, and thus not more than a bird track remained in the snow." So it is said.

"People say that a handful of *tsampa* was sufficient for you to last twelve days; is this true?" they asked.

"When there were no people, many *ḍākinīs* brought plenty of food from their ritual offerings. Experiencing this, I did not think about food for ten days," he said.

The following are some more [miraculous] displays of his body: to make himself invisible, to ride a lion in the sky, to adopt the conduct of yogic discipline. When staying at Chuwar in Drin, all the worldly gods and demons gathered, drawing up an army. When the classes of gods and spirits in the entire entourage of Tashi Tseringma drew up an army, uninterruptedly, again and again, he subdued them with his splendour and bound them with an oath. Thus he conquered the *māra* of the son of the gods.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ PT *mi gcig byung bas mthong bar gda'*; RD. *mi gcig byung bas ma mthong bar gda'*.

¹⁴¹ Tib. *zad par nam mkha'i ting nge 'dzin*. These episodes appear in the Golden Rosaries in Gampopa's lineage but not in those in Rechungpa's lineage.

¹⁴² PT *physis dris nas bde chen zhus pas*; RD. *physis dris nas de bzhin zhus pas*.

¹⁴³ These episodes appear in Tsangnyön's Chapters 2 and 4.

When staying at the Lingpa Red Rock in Gungthang, the *rākshaṣa* rock demoness and others pestered him without interruption, but later they asked for forgiveness. Moreover, in Lachi Chuzang, he addressed a song to all the gods and demons. Thus, he subdued them and they offered him yoghurt for one month. He had immeasurable powers of this kind. He sang:

I am resolved that appearances are mind;¹⁴⁴
I've seen that the mind itself is *dharmakāya*.
So, spirits, whatever magic you may show,
It becomes a great gem for me, this *yogin*!

Thus he sang.

The above is but a minimal description of his various qualities. It would be impossible to expound on them in full detail.

*Twenty: The Quality of How, in the State of Immaculate Luminosity, the Three Spiritual Bodies Became Inseparable and, without Seeing the Bardo of Becoming, the Result of the Three Spiritual Bodies Operating for his Own and Others's Benefit Came About*¹⁴⁵

While the Jetsün was staying at Chuwar in Drin, his body showed signs of passing away at one point. At that time, he explained why different visual perceptions would arise

¹⁴⁴ TN-Dha: 250; Stagg 2017: 67.

¹⁴⁵ Tib. *nyi shu pa 'od gsal dri ma med pa'i ngang du /sku gsum dbyer med du gyur pas /srid pa'i bar ma do mi mthong zhing/'bras bu sku gsum rang dang zhen gyi don 'byung ba'i yon tan.*

according to the disciples' higher or lower thoughts and the particularities of their intentions. He also said that, having subdued the demon of negative emotions, the *dharmakāya* would manifest itself at the time of the first clear light. Further, he explained which signs of the Lama's *nirvāṇa* would appear. He sang:

When this flower, the *yogin*'s body,
In the *bardo* caused by the Lord of Death
Is on the point of moving on after subduing the demons,
The *yogin* will not see any *bardo*; he will be fine!

Having subdued the demons, he will go on to another life.
At that time, he will transmigrate to Khechara.
At that time, a pure illusory body free of clinging¹⁴⁶
In that *bardo* of perfection,¹⁴⁷
Through its connection with the profound Aural Transmission
lineage
Will be welcomed by the Lama, the *yidam* and luminosity,
And guided along the path of the unborn.

In that *bardo* with perfect qualities
Many different visions of me will appear.
With the loss of the wish-fulfilling jewel¹⁴⁸
Some will weep, some will rejoice,¹⁴⁹
[Some will] faint in their grieving.

¹⁴⁶ PT *dag pa'i sgyu lus zhen pa 'di*; RD *dag pa'i sgyu lus zhen med 'di*.

¹⁴⁷ Tib. *phu yul rdzogs pa'i bar do der* (?)

¹⁴⁸ From here the song is similar to TN-Dha: 854; Quintman 2010: 212. In Tsangnyön's version, in Zhijé Ripa 2004: 444, Demchok Nyengyü Biographies 1983: 187, and Jangchup Zangpo 1973: 124, the *dākinīs* sang it. By contrast, here and in Ögyenpa's Golden Rosary, Mila sings it.

¹⁴⁹ PT *la la rgyu zhing la la dag*; RD *la la ngu zhing la la dga'*.

At that moment, spontaneous fire will ignite on its own;
 The smoke will take the shape of a rainbow,
 Forming pennants, umbrellas and victory banners,
 Coiling like knots of good fortune and swastikas.
 There will be the crackling of a fire, sounds of horns and
 cymbals,
 And sounds of lutes and *damarus*.
 The flames of the fire will scatter like stars,
 Making outer, inner and secret offerings;
 A host of *ḍākinīs* will gather like clouds,
 And a continuous rain of enlightened activity of the emanation
 body
 Will ripen the harvest – the disciples.¹⁵⁰
 Ultimate reality, free from any birth whatsoever,
 Is unborn emptiness.
 Emptiness is itself without birth or cessation.
 Why should you doubt this?

Thus he sang.

Thus, it happened when the sun was at its peak on the fourteenth
 day of the month of the horse in the year of the bird, when he
 reached the age of eighty-two years. In later times, the
 particularities of the Jetsün's passing, those who had seen it and
 those who had not seen it, appeared to be as follows:
 When the Lama passed into Khechara, he displayed actions and
 miracles. Some saw the Lama riding a lion and departing in the
 sky with the *ḍākinīs*. The above is what those of superior
 capacities saw.

¹⁵⁰ PT *gdul bya'i lo tog smin par byed*; RD *gdul bya'i lo tog bsnyen par byed*.

Some saw the Lama showing a way of dying,¹⁵¹ and numberless *ḍākinīs* arrived, displaying numerous inner, outer and secret offerings.¹⁵² While the corpse was being consumed, the people experienced various excellent appearances of offerings: auspicious signs, music, rainbow light, umbrellas, victory banners, pennants, canopies, sounds of lutes and damarus, cymbals. The corpse transformed into a heap of *ringsel*,¹⁵³ taken into the sky to *ḍākinī*-land.

Thus, the Lama manifested the *dharmakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* spontaneously arose and various *nirmāṇakāyas* pervaded the ten directions. In this way, he accomplished various enlightened activities to guide the beings.

* * *

This is the fourth chapter, explaining the signs and meanings of the great Lama Milarepa's complete liberation, which spontaneously brought the three buddha bodies into existence.

I arranged in written form the life story of the emanation body of the Immaculate Secret Aural Transmission Instructions. For the benefit of the fortunate beings of later generations, I asked permission from the Lama, and to accord with the words of the Exalted One, I took the *ḍākinīs* as witnesses. [I did not write it] for the sake of my memories. I pray to the gods that we may drink the nectar of the wish-fulfilling gem of the practice lineage until the lower realms are empty. I wrote this to dispel

¹⁵¹ PT *bla ma 'dra tshul bstan nas*; RD *bla ma 'da' tshul bstan nas*.

¹⁵² PT+RD *pu tsa*; I take it to stand for puja.

¹⁵³ PT *dung rgyus drangs pa*; RD. *gdung rus rangs pa* (?).

obscurations in the same way as sunlight does. May the fortunate ones living on earth be able to meet this.

This innermost essence of the *ḍākinīs*, their heart secret, was arranged in written form by Bodhiradza, inspired by compassion, without wanting anything [for himself]. I wrote this to benefit the few future yogins who will exert themselves in practice. If I transgress this inspiration, I ask the *ḍākinīs* to forgive me. If my own wishes have inspired me, may I go to hell.

Ithi

Jetsün Mila's disciple, Ngendzong Repa, served [his master] for twenty-seven years. [This was written down by] his heart son, Gung Repa, a begging Indian mendicant blessed by the holy one and taken under his care.

[ToC](#)

5 – THE TEACHING TRANSMISSION FROM MARPA TO MILA IN THE HAGIOGRAPHIES

What can the life-and-song stories of Milarepa teach us regarding the Dharma transmission from Marpa to Milarepa?

This chapter contains translations or summaries of the episodes relative to the teachings Marpa gave to Mila in the different texts of the Milarepian corpus up to Tsangnyön Heruka. In this way, one can assess the developments that have occurred through time. The analysis also includes Marpa's life story in the same collections whenever there is any mention of the relationship between Marpa and Mila (in most Marpa biographies Milarepa is hardly mentioned). The sequence of the text analysis corresponds to the approach explained in Part One. The chapter ends with some comments.

Early Golden Rosary Biographies In Gampopa's Lineage

*Gampopa/Khyungtsangpa – 12th century*¹

From that day onwards he remained by the Lama's side. [Gampopa] has said that there are many stories about that [period]. Milarepa studied there with Lama Marpa for five years and requested instructions on the practice lineage.

*Lama Zhang – 12th century*²

¹ Quintman 2014a: 192.

² Lama Zhang (*Zhang g.yu brag pa brtson 'gru brags pa*, 12th century), 333: *rJe btsun mar pa'i spyang sngar ji ltar byon pa dang / de'i nyin mo rang nas nye gnas*

[Gampopa] has told many stories about how [Mila] came to Lord Marpa and became his attendant from that day. He served Lama Marpa for five years and asked him for oral instructions.

*Dönmo Ripa – first half 13th century*³

Together with them [the other disciples] he listened to the tantric commentaries and all the oral instructions.

Each time he carried a stone, the Lama gave him one teaching session. He bestowed The Six Teachings of Nāropa, which condense the meaning of the quintessence of the oral instructions of the tantras in few words.[...] The great Jetsün served the Lama for six years and eleven months. He gave him all the oral instructions without exception.

*Sangyé Bum – first half of the 13th century*⁴

byas pa la sogs pa lo rgyus mang du gsung / / bla ma mar pa lo lnga brten nas bdam ngag zhus.

³ rDo rje mdzes 'od, 182: *Khong rnams dang mnyam po rgyud 'grel dang gdams nag thams cad gsan no.*

183: *rdo khur re re bskyas kyin bla mas chos thun re gnang bas.*

184: *der rgyud sde bzhi 'i gdams ngag hril gyis dril nas bcud rnams phyung ste / tshig nyung don dril ba n'a ro 'i chos drug gnang ngo /.../ der rje btsun chen pos bla ma 'i nye gnas lo drug zla ba bcu gcig mdzad nas / gdams ngag ma lus par gnang ngo.* For an English translation, see Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen 2006: 124-128.

In his *Marpa Biography* Dönmo Ripa (Don mo ri pa, 12th century) mentions that Nāropa transmitted five of the formless *dākinī* teachings to Marpa and that the other four had to be requested from Kasoripa. Ngok Dode's *Marpa Biography*. (rNgog mDo sde, 12th century) mentions the same. See Ducher 2017: 289.

⁴ Sangyé Bum (Sangs rgyas 'bum, 12th-13th century), *Rwa lung dkar brgyud gser 'phreng*:

178: *De nas bla mas kyang dbang bskur tshad kyi zla la bcug / chos gsung tshad nyan la bcug / gdams ngag thams cad snang ngo.*

179: instructions received from Ngok: *dang po kho na 'pho ba 'i gdams ngag gnang / de nas bsre ba la sogs pa 'i gdams ngag gnang ngo / bla ma mar pas gnang*

Then, the Lama imparted empowerments to him; he made him listen to Dharma teachings and gave him all the oral instructions.

[teachings received from Ngok] First he gave the oral instructions on consciousness ejection (*'pho ba*), then oral instructions on blending (*bsre*) and the like. “There is no difference with what Lama Marpa had given to me; he [Ngok] seems to have a slightly more profound teaching on short-A *caṇḍalī* (*gtum mo a thung*),” [Mila] said.

Gyalthangpa – mid-13th century

Before looking at the teaching transmission from Marpa to Mila in Gyalthangpa’s *Life of Milarepa*, it is interesting to look at the same transmission in his *Life of Marpa*.

Gyalthangpa’s Life of Marpa:

- The transmission to Mila together with the other great disciples: He bestowed numberless teachings on the Tantra sections: the Mother Tantras – Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, Mahāmaya, Vajracatūhpita – the Father Tantras – Guhyasamāja, Yamāntaka the sworn enemy and Vajrabhairava – together with teachings on Kriya-, Caryā- and Yoga-tantra. Further, he gave upadeśas (*man ngag*) on the illusory body, dreaming, *caṇḍalī*, luminosity and *mahāmudrā*. Furthermore, he bestowed numberless ordinary teachings such as sūtras and treatises, so that the sound of Dharma resounded without interruption. He brought all his disciples to maturation and liberation.⁵

ba rang la yod pa dang khyad ma byung /gtum mo a thung khong la bag zab pa zhi byung gsung ngo.

⁵ Gyalthangpa (rGyal thang pa bde chen rdo rje, 13th century)

177: teachings received together with the other disciples:/ *mtshan nyid ldan pa'i bu chen tshogs pa la /ma rgyud dges pa rdo rje/ma ha' ma ya /rdo rje gdan bzhi*

- The transmission from Marpa to Mila alone:

After Lord Marpa from Lhodrak himself had transmitted oral instructions to the great disciples, Mila said: “Teachings on how to become enlightened through meditation and how to gather knowledge through learning are available also with other Lamas than Nāropa. However, instructions on how to awaken without meditation and upadeśas (*man ngag*) on how to get

la sogs pa'i rgyud rnams dang / pha rgyud gsang ba 'dus pa / gzhin rje dgra nag / rdo rje 'jigs byed la sogs pa'i rgyud rnams dang/ gzhan yang / bya rgyud / spyod rgyud / rnal 'byor gyi rgyud la sogs pa / brgyud sde 'i chos dpag tu med pa gsungs / gzhan yang man ngag gi chos/ sgyu lus dang / rmi lam dang/ 'od gsal dang / phyag rgya chen po la sogs pa man ngag gi chos yang tshogs gnang / mdo dang bstan bcos la sogs pa thun mong gi chos yang dpag tu med pa gnang nas chos sgra rgyun mi chad pa sgrags pas / gdul bya thams cad smin cing grol ba mdzad do.

179-182: *rJe mar pa lho brgag pa nyid kyis /bu chen rnams la gdams pa tshogs pa gnang yang / mid la na re / sgom pas sangs rgya ba dang / slabs pas shes pa'i chos / nyid kyi bla ma n'a ro pa min pa la 'dug / ma sgoms par sangs rgya ba'i chos dang / ma bslab par shes pa'i man ngag yod na / n'a ro pa'i chos mchog tu gyur pa lags pas / bdag cag la de lta bu'i chos cig 'dog na thugs rjes 'dzin par zhu zhus pa/ bla ma mar pa'i thugs dgongs la/ a pa mkhas pa chen po n'a ro pa de 'dra'i gdams ngag yod nges shes te / zhu ba ma byung 'dug dgongs/ mid la la de lta bu'i yod do nang par bya yis / der zhag 'tshams dam par gyis cig gsung / mid la 'tshams dam po la bcug nas / bla ma mar pas gsang nas gser cig sguyugs pas / bram ze'i bu mo lo rtsa lnga ma shi ba'i thod pa phyur ba gang byung / de rnams/ thams cad la gsang nas rgya gar gyi gnas su zangs kyis byon pas...*

Bla ma'i gsung nas / a pa bod na sprul pa'i sku bzhugs kyin yod par 'dug / phyogs kang na yod nga phyag 'tshal ba yin gsung nas / hog bzhengs te / bod na tshur dmigs pas phyag gsum 'tshal gyin 'dug / de lta bu'i gdams ngag de nga la yod te / khyed rang na ning nas nga la mi zhu 'dug / da stan gyis khyod rang nyon cig gsung nas / 'pho ba dang don gyi grong 'jug la sogs pa tshed pa cig gnang / de ltar nyams su blangs pas thams cad mngon du gyur ro / de nas dpal chen po n'a ro pas / mar pa blo gros kyi spyi gtsug tu zhabs gzhas ste / lung stan mgur ma 'di ltar du bzhes so / ang ge mar pa blo gros ka/ sngon du rje btsun tilli pas/ nga la lung stan 'di ltar gnang/ pu la ha ri'i dgon pa ru/ rang grol ye shes nyi ma shar / bho te'i ma rig mun sel la/ ye shes snang bas khyab par gyis / 'pho ba don gyi grong 'jug sogs / gdams ngag thams cad rdzogs par byin.

knowledge without studying would make Nāropa's teaching the highest. Therefore, please be compassionate and tell me if we have this kind of teaching." Lama Marpa thought: "Oh! I am sure the great wise Nāropa has this kind of oral instructions, but I did not request them." He told Mila that there were this kind of teachings. The next morning, he told him to stay in a closed retreat for some days. Then Lama Marpa enclosed Mila in strict retreat and secretly took one piece of gold, gathered as many *kapalas* of twenty-five-year-old deceased Brahmin girls as he could get and secretly took these with him on his trip to India, where he reached without obstruction.

- Then follows the account of Marpa's trip to India and difficulties in finding Nāropa, who finally appears to him when he is on the point of committing suicide. Marpa tells him the reason why he has come.

Nāropa replied: "Oh! It seems there are emanation bodies in Tibet! I will offer prostrations to the direction where they are." He stood up abruptly and, looking towards Tibet, offered three prostrations and said: "I do have this kind of oral instructions. Last year, you did not ask them to me; now listen carefully." He then gave him the [instructions on] consciousness ejection (*'pho ba*) and the ultimate transference for entering in another body (*don gyi grong 'jug*). Practising in this way, all became manifest [to Marpa].⁶

Then the glorious great Nāropa bowed down to Marpa Lodrö, and sang the following prophecy song:

Listen carefully, Marpa Lodrö! Before, the venerable Tillipa
gave me this prophecy:

⁶ Ngendzong Tönpa's *Marpa Biography* mentions that Marpa received the *'pho ba* and *grong 'jug* instructions from the Nepali Citerwa (Spyi ther ba), not from Nāropa (see Ducher 2017: 258); also Ögyenpa's and Khachö Wangpo's Marpa biographies and Tatshag Tse Wangyal's *Lho rong chos 'byung* (p. 31) mention the same.

At the remote place of Pullahari, the sun of self-liberating
primordial wisdom will shine.
Clear away the ignorance of Bhuti (the Tibetan?), and make
primordial wisdom appear and expand.
Give him complete instructions on consciousness ejection and
ultimate transference.

This is what [Nāropa] said; afterwards, he gave him the
complete oral instructions.

Nāropa then told him not to stay there but to return to Tibet.

This episode is the basis of what for later authors would become
Nāropa's prophecy about Mila to Marpa.

*Gyalthangpa's Life of Milarepa, King of the Jetsüins*⁷

[Marpa said]: "In general, Mila, you are a person who is a
suitable vessel. Now, oral instructions are necessary for a
suitable vessel. Your preliminary negativities and the like are
completely eliminated. It will now be sufficient to give you the
main part, the oral instructions (*gdams ngag*). I will give you
all that is needed, so stay at my place." Thus he said.

The Lama said to the monks:

"Now, this year is very restrictive. I will withdraw into solitude,
not seeing anyone for six months." Saying this, he enclosed
himself in retreat for all of them.

⁷ rGyal thang pa bde chen rdo rje, 214: *phyir mid la khyod snod dang ldan pa 'i gang zag cig 'dug / gdams ngag gi snod du rung ba yin / khyod kyi sngon 'gro sdig sbyong la sogs pa yongs su tshar bas / da dngos gzhi gdams ngag phog pas chog par yod pas / khyod la gang dgos ster ba yin pas nga 'i rtsa ru sdod cig gsung nas / gra pa rnams kyi rtsa ru bla ma 'i zhal nas / da lo 'i lo 'di shin tu dog / zla ba drug bya ba da su dang yang mi phrad par 'tshams gcod do gsung nas / gzhan thams cad la 'tshams bcad do / rje mid la nyid la dbang gdams ngag sems bskyed la sogs pa 'i chos thams cad bum pa gang yod tshul du gnang ngo.*

To Lord Mila, he bestowed all the Dharma teachings: empowerments, oral instructions, cultivation of the enlightened attitude (*sems bskyed*) and the like, as if filling up a vase.

Ngendzong Tönpa – 12th Century⁸

When he finished the fifth storey [of the tower], he received many commentaries, tantric explanations, empowerments and blessings. When he finished the seventh storey, the Lady, the Mother, said: “This boy has suffered numberless trials, just as many as the Jetsün [Marpa] himself has suffered, and many years have gone by. I request you to give him instructions.” So [Marpa] gave teachings on the cycles of the path of means (*thabs lam gyi skor*), and many essential teachings on blending and consciousness ejection (*bsre 'pho*). Five times, he also obtained complete empowerment. He received the secret names “Laughing Vajra” (*bzhad pa rdo rje*) and “Vajra-Victory Banner” (*rdo rje rgyal mtshan*).

[episode while staying with Ngok]

Mila expressed his concern that he was only accumulating negativities through [the creation of] hailstorms. In response, Ngok reassured him: “Son, I have instructions Nāropa bestowed to Lama Marpa. Before he finally received them, he had to request these three times. He has not given these to

⁸ Ngan rdzong ston pa Byang chub rgyal po, *Mi la rdo rje rgyal tshan gyi rnam thar* (translated in Chapter 4, *The Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*). Ngendzong Tönpa’s *Marpa Biography* is included in Möntsepa’s (Mon rtse Kun dga’ dPal ldan, 15th century) *dKar-brgyud gser-phreng*; it has been studied by Ducher (2017: 46-54) and translated in her Appendix 2 (2017: 257-73). There is no mention of Milarepa in the biography. He is mentioned only in the colophon, which states the stories and songs of Marpa were given to Ngendzong Tönpa by Milarepa and Marpa Goleg.

anybody, and now I give them to you.” And he bestowed the short-A *caṇḍalī* on him.

[episode on his return to Lhodrak]

Marpa gave him the empowerments and blessings of the Precious Secret,⁹ The Aural Transmission of Saṃvara, and oral instructions of the Coemergent Lady [Vajrayoginī].¹⁰ He gave teachings and explanations on Hevajra and completed the five families of Guhyasamāja, meditation in one seat.¹¹ In particular, he gave five of the nine formless-*dākinī* teaching cycles, and said that the other four remained in India and that he should go to look for them. Lord Marpa said: “You are someone with great perseverance who does whatever the Lama orders to you; you should primarily apply yourself to practice.”

Early Golden Rosary Biographies in Rechungpa’s Lineage

Jangchup Zangpo / Martön – 12th century

[After returning to Lhodrak with Ngok]

Mila stayed there for about half a month. Then Ngok Zhungpa prepared to leave, and so did Mila.¹²

⁹ *bDe mchog snyan rgyud gsang ba rin po che.*

¹⁰ *gDams ngag jo mo lhan cig skyes ma.*

¹¹ *gSang 'dus rigs lnga gdan cig la bsgom pa .*

¹² Byang chub bzang po, *bDe mchog mkha' 'gro sñan rgyud*, 86. The *Marpa Biography* in this collection – possibly written by Martön (Mar ston tshul khrims 'byung gnas, 12th century), as explained in the first chapter of this book – mentions that Nāropa bestowed the oral instructions of the Dākinī Aural Transmission on Marpa at Pullahari. Here, we find a first reference to the difference between the instructions of the path of means and the Aural Transmission. We learn that Nāropa said: *sngar gyi de yan chad rgyud dang 'brel ba thabs lam gyi gdams ngag bya ba yin / da byin rlabs dang 'brel ba snyan brgyud kyi gdams ngag bya ba yod do /.../ snyan rgyud kyi dbang byin rlabs gdams pa dang bcas pa rdzogs par gnanng ngo /* “[Those I gave you] up to now are called ‘oral instructions of the path of

The Lotsāwa said, “You stay here. Last year, your mind was purified, and this Lama received a prophecy command from the *dākinī*. Now I have to see whether it corresponds or not. I hold the Aural Transmission, and have not given it to anyone. I will teach it to you, without any mistakes. In case I do not meet him again, one time you should teach it to my son Dode.”¹³

At that time, [Mila] did not stay; he went to serve Ngok. Later, when he returned from Zhung, following the advice of Ngok’s wife he carried a bag with a bolt of silk as a present. He [Marpa] completed the Aural Transmission in forty-eight days. Then [Marpa] said: “Do not stay here any longer. It would not be good if the great sons would hear this. Go to Tö and meditate to become a *siddha*. You are still young and have great faith, perseverance and great wisdom. Go to India to get five teachings of the formless [*dākinīs*], such as *awareness: the*

means connected with tantra.’ However, I also hold oral instructions of the Aural Transmission, connected with blessings.” Then he bestowed initiations, blessings and complete advice regarding the Aural Transmission.

87: before Marpa’s departure to Tibet, Nāropa gave him a prophecy about the *lus med mkha’* ‘gro: he had to come back to India to find five more teachings.[From now on, five of these teachings are still in India].

- ¹³ *bDe mchog mkha’* ‘gro *sñan rgyud*, 1: 110: *zla ba phyed tsam bsdad / rngog bzhung pa chas tsam na mi las kyang chas nas yongs pas /lo tsha ba’i zhal nas khyod sdod cig / na ning nas snod brtags rgyud shyangs pa yin / bla ma mkha’* ‘gros lung *bstan pa yin pas de lta yin te de lta min bya ba su la yang ma byin pa’i snyan rgyud yod / ngas khyod la phyin ci ma log par bslab s/ nga rang gis ma* ‘phrod na khyod lan cig nga’i bu mdo sde la slobz zhig gsung / da res ma sdad par rngog gi *zhabs tog la phyin / phyis gzhung nas yongs pas rngog pa’i jo mos gros brab pa la snyan pas thugs skyal cig dang dar yug rten bskyer nas ongs / snyan rgyud zhag bzhi bcu rtsa brgyad pa la tshar bar mdzad nas/ da* ‘dir ma sdod cig / bu chen tshogs thos na sdig tu ong bas stod du song la bsgom shig grub pa thob ong gis / khyod na so yang gzhon ded pa dang snying rus she rab che bar ‘dug pa / rig pa ye shes sgron me la sogs pa lus med kyi chos lnga khyod gya gar du song la n’a ro’i slob ma gang la ‘dug pa la zhus la nga la yang khyer shog gsung. This indicates that, in Martön’s opinion, Dode was still alive when Mila left Marpa.

torch of primordial wisdom and the like. Request them from wherever there are disciples of Nāropa and bring them back to me. ”

Ogyenpa – 13th century

In Ogyenpa’s *Life of Marpa*, we find details of the single transmission of the Aural Transmission from Nāropa to Marpa and the teachings Marpa received on his trips to Nepal and India. There is also one reference to Milarepa:

[*episode at Pullahari, Nāropa to Marpa*] “This is this, I have given you the essence. Before, I have explained numberless instructions to you, but this is like the quintessence of butter,” he said.¹⁴

In a song to Tsurtön and Marpa Goyak, Marpa narrates the instructions he has received:

“From the blessed Nepali, I heard the famous Catūhpita and obtained the oral instructions for consciousness ejection and transference of the consciousness in another body. [...] From the gatekeeper Nāro Panchen, I heard the profound Hevajra tantra and obtained instructions on the union of blending and consciousness-ejection. In particular, I requested inner heat and karmamudrā instructions. He pointed out the essence of the Aural Transmission.”

¹⁴ Grub thob O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, 138-39: episode Nāropa-Marpa at Pullahari, with *snyan rgyud* transmission in *cig brgyud*: *de te yin ste de nyid byin / ngas de snga khyod la dpag tu med pa bstan kyang / mar gyi snying po lta bu'i 'di yin gsungs/*

164: *rJe byin rlabs can kyi bal po la / rgyud gnyen por grags pa'i gdan bzhi mnyan / 'pho ba grong 'jug gi gdams ngag thob / sgo srung na ro pan chen la / rgyud zab mo dgyes pa'i rdo rje thos / bsre 'pho mtshams sbyor gdams ngag thob / khyad par gtum mo las rgya zhus/ snyan rgyud kyi gnad la ngo sprod byas.*

167: *mTshur ston me rngog mgo yags bzhi / snying dang 'dra ba'i bu bzhi yin / bstan pa dar ba de gtsugs lags / mtshar lan ma rngag ci gsung bka'i bzhin bsgrub pa de / mid la rdo rje rgyal mtshan yin / gdams ngag sbrug pa de chug lags.*

In another song, Marpa said:

Tsurtön, Me[tön], Ngok and Goyak are four sons similar to my heart; they will make the doctrine flourish. However, Mila Dorje Gyaltzen is the marvellous one who never spoke back to me and practised everything I ordered him. I have given the complete oral instructions to him.”

Ogyenpa’s *Life of Milarepa* mentions:

They made a strict retreat. The first evening, he [Marpa] consecrated the place; the second night, he performed the preparatory rituals; the third night, [he bestowed] the main body; and the fourth night, he offered thanksgiving. Within this [time], he granted both empowerments and blessings. Then he said: “Son, this is this, but it is not the essence. I have this kind of oral instructions. The *ḍākinī*, Tilopa, Lama Nāropa and myself hold these in a single [one-to-one] transmission. I had thought of giving them to Dode. Dode and you are both suitable vessels. Nobody is comparable to you both in the sky and on the earth. All the *ḍākinīs* rejoice in you, so I have to give these oral instructions to you. In the future, you should also give these oral instructions to one fortunate person like Dode. You should certainly not give them to anyone who is not a suitable vessel.” Thus he said, sealing his words with the seal of secrecy. He then finished explaining the Aural Transmission gradually and in proper order. He also gave various oral instructions on the path of means, and completed everything. The Lama then laid his hand on Mila’s head and said: “For one who has the lineage transmission and devotion, luminosity will be uninterrupted. Such a person will not see the villages of the intermediate states. Many understandings of the two aims will arise. A person who meditates on the essential meaning of the ultimate vehicle – limitless, uninterrupted luminosity without mental elaborations – will not see the appearances of the intermediate states. Besides, to others he will appear in various form bodies.”

So he is said to have said. He completed everything in four months. The second month was the month of the secrets of the *dākinī*. It was strictly secret. They made sure that nobody else knew what was happening. In the third month, he explained Dharma teachings. Then he gave the following advice: “Awareness – the torch of primordial wisdom – and the like, of these five teaching cycles only the name is revealed. You are the one to whom they will come. Try to find disciples of Nāropa and see if you can take them with you and bring them here.” So he said, but he did not bring any gold. Then he opened the retreat. [Mila] offered prostrations and prayers to the Lama and hastily left.¹⁵

¹⁵ Grub thob O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, 197: *'tsham dam po cig byas nas / dang po'i nub sa chog / nub gnyis pa la sta gon / nub gsum pa la dngos gzhi ma dang / bzhi pa la gtang rag byas nas / dbang dang byin rlabs gnyis sbug mdzad nas / bu de de yin ste de nyid men / nga la 'di 'dra ba'i gdam ngag yod / mkha' 'gro ma dang / te lo pa dang bla ma n'a ro pa dang / nga la yang cig rgyud yin / 'di mdo' sde la sbyin snyam / mdo' sde khyed gnyis snod ldan du 'dug / khyod gnyis gnam sa 'gran du ma btub pas / mkha' 'gro ma thams cad khyod la dga' bar 'dug pas / nga gdam ngag 'di khyod la sbyin dgos / de nas khyod kyi kyang phyis gdam ngag 'di / mdo' sde la sog pa skal ldan cig la byin / snod dang mi ldan pa su thod thod la ma byin gsung nas bka' rgya dam par mdzad / de nas snyan rgyud tsho rim par khrigs kyis bshad tshar bar byas nas / gzhan yang thab lam gyi gdam ngag mang po ngnang / thams cad rdzogs par byas / de nas bla ma'i phyag mid la'i sbyir bor bzhag ste / rgyud ldan mos gus ldan pa la / 'od gsal ba ni rgyun chad med / bar do'i grong khyer des mi mthong / don gnyis mkhyen pa du ma 'char / theg pa mthar thug snying po'i don / mtha' bralyid la mi byed pa 'od gsal rgyun chad med bsgom na / bar do'i snang ba de la med / gzhan de na gzugs sku sna tshogs 'char / ces gsung skad do / zla ba bzhi la tshar bar byas pa yin / de yang zla ba gnyis pa de la / dha ki ma'i gsang ba yin par 'dug / dam por gsang ba yin par 'dug / gzhan sus kyang / ci byed cha med ma 'phrig par byas / zla ba gsum pa de la da chos 'chad par shes par byas so / de nas zhal lta mdzad pa ni / rig pa ye shes sgron ma la sogs pa ming tsam gyis kyang grol grol 'dra ba'i chos skor lnga yod pas / khyod kyis 'ong ba cig 'dug pas / khyod rgya gar du song la / n'a ro pa'i slob ma kun rtsad chod i lon ltos la khyer la shog gsung nas gser ni ma bskur / de nas 'tsham phyé / bla ma la phyi phag 'tshal / bla ma la gsol ba btad nas / shed kyis song ba.*

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples and its variants – 13th-early 14th century¹⁶

Mila returns to Marpa together with Ngok. Marpa confers on both of them the four symbols of the profound empowerments (*dbang zab mo'i brda bzhi*)¹⁷ together with oral pointing-out instructions on *caṇḍalī* and all the instructions and reading transmissions of the profound classes of tantra. The following day, Marpa sings a song of auspiciousness during a ritual feast.¹⁸ Ngok's wife calls her husband and the great magician back. Mila asks for permission, and Marpa tells him to come back soon as he has some more reading transmissions and instructions to give to him. Before leaving, Ngok asks Marpa for his wish-fulfilling scroll of oral teachings (*shog dril*). Marpa wants a gift in exchange for the scroll, and Ngok brings him a lame goat, as he has already offered all of his cattle to Marpa. Mila says he has nothing to offer but a copper kettle. Marpa is happy with the offering and describes its value.

Marpa then gives oral instructions and profound empowerments to his four main disciples, different from the

¹⁶ The “Zhepé Dorje Compendia” is the name chosen in this study to refer to the corpus of biographical compendia with life and song stories of Milarepa. See Chapter 1b and Blancke, K. & E. Bock. 2024. *New Research on the Mi la ras pa Biographical Compendia*. For the eight versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, see also Song Chart 7. The episode summarised here comes in Ms-Oxford: 8b-12b; RBC-Pt:15-26; Ms-Drukpa 12a-18a; Ms-Gansu 22:243-246 & 23: 3-6; Ms-Newark: 9b-15a; Ms-Bordier: 13a-20a; Ms-BDRC: 14b-23b; Ms-Lhasa:12a-17b.

¹⁷ In the more recent versions, this is corrected to *dbang zab mo brda' bzhi*, the four symbolical empowerments (RBC-Pt:15, Ms-Drukpa: 12a; Ms-Gansu 22: 243).

¹⁸ TN-Dha 88, Quintman 2010: 75.

other [instructions?]. One evening, the Lama confers the empowerment of Nairātmyā. The following day, he inspects what each of the disciples is doing to decide which [specific] teaching he should give each of them. He thinks of giving the “*caṇḍalī* that ignites a dry branch of wood” to Mila.¹⁹

Then, he takes Mila to a secluded place, asks Dagmema to prepare a ritual feast and confers the four symbolical empowerments of the Aural Transmission, together with oral instructions on the essence of *caṇḍalī*, upadeśas on prāṇāyāma, blending and consciousness ejection, and naked instructions (*dmar khrid*) on the five stages, all of which he points out exactly, without withholding anything and without any superficiality.²⁰

He then sings the following song:²¹

¹⁹ E.g., Ms-Oxford 9b, Ms-Lhasa 13b – *gtum mo sdong skam la me sbar ba*.

²⁰ *sNyan rgyud brda'i dbang bzhi dang / gtum mo gnad kyi gdams ngag / srog rtsol / bsre 'pho / snyan rgyud kyi man ngag / rim lnga'i dmar khrid la sogs rnams ngo legs par ngo sprad de / sba sri dang kha zhen med par gnang nas /*

²¹ The song comes similarly in TN-Dha 120, Quintman 2010: 107. *Na mo bka' drin can la gsol ba 'debs / bsam pa'i gdams ngag de ka nyid / mang po thos 'dod gyeng ba'i rgyu / gnad kyi gsung ngag sems la 'chongs / de de mang yang de nyid med / sdong bu mang yang 'bras bu med / yon tan yin yang don tan[bstan] med / de snga bslabs yang 'di mthong med / bshad rgyud mang yang phan pa med / phan snying la thogs pa dam pa'i nor / nor phyug po 'dod na 'di la dril / chos nyon mongs 'dul ba thabs kyi lam / lam rtsan sa 'dzin na 'di la dril/ sems kho thag chod pa chog shes kyi dpon / dpon bzang po 'dod na 'di la dril / 'khor ba la ngu spro'i sgyid lug skyur / mi med kyi rdza brag pha'i mkhar / grogs med gcig pu lha'i lus[yul] / sems la sems zhon chad med gyi rta / rang lus dgon pa lha'i khang / yengs med kyi dge shyor sman gyi mchog / don dang ldan pa'i skyes bu la / don la thogs med kyi gdam ngang byin / nga dang gdam ngag khyod dang gsum / ma rul ma bsad ma skams pa / bu'i lag tu bzhag pa 'di / 'bras bu lo 'dab rgyas par shog/*

Remarkably, the Aural Transmission appears as the path of means in this song. The typical Nyengyü terminology, as would be seen later in the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies and Zhijé Ripa's text, is here expressed as a more general statement.

I pray to the Lamas who are so kind.
These oral instructions on which to ponder,
wanting to hear many becomes cause of distraction.
Keep in your heart the essential instructions.

Much this and that without the essential
Is like many trees but no fruit.
It may have its merits but doesn't show the ultimate.
You may have studied it earlier but without seeing "this".
There are many explanatory tantras without benefit.
Taking to heart that which is beneficial is the sublime
treasure.
If it's a treasure you desire, concentrate upon this.
Teachings for taming afflictions are the path of means.
To keep a secure path, concentrate upon this.
A resolute mind is a master of contentment.
If it's a fine master you wish for, concentrate upon this.
Give up the whining and slot of saṃsāra.

A rock crag with no one around is your father's house.
A friendless and lonely abode, the deity's home/body.
Mind riding mind is a tireless steed;
Your body: a wilderness hermitage, the deity's temple.
Unwavering virtue is the best of all medicines.

To the one endowed with meaningful [purpose]
I gave oral instructions lacking nothing.
Me, my oral instructions, and you, these three,
I place in the hands of my son,
And thus without rotting, scattering or withering,
May the leaves of their fruit blossom forth.

After this song, he continues: "It is not suitable to give these
oral instructions of mine to someone who is not like my son

José Dode. Do not give them to just anybody!” So he says, sealing his words.

After this, Mila asks permission to leave. Marpa tells him to wait a few days, then he says he should go to retrieve four²² of the nine teachings of the formless *ḍākinīs* still in India and advises him to dedicate himself to practice. When he experiences difficulties in his practice, he should open a teaching scroll he gives him and look at it. Later, Dagmema sings a farewell song.²³ Mila replies with his song of departure to Tsang.²⁴ Marpa replies with a song of heartfelt advice.²⁵ Marpa and Dagmema accompany him for a whole morning and offer another ritual feast. Marpa takes Mila by the hand and tells him that he had a dream revelation that Mila will be the holder of his lineage. He offers his dream about the Four Pillars in a song, describing and interpreting the dream symbols.²⁶ Then Mila leaves, after mutual prayers and looking back many times.

Late Biographies in Rechungpa’s Lineage

²² In Ms-Oxford – and its copy RBC-Pt – the teachings to retrieve from India are only four, as in Ngendzong Tönpa’s *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner* and Dönmo Ripa and Ngod Dode’s *Marpa Biography*. In the other versions of the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu, Ms-Newark, Ms-Bordier, Ms-BDRC, Ms-Lhasa), the second stratum compendia (DNM-RD, *A River of Blessings*, Ms-BL) and TN, there are five.

²³ TN-Dha 128; Quintman 2010: 114.

²⁴ Tsangnyön split this song into two parts; TN-Dha 117 & 125; Quintman 2010: 104 & 111.

²⁵ TN-Dha 126; Quintman 2010: 111.

²⁶ Here it is Marpa’s dream, told only to Mila; by contrast, starting from Khachö Wangpo’s text, the dream will be Mila’s and Marpa will interpret it, and so it will also be in Tsangnyön’s text.

In the following two 14th-century works in the Golden Rosary texts in Rechungpa's lineage, a new element emerges – the accurate description of the difference between the path of means and the Aural Transmission. Until this point, its specific terminology – this is this, but it is not the essence – appeared only in the exchange between Nāropa and Marpa in the Marpa biographies. In the life story of Milarepa, this description came only in Ögyenpa's text.

Demchok Nyengyü Biographies – *Life of Milarepa* –²⁷ and
Zhi-jé Ripa's *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*²⁸ –
14th century

Marpa said: "This is this, but it is not the essence; so it is said. "This is this" refers to the oral instructions of the path of means connected with tantra. These are the explanations I gave you before. All four of Marpa's great sons have nothing but these. "This is not the essence" refers to the oral instructions of the Aural Transmission connected with blessings. Lord Nāropa said: "The cakravartin king detains a jewel, the birds of the five families that fly in Dharmatā's expanse". This is a single transmission. Telopa gave it only to Nāropa and to nobody else. And Nāropa gave it only to me, to nobody else. I was also looking for a suitable vessel and saw nobody superior to you. My son Dode and you are both equally capable of benefitting the lineage. As he is slightly weaker than you, I thought of not giving it to Dode. Anyway, you are more suitable, therefore I give it to you. Then, when Dode will become suitable, give it to him. I thought of giving it slowly, but you and my wife

²⁷ *bDe mchog sñan brgyud Biographies*, 1984. The *Life of Marpa* inserted in the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies (1-131) is the one written by Shamar Khachö Wangpo (see below), and it does not belong to the Aural Transmission Lineage. Our episode in Mila's life story comes on pp. 148-155.

²⁸ *Zhi byed ri pa, nyi zla'i 'od zer sgron me.*

created confusion, so it got slightly postponed. Meanwhile, you have become more suitable than Dode, so I give it to you; if not, I would have given it to Dode. If I would give it to him because he is the son of the Lama even though he is weaker, that would bring harm to you.”

After saying this, he conferred the entire Aural Transmission with its blessings and oral instructions. “Regarding what Lord Nāropa has said, “The birds of the five families fly in Dharmatā’s expanse”, he referred to the names of five instructions, which I will now reveal.

-Awareness: the torch of primordial wisdom.

-The network of nāḍīs, prāṇas and cakras.

-Equal taste, the mirror of outer phenomena.

-Self-liberation: mahāmudrā.

-Great bliss: the precious jewel of speech.

These are the five. Although I will not teach them now, these are part of your oral instructions.” So he said and did not bestow them. He continued: “As you have the necessary discriminating wisdom and perseverance, and these [instructions] might still be available in India with some disciple of Lord Nāropa, hurry up and go there to get them.” So he said. While Mila was preparing to go there, during a parting ritual offering organised [by Marpa], [Marpa] also sang a song of a prophecy received in his sleep.²⁹

²⁹ *bDe mchog sñan brgyud Biographies*, 153: *Mar pa'i gsung nas / de de yin te de nyid min bya ba yin / de de yin te bya ba rgyud dang 'brel ba'i thabs lam gyi gdams ngag bya ba khyod la sngar bstan pa de rnams yin ste / mar pa'i bu bzhi la yang de las med do / de nyid min bya ba byin rlabs dang 'brel ba snyan rgyud kyi gdams nga / rje n'a ro pa'i zhal nas/ 'khor lo sgyur rgyal rin chen 'dzin / rigs lnga bya 'phur chos nyid klong / zhes gsungs pas/ 'di cig rgyud yin pas / te lo pas kyang n'a ro pa cig po min pa la ma gnang / n'a ro pas kyang nga min pa la gnang ba med / ngas kyang snod ldan btsal bas khyod pas drag pa ma mthong / nga'i bu mdo sde dang khyod gnyis brgyud mnyam pa tshod dang / en zhen tsam yin na 'ang / mdo sde la byin snyam pa min no/ gang gi phyogs nas khyod grag par 'dug pas*

Zhijé Ripa

The narrative of the teaching transmission from Marpa to Mila is almost identical to the one in the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies. At the end of the episode, the following is added:³⁰

After receiving the teachings, Mila wanted to go to his village and offered the song of request to leave. Then Marpa said he

*da khyod la ster ba yin / go le sbyin snyam tsa na / khyod dang jo mo dang gnyis
tug tug zer ba des bag tsam 'gyangs pa yin gyi / da khyod kyis mdo sde nas drag
pa byung na byin / ma byung na mdo sde la byin / bla ma 'i sras yin snyam pa 'i
zhen pa dang bcas pas byin na khyod rang la nyes pa ong bas yin no gsung nas
snyan rgyud kyi dbang dang byin rlabs dang / gdams ngag thams cad rdzogs par
gnang nas rje n'a ro 'i zhal nas / rigs lnga bya 'phur chos nyid klong / gsung nas
gdams ngag ming gi grol grol 'dra ba lnga yod de / rig pa ye shes sgron me / rtsa
rlung dra mig 'khor lo / ro snyoms phyi 'i me long / rang grol phyag rgya chen po
/ bde chen gsung gi rin chen lnga yod de / de dngos su ma bstan na yang / don
gyis khyod rang gi gdams ngag gi khongs na yod kyis gsungs nas ma gnang bas /
khyod kyi shes rab dang snying rus gnyis kas yong bas 'dug pas / da rung rje n'a
ro pa 'i slob ma 'dra rgya gar na yod srid pas / khyod rgyug la long gsung ngo /
der 'gro bar chas te phyi phyag gi tshogs mchod byas dus su rnal lam lung bstan
gyi mgur yang gsungs.*

Note that here it is still Marpa who has the dream of the four pillars.

- ³⁰ Zhi byed ri pa 294-96: the same episode as above, with a few minor differences:
-*rigs lnga bya 'phur chos nyid rlung*: the birds of the five families fly in the wind of the Dharmatā.
-*jo mo dang khyod ma smad kyis tug tug zer ba de / sbyin en rjes tsam yin no /
gdams ngag sbyin sngas pa des / khyod la lo kha cig sgrub rtags 'gyang ba cig
yong dogs yod de / da rung lo kha cig nas byin na physis grub thag nye ba yin te /
da khyod kyis mdo sde las snod drag pa 'dug na de la byin* / “My wife and you,
mother and son, created confusion; otherwise, I would have postponed giving it
for a while. Now that I have given you the instructions earlier, I suspect the signs
of success in the practice will be delayed for a few years. If I had given them a
few years later, the signs of success would be closer. Now you have become a
more suitable vessel than Dode, so I conferred them to you.” (I am not quite sure
of this translation).

should stay on. During the night Marpa had the dream of the Four Pillars and explained the dream and its meaning to Milarepa in a song, after which Mila left with Ngok.³¹

Some other interesting parts in Zhijé Ripa's text – regarding teachings Mila bestowed on his disciples – are shortly addressed in Chapter 8.³² One crucial point Mila refers to is that the Two Segments (*brtag gnyis*) of the Hevajra Root Tantra is the background teaching (*rgyab chos*) he had received eighteen times, sixteen times from Marpa and two times from Ngok.³³

Jangchup Zangpo – 16th century³⁴

Here we find only a very short mention:

“Then Lama Marpa gave him the oral instructions of the Aural Transmission and the like.”

Shamar Khachö Wangpo, Möntsepa and the Dochen Kagyü
Rosary

Shamar Khachö Wangpo, 1350-1405

The second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's *Life of Marpa*³⁵ comes in the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies. It is strongly influenced by Ogyenpa. There is no mention of Milarepa in the biography.

³¹ Zhi byed ri pa: 296-300; the song included is identical to the version in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

³² See Chapter 8.

³³ Zhi byed ri pa: 379.

³⁴ Byang chub bzang po 2004: 160, *de nas bla ma mar pa snyan brgyud la sogs pa'i gdam ngag gnang ngo*.

³⁵ Zhwa dmar mkha' spyod dbang po *Chos kyi rje mnga' bdag mar pa lo tstsha'i rnam par thar pa gsang ba mdzod kyi lde mig*. In bDe mchog snyan brgyud biographies 1-131.

In his *Life of Dharma Lord Mila Rechen* called *Clouds of Blessings*,³⁶ on Mila's return to Marpa after his stay with Ngok, Marpa discovers that Ngok has given him initiations and asks Ngok why he did so. At this point, Dagmema tells him she was the one who had requested Ngok. Marpa takes an acacia stick, and she runs away. Marpa calls her back and requests her to bring him a *kapala* with inner offerings. He offers it to the Jetsün, who drinks all of its content. Then Marpa apologises for the rough way he has treated Mila, although Mila has always maintained a pure view.

“However,” he says, “you womenfolk have only a small intellect. If I had managed to apply the punishment nine times on this son of mine, in our Tibet, many people would have obtained a rainbow body, and [Mila] would have become fully enlightened without leaving behind any bodily remains.”

He then sends Ngok away and explains the symbolic meaning of the offering of the copper kettle to Mila (identical to the explanation in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*).

At this point, six pages are missing in the Rumtek version, which unfortunately leaves a gap in the narrative. To fill this void, we have to refer to the *dbu med* version.³⁷

³⁶ *Chos rje mi la ras chen gyi nram par thar pa byin rlabs kyi sprin phung zhes bya ba*. In *The Collected Writings (gSuñ-'bum) of the Second Zhwa dmar mKha'spyod dba'i po*, 1978a: 214. (2010, 24: 361).

³⁷ BDRC *dbu med* version p. 23 (2010, 24: 361): *Da do nub nas dbang bskur bya yis bsam ste dbang mdzad pas bla ma 'khor lo bde mchog dngos su zhal gzig / dbang tshar ba dang / da ngad rang pha sras bsgrub pa bya'o gsung nas dpon slob sku 'tshams la bzugs / rgyud dang 'gral pa gdams ngag tu bcas pa bum pa gang phy'o'i tshul du mdzad / khyad par du ye shes kyi da kis thugs las byung ba'i gdams pa / chos drug bsre 'pho'i gdams ngag zhib rgyas su gnam / chos nams*

Then he said: “Now, I’ve been thinking of giving you empowerment from tonight onwards.” He gave the empowerment, and Mila saw the Lama manifest with the face of Cakrasaṃvara.³⁸ Then he added: “Now we, father and son, will practise together.” So, the teacher and the student closed themselves in retreat. He taught oral instructions about the tantras and the commentaries, like filling up a vase. In particular, he gave the instructions coming from the heart of the wisdom *ḍākinī*, The Six Teachings, oral instructions on blending and consciousness ejection, in a detailed and extensive way. After finishing all the teachings, he said: “Now go to meditate at the Narnya cave of Lhodrak.” The Jetsün went there, and during his practice, he received a prophecy command from a *ḍākinī*. He went to the Lama and asked him for a special transference instruction. Marpa replied he had to return to India and did so. The great Jetsün served both his wife and son. After one year had gone by, the Lama came back. Later, he again gave him teachings and oral instructions. The following year, his son Darma Dode was killed. In the evening, during the offering ceremony, the Jetsün, sitting near the Lama, asked: “Great Lama, as your incomparable son will not be able to work

*ma lus par rdzogs pa la / da khyod lho brag rnya rnya'i phug la sgom du song
gsung / rje btsun der byon zhing thugs dam mdzad pa'i tshe / da ki'i lung bstan
byung nas bla ma'i drung du byon te / khyad par du 'pho ba'i gdams pa zhus pas
/ kho bo'i rgya gar du lan gcig 'gro'o gsung nas rgya gar du gshegs / rje btsun
chen pos yum sras gnyis kyi zhabs tog mdzad / lo gcig lon tsam na bla mas chen
po phyags phebs / slar yang chos gdams ngag mang du gnang / de'i phyi lo sras
dar ma mdo sde sku gsad / de'i dus kyi mchod pa'i nub mo / rje btsun gyis bla ma
chen po lags bsras 'gran zla med kyi 'dul 'bya rnams kyi bsod nams la ma shong
/ da chos rgyud gang gis 'dzin gang dang gang du ji ltar dar gsung bar zhu zhus
pas/ bu khyod rang rmi lam thob dang gsal bar 'ong gis gsung.*

³⁸ This is the first mention of the manifestation of Cakrasaṃvara at the time of initiation, although here it is not as a maṇḍala in the sky.

for the benefit of those who are to be disciplined, who will now uphold the teaching lineage? Please tell us how and by whom this will happen.” “Son, this will become clear from a dream you will have,” Marpa replied.³⁹

Then Mila has the dream of the Four Pillars. He offers the dream in a song and asks Marpa to interpret it. Marpa invites his four main disciples and sings the song with the explanation of Mila’s dream. Then Marpa bestows the most adequate teachings on the four main disciples. He again sends Mila to practise in retreat, so Mila stays there for many years. He has many experiences and realisations and offers his practice to the Lama as a means to express his gratitude. Later, Mila dreams of a *ḍākinī* telling him to go south. There, through the blessing of the *ḍākinī*, realisation will be near. Saying this, she extends a white cloth in the sky. In a later dream session, he dreams of returning to his village. His mother has died, the house is destroyed and his sister is gone. He starts to weep, and his whole cushion is wet with tears. He wakes up, overcome with unbearable sadness. So he goes to the Lama and requests permission to leave with two songs.⁴⁰ The Lama first tells him to stay; he gives him more

³⁹ From now on, the dream of the pillars would be Mila’s, and Marpa would explain it. As can be seen, there is no mention of the Aural Transmission.

⁴⁰ Khachö Wangpo *dbu med* version, 31b [2010, 24: 368] *Nub cig gi rmi lam na / da ki ma bu med kyi cha byed du byed pa cig gi zhal nas lho shal gyi phyogs su song zhig* [2010: *lho bal gyi mtshams su song*] *dang / da ki ’i bying rlabs ’jug cing ’grub thag nye bar ’ong ngo/ zhes ras dkar po zhig nam mkha’ la dpyangs pa rmis / yang de’i rjes su mnal thun cig la / ’khrungs yul du phebs / yum ’das / khang pa zhig / sring mo ’khyams pa zhig rmis nas mang po bshums pas dbu sngas sphyen chab kyi dkaṅ / mngal sad pa dang skyo ba bzod blag med pa byung / der nam langs nas mtshams sgo phyed bla ma ’i drung du byon tsam na/ bla ma mngal du bzhugs ’dug pas zhabs la phyag ’tshal nas zhu don glu ru blangs na /*

teachings and says that he should see all phenomena as a dream. He then gives him more teachings on *nāḍi*, *praṇa* and the path of means and seals them, saying not to reveal this to others. Marpa adds that he should look at a text he gave him when he incurs a difficult *nāḍi* and *praṇa* blockage. Mila sings another farewell song. Marpa and Dagmema accompany him to the Koskar mountain pass, and they split.

Möntsepa – end 15th century (the biography was probably written between 1450-1475)⁴¹

The episode of Mila's stay with Marpa is similar to the one in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's text. A few new details:

At the time of empowerment, Marpa shaves Mila's hair (*skra bregs*) and gives him the name "Mila The Famous Vajra Victory Banner" (*Mi la grags pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan*), while the wisdom *dākinī* gives him the secret name "Glorious Laughing Vajra" (*dpal bzhad pa rdo rje*).

Early the following morning, the Lama said: "We, father and sons, will do some Secret Mantra practice. Dagmema, please bring us a hot meal." From that morning, the Lama, father and son, together with the Jetsün, all three, practised one-pointedly on top of the son's tower.⁴² The Jetsün made a strictly closed

⁴¹ Mon rtse Kun dga' dPal ldan, *dKar brgyud gser 'phreng, rJe btsun Mi la ras pa'i rnam par thar pa*. Our episode pp. 125-48. As indicated above, the *Life of Marpa* by Ngendzong Tönpa does not include any mention of the relationship between Marpa and Mila.

⁴² Mönstsepa: 126. Here, also Darma Dode is in retreat. *De'i nang par snga dro nas / bla ma'i zhal nas / ngad pha spad gnyis sangs ngags kyi sgrub pa gcig byed do / bdag med mas tsha ba gcig skyol gsung / de'i nang par nas yab sras gnyis dang rje btsun gsum gyis sras mkhar gyi rtse mo ru rtse gcig gi sgrub pa mdzad / rje btsun gyis sku 'tshams dam po mdzad / bla mas phug sgo na yod la nyi ma re la chos thun re gsung / de nas de'i dbyar de lho brag mnyar rnya'i phug tu sgom du rgyug gsung nas sgom du phyin.*

retreat, while the Lama gave him every day a teaching session outside the door of the cave. Afterwards, he told him to meditate at Lhodrak Nyarnya Cave for the summer and Mila did so.

Later, following a prophecy command from a *ḍākinī*, Mila went to the Lama and asked for oral instructions on transference in another body (*grong 'jug*). The Lama replied: “That’s good. These are in India, so I need to go to India to take them,” and he went.

Then comes the episode of Marpa’s one-year stay in India, Dode’s death the following year, offerings for Dode, Mila’s request who would make the lineage flourish, Mila’s dream and Marpa’s interpretation during a ritual feast with all of the foremost disciples. Marpa then gives a unique teaching to each of them, as in Shamar Khachö Wangpo’s text. Mila goes back in retreat and dreams of his mother, his village, his sister and so on (no vision of the *ḍākinī* here). He comes out of retreat, goes to the Lama and asks permission to go to his village with a song of request. The conversation between Marpa and Mila and the songs for his departure are the same as in Shamar Khachö Wangpo’s text.

Dochen rosary – 15th century

The episode is almost identical to the one in Möntsepa’s text, except for a few minor differences in the wording. The following is just an example:⁴³

⁴³ mDo chen Rosary 89b; *De'i lo sras zhi bar gshegs / bla mas thugs ngan gyi zin nas thugs gso zhin bsdad / nub gcig bla ma gzim pa'i bu rngas su shog gsung nas phyin / de'i nub mo sras kyi zla du mchod pa mdzad pa'i phud mang po 'dug pa gnang nas / do nub mi la kyang 'di kar nyol gsungs / de'i nub mo bla ma'i drung du zhus pa / da sras ni zhi bar gshegs / bka' brgyud kyi bstan pa dar mi dar zhus / mi la ras pa khyod blo gsal ba yin pas / do nub rmi lam bzung cig gsung / der rmi lam rgyugs pas rmi lam ya mtshan can byung nas / bla ma'i snyan du 'di bzhi phul ba.*

That year, [Marpa's] son passed away. The Lama was grieving, and he [Mila] stayed to console him. One night, the Lama called his son [Mila] into his bedroom, and he went. That evening, there had been a monthly offering ceremony with many offerings for his son, and he gave Mila the select portion. He said: "Mila, please sleep here tonight."

The same night, [Mila] asked the Lama: "Now that your son passed away, will the Kagyü doctrine flourish?"

"Milarepa, you have a clear mind. Recognise your dream tonight." So he examined his dream: a wonderful dream came, which he offered to the ear of the Lama.

Second Stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia⁴⁴

The principal texts in this second stratum are: *The Dark/Black Treasury* (3 versions); *A River of Blessings* (5 versions), and a manuscript kept at the British Library.

The Dark/Black Treasury – DNM-RD – end 15th-early 16th century

In our episode, most of the narrative and songs are similar to the ones in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Khachö Wangpo's text. However, there are a few meaningful changes.

Added: on the occasion of the first meeting between Mila and Marpa, when the latter is ploughing his land and tells Mila he

⁴⁴ For a detailed analysis of the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, see Chapter 1d, and Blancke & Bock 2024. See also Song Chart 8. The studied episode comes on the following pages: Ms-Smith 11b-33b; Ms-India 1: 35-114; Ms-Drepung 1: 28-98; BCG-D 7:30-114; BCG-Si 1:37-127; DNM-RD 1: 10-43; DNM-RD 3: 10-46; Ms-BL: 8a-21b.

should dig his field while he goes to call for the Lama, Marpa pronounces three oral instructions, which Mila does not understand:

- The essence of the Lama's oral instructions [is as follows]: when you gather the subtle-body elements in the central channel, you subdue the defilements, and the result quickly ripens.
- With the blessing of a lineage-holding Lama, the mind's nature rests spontaneously in its essence; through mindfulness, you subdue the defilements, and the fruits of the autumn harvest quickly ripen.
- When you are satisfied with the beer of great bliss – this secret intrinsic reality – you fully subdue the defilements, and the fruit will quickly ripen.

With these, Marpa had given mahāmudrā pointing-out instructions for beings with higher, middle and lower capacities to Milarepa, but he had not understood them.⁴⁵

Added:

[After Marpa's song of auspiciousness, he offers a respectful service to Ngok and sends him home because he has many teachings to give to his monks. Ngok is pleased; although he would like to stay on, Marpa tells him to go and come back the following year at the end of his son Dode's retreat. Marpa asks Mila whether he also wants to go. Mila offers to escort Ngok. Marpa agrees but tells him to come back soon. So he does, and on his return, the Lama asks Dagmema to prepare excellent offerings for Mila because he has to practise in retreat for ten days. She should tell the monks that the Lama had a bad dream, so he has to do some practice, and nobody

⁴⁵ DNM-RD 2006: 10; BCG-D 7: 30, BCG-Si 1: 37; Ms-Smith: 11b; Ms BL 8b.

should come to see him in the meantime. She should also bring food to the cave for both of them, as they will enter into retreat together. She prepares all the necessities.]

On the first night, [Marpa] consecrated the place.⁴⁶ He performed the preparatory rituals on the second night and the main body, conferring complete empowerment and blessings, on the third night. The following night, he prepared many offerings for thanksgiving. In the early morning, in one instant and for a single moment, [Mila] saw the face of the Glorious Cakrasaṃvara, with the inner deities, the thirty-two field-protecting *ḍākinīs*, the sixteen consort-goddesses and the offering goddesses, all of them residing in the sky in front of him. At that exact moment, the Lama and the *ḍākinīs* consented to his secret name, “Glorious Laughing Vajra.” Then [Marpa] said: “Son, this is this, but it is not the essence. I have this kind of oral instructions. The *ḍākinī*, Tilopa, Lama Nāropa and myself hold these in a single [one-to-one] transmission. I thought of giving them to Dode; Dode and you are both suitable vessels. Nobody in the sky and on the earth is comparable to you both. All the *ḍākinīs* rejoice in you, so I have to give these oral instructions to you. In the future, you should also give them to a fortunate person like Dode. You should not give them to anyone who is not a worthy vessel.” So he said, sealing his words with the seal of secrecy. Marpa then explained the Aural Transmission instructions gradually and in proper order. He also commented on the tantras and many upadeśas, like filling up a vase. In particular, he gave extensive instructions coming from the heart of the wisdom *ḍākinī* regarding the Six Teachings, upadeśas on blending and consciousness ejection and many oral instructions on the path of means. After completing everything, the Lama said:

⁴⁶ DNM-RD 1: 23, BCG-D 7: 65, Ms-India 1: 71. Ms-BL: 15b.

“Tilopa had received a prophecy command from the wisdom *dākinī* regarding the great Lama Nāropa, and the glorious Nāropa had received a prophecy command regarding me. The glorious great Nāropa gave me a prophecy command saying you are a worthy vessel for me to discipline.”⁴⁷

At this point, Mila said:⁴⁸ “But, great Jetsün, when I came to you, you did not take care of me. Time and again you did not teach me anything. What need was there for me to build a nine-storey tower?” Lord Marpa replied: “In times like the present one, one can do whatever is convenient, but in the future, bad disciples might bring down the Lama and the essential points [of the teachings]. Such times can come, and

⁴⁷ Apart from the vision of the Cakrasamvara maṇḍala and the secret name, this part comes in a similar although shorter way in Ögyenpa’s life story. This similarity shows that the second stratum Zhepé Dorje compendia enriches *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* integrating details from Golden Rosary life stories in Rechungpa’s lineage.

⁴⁸ DNM-RD 1: 25, BCG-D 7: 66, Ms-India 1: 71: *De’i tshe mi las ’o na rje btsun chen pos bdag drung du sleb pa’i tshe gces par skyang bar ma mdzad / yun du chos kyang ma gnang / ’phru byed pa dang / gnag lug skyong ba dang sku mkhar dgu thog brtsigs pa la sogs pa ’di dag ci la dgongs pa lags zhus pas / rje mar pa’i zhal nas yang deng sang gi dus lta bu yin na ci kyang byas kyang btub ste / phyi rabs kyi dus su slob ma ngan pas bla ma gnad la ’bebs pa’i dus ’ong ste / de lta bu dgags pa’i phyr kho bo khyod la de ltar bstan pa yin no / bu khyod kyang tshogs gnyis rdzogs shing sgribs gnyis byang ba’i las can gyi skyes bu yin zhing / gnas gsum gyi mkha’ ’gro ma thams cad kyang khyod kho na la dga’ nas ’tshogs par ’dug ste / nga’i bka’ zur gcig bcag pa’i nyes pa rgyud pa la ’ong bar ’dug gsung/ de ci ltar lags zhus pas / bu khyod kyis mkhar dgu thog pa brtsig pa de’i bar ma bzhaq par ’tshar bar byas na/ khyod rang dang rtogs pa yon tan mnyam pa’i rgyud pa dgu’i bar byin gyis rlabs par ’dug pa la/ da brgyud pa bdun khyod rang dang mnyam pa ’ong/ rgyud pa gnyis kyi bar du spyod pa rtsing po ’ga’ re byung gsung/ ’o na bdag gis rdo khur nas brtsig na ’ong lags sam zhus pas / mi ’ong ste khyod kyis las dad can du mthong ba dang / rten ’brel gyi ’grigs tshul dang sems can so so’i las yin gsung/*
This episode also comes in Khachö Wangpo’s *Life of Marpa*, inserted in Demchok Nyengyü Biographies, 1983: 101.

I had to teach you this way to avoid this. Son, you are a fortunate being because you completed the accumulations and purified the veils, and all the *dākinīs* from the three places rejoice very much in you only. However, that you have somehow broken my command is a fault that will fall back on the lineage.” “How is this?” Mila asked. “Son, if you had completed the construction of all nine tower storeys without interruption, the lineage would be blessed with all the qualities of your realisation for nine [generations?]. Now, these [qualities] will be the same as yours for seven [generations], but until the second, the conduct will be somewhat coarse,” he said. “So, if I now carry more stones and [continue to] build, would that be all right?” Mila asked. “That will not work,” he said, “but I have seen that you are faithful, and the circumstances will be all right, and it will depend on the karma of the individual beings.”

Then the Lama laid his hand on Mila’s head and said: “For one who has faith and devotion, luminosity will be uninterrupted. He will not see the villages of the *bardo*. Many understandings of the two aims will arise. If he meditates the heart meaning of the ultimate vehicle – uninterrupted luminosity, limitless and without mental elaborations – he will not experience the *bardo* appearances, and he will appear in a variety of form bodies benefitting others.” Thus, he made a prophecy that Mila would attain the supreme realisation in a single lifetime.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This episode is again very similar to Ögyenpa: *de nas bla ma'i phyag mi la'i phyi bor bzhaḡ nas / dad ldan mos gus ldan pa la / 'od gsal ba ni rgyun chad med / bar do'i grong khyer de mi mthong / don gnyis mkhyen pa du ma char / theg pa thar thug snying po'i don/ mtha' bral yid la mi byed pa / 'od gsal rgyun chad med bsgom na / bar do'i snang ba de la med / gzhan don gzugs sku sna tshogs 'char / zhes gsungs te tshe gcig mchog gi dngos grub thob par lung bstan pa'o.*

After this follows Ngok's request for the scroll, with the same episode as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, and also the episode in which Marpa bestows the Nairātmyā empowerment and checks which practice will suit each of his four main disciples.

Added: [as in Khachö Wangpo]

Jetsün was present during the offering ceremony for the death anniversary of [Marpa's] son Darma Dode. In the evening, he asked the Lama: "Great Lama, as your incomparable son will not be able to work for the benefit of those who are to be disciplined, who will now uphold the teaching lineage? Please tell us how and by whom this will happen." "Son, this will become clear from a dream you will have," Marpa replied. Mila dreamt about the Four Pillars; he offered the dream in a song and asked Marpa to interpret it.⁵⁰

After Marpa finishes the song with his interpretation, he asks the disciples to prepare a ritual feast and gives specific teachings to each of the four disciples. He and Mila then enter retreat together, as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. In contrast to the story in Khachö Wangpo's text and *A River of Blessings*, during his retreat, Mila does not dream of a *dākinī* who tells him about a particular *phowa* practice, and Marpa does not leave for India to obtain it.

[As in Khachö Wangpo]: After Mila received all the instructions, he went to meditate and had the dream of the *dākinī* telling him to go home.

⁵⁰ DNM-RD 1: 29-30. Both songs are given, identical to the ones in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life of Milarepa*.

The last part of the episode is identical to the above version in the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

A River of Blessings: Ms-Smith, Ms-India, Ms-Drepung, BCG-D, BCG-Si – end 15th–early 16th century

The main narrative is the same as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, and the same changes as in DNM-RD also appear in these versions. However, there are a few new elements, some of which are not part of the first *River-of-Blessing* group (Ms-Smith & Ms-India).

One new episode, a further elaboration of the narrative in Gyalthagpa's *Life of Marpa*:⁵¹

One day, while meditating on a thin cushion in the courtyard, he had a vision of a *dākinī* called Maha Sukhasiddhi. She, a sixteen-year-old girl, carried a damaru in her right hand. She held a white bamboo stick adorned with five-coloured silk ribbons fixed on an iron portion in her left hand, which she moved as a sign of having subdued the *dākinīs*. She said to the Jetsün: “A yogin can attain enlightenment through meditating *mahāmudrā*, or else if he possesses special instructions of blending and transference of consciousness in another body (*bsre ba dang 'pho ba grong 'jug gi gdams pa khyad par can*), he can attain enlightenment without meditation. Which of these two do you have?” The Jetsün wondered whether this was a prophecy of a *dākinī* or an obstacle from Tseringma., She disappeared like a rainbow in the sky when he looked more carefully. The Jetsün thought: “My practice for reaching

⁵¹ This fragment is not in Ms-Smith and Ms-India. It comes in Ms-Drepung 1: 65; BCG-D 7: 73, BCG-Si 1:77.

enlightenment is *mahāmudrā* meditation, but maybe the Lama has instructions for reaching enlightenment without meditation.” So, he loaded his purse with his Aural Transmission texts, a *torma* plate and a garland of skulls on his back, carried a small black antelope horn, adjusted his garment on his body, and went to the Lama. He met the Lady who had gone to fetch water. At first, he thought: “Is this meeting of mere emptiness the instruction for reaching enlightenment without meditating?” His next thought was: “Is this the instruction that there are no examples of emptiness?” Then, he went to the Lama with the Lady and asked him for a particular transference instruction. [Marpa] looked through all his texts and took out his scrolls, but could not find it. So, he said he would go to India and left.

Meanwhile, Mila took care of the Lady and her son. The Great Lama arrived in India and met Lord Nāropa. He saw the face of the *ḍākinī* and obtained all the precepts, scriptural transmissions of consciousness ejection, the *siddhi* of swift walking, and many other instructions. Marpa also received many prophetic songs and permissions. The Great Lama then returned from India to Tibet, where he arrived in less than one year. The Lady went to welcome him. Then Lama Marpa invited Ngok. While teaching the dharma, he could not find the daily meat offerings, so he asked: “Don’t you have a sheep?” He asked this again and again. So [Ngok] started thinking: “Has my Lama become a heretic?” He then found a sheep. [The Lama] said: “Kill it and bring me the heart soon.” He then placed it in front of him, raised it with his hand, and sat there looking with squint eyes. Then, in one instant, he said, “Bag” and the heart rose in the sky and vanished like a rainbow. The Lama said: “This is the kind of transference instructions I possess to become enlightened without meditating.” He then finished the teachings.

There was no mount or palanquin to carry the Lama to the other side (of the river?). Therefore, to purify Ngok’s wrong view [of

thinking Marpa had become a heretic], he and his wife had to carry him on their shoulder to return.

The rest of the episode is identical to the DNM-RD narrative, with Mila's departure and all the same songs. The number of formless-*dākinī* teachings to retrieve from India is five.

[After Marpa's prophecy that Mila would reach enlightenment in a single lifetime], Mila asked Lama Marpa: "How does one combine meditation practice with post-meditation while on the path?" [Marpa] sang the following song:

In daily life, cultivate prāṇa control;
Cultivate the application of vigorous methods again and again.
Even when the four elements are disturbed, do not fear.
There is an oral instruction on how to enhance this.

During sleep, cultivate luminosity.
Cultivate the absorption of appearances again and again.
Even when coming under the influence of delusion, do not fear.
Have confidence in your understanding of Dharmakāya.

During a dream state, cultivate the illusory body.
Cultivate the emanation of appearances again and again.
Even if you come under the influence of thoughts, do not fear.
Have confidence in your understanding of unification.

At the time of the descending path, rely on another body.
Cultivate bliss again and again.
Even if you come under the influence of attachment, do not fear.
Have confidence in your understanding of co-emergence.

At the time of death, apply consciousness ejection.
Exercise ejection again and again.
Should signs of death arise, do not fear.
Have confidence in your understanding of ejection's forceful
method.

When body and mind are separated, recognise the *bardo*.
Bardo is similar to clouds and mist.
Even if luminosity comes under the influence of other
appearances, do not fear.
Be confident it will be like meeting someone familiar to you
from before.

If you do not separate from these six confidences,
whenever you wander in the three realms of *samsāra*, do not
fear.⁵²

⁵² This episode and the song titled *lam khyer drug gi mgur* are also not included in Ms-Smith and Ms-India. They come in Ms-Drepung 1:80; BCG-D 7:90; BCG-Si 1:94. *De nas bla ma mar pa la mi la ras pas mnyam bzahg rjes thob lam gyi dus su ci ltar bgyi gsungs pas mgur 'di gsung so / tha mal gyi dus su srog rtsol sgom / btsan thabs su bgyid cing bgyid cing sgom / 'byung bzhi 'khrugs kyang nyam mi nga / bogs don du shes pa'i gdams ngag zhig bdog / gnyid kyi dus su 'od gsal sgom / snang ba sdud cing sdud cing sgom / gti mug tu song yang nyam mi nga / chos skur shes pa'i gdeng zhig bdog / rmi lam gyi dus su sgyu lus sgom / snang ba spro zhing spro zhing sgom / rnam rtog tu song yang nyam mi nga / zung 'jug tu shes pa'i gdeng zhig yod / babs lam gyi dus su gzhan lus brten / bde ba sgom zhing sgom zhing sgom / chags par song yang nyam mi nga / lhan skyes su shes pa'i gdeng zhig bdog / 'chi ba'i dus su 'pho ba sgom / sbyong zhing sbyong zhing 'pho ba bgyi / 'chi ltas byung yang nyam mi nga / btsan thabs su 'pho ba'i gdeng zhig bdog / lus sems bral nas bar do 'dzin / bar do sprin dang na bun 'dra / 'od gsal gzhan snang du song yang nyam mi nga / sngar 'dris mi 'phrad lta bu'i gdeng zhig dog/ gdeng drug 'di dang ma bral na / khams gsum 'khor bar 'khyams yang nyam mi nga/.*

In these biographies, Mila does not visit Ngok before going to his village. However, the compendium mentions another biography in which Mila does visit Ngok and later goes back for a short visit to Marpa and Dagmema before leaving for his village.⁵³

After leaving Marpa, Mila returns to Ngok, who puts him in retreat. Later, Mila says he wants to go back to Marpa because he has some things to ask him, and maybe he will return to Ngok. He then goes to Marpa and tells him he wants to go to his village to settle everything. Mila leaves and goes to meet his previous masters. The Nyingma master, Rongtön Lhaga, wants him to stay, but Mila refuses and goes to his home. There, he finds the same situation as in other stories and sings the song of essencelessness. Mila offers his belongings to his previous masters and meditates in a cave behind the house. However, meditation does not work, so he returns to the Nyingmapa. They drink *chang* together, and the prāṇa settles again in its place. He then meditates in a cave, but meditation still does not work. He returns to the Nyingmapa, and along the road, he meets two previous patronesses who tell him that Nyag Trogial and the Bönpo have died. He goes to the Dzogchenpa and offers him the field he had already given to one of the deceased. He returns to the cave but still cannot meditate. Then, he provides some of his wealth to geshe Ngok and his wife. He returns to meditate and one night, he dreams that he cannot postpone

⁵³ Ms-Smith 28a-33b; Ms-India 1: 93-114; Ms-Drepung 1:81-98; BCG-D 7: 92-112; BCG-Si 2:95-122. This alternative story is similar to the one in Ms-BL (see below): some sentences are identical, but not all. The story is like a summary of the story in Ms-BL, although it is not quite the same. It seems to be a later addition to complete the picture.

ploughing a field. He wonders why he still has not developed experiences and sings the song about cultivation.⁵⁴

He goes to Drakar Potho and gathers provisions. When these run out, he turns green from eating only nettles and becomes very skinny. Some hunters come by; they become faithful and give him food. By the time the food finishes, it is autumn, and some people from Nyanam bring him wheat. People talk about him everywhere. Peta hears about it and goes to meet him, together with a shepherd. Later, she brings him food. His old clothes fall to pieces, so he remains naked. Peta tells him to go and ask for food from his aunt, but she chases him. Then Peta brings him food and tells him to give up this story and come to the village. However, he says this is no longer necessary because now his meditation is working. Peta comes back with an aunt. They bring him clothes and food; he says he does not need them anymore because he has reached realisation.

He wants to go back to meet Marpa; he gives away everything, also some gold, for his teachers' death. He meets Marpa and Dagmema. Dagmema is very happy to see him. She asks him how he is and tells him he cannot meet Dode right now. Then Mila recounts his experiences to Marpa, who is very happy; he lays his hand on his head and anoints him.

He says: "Mila Dorje Gyaltsen is the one who practises in this way. Working through the instructions in such depth brings real stability. What you have done cannot tire me."⁵⁵

Mila then goes to pay homage to Ngok and his wife, after which he returns once more to Marpa. Dode has finished his retreat, and there is a great feast offering. There is a throne of equal height as the Lama's for Mila, and *dākinīs* gather around Mila,

⁵⁴ Quintman 2010: 131.

⁵⁵ *tshul dang ldan pa bsgrub pa 'di / mi la rdo rje rgyal mtshan yin / gdams ngag sprug pa de tshug lags / byas pa khyod kyis nga sun ma phyung*; the same detail, included also in Ms-BL, first appeared in Ögyenpa's text (see above, n14).

offering praise to him. Mila and Dagmema see marvellous appearances of the Lama; the *ḍākinīs* manifest, giving teachings and bestowing numberless realisations.

Ms-BL – 16th century

This compendium is close to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* but contains the changes added in the *Dark/Black Treasury* and *A River of Blessings*.

At the first meeting with Marpa, Mila receives the *mahāmudrā* instructions (for beings of higher and middling capacities, as in BCG). There is an additional detail: he had to plough for a month! The narrative follows the DNM-RD version (no *ḍākinī* tells about the *phowa* practice, and Marpa does not return to India). Before Mila's departure, Marpa tells him that he will develop a unique understanding in the future, very different from the one he has now. At that time, he should come back to him once more.⁵⁶

After leaving, Mila goes to his village – the same episodes follow as in DNM-RD, with the same songs. The extra episode comes in the cycle at Pori Pothon (third quality).

Mila returns to Marpa to relate his experiences.⁵⁷ He goes to Ngok and realises there is no difference between the teachings he and Ngok received from Marpa. He then goes to Marpa and asks him: "If you had a prophecy about me, why were you so

⁵⁶ Ms-BL 20a.

⁵⁷ Ms-BL 35a-43a.

unkind?” The reply is very similar to that in the other compendia, although here it is more explicit.⁵⁸

Mila sings to Marpa.⁵⁹ Dode then finishes his retreat and there is a great ritual feast. At that time, Mila sits on a throne of equal height as Marpa’s. The *ḍākinīs* gather around like clouds and tell Mila that he is more marvellous than Dode. Dode asks his father how the lineage will spread, and Marpa sings a song in which he says that his four main disciples – Ngoktön, Metön, Goyak and Tsurtön – are his four heart disciples who will spread the lineage, but Mila Dorje Gyaltsen is the one who practises correctly. He is the one who will make the oral instructions flourish.⁶⁰

After this follows the episode in which Dode falls from his horse and dies,⁶¹ Marpa’s pain, and the offering ceremony during which Mila asks Marpa what will happen with his lineage after he dies. Marpa tells him to watch his dream, and Mila sings about the Four Pillars, which Marpa explains to him⁶²

⁵⁸ Ms-BL 37a-38a. This question also comes in DNM-RD and *A River of Blessings* – e.g., DNM-RD 1: 25; BCG-D 7: 66; Ms-India 1: 71, but in these texts, he asked the question before leaving for his village. (see above).

⁵⁹ The song bears the title *lam khyer drug gi mgur* (Ms-BL 38a). It has the same title as the song in group B of *A River of Blessings*. However, whereas in *A River of Blessings*, Marpa sang it to Mila on the latter’s request (see above) here, Mila sings a song to Marpa. The song itself is different and corresponds to Tsangnyön’s song 21.3 (Stagg 216), on a young man’s request.

⁶⁰ Ms-BL 39a. *bsgrub pa tshul bzhin byed pa de / mi la rdo rje rgyal mtshan yin / gdams ngag sprug pa de tsug lags*. This detail first appeared in Ögyenpa’s text (see n14). By contrast to BCG, here it is Dode who asks about the future of the lineage instead of Mila.

⁶¹ This detail is not narrated in the other Zhepé Dorje Compendia. The colophon of Ms-BL states that Marpa’s life story is one of the sources of the text.

⁶² TN-Dha 109 & 111, Quintman 2010: 95 & 97.

Marpa tells him to go to India to find the formless-*dākinī* teachings (5), as he has lost them while crossing a river (!) Mila decides to return to Tsang. He thinks of going to India but does not go. One day, he hears Marpa has died and decides to commit firmly to meditation, so he goes to Drakar Pothon.

Tsangnyön Heruka (1488)⁶³

Tsangnyön's episode of Mila's stay with Marpa has become very long, with a more "dramatic" narrative, a further elaboration of the Dochen Rosary version. Here, I point out the most significant differences with the previous versions.

That evening, offerings were laid out at the place where the assembly had gathered. The Lama said: "I shall give you the common vows of individual liberation." After my hair was shaved and my clothes changed, the Lama said: "Your name was originally foretold by Nāropa in a dream I had before we met." He gave me the name Mila Dorje Gyaltsen and then granted me the vows of a layman and the bodhisattva precepts. Then he offered me a skull cup of inner offerings with the special blessings of his mental powers. Everyone thus clearly saw the oblation bubbling with light rays of the five colors. He first offered it to the Lamas and chosen deities. Next Marpa himself partook. Then he gave the skull cup to me and I emptied it completely.

"This is and auspicious omen," said the Lama. "Tasting the nectar of my inner offerings is greater than all four empowerments of some other lineages. However, starting

⁶³ TN-Dha 95-130; Quintman 2010: 83-116.

tomorrow, I shall give you the ripening empowerments of Secret Mantra.”⁶⁴

Then he constructed an extensive maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara with sixty-two deities. When he revealed the maṇḍala before bestowing the empowerment, he pointed to the circle of coloured powder.

“This is called the symbolic *maṇḍala*. The actual *maṇḍala* is there,” he said, and he pointed up to the sky. I clearly saw Cakrasaṃvara surrounded by the heroes and *ḍākinīs* of the twenty four lands, the thirty-two sites, and the eight great charnel grounds, all vividly present. At that moment, the Lama and the deities of the *maṇḍala* in a single voice conferred upon me the secret name Pel Zhepa Dorjé. The Lama imparted at length the oral transmission of the tantra and then taught the complete practice of the quintessential instructions along with the performance rituals.⁶⁵

The next chapter introduces a wealth of new inputs, adding depth and complexity to the narrative.⁶⁶ During a ritual feast, Marpa questions Mila about the certainties he has gained about the oral instructions while in retreat. Mila responds by first singing a song of sevenfold service to the Lama and then recounting his understandings obtained during the retreat. Mila explains:⁶⁷

“I have understood that, due to the fundamental condition of ignorance, the body comprised of flesh and blood fully formed,

⁶⁴ TN-Dha 96; Quintman 2010: 83-84.

⁶⁵ TN-Dha 96; Quintman 2010: 84.

⁶⁶ In TN-Dha 99-115, Chapter Four; in Quintman 2010: 87-101, Chapter Seven.

⁶⁷ TN-Dha 101-104; Quintman 2010: 89-92; my reference between brackets.

together with its perceiving consciousness, initially coalesce through the twelve links of dependent origination, formations and so forth. For those with merit who desire liberation, this is a ferry to a future life of freedoms and endowments. For those with evil karma who amass sinful deeds, it is a guide leading to the lower realms. This is a truly decisive moment, the boundary between journeying up or down, and one that determines the profit or loss leading to lasting good or lasting evil far into the future.

“Moreover, relying upon your power as lord and guide of beings, I seek release from the ocean of life’s round (*’khor ba, saṃsāra*), the source of all suffering so difficult to escape. I first sought refuge in the Lama and three jewels and then trained properly in the discipline. I have understood that in such a context, the source of all goodness and happiness is the Lama. Therefore, the primary and essential point is to follow whatever he commands and to maintain the sacred commitments purely. Then, intensively contemplating the difficulty of attaining the freedoms and endowments of a human rebirth, death and impermanence, the causes and effects of actions, and the faults of life’s round, one is overwhelmed by the desire for liberation from life’s round. One should then rely on the appropriate vows of individual liberation, which are like the foundation. Upon such a basis, one gradually ascends through the religious vehicles, guarding as closely as one’s eyes the disciplines they describe. If transgressed, the vows must be restored.

“But since it is a mistake to practice the Lower Vehicle seeking happiness and peace for oneself, through the desire to free all sentient beings from life’s round in its entirety, one generates the mind set on enlightenment. With love and compassion, everything one does is dedicated to the benefit of others – this, I have understood, is arousing the attitude of enlightenment according to the Great Vehicle. One gives up the path of Hearers and Solitary Buddhas and enters the path of the Great Vehicle. Then, maintaining a completely pure view as a

basis, one enters the path of the unsurpassed Vajra Vehicle. In order to realize a completely pure view, one needs a fully qualified Lama with the wisdom and skillful means to impart all the pure rites of the four initiations, and to transmit their meaning without error. Initiation or 'empowerment' means to have power over the profound view and from that point on one meditates in a gradual way.

First, in the common Dialectics Vehicle (*mtshan nyid theg pa dang thun mong pa*), one sets out in search of the selflessness of persons. Employing numerous examples and reasons drawn from both scripture and logic, one does not find a self, and indeed one comes to realize the selflessness of persons. One must then rest the mind evenly within the state in which the self was not found. When it is brought to rest through various means, conceptual thoughts cease and the mind relaxes in a non-conceptual state. When months and years pass by without noticing and one needs to be informed of the time by others, then one has achieved serenity (*zhi gnas*). One maintains this state by means of mindfulness, and without succumbing to mental sinking or torpor, one draws forth the vitality of awareness. Thus one experiences serenity in this way: appearing while lacking self-nature, luminous while lacking conceptuality, naked, unadulterated, brilliant, vivid.

"It is also possible to take up the practice of insight (*lhag mthong*), although genuine insight will not manifest for ordinary individuals. I believe only those who have attained the first bodhisattva level will experience it. This being the case, one incorporates outward appearances onto the path by relying upon visualization practice. Other kinds of visionary experiences, deities and so forth, may appear through the practice of serenity, but I believe they are merely signs of meditation and have no essence whatsoever.

"In brief, experience of excellent serenity together with vitality in practice (*zhi gnas bzang po'i nyams ngar 'don dang bcas pa*), as well as analysis by means of profound

discriminating wisdom, are indispensable for the attainment of insight. I consider them to be like the lower rungs of a ladder. I have understood that whatever kind of serenity meditation one practices, such as those with signs or those without signs, developing an attitude of love and compassion must precede them all. Whatever one does, it must be embraced by the attitude of enlightenment that aims to benefit others. Next, with a completely pure view one should train in meditation that lacks a reference point. Finally, one practices within a state free from reference points sealed with prayers dedicated to the benefit of others—this is supreme among all paths.

“I have understood that, just as the knowledge of food does not help a starving man, but rather he needs to eat, it is not enough to comprehend the meaning of realizing emptiness—one must meditate. In particular I have understood that, in order to realize insight, one must strive without distraction to accumulate merit and purify misdeeds in periods between meditation sessions.

“In short, I have now understood that the experiences of emptiness, evenness (*mnyam nyid*), ineffability, and non-conceptuality gained by yogins through practice are the view of the stages of the path of the Secret Mantra Vajra Vehicle, which correspond to the four initiations.”⁶⁸

Then follows the episode of Mila’s new retreat, in which he has a vision of a *ḍākinī* telling him to request the particular transference teaching (*khyad par gyi ’pho ba grong ’jug*), like in Mōntsepa and similar to Gyalthangpa and *A River of Blessings*,

⁶⁸ The Tibetan text of this important last paragraph is as follows: TN-Dha 104: *Don dril ba la / da lta rnal ’byor pa nyams su len pa’i stong nyid / mnyam nyid brjod med mi rtog pa rnams dbang bzhi dang mthun pa’i gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa’i lam rim gyi lta ba yin par go lags.*

with the difference that Marpa also has a revelation of a *ḍākinī* who had deciphered one of Nāropa's symbolic teachings,⁶⁹ so that he has already decided to go to India before Mila comes to ask him the teachings. Then Marpa goes to India. He meets Nāropa and requests the transference-in-another-body-instructions, with the further development of Nāropa's prophecy regarding Milarepa already given in Gyalthangpa's *Life of Marpa*. Here is the extract:⁷⁰

Panchen Nāropa asked: "Did you think of this yourself or did you receive a prophetic command?"

"I neither thought of it myself nor received a prophetic command. I have a disciple named Töpaga who received the prophetic command of a *ḍākinī* and he came to request it from me."

"How marvellous. In the gloomy land of Tibet lives a man like the sun rising over the snows." Raising his hands in prayer to the crown of his head, Nāropa continued:

In the gloomy darkness of the north
Lives the one called Töpaga
Like the sun rising over the snows.
To that man I bow down.

He closed his eyes and bowed his head three times. All the mountains, trees, and plants in India then bowed toward Tibet. Even now the mountains and trees of Pullahari bend in the direction of Tibet.

⁶⁹ TN-Dha 105, Quintman 2010: 92.

⁷⁰ TN-Dha 107, Quintman 2010: 94.

Nāropa then imparted all the instructions of the *Ḍākinī* Aural Transmission lineage (*mkha' 'gro snyan brgyud kyi gdams ngag*).

Marpa goes back to Tibet, his son dies the following year, and during the offering ceremony commemorating the anniversary of his son's death, the senior disciples – not Milarepa – ask the Lama how the Kagyü teachings will spread. The Lama tells all of them to watch their dreams, and Mila has the dream of the Four Pillars, which Marpa later interprets. The chapter ends with Marpa imparting specific teachings to each of the senior disciples, as in the earlier accounts. To Mila he imparts exceptional instructions on yogic heat, likened to a fire burning a pile of kindling (*gtum mo'i khyad chos shing gshags la me sbar ba lta bu*). The other disciples leave, and Marpa tells Mila to stay some years because he has more empowerments and oral instructions to impart. So, he goes to meditate in a cave.

In the chapter leading up to Mila's departure, like in Möntsepa and the Dochen Rosary, Mila has no vision of a *ḍākinī* but a dream about going back to his village.⁷¹ The narrative with the songs of request is very similar to the earlier versions. Then comes another episode in which Marpa sets up a maṇḍala and bestows the ripening-path symbolic empowerments and the liberating-path oral instructions of the *Ḍākinī* Aural Transmission (*mkha' 'gro snyan brgyud kyi smin lam brda'i dbang dang / grol lam gyi gdams ngag*) which were not known to others, in a single transmission. He tells Mila he should also transmit them to one disciple only. Furthermore, he tells him that five more teachings of the formless *ḍākinīs* need to be retrieved

⁷¹ TN-Dha 116-130, Quintman 2010: 103-16.

from a disciple of Nāropa, and says: “From among Lord Nāropa’s oral instructions, there are the oral instructions of the Ḍākinī Aural Transmission that my other principal disciples have not received.”⁷² He concludes with a song similar to the one in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

What follows next is a long series of farewell moments, with Marpa showing miracles to Mila, singing songs and giving various kinds of advice, among which the places Mila should go to meditate.

* * *

For comments on the dharma transmission from Marpa to Mila see Chapter 3.

[ToC](#)

⁷² TN-Dha 120; Quintman 2010: 106.

6 – THE ENTRUSTMENT OF THE SAMVARA AURAL TRANSMISSION TO RECHUNGPA

In the biographies of Milarepa and Rechungpa from Rechungpa's lineage, a significant aspect of Mila's teaching legacy is the *Demchok Nyengyü*, the Samvara Aural Transmission. This unique transmission was entrusted in its entirety only and exclusively to Rechungpa. While Ngendzong Tönpa and Gampopa also received instructions from this tradition, it was Rechungpa who held it.¹ It is somewhat surprising that the authors from the other lineages do not mention this crucial aspect.

In *The Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, Zhijé Ripa points out some elements of this Aural Transmission. In a discussion between Mila and his disciples, the Jetsün explains the difference between the instructions of the path of means – also given to his other disciples – and the path of blessing, reserved exclusively to Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa. In particular, Mila presents an outline of the transmission to some junior *repas*.²

This chapter provides a translation of the references to the entrustment of The Aural Transmission to Rechungpa found in the hagiographies I studied. This crucial element, accentuated

¹ As mentioned in Chapter 1d, the colophon of the manuscript of Milarepa's life at the British Library mentions that Ngendzong Tönpa was the holder of this transmission. However, the text includes the entire episode of the entrustment to Rechungpa, almost identical to the DNM-RD version.

² For a translation of the episode, see Chapter 8.

especially in the fourteenth-century *Golden Rosary* life stories of Rechungpa, does not appear in the first stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its variants – but it comes in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings*, and a similar manuscript at the British Library.³

Jangchup Zangpo/Martön

On this occasion, he completed the *Nyengyü* transmission. In general, by the time Jetsün Mila completed [an instruction] with a disciple, he had given it three times. When it was finally Rechungpa's turn, he bestowed many [teachings] and said: "Now go! Pursue each prophecy you received [like] a wild yak." Having said this, after bestowing all [the instructions], the Lama told Rechungpa:

"Do not stay here; rush to the land of Central Tibet. I did not bestow the Aural Transmission to others. What you have heard, I have told you completely. So go now!" he said. He sang....⁴

* * *

³ Regarding the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, see Chapters 1b and 1d. and Blancke & Bock 2024. For the references to this episode in the *Golden Rosary* life stories of Rechungpa, see Song Chart 5, under the quality *gsung bzhin ldoms pa'i yon tan*; for the references in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, see Song Chart 8, thirteenth quality, "Upholding the torch of wisdom".

⁴ BZ-Martön 1:137, *Skabs 'dir snyan rgyud tshar ba dang / phyir rJe mi las slob ma tshar nas lan gsum skye ba'i tha ma ras chung pa bkye ba'i dus tshod na mang po chig bkye nas 'di skad gsung / da khyod rang song la lung bstan pa re rer gyag rgod re ded cig gsung nas thams cad bkye nas ras chung pa la bla ma'i zhal nas khyad dir ma sdod par dbus kyi rgyal khams su rgyug cig snyan rgyud gzhan la ma bstan pas thos na hril sog pas gsung songs gsung nas*.

The episode does not appear in any version of the first-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia⁵ (*The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its variants), Shamar Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*, Möntsepa's life story of Milarepa⁶ and the life story of Milarepa in the Dochen Rosary.

Demchok Nyengyü Biographies and Gyalthangpa's – 14th century Life Story of Rechungpa

Once [the Jetsün] said: "Gather all the monks together". After all had gathered, he said: "I have given oral instructions impartially to all of you. All of you have meditated, and all of you have developed various positive or negative experiences and realisations, depending on each one's degree of discriminating wisdom and discipline. Among all of you, there is not a single person who has not developed some experience and realisation. Therefore, I want each one of you to present one particular aspect of your expertise".

The monks did so. After each one had presented his accomplishment, he left. Rongchung Repa, one of the disciples, held a small bag with texts under his arm. He placed a cup on the floor because he did not want to return to his cave. After offering his accomplishment to the Jetsün, he left straight away. "None other among the *repa*s has renounced worldly life more than him," said the Jetsün. Khyungtsangpa also mentioned Rongchungpa's song of realisation:

⁵ Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu do not recount the entire episode. However, in the episode with advice before Rechungpa's departure to Central Tibet, there is the following very short mention (Ms-Drukpa 295a; Ms Gansu 25: 51): *snyan rgyud gi gdam ngag thams cad rdzogs par gnang*, "He entirely bestowed all the instructions of the Aural Transmission." These versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* are of a later date. Therefore, they include many later songs, like the ones in the second-stratum compendia.

⁶ As we will see below, it comes in Möntsepa's life story of Rechungpa.

Without squeezing grains, [oil] will not be extracted,
Only in this way can it be taken out.

Then Rechungpa asked: "Should I also go?"

"Don't go yet," Mila said.

The following morning, he said: "Listen now! In the saying: 'This is this, but it is not the essence, 'This is this' refers to what I have taught to all of you before. For reaching enlightenment through meditation, there are the so-called 'oral instructions of the path of means', and I have bestowed these to each one of you without partiality. 'This is not the essence' refers to [the possibility of] reaching enlightenment without meditation, through the so-called 'spontaneously existing oral instructions of the Aural Transmission'. Jetsün Marpa told me: 'O you, Töpaga! From the mouth of the Jetsün Nāropa I have heard: 'The cakravartin holds the jewels.' In the same way as this metaphor, also this teaching is a single transmission bestowed from the Jetsünma to Tilopa only, from Tilopa to Nāropa only, and from Nāropa to nobody else but me. I also will transmit it to no one else but you. Among all people, you too have to bestow it only to a vessel similar to my son Dode. If someone else arrives, you should not give it to him. My son Dode died last year, so I searched for an appropriate vessel, and nobody is more suitable than you; therefore, I give it to you. You should also give it to only one suitable vessel and nobody else." So [Mila] said. First, he transmitted the empowerment and blessings to ripen what was not yet mature. Then, to bring to liberation what was mature, he entirely bestowed the ordinary-, the commitment-, and the true nature-Wish-fulfilling Gems. Rechungpa now considered staying with the Lama until he passed away, but the Jetsün said: "You are not the kind of disciple similar to a son who has to dispose of his father's corpse. You should spend this human life in Central Tibet. Your

disciples will be in Central Tibet, so that is where you should go.” He repeated this over and over again.⁷

Möntsepa – 15th century Life Story of Rechungpa

Rechungpa thought: “On top of Mila’s [teachings], I have fixed the roof of Tipu’s [teachings]. At present, there is nobody

⁷ Demchok Nyenggyü Biographies 219-20; Gyalthangpa 365-66; *Skabs shig tu / gra pa thams cad 'tshogs shig gsung nas / der thams cad 'tshogs pas/rJe btsun gyi gsung nas / ngas khyod tsho thams cad la gdams ngag ni nye ring med par byin/thams cad kyis kyang sgom pas shes rab che chung dang brtson grus ches chung gis nyams rtogs bzang ngan aen re ma gtogs pa/thams cad la nyams rtogs med pa cig kyang med pa / de thams cad kyis chig skya thub par yod pas thams cad gyes shig gsung nas / gra pa mams bkye pas / thams cad kyis rang rang gi rtogs pa mams phul gyin gyes nas song/rong chung ras pa bya ba de la pe bum chung ngun cig yod pa ni 'chan khung na yod/phor pa cig ni rtsa na yod pas / phug tu yang 'gro mi dgos par / rJe btsun rang la rtogs pa cig phul nas sa de rang nas gshegs song / ras pa cig la blos btang de bas che ba med gsung / rong chung pa'i rtogs pa'i mgur de khyung tshang pa yang shar ba re gsung ste / 'bru non mi dzad pas ma zin / nen ltar ba cig yod de gsung/de nas ras chung pas ngas kyang 'gro lags zhus pas / khyod da rung ma 'gro zhid gsung nas / sang ras chung pa la 'o de de yin de de min bya ba yin/de de yin bya ba la sngar gi khyed tsho la bstan pa/bsgoms pas sangs rgya bar byed pa thabs lam gyi gdams ngag bya ba yin ste/thams cad la nye ring med par bstan pa yin / de nyid med bya ba ma bsgoms par sangs rgya bar snyan rgyud lhun grub kyi gdams ngag bya ba yod de / rJe btsun mar pa'i gsung nas / thos pa dga' kho de/nga la rJe n'a ro pa'i zhal nas / 'khor lo sgyur rgyal rin chen 'dzin /gsung nas /dpe de bzhi du chos 'di'ang chig rgyud yin pas / rJe btsun mas ti lo pa cig pu la / des yang n'a ro pa cig pu la / n'a ro pas kyang nga chig pu las ma gnang / ngas kyang khyod chig pu min pa su la yang ma byin pas yin pas / da khyod kyis kyang nga'i bu mdo sde 'di dang snod mnyam po tsam las mang na 'di la byin cig /gzhan pa byung na de ma byin cig gsung ba yin no / sras po mdo sde ni na ning du grongs / de nas snod ldan rtags pas khyod pas grag pa mi 'dug pas khyod la gter ba yin pas / khyod kyis kyang snod ldan cig la byin la de bas mang ba la ma gter zhid gsung nas / thog mar ma smin pa smin par byed pa'i dbang dang / byin rlabs gnang / de nas smin pa grol bar byed pa la brgyud pa / thun mong / dam tshig / gnas lugs yid bzhi nor bu tsho rdzogs par gnang nas / da bla ma ma 'das kyi bar du drung du sdad snyam tsa na / rJe btsun na re / da khyod pha ro bus 'khur ba slob ma de min / khyod kyi mi tshe dbus su 'gyid dgos / khyod kyi 'dul bya dbus na yod pa yin pas dbus su song zhig yang yang gsung.*

superior to me.” Mila said: “However nice a house if one digs a trench in the sand, it will start to collapse.”

Rechungpa started to have some doubts. Then Mila said: “Arrange a nice ritual feast.”

He bestowed both empowerments and blessings, and said: “This is this, but it is not the essence.”

“Is this not the same as before?” asked [Rechungpa].

“No, it is not the same,” replied the Jetsün. Then he bestowed the entire Aural Transmission and said: “Jetsün Tilopa reached liberation meditating on these, [and so did] Nāropa, Marpa and myself. I could not teach these to anybody else but you. You should also not teach them to anybody but one suitable vessel.” By merely hearing the empowerments and the oral instructions, Rechungpa became liberated without any effort, so it is said. They then a ritual feast, and the Jetsün said: “You are not the kind of son who carries the corpse of his father. You have to go to Central Tibet, so go now!”⁸

* * *

The episode does not appear in *Jangchup Zangpo*’s summary and the different editions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

* * *

Second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – 15th-16th century Life and Songs of Milarepa

⁸ Mönksepa, *dKar brgyud gser 'phreng* 176-78. This collection includes biographies written by different authors. For instance, it includes Marpa’s life story by Shamar Khachö Wangpo (see Ducher 2017: 117-22) and Mila’s life story also strongly influenced by Khachö Wangpo’s narrative. His Gampopa life story is an early version, very close to Ögyenpa’s, probably thirteenth century. The author of Rechungpa’s biography is unknown; it looks pretty close to the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies.

These compendia mention the entrustment of the Aural Transmission to Rechung Dorje Drakpa in two instances. In *The Dark/Black Treasury* (DNM-RD), *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Smith and Ms-India) and the British Library manuscript *Ms-BL*, the first mention comes in the thirteenth quality – upholding the torch of wisdom – in the “Episode at Khujug Enpa Dzong.” Instead, in the other versions of *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si), it comes earlier, in the fifth quality – experience becoming blissful – in the “Episode with instructions to Rechungpa.”⁹

⁹ See Song Chart 8; DNM-RD 1: 322-24; Ms-BL:178b-179b; Ms-Smith:148b-149b; Ms-India 1:501-502; Ms-Drepung 1:193-195; BCG-D 7:233-36; BCG-Si: 1: 252-256.

khu byug dben pa rdzong la byon / der lo hril ba gcig bzhugs nas / bu slob bzang dag cog rnams kyang der byung ste ras pa dpon gyog sum cu tsam byung / de rnams dhyar der bde mchog snyan brgyud kyi bum dbang dang 'bral pas thun mong yid bzhin nor bu / gsang dbang dang 'brel pa steng sgo rnam grol gyi chos drug / gsum pa dang 'brel ba 'og sgo bde ba chen po / tshig dbang dang 'brel ba phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed gnang ba 'i rjes su gsungs pa / byin rlabs sgrub pa 'i rtsal dang ldan / nyams dang rtogs pa 'i mchog dang ldan / mos gus gdams pa 'i snod dang ldan / bu cig ras chung rdo rje grags / nga yi gdams pa khyad 'phags 'di / mkha' 'gro 'i lung bstan byung nas ni / dad gus snod dang ldan pa 'i phyir / rin chen gser gyi ga bu ru / nor bus bkang ba 'dra ba 'di / ras chung lag tu gtad pa yin / yid ches gyis la sems la chongs / kun gyi thun mong ma yin pas / dkon mod rgyal khams mi la dris / bden rdzun lag tu long la ltos / 'bras bu phyi dus 'gyang gyur na / rnal 'byor nga yis bslus pa yin / sems bskyed chung ba ma yin te / mkha' 'gro 'i tshogs rnams ko long dom / bla ma brgyud pa 'i bka' rgya yod / chos bdag mkha' 'gro 'i dam tshig yod / nga yi tshe la khar mi gdon / nyams kyi drod tshad spel ba dang / dus phyis 'gro don dar ba 'i phyir / gcig brgyud gnad du shes par bya / drin dang ldan pa 'i slob dpon dang / brtse gdung can gyi mched lcang dang / zas nor can gyi 'phan po dang / mkhas grags can gyi btsan po dang / byas yus can gyi 'ang mi byin pa / gzhan ma rnams la smos ci dgos / mkha' 'gro 'i lung bstan byung ba yi / rang la dad cing gus par ldan / snod ldan sprang po yin kyang byin / kye ho ras chung rdo rje grags / dper na nor bu rin chen ni / tshogs ma bsags dang 'phrad pa med / bsod nams ldan pa 'i spyod yul yin / des na snyan brgyud gdams pa 'di / gdul bya bsags pa dman pa yi / skal med rnams dang 'phrad

He went to Khjug Enpa Dzong and stayed there for a year. His best students also came there. There were thirty of them, *repa*-disciples and their helpers. That summer, he bestowed the *Samvara Aural Transmission*: the ordinary Wish-fulfilling Gem, associated with the vase-empowerment; the Six Teachings for liberation through the upper door, associated with the secret empowerment; great bliss of the lower door, associated with the third [empowerment], and *mahāmudrā*: illuminating primordial wisdom, associated with the word empowerment.¹⁰ After all this, he said [to Rechungpa], “*You, my only son, Rechung Dorje Drak! You can confer blessings; you have outstanding experiences and realisation. Because of your devotion, you are a vessel for the instructions. Because I received a prophecy from the dākinīs, and because you are a*

par dka' / las can 'ga' yi spyod yul yin / dad med skye bo ru shing rag / skal med rgyud ngan log rtog skyed / go med chos la gshe skur 'debs / de phyir kun la shin tu gsang / dbang khrid gdams pa bzhi po 'di / khrid du rdzogs par ma thob par / dpe thob lung thob byed pa 'i mis / bla ma ltas ngan mthong bzhin gsang / chos 'di mthong na gzhog ngom byed / nyams su mi len 'chad sems can / dam nyams slob ma byung srid na / nag po chen po chad pa chod/ za byed mkha' 'gros bka' chad phob / las can gus ldan slob ma yi / chos 'di gtso bor 'dzin gyur na / lus dang sgrib bzhin sdong grogs mdzod / mchog dang thun mong dngos grub tsol / bla ma bde mchog mkha' 'gro dang / sangs rgyas chos dang dge 'dun dang / mi la ras pa mi rdzun pas / 'khor ba ji srid ma stongs par/chos 'di dar zhing rgyas par shog/de sogs dge ba'i rtsa ba 'dis / sangs rgyas bstan pa dar ba dang / nag po'i phyogs rnams pham par shog / mkha' mnyam rdo rje 'dzin thob shog / snyan brgyud yi ge med pa 'di / bla ma mkha' 'gros gsung bzhin du / snye nam drod phug dgon pa ru / rdo rje rgal mshan brtse bas bris / phyogs yul bde legs ldan gyur cig / rje btsum mi la ras chen gyis / ras chung khyod la gtad do rgya.

¹⁰ On the Wish-fulfilling Gems see Chapter 1b. The doctrinal aspects of the Aural Transmission are contained in the manuals by gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507), Kun mkhyen Pad ma dkar po (1527–1592), Byang chub bzang po (sixteenth century) and 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899). See Sernesi 2007 & 2011: 179–209. See also Callahan 2023: 173–79. The above instructions' titles in the text correspond to some doctrinal texts attributed to Milarepa in the manuals mentioned above.

worthy vessel with faith and devotion, I entrust these unique instructions in your hands, like a precious golden gau box filled with jewels. Have faith in them and keep them in your mind. These are not ordinary. They are not for everyone. They are rare to obtain. You can ask people all over the land. See whether they are true or false by practising them. If the results are delayed in the future, it will mean that I, the yogin, have deceived you. The mental attitude [to adopt] is no small one; this would irritate the assembly of the *dākinīs*. The instructions are sealed with the command of the lineage Lamas and with the commitment of the *dākinīs*, owners of the teachings. I have not expressed them in words in my whole life. To expand the range of experiences and to spread the benefit to others in future times, please know that a single transmission is essential. Do not give them to a kind teacher, to beloved brothers and sisters, to the rich, to famous rulers, to those who boast about their deeds and, needless to say, to anybody else. Give them to someone who the *dākinīs* have prophesied, someone with faith and devotion, someone who is a suitable vessel, even if he is a lower [humble] one.

Kye ho, Rechung Dorje Drak! For example, one who has not accumulated merit will not find a precious jewel, as this is [only] within the reach of those with merit. It is the same way with these Aural Transmission instructions: those unworthy who have gathered inferior disciples are very unlikely to meet these [instructions], as they are [only] within the reach of a few persons with the [right] karma. Faithless people are rigid [like] horns or wood. Unworthy people from an unwholesome lineage develop wrong views; they slander the teachings without understanding. Therefore, keep them a high secret from everyone. You should keep these four empowerments, explanations and instructions secret from all those who have not received the complete explanations – even if they have received the text and the scriptural authorisation – because they could deprecate the Lama. He who receives these

teachings should be satisfied with them. Should samaya-violators – beings who do not put them into practice – become disciples, the Great Black One [Mahākalā] would punish them. The flesh-eating dākinīs would inflict their punishment. But if a devoted disciple with good karma holds this as his main teaching, it should accompany him like a body and its shadow. He will obtain ordinary and supreme accomplishments. There can be no falsity in the Lama – Saṃvara and the dākinīs – in the Buddha, his teachings and the saṅgha, nor in Milarepa, so may these teachings spread and flourish until saṃsāra is empty. With the roots of virtue of this and the like, may the Buddha's doctrine spread and subdue evil. May you obtain the sky-like [level of] Vajra holder.

This Aural Transmission beyond words, has been written down with love by Dorje Gyaltsen, at the remote place of Nyenam Dröphug, following the words of the Lama and the dākinīs. May happiness and goodness prevail in all directions and places. The Jetsün Mila Rechen entrusts this to you, Rechung. Gya."

The above citation in cursive script corresponds to an independent song by Mila to Rechungpa called "Mila's seal of entrustment" (*Mi la 'i gtad rgya*), often found at the end of texts in the doctrinal manuals of the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara.¹¹

The second mention of the entrustment to Rechungpa comes in in the seventeenth quality –recognising *mahāmudrā* – in the "Episode of Rechungpa's prophetic dreams" of *The Dark/Black Treasury* (DNM-RD) and *Ms-BL*; in *A River of Blessings*, it

¹¹ See Sernesi 2010: 416-17; see *rJe mi la 'i gtad rgya*, Padma dKar po 1985, 2: 449-54; Byang chub bZang po 1973, 1: 371-73.

comes in the thirteenth quality – upholding the torch of wisdom – in the “Episode on top of the Taga Rock.”¹²

The quality of practising following the instructions.

[Mila said to Rechungpa],

“This is this, but it is not the essence. The first part [of this sentence] refers to the oral instructions to become enlightened through meditation. However, there are also oral instructions to become enlightened by merely hearing them.” After saying this, [Mila] bestowed the entire Aural Transmission.

* * *

In Tsangnyön Heruka’s *Collected Songs*, there is no mention of the exclusive entrustment of the Aural Transmission of Samvara to Rechungpa. Chapter 47 mentions the following:

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, he had a direct vision of Vajrayogini. In a prophecy, she released the command-seal of the single-lineage key of the dakinis’ whispered lineage and permitted him to teach it to a few worthy vessels.¹³

In Chapter 52, Rechungpa’s Departure for Central Tibet, we read:

¹² See Song Chart 8; DNM-RD 1: 605-6; Ms-BL 292b; Ms-Smith 147a; Ms-India 1:496; Ms-Drepung 1: 417; BCG-D 7: 487; BCG-Si: 1: 507.

gsung bzhin sgrubs pa'i yon tan ni / de de yin te de nyid min / sngar gyi de rnams bsgoms pas sangs rgyas pa'i gdams ngag yin / thos pas sangs rgyas pa'i gdams ngag de yod pa yin / gsungs nas snyan rgyud rnams tshang par gsungs so.

¹³ Stagg 2017: 574.

[After the Jetsün allowed him to leave] Rechungpa was so ecstatic that he nearly wept. For several nights, Rechungpa and his guru lay with their pillows touching, and Rechungpa received the teachings of the whispered lineage. Also, having written these in some pechas, he had nothing else to prepare when it was time for him to depart. He wore nothing other than his single white cloth, and he carried a gayal's horn and a bundle upon his back. Carrying a manual of the whispered lineage instructions under his arm, he went to receive the Jetsun's blessing.¹⁴

The episode reappears in the life stories of Rechungpa written by the two most famous disciples of Tsangnyön Heruka, Götsang Repa and Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal.¹⁵

[ToC](#)

¹⁴ Stagg 2017: 613.

¹⁵ For details, see Sernesi 2006: 82-91.

7 – GAMPOPA SÖNAM RINCHEN MEETS JETSÜN MILA

What can we learn about the meeting between Jetsün Milarepa and Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen)¹ by analysing the textual corpus regarding these two eminent masters?

Following the typical sequence of this study, I first review the episodes of Gampopa's stay with Milarepa in two "autobiographical fragments" of Gampopa's life and his life stories recounted in the early Golden Rosaries in the different lineages. After that, I search for the same episodes in the first stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its 'variants' – Shamar Khachö Wangpo's liberation stories of Milarepa and Gampopa, and the second stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia – *The Black Treasury, A River of Blessings*, and a similar manuscript at the British Library. Finally, I summarise Tsangnyön Heruka's version of their relationship narrated in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.

Thus, the cross-section of the same episode presented throughout these works can shed some light on the narrative development regarding Milarepa and his disciple Gampopa between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.

¹ Throughout the texts, Gampopa Sönam Rinchen is called by different names: Upa Tönpa (teacher from Central Tibet), Nyalpa Lhajé (physician from Nyal), Bu Tönpa (teacher-son), Dorje Dzinpa Dzamling Drak (Vajra-holder famous throughout the world), Dakpo Rinpoché (the precious one from Dakpo), Rinpoché denyid (the precious one). The name Gampopa (sGam po pa) is hardly ever mentioned. He became known by this name only after he left Mila and stayed at sGampo Dar.

Autobiographical fragments

For the presentation of the earliest records of Gampopa's life, I rely on U.T. Kragh's work regarding the *Dags po'i bka' 'bum*, "The Manifold Sayings of Dags po".² The first two records are extracts of two "autobiographies" – transcriptions of oral accounts delivered by Gampopa – included in the *bka' 'bum*. Both autobiographical passages appear in the chapter *Answers to the Questions of Düsum Khyenpa* (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*).³ Although not written directly by Sönam Rinchen, the first-person narrative, the plain character of its contents, along with the self-irony with which Sönam Rinchen occasionally speaks of himself all make it seem possible that the text, at least to some extent, may reflect an actual autobiographical oral account. If so, these passages would constitute the most direct literary witnesses of Mila's life. However, given the serious discrepancies between the first and the second "autobiographical" passage, there is good reason to think that both narratives were strongly coloured by their subsequent writers.⁴ Here is Kragg's translation:

In the morning of the day I was going to meet the Bla ma, the Bla ma had said [to his students], "Today a teacher from Central Tibet will come to me; he is someone who will bring benefit to sentient beings." When I arrived, a warm welcome had [therefore] been prepared with some dark beer. Whereas I was

² Kragh 2015.

³ Kragh 2015: 96-7. Düsum Khyenpa (the first Karmapa, 1110–1193) was a direct disciple of Gampopa.

⁴ Kragh 2015: 92.

physically and mentally fatigued from having traveled so far, the Bla ma said, “I am feeling very good.” I asked him how come, yet as soon as the Bla ma had spoken those words, my former tiredness disappeared completely.

Then I stayed there and the Bla ma’s attendant, Se ban Ston chung, came by to see me. He said, “I will help you make a request for higher teachings. Now let’s go to see the Bla ma!” We went there, and having made prostrations very properly, I said to the Bla ma, “As I have traveled four months to come here, please consider me with kindness.” However, the Bla ma responded, “In the course of your four months, one could have come to my place all the way from India.” I answered, “Yes, but two of us set out to come here and then one of us became sick and had to remain behind.” Then the Bla ma said, “It seems that you do not have a karmic connection with me.” I responded, “Although many Bka’ gdams pa Dge bshes cared greatly for me, this did not hold me back in the least. My coming here was therefore like an arrow being released from the bow. So if we have a karmic connection, it would seem to be a strong one.”

When I requested instructions from him, I received several good instructions that Bla ma Byang chub sems dpa’ had not obtained.⁵ I presented my former manner of meditation to the Bla ma and he responded that it was good and just right.

⁵ Kragh 2015: 93, “One of Gampopa’s previous teachers, Ācārya (slob dpon) Byang chub sems dpa’ (i.e., *Bodhisattva, dates unknown). The title Ācārya refers to a highly educated monk teacher. Like Mnga’ ris pa, Ācārya Byang chub sems dpa’ seems to have resided somewhere in Dags po, near Bsod nams rin chen’s home in Se ba valley, since their meeting is prior to Bsod nams rin chen’s departure for Central Tibet. The Ācārya Byang chub sems dpa’ had instructions from Bla ma Mid la, and together with his friend ’Gong ston Gampopa had requested meditation instructions from him.”

At one time, there was a fine teaching I had requested, which I could not meditate on properly due to intense lethargy. Then the Bla ma said, “You should practice breathing exercises.”

Another time, when Se ban Ston chung and the Bla ma got distracted from the teaching topic, I reminded Se ban Ston chung and [the Bla ma then] said to me, “Indeed, you speak of the meditation I am explaining in the right terms. Now I want to meditate like you – please give me a teaching!” [Horrified], I thought to myself, “I cannot teach meditation to the Bla ma!” Since I was [always] so smart in asking for [new] explanations, the Bla ma [one day] said to me [jokingly], “Hey stupid, there haven’t been many questions from you [lately]!”

Toward the end of the winter, the Bla ma told me, “You have stamina in your practice. You are suitable for becoming a Ras pa.” Having donned the [white] cotton robe, I felt improvement in my meditation and when I woke up after sleeping, my body felt like it was boiling, although [the sensation of Inner Heat] did not last. As I continued to practice [the yoga of Inner Heat] over the summer, the bodily heat that one is taught [to generate gradually] arose in me. I then moved down to a lower place [on the mountain], where there was a cold [and windy] juncture of three valleys. I only wore the tattered cotton garment. While I stayed there, the Bla ma came to see me and asked, “Do you feel warm now?” and I answered, “The heat is still there.” I asked him whether the heat would also be there during winter and he replied, “Then it becomes even warmer. By now, you are already better than me.”

At the age of thirty-two, I traveled down from the mountain after having stayed just thirteen months [with the Bla ma] high up on the mountain pass.⁶

⁶ About this autobiography, Kragh 2015:104 writes: “This tone differs considerably from the later hagiographies, which tend to speak only very highly

The following fragment is a second autobiographical narrative regarding Gampopa's time with Mila contained in *Answers to the Questions of Düsum Khyenpa*:

At the age of thirty-one, I met Bla ma Mid la. When I presented him with my former meditation experience, he said, "That [experience] of yours is meditation, but it is not the path of the Buddhists."⁷ [Later on], there was a period when I could not meditate properly due to intense lethargy, and he said, "You should practice breathing exercises." When I had practiced breathing exercises for a year, all the qualities of the winds arose perfectly, and he said to me, "I think from now on there will be no difficulty for you to bring about bliss-heat and meditative concentration." When I had stayed thirteen months with the Bla ma, I went down. At that time,⁸ [Bla ma Mi la] placed a large gtor ma on my head and gave me an empowerment to the *ḍākinīs* and *Dharma* protectors. At the end of it, he said, "It seems you will bring much benefit to sentient beings." When I asked him how that might be, he said, "When

of their subject. Further, the narrative lays an unusual emphasis on the speaker's ties to the Bka' gdams tradition. According to the present story, Mi la ras pa begins his teacher-disciple relationship with Bsod nams rin chen by confirming the success and validity of Bsod nams rin chen's former Bka' gdams style of meditation practice. This too disagrees with the later hagiographical tradition as well as with the second 'autobiographical' narrative below, which has Mi la ras pa reject and belittle Bsod nams rin chen's Bka' gdams practice."

⁷ Ibidem, 108n248, Ms DK. A., another version of the text changes the sentence to: "but it is not the path for becoming a buddha."

⁸ We find the details narrated in this paragraph in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, e.g. in the 'variant' versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, all versions of *A River of Blessings* and Ms-BL. Surprisingly, they are missing in *The Black Treasury* in Rangjung Dorje's Collected Works. See below and Blancke & Bock 2024.

you first arrived here, there appeared a special sign indicating that there would be [much] benefit for sentient beings. I dreamt that while you were staying here, you and I competed in a foot race. Since you came in first, it seems to indicate that you will bring about a bigger benefit for sentient beings than I will. Also, once I dreamt that I threw a boulder larger than a tent to another land, but when you struck it with both your hands it turned into a pile of dust. [The dream] shows that since your bodily strength is better than mine, there will be no difficulty for your abilities and you will have no fear of outer things.” After going down...⁹

* * *

The first complete hagiography of Gampopa, attributed to *Khyungtsangpa Yeshe Lama* and written between 1153 and 1176, appears in only one version of the *Dags po 'i bka' 'bum*. By contrast, in the other *Dags po 'i bka' 'bum* versions, a much later biography of Gampopa dated 1520 replaces it.¹⁰

⁹ Kragh 2015: 108-9. Kragh comments: “Bla ma Mila’s reaction to Bsod nams rin chen’s former meditation practice differs considerably from the first narrative, since Mi la here rejects his Bka’ gdams practice, saying it was unsuccessful. In general, the present narrative does not emphasize Bsod nams rin chen’s Bka’ gdams ties in the same positive vein as seen in the first narrative.”

¹⁰ Ibidem, 138, Kragh explains the history of the *Dags po 'i bka' 'bum* as follows: “In the first printed edition of the *Dags po 'i bka' 'bum* (ms DK. A.) produced at Dags lha sgam po in 1520, Ye shes Bla ma’s text was broken up into two separate works (texts DK.A.Ka and DK.A.Kha) containing the hagiographies starting with Vajradhara until Mi la ras pa. The printer gave the first work (DK.A.Ka) a new title: “The Hagiographies of Tailo and Naro composed by Master Sgam po pa” (Rje sgam po pas mdzad pa 'i ta i lo nii ro 'i rnam thar). To the second work (DK. A.Kha), he gave the title: “The Hagiographies of Master Mar pa and the Venerable Mi la” (rJe mar pa dang rje btsun mi la 'i rnam thar). The last part of Ye shes Bla ma’s composition containing the vita of Bsod nams rin chen, however, was entirely omitted from the xylograph publication (DK.A) and was

When he then heard the story of Bla ma [Mi la] ras pa, he felt trust [in him] and decided to ask Dge bshes Yon bdag for permission to go to him. When requesting this, he was given permission and went up to [Mi la] ras pa and learnt with him for thirteen months. He said that he was given all the instructions. He said that [Mi la ras pa] three times prophesied [his coming], saying “Tomorrow there will come a monk with a pure conduct” and so forth. As for the instructions:¹¹

The [two] meditations on Dream [and] Radiance (*rmi lam öd gsal*)

The four Dharmas [for] buddhahood without meditation, (*ma bsgom sang rgyas chos bzhi*)

replaced with a much longer Sgam po pa hagiography (DK.A. Ga) composed by Sgam po Bsod nams lhun grub himself, i.e., the publisher of the 1520 xylograph, being an embellished version of Zhwa dmar pa Mkha’ spyod dbang po’s large Sgam po pa hagiography (*rnam thar chen mo*). As a consequence, the final colophon of the cycles of Ye shes Bla ma’s texts, wherein the name of the author was explicitly stated to be Ye shes Bla ma, was not included in the xylograph (D K.A) and for this reason the authorship of the printed hagiographies of Telopa to Mi la ras pa became unclear. Moreover, the new title given to the first text (D K.A. Ka) in the 1520 print suggested instead that the two cycles of hagiographies from Vajradhara to Mi la ras pa (DK .A.Ka and DK.A.Kha) had been composed by Bsod nams rin chen, which obviously is not the case. This misinformation has in several instances misled modern scholarship to believe that the hagiographies of the earlier masters were works by Bsod nams rin chen, as is stated explicitly in some of the existing Western scholarship.”

- ¹¹ For the texts included in the *Dags po’i bka’ ’bum*, it seems appropriate to keep in mind Kragh’s conclusion from his redaction critical and source critical study, “It seems that the manuscript’s overall title for the corpus, viz. “*Dags po bka’ ’bum*” originally may have been intended merely to suggest a compilation of miscellaneous contents associated with Dags lha sGam po and the early Dags po’i bka’ brgyud tradition rather than signifying an exclusive collection of texts composed by Bsod nams rin chen.” (Kragh 2013: 400). Therefore, the instructions included in Yeshe Lama’s text cited above may have been added later.

The three [types of] aptitude, viz. superior, middling, and weak,
 The three [kinds of] merging (*bsre ba gsum*)
 The three [yogas of] Inner Heat, Dream, and Radiance, (*gtum
 mo rmi lam 'od gsal gsum*)
 [And] Co-emergent Yoga, the natural state, Mahāmudrā. (*lhan
 cig skyes sbyor gnyug ma phyag rgya chen po*)
 Having acquired mastery over all these instructions
 [Aimed] at achieving buddhahood in one life, in one body,
 The points of meditative absorption and post-meditation arose
 in his mind.
 Unlike any other, the Bla ma implanted [the teachings] up to
 and including the Instruction Text (*bka dpe*) in [Bsod nams rin
 chen's] heart.¹²

* * *

Lama Zhang Tsöndru Drakpa (Zhang Brtson 'grus Grags pa, 1122-1193) also wrote a hagiography of Gampopa, which is more or less a direct reproduction of the first “autobiographical” fragment from *Answers to the Questions of Dusum Khyenpa* translated above. Whether Lama Zhang's version of the narrative or the version found in the *Answers to the Questions of Dusum Khyenpa* is the source for the parallels is an unsettled question, but the parallel itself is significant in that it provides one of the earliest attestations for the existence of a segment of the *Dags po 'i bka' 'bum* corpus in the second half of the twelfth century.¹³

* * *

¹² Kragh 2015: 141-42.

¹³ Kragh 2015: 147-48.

A liberation story of Gampopa attributed to *Barompa Darma Wangchuk* ('Ba' rom pa Dar ma dbang phyug, 1127–1199), a direct disciple of Gampopa Sönam Rinchen,¹⁴ appears in the *Golden Rosaries* of *Ögyenpa* (Grub thob O rgyan pa rin chen dpal, 13th century), *Möntsepa* (Mon rtse pa Kun dga' dpal ldan, 15th century), and the *Collected Works* of *Karmapa Rangjung Dorje* (Here it bears the title *rgyal sras zla 'od gzhon nu gzhugs so* – Prince Candrabhadrakumāra). The colophon reads:

Lama Dakpo Lhajé, who had become a mahasiddha, told this to Je Rinpoche Barompa¹⁵

The episode does not contain any song, although there is a reference to a welcome song. Barompa's narrative is fascinating because, although from a very early date, it contains most elements that constitute the narrative in the later hagiographies. I have provided a summary of the episode here.

[Upa Tönpa] had a nice piece of land that he sold for two *sangs* of gold and went to meet the Lama. He met one person called

¹⁴ The episode of Gampopa's meeting with Milarepa comes in *Ögyenpa* pp. 249–57, *Möntsepa* pp. 193–201, *Rangjung Dorje* 4 (nga): 134–42.

For the different versions of the text, see Kragh 2015: 87n136. The version in Möntsepa's *Golden Rosary*, although attributed to Barompa Darma Wangchuk, is slightly different from the other two. It includes other elements from a later date.

About Barompa Darma Wangchuk, see Dan Martin's entry in *The Treasury of Lives*:

<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Barompa-DarmaWangchuk/3181>

See also Chapter 11, *Interconnections between inner winds and outer perceptions of non-human beings*.

¹⁵ *sgrub thob chen por sgyur pa 'i/ bla ma dags po lha rje des/ rje rin po che ba brom pa la gsungs pa'o*. *Ögyenpa* 270, *Rangjung Dorje* p 157.

Nyishang Khyirawa, an attendant of the Jetsün, and Loro Rechung, Gomtak Jodor, Seben Tenchung, Megom and Kongur. The attendant said: “Upa Tönpa, the Jetsün knew you were coming, and he thinks of you kindly. Just wait here for a few days; do not become impatient. Then the Lama will meet you.” He settled below a rock. The following afternoon, they summoned him and he found the Lama sitting on a boulder, surrounded by disciples. When he offered all the *srangs* of gold, the Lama said: “This gold and I do not agree. Use it for your needs while you are in retreat.” He did not accept it.

The Jetsün asked: “What is your name?”

“Sönam Rinchen,” he replied.

“Sönam, Sönam,” he repeated twice, “Merit comes from the two accumulations in the past. Rinchen, Precious, because you are precious to all sentient beings.” Then he sang a song [not included in the text] and said: “Upa Tönpa, this is my welcome to you.”

Then, [Upa Tönpa] gathered some plants and made a grass hut; he sold a *zho*¹⁶ of gold to each of two benefactors, Könbar and Barsé, and bought flour from them. He then asked for instructions.

The Jetsün asked: “Did you receive empowerments and teachings?”¹⁷ [Upa Tönpa] replied that he had requested the four empowerments [of Guhyasamāja] to Geshé Loden from Mangyul and that he had received the Hevajra thrice, the Dagmema’s blessings thrice, the teachings of Luipa, the blessings of the Six Ornament Vajra Vārāhi and many empowerments from various Lamas. He added that he had a thirteen-day good undisturbed samādhi. Mila had a good laugh. “Haha, one does not obtain oil by squeezing sand but by

¹⁶ *srang* and *zho* are weight measures for precious metals; a *zho* is one-tenth of a *srang*.

¹⁷ *dbang bskur gyi bka’*.

squeezing mustard seeds. These things are not necessary. Practise my short-A *caṇḍalī* (*gtum mo a-thung*) with physical exercises, and you will immediately see the true nature of the mind. A demon has entered the heart of Tibet. Atiśa did not get permission to teach Secret Mantra, and, in this way, many people came to destruction.”

[Upa Tönpa] said: “The Kadampas also have many Secret Mantra oral instructions,” to which Milarepa replied: “Yes, these belong to the Secret Mantra teachings, but there are no pith instructions. In each *sādhana* with a single deity [without consort], the completion stage consists in the absorption of the world and the beings into [the deity]. Such practice is a conceptual *samādhi*. Meditating on the selflessness of the stages of the path has only a relative value. Keep quiet now and practise meditation according to the path of means.”

[Upa Tönpa] then requested inner heat teachings and went to meditate. He spontaneously experienced blissful heat, and after seven days, he received a vision of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. When he recounted this to Milarepa, the latter said: “This is like seeing two moons by applying pressure to your eyes; it occurs through the control of the *prāṇa* of the five elements. It is neither good nor bad. Continue with your meditation.”

Then he thought: “Though the Lama says this is not a good quality, I feel joyful nonetheless.” And he exerted himself in meditation.

After three months, one day he saw the entire universe swirling around him like a wheel. He began to run but fell and lost consciousness for some time. Upon returning to his senses, he told Milarepa, who said: “The wind from your right and left channels entered the central channel. This is neither good nor bad. Go on with your meditation.”

At another time, in the early morning [Upa Tönpa] saw a myriad of Chenrezik forms seated on moon discs, filling all of space. When he told Milarepa, the latter said: “This is due to the increase of the drops [vital energy, *bindu*] at the crown

cakra, the wheel of great bliss. It is neither good nor bad. Go on with your meditation.”

At dusk, he saw the Black-Line Hell Realm. He felt as if his heart were crumbling and became utterly depressed. When he told Milarepa, the latter said: “This is due to the tightness of your meditation belt. It has bound up the channels. Loosen it a little. You have taken hold of the upward-moving wind. This is neither good nor bad. Go on with the meditation.”

[Upa Tönpa] next saw the celestial beings in the six desire realms, the upper ones showering a rain of nectar onto the lower. The gods were all content and satisfied. He saw his mother dying from thirst. He asked the Lama, who said: “The rain of nectar comes from expanding the vital energy in the right and left channels at the throat cakra. Your mother’s thirst comes from the opening of the lower end of the central channel. Do the following yoga exercises,” and he indicated special yogic techniques.

[Upa Tönpa] meditated for one month. He felt his body quivering and trembling and shaking without interruption and started to cry uncontrollably. He wondered if this was an obstacle of the Māras. The Lama told him: “The heart cakra is filled with drops. Do the yoga exercises I gave you regularly. These signs are neither good nor bad.” From that moment, he had little need for food.

One day, [Upa Tönpa] saw the planet Rahu devour the sun and the moon in the sky in front of him. The planet itself had two lines as subtle as horsetail hair. He asked the Lama, who said: “The winds in the right and left channels have merged in the central channel. This is neither good nor bad. But you really are a capable man! Now, now!” he repeated three times.

[Upa Tönpa] diligently continued practising meditation and saw the face of Red Hevajra. He thought: “The Lama’s saying ‘now, now’ must have referred to seeing the face of the yidam.” When he told Milarepa, the latter said: “The red seed essence

received from your mother has increased at the navel cakra. This is neither good nor bad.”

After that, he practised strenuously, and one day, he saw the skeleton maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara in the Luipa tradition. Milarepa said: “The navel cakra is filled with drops. This is neither good nor bad.”

[Upa Tönpa] practised diligently for eleven days, and one night, he experienced his body pervading the whole space. From his crown cakra to his toes, sentient beings of the six realms gathered, many drinking milk, some drinking from a star. He heard a loud sound, but no one could tell whence it came. When he loosened his meditation belt in the morning, the vision disappeared. On telling Milarepa, the latter said: “The karmic wind is directing the drops into the inconceivable number of channels in the body. This wind is close to becoming transformed into the wisdom wind.” Then Milarepa gave him the supreme inner heat practice (*mchog gi gtum mo*). He practised diligently, and one day, he saw the entire Gungthang valley filled with smoke. In the afternoon, the area around him was utterly dark. He could not even see the road to reach the Lama and had to feel his way along the path, like a blind man. Milarepa said: “Sit by me and meditate.” And he gave [Gampopa] a blessing that dispelled obstacles above and below (*steng 'og dgegs sel*). [Gampopa] meditated, and at dawn break he left.

One night, in a vision [Upa Tönpa] saw his waist without flesh and his bones covered with the joined channels of his body. Milarepa said: “Your wind energy is rough, so you should meditate to make it smooth.”

[Upa Tönpa] practised for a month and saw the faces of the Seven Medicine Buddhas. At this time, he needed to breathe in and out only once a day. When he released the wind, his visions disappeared. In the early evening, when he meditated holding the wind, he saw the limitless saṃbhogakāya buddha field and

experienced its enjoyment. When he got distracted, he released the wind energy, and twilight fell.

Thinking he would disturb the Lama's samādhi if he went there right away, he did not go that evening but made maṇḍala offerings and said prayers. At dawn, as he retained the wind energy, he saw the faces of the thousand buddhas surrounding Śākyamuni. When he went to Milarepa at daybreak to recount his experience, he offered a prostration and without having the time to relate all, [Mila] said: "Now you have seen the yidam deity and the saṃbhogakāya and nirmanakāya spheres. Soon you will see the dharmakāya sphere. Journey to Central Tibet to practise meditation. I have dispelled all your previous dangerous obstacles. Now you will face the dangerous path of clairvoyance, also filled with obstacles. When you achieve that state, you will experience the dangerous Māra of the son of the gods. It is important to keep this and all the siddhis you obtain secret. Generally, this Māra cannot harm superior beings, and you are a superior being. However, keep your Secret Mantra practice secret. You will benefit many beings, so you should gather disciples and care for them."

[Upa Tönpa] asked: "When will be the right moment to gather disciples?" and Mila replied; "When you see the true nature of the mind and stabilise it. Test if you can send the wind through your fingertips. When you can do this, you are free from the dangerous narrow path of the wind."

That night, [Upa Tönpa] piled a heap of dust on a rock, stretched his fingertips, and concentrated on directing the winds. At midnight the dust had dispersed. In the morning, he told Milarepa, who said: "This is not [yet] what is called "mastering channels and winds"; it is called "making channels and winds workable". Now you have no further need to stay here with me. You will obtain magical powers to emanate and transform and the like, as well as ordinary and extraordinary accomplishments. You will be called Bhikshu Vajradhara Jambudvīpa Kīrti [World-Renowned Vajradhara]."

Then [Milarepa] gave him all the empowerments, teachings and blessings he possessed and said: “Now return to your country and practise. Do not befriend those who have an increase of the three poisons, for you can be influenced by them. Why is this? There are beings full of anger, who heap abuse on others and the Dharma. In such beings’ minds, hatred blazes like fire. For instance, a snake, although without wings and feet, is nonetheless an object of fright to many because of its strong anger. When one has strong anger in the mind, one perceives everyone as an enemy. And a greedy person who gathers everything lest he should one day be in need, even small pebbles, is as filled with burning desire as boiling water is with heat. Likewise, beings who feel this is not a time to meditate on the practice of the perfect meaning, who believe it is impossible to achieve buddhahood within one lifetime and who do not accumulate merits, purify negativities and practise compassion will fall into the *śrāvaka* path. Those who reject the special method fall into nihilism, bound by ignorance. So, don’t deal with such people. If you speak with them, they will first ask about your teacher and the kind of teaching you are studying. If you tell them, they will become angry, hate the teachings and the teacher, give up all attempts to practise and be reborn in the hell realms. In that way, you would cause others to accumulate negative karma. Therefore, do not keep company with persons having the three poisons. Do not stay for seven days with *śrāvakas*. If you do, there will be discordance between your and their vision and conduct and your Secret Mantra experiences and realisations will become obscured. In the *samaya* teachings [it is said] one should not remain with *śrāvakas* more than seven days. The meaning of this is as [explained] above. In general, one should be cautious, like a bird or a wounded forest animal. Be peaceful, controlled, compassionate and kind to all beings. Maintain impeccable cleanliness and have few conceptual thoughts. Pass your time in silent retreat without leaving your meditation seat. And do not abandon your vajra master, even

when you realise awakening. Proceed as much as possible in purification and accumulation. Even the slightest positive accumulation can have results as vast as the sky, but the smallest negative action can destroy it. Do not cease practising the four-session guru yoga, even though you experience the inseparability of the meditation and post-meditation states. Do not slander the dharma or the persons, even when you have achieved the equalisation of self and others. In three years you should have completed the oral instructions. So, go to Central Tibet and stay in the mountains to meditate. When you see the face of the dharmakāya you will experience an extraordinary devotion for me.”

Then [Gampopa] went to Central Tibet.

* * *

Several Gampopa hagiographies appeared in the thirteenth century. In Gampopa’s lineage, there are *Golden Rosary* life stories by Dönmo Ripa (Don mo ri pa), Gyalthangpa Dechen Dorje (rGyal thang pa bde chen rdo rje) and Sangyé Bum (Sangs rgyas ’bum).

Dönmo Ripa’s Gampopa biography is almost identical to Barompa Darma Wangchuk’s version.¹⁸ There are a few minor differences. For instance, in the episode of Gampopa’s earlier training and Mila’s reaction, the reference to Atiśa is limited to: “The Tibetans did not allow Atiśa to teach the Tantras.”

* * *

¹⁸ For an English translation of the episode, see Khenpo Könchog Gyaltzen 2006: 190-95.

Here follows a summary of the episode in *Gyalthangpa*'s Gampopa life story:¹⁹

303:

He reached Mila with Lekse, and the Jetsün manifested in three bodies. He wondered to whom he should prostrate. After a while, the two manifestations on the sides melted into the central Jetsün. Gampopa threw his golden mālā in the direction of Jetsün's heart and also offered him some tea.

"Jetsün Rinpoche, he said, I have heard of your fame, and today I finally meet you. Precious Lord, I did not stop thinking of you. With my speech in great torment, I never stopped praying to you. Jetsün Rinpoche, my breath has been cut off many times before meeting you. Lord, I could not phantom meeting you. I am so happy now that I have met you, and all has been fulfilled. Please be compassionate so that from now on until the future *bardo*, in all this time, we may never be apart." Saying this, he touched [Mila's] feet and laid his head in his lap, weeping for a long time. At that moment, the King of the Jetsüns,²⁰ Milarepa, spoke the following words: "Teacher-son, please stand up. All your wishes will be fulfilled. You should know that, from the moment you heard my name until you reached here, I have perfectly known everything that happened to you. I had blessed you even before that time. Now, son, do get up and tell me your name."

"My name is Sönam Rinchen," he replied. The precious Jetsün was very happy with this name and sang the following welcome song [*shang len gyi mgur*, different from Tsangnyön's and Sangyé Bum's].

¹⁹ rGyal thang pa bde chen rdo rje 1973, 300-26.

²⁰ The King of the Jetsüns – *rje btsun gyi rgyal po* – is the title of Gyalthangpa's liberation story of Milarepa.

“Son, you have arrived because you have accumulated merits. As the intent of the Lord Vajradhara – the precious one among all beings in the Densely Arrayed Realm – I, Milarepa, tell you the following words,

The view: unlimited;
Meditation: luminosity without attachment to it;
Conduct: spontaneous and ever-changing;
Commitment: wholly pure and white;
Fruition: mere absence of expectations.
Teacher-son, I am happy you arrived.
Take this as a welcome song to the monk.
I will give you instructions.

306:

Then Gampopa went to sleep in a cave. He thought that his meeting with such a great Lama resulted from his great accumulation, so that night, he went to sleep with great faith, and for eight nights, he slept in luminosity. When he awoke, he thought: “Luminosity is dharmakāya and enlightenment. I do not need any other teachings. The greatest thing is to have faith and devotion towards the Lama.” Thus, he kept praying. Then, Rechungpa and Zhiwa Ö came to summon him, so he got up and went to the Lama. He did not offer prostrations; instead, he touched the Lama’s feet. He thought: “Is this a dream that I am meeting the Jetsün or is this real?” He said: “Lama, by merely meeting you, I have experienced the meaning of luminosity and dharmakāya. I do not need to hope for meditation to become enlightened.” Saying this, he wept and then lost consciousness. Then, Rechung Dorje Drakpa emanated, Zhiwa Ö transformed himself, and Mila laughed. When [Gampopa] recovered, the Jetsün said: “As your portion of dharma, have faith. Now I will not show you other teachings.”

“I will,” said Upa Tönpa. “I brought some tea from Central Tibet to offer you.”

The Jetsün drank a lot of tea. Then, he sent two junior *repas* to gather some herbs to boil tea and bring it to him, after which he cooled it with his secret water. Gampopa drank it all and admitted it tasted excellent: it had a taste he had never experienced. Through drinking the tea, the Jetsün had bestowed the four ripening empowerments.

309:

For fifteen days, the Jetsün did not give him any teaching. All this time, Nyalpa Lhajé circumambulated around the Jetsün and prayed to him without interruption. Unaware of the need for food and drinks, he remained concentrated in one point.

After some days, [the Jetsün] bestowed the complete empowerments. He practised the preliminary teachings in four sessions. The Jetsün called him and said: “Although devotion and prayers are indeed excellent teachings to practise, it would not be appropriate that you have come here without me giving you any oral instructions.” At that time, he bestowed the complete empowerment of Cakrasaṃvara based on a powder maṇḍala and told him to practise the four preliminary practices. He then gave him the four preliminary practices, and [Gampopa] practised these in four sessions. In the early morning, for the accumulation of merit, he continuously made maṇḍala offerings to the Lama. In the morning session, for the purification of obscurations and veils, he recited the hundred-syllable mantra and made confessions and purifications. In the afternoon session, he meditated on death and impermanence and turned the mind away from worldly desires. In the evening session, he prayed to receive blessings from the Lama, a manifestation of the Buddha. In this way, he practised.²¹ As a first sign of the purification of negativities, an ocean of milk

²¹ To my knowledge, this is the first reference to the preliminary practices in the studied hagiographies. See above, Chapter 3.

washed away the stains of his outer and inner body, and he thought of his body as completely pure and clean. As a sign of the accumulation of merits, he vomited jewels. As a sign of the meditation on impermanence, from the most profound of himself his mind turned away from worldly samsaric desires, and not for a single moment did he have any aspirations for this life. As a sign of his prayers, as soon as he thought of the Lama, the meaning of unified *mahāmudrā* took hold of his mind, and all phenomenal existence turned into the Lama. Later, he would say that, to practise dharma, the preliminary practices alone are sufficient to give rise to many qualities in the mind. He would speak very highly of the preliminary practices.

311:

Gampopa's dream, with the complete song 41.4.²²

314–17:

Mila's reply with his interpretation of the dream, with the complete song 41.5.²³

317:

Then Lama Jetsün concentrated on the teaching of the channels and the winds, and many qualities manifested. Gampopa referred his experiences to the Lord, and the Lama gave pointing-out [instructions].

318:

Nyalpa Lhagé concentrated on the inner heat practice and became an expert in good channels and winds and in the practice of blissful body exercises (*bde ba'i 'khrul 'khor*). He

²² TN-Dha 641; Stagg 2017: 506.

²³ TN-Dha 644; Stagg 2017: 509.

became proficient in inner heat practice. Even the sky filled with fire, whereas the earth was full of water. The whole sky was covered with a bluish fog. He went to the Jetsün to ask what this meant, relating his different experiences.²⁴

320:

After this inner heat practice, the Jetsün bestowed all teachings upon him during three years and four months,²⁵ like emptying a vase: the Six Teachings, such as luminosity and the illusory body, the co-emergent *mahāmudrā* (*phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor*), blending and transference, and the oral instructions of the dohās. [Gampopa] had some experiences during his meditation on luminosity and during his meditation on dreams, the illusory body, and consciousness ejection. He recounted all these experiences to the Jetsün. The Lama considered him his son, who would remain for the sake of the [other] sons after their father passed away. He told him to go to Central Tibet. “I, your father, stayed with Marpa for six years and seven months, and I have transmitted all the oral instructions I received from him without adding or retaining anything.” [Gampopa] requested: “Now that I have met a Lama who is like a buddha, please let me remain here until you die.” However, the Jetsün told him to go to Central Tibet because that is where his future disciples would be. He would be beneficial to beings at Dakla Gampo in the east.

321:

²⁴ The meditation experiences are narrated in the same way as in Barompa Darma Wangchuk and TN-Dha 637-44; Stagg 2017: 503-6.

²⁵ All the other authors agree that his stay with Mila lasted only thirteen months. Here, Gyalthangpa hints at the notion of a three-year retreat!

Then he sang a prophetic song (41.7, only the first stanza).²⁶ Gampopa asked: “Will the qualities born in my present mindstream be equivalent to benefitting others?”

“No, they will not,” he said, “you should stay and meditate continuously for seven years at a place called Sewa Lung. At that time, as I have blessed your mindstream, an immediate realisation will dawn in your mind (*cig car gyi rtogs pa*), and that will be the time for you to act for the benefit of others.” Dakpo Rinpoché listened to the advice of the Lama and prepared to leave.

322-26:

Jetsün gave him a piece of cloth, and they left together as far as a rock called *chos khri skang*. Then the Jetsün said: “I have a farewell oral instruction for you.”

“Should I offer a maṇḍala?” he asked.

“That is not necessary,” he replied.

“Should I prepare a *torma*?” he insisted.

“That is also not necessary,” he said.

“Then I will offer a prostration,” he said.

“Also for this there is no need,” [Mila] replied.

“What should I do then?” he asked.

“Come here, below this rock,” [Mila] said. There, the Lama lifted his garment and showed his buttocks, which had become completely covered with sores, so it is said. He said: “Son Upa Tönpa, dharma teachings alone are not enough, you must meditate on them. My teacher, Marpa Lotsāwa, told me: ‘In these degenerate times people have short lives; there is no time to explore all the limits of intellectual knowledge. Son, take to heart your practice.’ Therefore, according to his words, I have

²⁶ TN-Dha 653; Stagg 2017: 518.

lived in remote areas, and you should do the same and meditate.” He then gave him the following advice.²⁷ After this, he gave some more advice in a song.²⁸ Mila then placed his hand on Upa Tönpa’s head, blessed him with the Ye Dharma-mantra,²⁹ and offered another song [not in Tsangnyön’s work], in which he said that the vinaya- and bodhisattva-vows, as well as the commitments of the Vidyādhara-mantra, are like a ship and a pond, and that he should consider all sentient beings as his parents and as yidams, as dharmakāya itself, without considering their faults. Then [Gampopa] went ahead for a while. Mila called him back and said that, while meditating at Sewalung, he would manifest signs of realisation. At that time he had to go to Gampo Dar to build a monastery. There he would meet his disciples, who would all be emanations. Then he took him by the hand and wept. Upa Tönpa repeated that he wanted to stay with the Jetsün, but the Jetsün told him to go.

* * *

²⁷ Here follows a song not included in TN-Dha, in which Mila tells him to keep in mind the well-being of others while meditating calm abiding, to continue to develop devotion, to maintain discipline while keeping death in mind, and to be assiduous in practice.

²⁸ The content of the song is similar to the prose in Barompa’s version in which Mila advised on how to behave, as in TN-Dha 654-55 and Stagg 2017: 520-21, although the long discussion about which kind of people not to stay with is missing.

²⁹ Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hyavadat. teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ,

“TheTathagata has proclaimed the cause, as well as the cessation, of all things (dharma) arising from a cause. This is the Great Śramaṇa’s teaching.” This verse is considered to be the epitome of the Buddhist teachings. See Bendor 1996: 114.

The episode recounted in *Sangyé Bum*'s Gampopa biography (13th century)³⁰ is very similar to the version narrated in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography. Here is a summary.

246:

[As in Gyalthangpa's version, Gampopa met Lekse, who told him that the Jetsün knew of his arrival. Gampopa became a little proud, and the Jetsün was aware of it, so he transformed Zhiwa Ö, Rechungpa and Seban Tönchung in his resemblance. When Lekse and Gampopa met the Jetsün, she tried to point out the right Jetsün among the emanations but could not find him.] Rechungpa could not withstand the resplendence of the Jetsün and told Gampopa: "It's the one in the middle." Understanding that these were emanations, Gampopa offered sixteen *sraṅgs* of gold. It is said that the Jetsün looked with squinting eyes. Gampopa, while providing the sixteen-*sraṅg* gold maṇḍala, thought he could not be considered a lowly one by making such a substantial gift at once and puffed himself up with arrogance. The Jetsün knew this, so he took a piece of gold and threw it in the air as an offering to Marpa. To cut his pride, he remained seated without showing his face.

The Jetsün said: "I don't want your gold, save it for yourself. Even without gold, all appearances become gold." He then stamped his foot to the right and the mountains transformed into manifold precious jewels; he did the same to the left and in

³⁰ This life story is part of the *Rwa lung dkar brgyud gser 'phreng* 1978: 246-72. Although it comes in a seventeenth-century collection, the biographies are attributed to Sangyé Bum (thirteenth century), even though no colophon corroborates this hypothesis. For details, see Ducher 2017: 96-97. As it is very similar to the version in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (see below), it is not sure which of the two relied on the other.

front. Jetsün told him not to be proud or arrogant. Otherwise, he could have a downfall. Together with Rechung, Zhiwa Ö and Seban, he sang a welcome song called *dags po shangs len gyi mgur* (41.2, only the opening stanzas).³¹ Then Gampopa offered tea. The Jetsün enjoyed it and drank a lot of it. To reciprocate, he sent the junior *repas* to gather some herbs for tea and boil it. He lifted his garment and cooled the tea with his urine to spice it up. Afterwards, he made Gampopa taste it and asked: “Which one was tastier: yours or mine?” Gampopa said it was his. Then he asked for his name and commented on it. He then took a skull cup full of *chang* (barley beer) and gave it to him. “Drink this,” he said, but [Gampopa] could not accept it as he was an ordained monk, and many people were present. The Jetsün said: “Don’t think about it so much, just drink.” [Gampopa] thought that the Lama knew anyway and drank it all. In this way, the Lama knew he would hold the lineage and was a fit vessel for all the oral instructions.

249:

Episode with the Kadampa Jayulpa, who requested blessings from the Jetsün but said he had nothing to offer to him.³²

250:

The Jetsün asked: “Did you receive empowerments before?” Gampopa summed up all the tantric teachings he had received and said his samādhi of the abiding mind (*sems gnas pa'i ting nge 'dzin*)³³ lasted for thirteen days. Mila replied: “Haha, all this is called ‘mere abiding’ (*zhi gnas lteng po*, here *gteng po*). Even if you protect it well, the result will only be a rebirth in

³¹ TN-Dha 634; Stagg 2017: 499.

³² TN-Dha 636; Stagg 2017: 501.

³³ This particular detail of the abiding mind, as well as the sentence about “mere abiding” and “you are lucky to have met me; otherwise, you would be reborn as a deva” is not mentioned in many later versions.

the realm of formless gods; it is of no benefit. You are lucky to have met me; otherwise, you would take rebirth as a deva. Teacher-son, from sand, one cannot squeeze oil; one needs sesame seeds for this. There is no need for such things [as your previous meditation experiences]. Meditate on my short-A *caṇḍalī* (*gtum mo a thung*), and you will see the mind's essence straight away. A demon has entered the heart of Tibet. Atiśa could not teach Secret Mantra, which was disastrous for many people.”

“Still, the Kadampas also have many Secret Mantra practice instructions,” [Gampopa] said, to which Milarepa replied: “Yes, these belong to the Secret Mantra, but there are no pith instructions (*man ngag*). For each *sādhana* of a single deity [without consort], there is an explanation of the complete arising and completion process.³⁴ This is a conceptual *saṃādhi* and cannot lead to enlightenment. In the completion stage [of the Kadampas], the world and the beings are absorbed into each other and meditated as empty. This practice is called a ‘merely generic image’ (*don spyi rkyang pa*).³⁵ Keep silent now and meditate on the short A. You have a great disposition towards dharma, but you should choose whether to practise that of the others or mine,” he said. Tönpa replied: “I will follow the way Lama Jetsün explains. However, according to the great Jetsün, when one first purifies the obscuration of the knowables, the obscuration of the afflictions will be purified by itself, whereas, according to the Kadampa Lords, it is not possible to abandon

³⁴ *Thabs kyang pa re res bskyed rdzogs bsdus pa re re tsam gshad nas 'dug*. In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, *bsgrub thabs rkyang pa re re / rdzogs rims snod bcud bsdus pa re re bshad nas 'dug*.

³⁵ In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, *The Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings* and Ms-BL “this” becomes “the meditation of the absence of a self in the stages of the path is a mere generic image, *lam rim gyi bdag med sgom pa don spyi rkyang pa yin*, as in Barompa’s version.

the obscuration of the knowables without first abandoning the afflictions. I want to size these two up to each other.” Jetsün replied: “Both are equal in their meaning.”³⁶

251:

The episode when Jetsün planned to go to Nepal but changed his mind after he had a vision of a *ḍākinī*. So they stayed at Menlung Chuwar, and [Gampopa] requested dharma teachings. The Jetsün said: “It is not that the previous empowerments you received are of no use, but for an auspicious connection, you need a blessing of my teaching tradition.” He bestowed the blessing of the Aural Transmission based on a *sindūra maṇḍala*. At night, [Gampopa] slept near Lama Jetsün. He thought he should engage in a discussion to investigate and reach a final decision. He went to the Jetsün and asked: “Lama Jetsün Rinpoche, what are the most powerful means to accumulate merit? I asked many spiritual teachers and, among those, Potowa told me: ‘Compared to offerings to the buddhas of the three times, the offering given to a single pore of the Lama is the most precious one.’ Is this true?”

“It is really like that. The *Guhyasamāja*, the *Catūhpitha* and other [tantras] mention that compared to offerings made to all the buddhas of the three times, the most precious offering is made to the pores of the Lama. Compared to offering a heap of jewels as vast as Mount Meru put together for all the buddhas of the three times, one accumulates more merit by offering to a single pore of the Lama.”

“Is there another way to accumulate merit?” [Gampopa] asked.

“Yes, there is one,” replied [Mila].

“Pray, please give it to me.”

³⁶ This conversation comes in *Dag po'i bka' ' bum*, *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs* 2000: Ka 507.

“To practise the instructions taught by one’s Lama without letting them go to waste is the best [method],” replied [Mila]. [Gampopa] insisted: “Once I asked Geshe Nyugrumpa whether it is possible to achieve buddhahood in a single lifetime, with this same body. [He said]: ‘[For this to happen], the person should not be interested in this life even for a single instant.’ I asked Geshe Yarlungpa and he replied: ‘Those words do not express the definitive meaning (*nges pa can*), they have an implied meaning (*dgongs pa can*). One should be able to produce medicinal pills, one’s life energy should equal that of the sun and the moon – so [one’s present life] should correspond to a seventh lifetime – and one should be able to see the faces of the deities and reach their pure lands.’ Is it like this?”

Mila replied:³⁷ “A worthy disciple of a perfectly qualified Lama should meditate on the Secret Mantra oral instructions without interruption. The best [disciples] will achieve buddhahood in this life, those of medium capacities [will achieve it] in the *bardo* at the moment of their death, and the laziest ones somewhere between the seventh and the sixteenth life.³⁸ If they still do not achieve it at that point, they will have to purify their sacred commitments, [otherwise,] they risk taking rebirth in the lower realms for a short time. Moreover, Lhajé, the persons who devote themselves to mere chatter are not fit for you. Do

³⁷ In Sangyé Bum’s text Mila does not take position on this issue; in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* we read: *de gnyis ka gsung ba med par ’dug gsung*; in DNM-RD, *De gsungs pa gnyis ka med par ’dug gsungs* “Both sayings are not true,” he said. In *A River of Blessings*, *De snga ma bden dgongs pa can min nges pa can yin*, “The first one is right, it is not an implied meaning, it is the definitive meaning.” This part is detailed in *Dag po’i bka’ ’bum*, *Tshogs chos yon tan phun thsogs* 2000: Ka 516-17. Also there, Jetsün Mila does not mention that one or the other is true.

³⁸ Ibid. 517 mentions Mila saying that the most ordinary practitioner would achieve buddhahood in the next life.

not listen to their words: do not follow them. You are compatible with persons who practise meditation. These kinds of people's words are those you should listen to and follow. Stay with people who have profoundly abandoned all thoughts [of interest] regarding this life. Some of the people tempted by this life teach the eight worldly concerns!

Generally, there are various possibilities for misunderstanding emptiness.³⁹ [The principal ways of misunderstanding it] are four:

Deviating from emptiness as the seal

Deviating from emptiness as the fundamental nature of objects of knowledge

Deviating from emptiness as the remedy

Deviating from emptiness as an attachment

Deviating from emptiness as the seal means thinking that all phenomena mentally conceived of in terms of subject-object must be meditated as empty.

Deviating from emptiness as the fundamental nature of objects of knowledge means saying that all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are empty.

³⁹ Ibid., 508, includes the entire part of misunderstanding emptiness. It would become important in the later Dakpo Kagyü *mahāmudrā* works – e.g., Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's *Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer*, "Moonbeams of *Mahāmudrā*," or the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorjé's *Nges don rgya mtsho*, "The Ocean of Definitive Meaning." The passage in these two texts is slightly different from Sangyé Bum's text, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Gampopa's hagiography by Shamar Khachö Wangpo: in these earlier works, the fourth deviation from emptiness is *stong nyid chags par shor ba*, whereas in *Dag po'i bka' 'bum* and the later *mahāmudrā* texts, the fourth deviation is *stong nyid lam du shor ba*, "deviating from emptiness as the path". See Kragh 2015: 298 and Wangchuk Dorje 2001: 197-99.

One deviates from emptiness as the remedy when, while observing whichever negative affliction or discursive thought arises, one says: ‘Anyway, it is empty’.

One deviates from emptiness as [some kind of] attachment by thinking, ‘There is nothing to meditate on. Whatever one meditates upon is empty’.

These are all incorrect [paths].⁴⁰ These only dissuade oneself from the idea that all is real.⁴¹

But without cutting the mind at its root, even though experiences of bliss, clarity and absence of thought arise, one will not go beyond the three spheres of conditioned existence. These are called ‘experiences of not having cut the root of the mind’,” he said.

“So, what then is the correct path?” asked [Gampopa].

“A perfectly qualified Lama guides a disciple who is a fit vessel with pointing-out instructions. Primordial awareness (*gnyug ma'i shes pa*)⁴² pervades all sentient beings and manifests clearly as the dharmakāya appearing to all the buddhas. The yogin who meditates after an unfathomable method has pointed

⁴⁰ Note that in *Dag po'i bka' 'bum* 2000: Ka 509, we read *de lam rnal ma ma yin*, “these are not genuine paths” whereas here, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography, the term used is *lam yang dag pa ma yin*.

⁴¹ *Blo'i bden zhen zlog pa las su rung ba tsam yin*; In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* we read *blo'i bden zhen zlog pa phan rgyu tsam yin* “These are only helping to turn away from the idea that all is real,” and in Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography we read ‘*O na kyang las dang po pa blo's bden zhen zlog pa la phan du rung tsam yin mo*’, “They are only helpful for beginners to turn away from the idea that all is real.”

⁴² *gNyug ma'i shes pa* is used here and in Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography, whereas in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* we read *gnyug ma'i sems*, “the innate mind.” I point this out because it seems that *lam rnal ma* and *gnyug ma'i shes pa* are typical terms used in texts attributed to Gampopa's lineage, and *lam yang dang pa* and *gnyug ma'i sems* seem to belong to the terminology used in texts in Rechungpa's lineage.

it out automatically realises the [*mahāmudrā*] view. [This view] spontaneously eliminates negative afflictions and discursive thought and spontaneously gives rise to primordial wisdom. The realisation [the yogin] experiences at that moment cannot be verbally expressed. Even if expressed, it can be indicated only marginally, like sexual pleasure to a virgin or a dumb person's dream. This ground is present in all beings, but they do not recognise it. Therefore, following a Lama with a lineage tradition is essential.

Furthermore, this primordial awareness has no support; no door can block it; no example can show it; no expression can describe it accurately; no conventional concept can indicate it. So, do not elaborate; rest in the natural state without modifying anything.” Having thus said, he sang (complete song 41.3).⁴³

Then Gampopa thought he had to sell some of his wealth and buy food for an extended retreat. Meanwhile, there was an epidemic in Dinma Drin, and people came to ask for his help as a physician, so he went there. Jetsün sent Rechungpa to call him back because he was supposed to dedicate himself entirely to practice. He returned, but the Jetsün did not talk to him.⁴⁴

⁴³ TN-Dha 637; Stagg 2017: 502. (The song is about the certainty of view, meditation, conduct, *samaya*, fruition and the guru).

⁴⁴ The details in this paragraph appear only in Sangyé Bum's Gampopa biography and, later, in Möntsepa's collection. In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (169b) and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography (348-49) Gampopa also thought of selling gold for his provisions, but the Jetsün sent Seban Repa to call him in the morning; then he told him that selling his wealth and doing practice were contradictory. Therefore, he should go to beg for alms in autumn; he should also avoid sleeping in the village at night and go back to his cave instead. In Shamar Khachö Wangpo's text the Jetsün adds: “As you are disciplined in your practice, you may now wear a cotton robe” and he bestows the oral instruction of ‘kindling inner heat as if igniting a fire,’ *gtum mo shing gshags la me sbar ba lta bu'i gdams ngag*. Thus, wearing only a cotton garment, he meditated and blissful heat ignited spontaneously.”

Gampopa asked whether he had done something wrong. The Jetsün told him this was not the case, but he should not have gone to sell his wealth. Gampopa wept and said his distraction carried him away, but now he would dedicate himself exclusively to his practice. “Well then,” said the Jetsün, “you must turn away from samsaric thoughts. In autumn, you should beg for alms, which should be enough as your provision for winter. If it is insufficient, you can then sell just a little gold. From now on, you should follow my advice,” and he gave him some advice: in the evening, he should practise without interruption; at dusk, he should meditate and recite the Hevajra mantra; he should purify all outer and inner karmic obstacles and circumstances and change his thoughts. Around midnight, he should pray fervently to the Three Jewels that he might realise supreme and ordinary siddhis and have beneficial thoughts. He should do breathing exercises at dawn to develop blissful, luminous experiences. “I do not lay down on a cushion nor experience sleep. This way, I do not shut the door to the lower realms with careless sleep! You should wear a meditation belt and meditate,” he said.

257-60:

Next follow Gampopa’s meditation experiences, as in Barompa Darma Wangchuk, Dönmo Ripa and Tsangnyön.⁴⁵ Then Gampopa narrates his dream in a song (41.4, only two verse lines mentioned). Jetsün replies with an explanation, after which he offers another song (41.5, only one line).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ TN-Dha 638-41; Stagg 2017: 503-6. Shamar Khachö Wangpo’s Gampopa biography (1978: 349-53) and *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* do not contain the details of his meditation experiences.

⁴⁶ In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (e.g., Ms-Oxford 170b-171a) and Shamar Khachö Wangpo (1978: 353-56), songs 41.4 (about Gampopa’s dream) and 41.5 (about Mila’s explanation of the dream) are complete and identical to the ones in Tsangnyön’s *Songs*, TN-Dha 641-44; Stagg 2017: 506-9.

261-68:

The text reconnects with Tsangnyön's narrative (TN-Dha 651-53; Stagg 2017: 517-18), without the *bardo* song (41.6), and without the dreams of Rechungpa and Zhiwa Ö, placed slightly later. The narrative continues with prophecies about the place where Gampopa would find his disciples but without song 41.7. At the moment of Gampopa's departure, Jetsün Mila gives the last upadeśa, showing his buttocks, followed by advice about the people with whom he should not stay (more elaborate than in other texts).⁴⁷

268-72:

Then follows a confused extension. During the night, Gampopa has a dream, but he has doubts about the dream signs, so he recounts these to Mila (only one line). The Jetsün replies with a song about impermanence (not in any of the other texts) and continues with song 41.6 (two lines) and song 41.7 (only hinted at with two lines, and repeated once more with the same two introductory verses). Mila then gives more advice on staying alone to meditate and how to practise in general, after which he tells Gampopa that he should come to the border between

⁴⁷ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* Ms-Oxford/RBC-Pt and Ms-Newark, and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa hagiography do not contain the *bardo* song (41.6) [it appears in the later versions Ms-Gansu and Ms-Drukpa]. Khachö Wangpo does not include the dream comparison between Rechungpa, Zhiwa Ö and Gampopa (TN-Dha 649-50; Stagg 2017: 515-16; *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* Ms-Oxford 173b). In *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Oxford 153b-155b) and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Gampopa biography (1978: 365-70) the prophecy about Gampo Dar is followed by song 41.7 (the song about different samsaric appearances he would experience in future); the Jetsün gives empowerments and blessings and more advice together with the *mahāmudrā* instruction on *rlung sems gnyis med*, "the nonduality of prāṇa and mind;" after that follows the advice not to stay with certain kinds of people and song 41.8 (advice on how to deal with experiences), after which they part.

Nyenam and Drin on the fourteenth day of the horse month in the rabbit year. As a song to escort him on his trip, he sings 47.8 (complete). Gampopa then prepares to leave, and Jetsün sings the song about “the prophecy of his dwelling place,” the last stanza of song 41.7. The episode ends at p. 272.

* * *

All the above extracts belong to texts created in Gampopa’s lineage. I have not found a Gampopa biography in Ngendzong Tönpa’s lineage. There is no mention of the episode of Gampopa’s meeting with the Jetsün in Ngendzong Tönpa’s biography of Milarepa.⁴⁸ This is also the case for the *Golden Rosary* texts studied in Rechungpa’s lineage (Martön et. al.). In *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, after the liberation story of Milarepa similar to the one in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*, Zhijé Ripa adds some notes taken from Gampopa’s lineage. He does not mention Gampopa’s meeting and experiences with the Jetsün. However, there is a conversation between Mila, Gampopa and Likor Charuwa regarding the difference between the Aural Transmission of Saṃvara and the path of means.⁴⁹

The episode in The Twelve Great Repa Disciples

The Twelve Great Repa Disciples and its ‘variants’ (13th-14th centuries) dedicate four chapters to Mila’s relationship with Gampopa, in the seventeenth quality, *Recognising mahāmudrā*:

⁴⁸ For translation, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ For translation, see Chapter 8.

- The episode of Dakpo's future arrival
- The episode 'Meeting Dakpo'
- The questions-and-answers episode between the Great Repa and the Incomparable Dakpo Rinpoché – father and son
- The episode of advice to go to Central Tibet and Dakpo's departure⁵⁰

The episode studied here regards the second and third episodes in this quality-chapter.⁵¹

As already mentioned above, these fragments are as good as identical to the version described above in Sangyé Bum's Gampopa hagiography. I am unsure which of the two relied on the other, whether Sangyé Bum inserted the story from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* or vice versa. There are anyway some minor differences in the first part of the story:

When [Gampopa] arrived at Drode Tashi Gang, he met a weaving lady. She said: "The one called Jetsün Milarepa knows the thoughts in the mind of others and has the power to show manifold emanations."

"Where is he staying?" asked [Gampopa].

"I will show you a female disciple who knows about it," she replied. An old lady had a silk sash loosely tied around her cotton garment. "Ask her," she said. He asked her, and the old lady replied: "You cannot reach there tonight; you can sleep in the upper storey of my house." She invited him inside and continued: "Yesterday, I went to see the Jetsün, and he told me: 'A Kadampa monk from Central Tibet will come to meet me."

⁵⁰ See Song Chart 7.

⁵¹ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*: Ms-Oxford 164b-175b; RBC-Pt 442-474; Ms-Drukpa 248b-266a; Ms-Gansu 24:199-228; Ms-Newark 213-221a; Ms-Bordier 270a-293b; Ms-BDRC 351a-381b; Ms-Lhasa 259b-281a.

Whoever will introduce him to me will be protected from the fear of the three lower realms.’ My daughter is a female practitioner staying with the Jetsün, she will make an appointment [for you].” The following morning, he went to meet the Lama. The Precious One [Gampopa] thought: “That he knows I am coming means that I am a worthy vessel. There will be no difficulty in obtaining oral instructions.” The Lama knew that [Gampopa] had developed some pride, so he did not grant permission to meet him for half a month.

Seban Repa once came to beg and collect wood below the house [where Gampopa was staying]. He said: “Upa Tönpa, the Lama knows you are coming and will give you oral instructions. Stay here now; don’t be impatient.” After half a month had passed, he said: “Now come to Tashi Gang to meet the Lama,” and he went there. Lama Jetsün was seated on a vast flat boulder, surrounded by his entourage. [Gampopa] offered one ounce of gold and a measure of tea, and prostrated.

Then, as in Sangyé Bum’s version, the Jetsün does not accept the gold. He asks for his name and comments on it as above, and then gives him the *chang* to drink, with the same comments:

[Mila] did not accept the gold and the tea, but Seban Repa took the tea with him and went. The Jetsün asked: “What are you doing?” “Well, he is a monk. The people will beat it to powder on a high boulder, boil it and bring it to us,” [Seban] replied.⁵² Later, the Precious One said: “This son Seban was a brave and intelligent person.”

What follows is identical to Sangyé Bum’s version, except for the few differences I have pointed out in the footnotes above.

⁵² This detail does not appear in Khachö Wangpo’s Gampopa biography.

Songs 41.1/3/4/5/7/8 are complete, as in Tsangnyön's work. Song 41.2 is addressed to Rechungpa instead of to Gampopa, (e.g., Ms-Oxford 149a). After song 41.7, the Lama gives all blessings and empowerments.⁵³

Then he told him to return to Central Tibet and accompanied him as far as the bridge; he sat down and stretched out his right leg, and Gampopa placed his head under his foot. This favourable connection pleased Mila. He gave him a gold-coloured myrobalan, a tinder pouch and a piece of molasses. He said: "When you have problems in your practice, the following oral instructions will help you develop a particular experience and realisation in your mindstream. You will need this oral instruction when you occasionally experience ups and downs in your practice." At this, he bestowed the *mahāmudrā* pointing-out instruction of nondual *prāṇa* and mind.⁵⁴

Then follows Mila's advice on how to behave and avoid contact with people influenced by the three poisons, as in Sangyé Bum's version. The conversation ends with Mila's song 41.8, after which Gampopa leaves. The buttock-showing detail is missing in all versions of the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.⁵⁵ After Gampopa's departure, Milarepa returns to Chuwar, where he meets his disciples and recounts a dream he had about the benefit Gampopa would bring: He dreamt a yellow bird flew to Central Tibet and landed on top of a mountain. Many geese then arrived

⁵³ *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, e.g., Ms-Oxford 174b.

⁵⁴ *Phyag rgya chen po rlung sems gnyis kyi ngo sprod* [in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's text, *rlung sems gnyis med kyi ngo sprod*.]

⁵⁵ Two small extra songs are added, about a dream of Gampopa and an explanation by the Jetsün (e.g., Ms-Oxford 172b-173a).

and multiplied, indicating that, although Mila was a yogin, his followers would all be monks.⁵⁶

In the Newark manuscript, after song 41.1 in the first part of the episode, the text jumps to Gampopa's request to interpret his dream (song 41.4) and Mila's interpretation (song 41.5). Gampopa's meditative experiences and Mila's interpretations, his explanation about deviating from emptiness and about the best means to realise enlightenment in one lifetime and song 41.3 (about the certainty of view, meditation, conduct, samaya, fruition and the guru) are missing. Similarly, after song 41.5 and Mila's explanations, the text again jumps forward to the narrative leading up to Mila's songs 41.7 and 41.8. It finishes in the same way as the other versions.⁵⁷ These narrative jumps create a sense of intrigue and curiosity about the missing parts.

⁵⁶ The dream resembles the one in Tsangnyön's *Songs*, Stagg 2017: 523. The dream comes in Sangyé Bum's text, but the interpretation is limited to "this son of mine will bring enormous benefit to the beings; I have served the Buddha's teaching as a yogin." The expression *kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la rjes 'jug thams cad rab tu byung ba 'ba' zhiig 'ong bar gda'* (indicating that his descendants would be "only" monks) appears in the same way in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's text and the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia. Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu have a small variant: *kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la kho bo 'i rjes su rab tu byung ba mang po 'ong bar 'dug*. (many will be monks). In the Bordier manuscript it becomes *kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la rjes 'jug thams cad rab tu byung ba dga' zhiig 'ong bar gda'* (some will become monks). Tsangnyön Heruka TN-Dha p. 659: *kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la rjes su rab tu byung ba mang po yang yong bar 'dug pas*.

⁵⁷ Ms-Newark 213a-221a. Unfortunately, in my copy, one folio, 218b-219a, is missing. As explained above (Chapter 1b), the Newark edition, composed in seventeenth-century Geluk circles, eliminates the parts concerning Mila's critical considerations regarding the Kadampa approach of the path to enlightenment, which might not have seemed acceptable in the Geluk lineage.

The ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – Ms-Bordier, Ms-BDRC and Ms-Lhasa, the latter attributed to Karmapa Rangjung Dorje – introduce two unique details that will influence the later narrative.

(1) The *bardo* song in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 41⁵⁸ appears here for the first time. It will be inserted in most of the later texts.

(2) After the Jetsün has bestowed all his blessings and empowerments on Gampopa, suddenly Tārā (*lCam lhan cig skyes pa’i sgron ma*), who is helping the Jetsün take care of his texts, exclaims joyfully how marvellous all this is. Mila then places a *torma* on Gampopa’s head and tells him that he will be of enormous benefit to sentient beings, more than himself, because of all the unmistakable signs he had seen before Gampopa’s arrival, and because of a dream in which Gampopa resulted as the winner in a contest with the Jetsün.⁵⁹

Shamar Khachö Wangpo and Möntsepa (14th-early 15th centuries)

⁵⁸ Song 41.6, Stagg 2017: 515. The song also comes in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu. However, in contrast to the variant versions which integrate it into the narrative, here it is placed at the end of the episode. This seems to indicate it was a later addition.

⁵⁹ The detail of *lCam lhan cig skyes pa’i sgron ma* comes in all three variant editions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (e.g., Ms-Lhasa f. 278b), in all versions of *A River of Blessings* and Ms-BL (it is not included in DNM-RD). The detail of the *torma* and the Jetsün saying that Gampopa would be better than himself appears for the first time in an autobiographical fragment by Gampopa in the *Dag po bka’ ’bum*, in the chapter *Answers to the Questions of Dusum Khyenpa* (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa’i zhus lan*). See the second autobiographical fragment above.

In Khachö Wangpo's *life story of Milarepa* – “Clouds of Blessings”, *byin rlabs kyi sprin phung* – there is no mention of the encounter between Gampopa and the Jetsün. However, there are two songs directed to Lhagé while he was staying with Mila, also included in “the story of questions and answers between the great Repa and the incomparable Dakpo Rinpoché, father and son,” in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia. These songs, the first combining part of Tsangnyön's song 7.5 and part of his song 27.2, and the second one being the *bardo* song 41.6 [already seen in the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*] play a significant role in the narrative. Both songs do not appear in the Dochen Rosary and Möntsepa's life of Milarepa (see Song Chart 6).

In his *life story of Gampopa* – “Banner of All-Pervading Fame,” *kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan* – Khachö Wangpo follows the narrative of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, with a few added details, some of which I already pointed out above.

For instance, on page 338, we read that Gampopa was 31 when he met Mila, which was in the year of the oxen.

Then he offered four *zhos* of gold and one full measure of tea. Seban Repa said: “Put these in front of him. To offer wealth to the great Lama is no different from heaping up jewels in front of wild animals; in no case will he take it in his hands.”

The Jetsün did not accept the gold and the tea (as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*).

“I have come from far away; please hold me with your compassion,” [Gampopa] asked. “Well, you have not come

from that far. Some people come to visit me from Kham and India,” replied the Jetsün.⁶⁰

Then follows the episode of asking his name, etc., as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. The rest of the episode strongly resembles *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Möntsepa’s *Golden Rosary* (15th century) also contains a liberation story of Gampopa with the title “Hagiography of the Dharma King Dakpo Rinpoche” (*Chos rgyal dags po rin po che’i rnam par thar pa*). In the colophon of this hagiography we read: “The hagiography of the Lama Sugata, the precious Dharma Lord Gampopa, was put into writing by Lama Barompa, after discussing with the attendants Lekdze, Jangye, Seljang, geshé Joten and āchārya Gompa.”⁶¹. Nevertheless, there are quite a few differences with the version of Gampopa’s life attributed to Barompa in Ögyenpa’s collection and the *Collected Works* of Karmapa Rangjung Dorje. These differences highlight the evolution of the narrative over time.

[Gampopa had met Lekse, who had told him that the Lama had predicted his arrival. As he had developed pride thinking that he must be an important person if the Jetsün had foreseen his arrival, Milarepa decided he would close himself in retreat for

⁶⁰ This detail elaborates on a similar detail mentioned in the first autobiographical fragment of Gampopa.

⁶¹ Ibid.221, *Bla ma bde bar gshegs pa rin po che chos rje sgam po pa’i rnam par thar pa rnam nye gnas legs mdzes dang byang yes dang gsal byang dang dge shes jo bstan dang slob dpon sgom pa dang de rnam bka’ gros byas nas bla ma ’bab rom pas yi ger skod pa’o*. Please note different spellings of the name: in Möntsepa’s version *’bab rom pa*, in the version in Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé’s *Collected Works* *’ba’ brom pa*, in Ögyenpa’s version *bha brom pa*.

fifteen days, thus not allowing him to meet [the Jetsün] immediately.]

When [the Jetsün] came out of his retreat, he asked: “Has Upa Tönpa not arrived? Where has he gone? I want to meet him today,” and he sent someone to call him. [Milarepa] was sitting near a flat rock, surrounded by sixteen *repas*. When [Gampopa] saw that he was the same yogin who had appeared in his dream,⁶² an intense devotion was born in him. [Mila] told Rechungpa to join him in a welcome song for Upa Tönpa. They offered a song [the song is not in the text].

“What is your name? Which qualities do you have?” asked the Jetsün.

“My name is Sönam Rinchen. I don’t know whether what I know are qualities or mistakes. I can go without food for ten days without feeling hungry. I can walk on the water of lakes and the like without my feet getting entangled, and I can enter a house without entering through the door or being hindered by the walls. As for my knowledge, I know the eight branches of healing.”

[...] At that time, there were many illnesses in Nyanam and Drin. Several people died, and the survivors did not get enough *tsampa*. The doctors did not know of any cure. They had heard that a learned physician from Central Tibet, a *bhikshu*, was staying with Mila and invited him. Upon his arrival, people got better by merely seeing his face; they were cured, and no one died anymore. Everyone was convinced he had great blessing power and was a capable doctor. In one month, the illness was eradicated.

Mila asked: “Where has Upa Tönpa gone?”

⁶² In Möntsepa (p.189), we read that he had repeatedly dreamt of meeting a white cotton-clad yogin some days before.

“He hasn’t been here for many days,” they said, “there were many illnesses in Drin and Nyanam, and the people invited him, so he went.”

“Well then, call him,” he said. They did so, and when [Gampopa] returned, the Jetsün asked him where he had been. He replied that while he was not receiving teachings [from Milarepa] some persons from Nyanam and Drin had invited him because many people were ill, and so, thinking that he might be of some help, he had gone there. The Jetsün wanted to know whether he had been helpful and whether people had died. He replied that he had been of some benefit and that during his stay nobody had died anymore and the illness was completely eradicated. Mila then asked him whether he had sold some of his wealth while he was in the village. As Gampopa feared he had made a mistake, he offered one ounce of gold as a present and asked for oral instructions. “Gold and my age do not agree, he said, I do not need it. I will give you oral instructions.”

Before his departure, [Gampopa] offered prostrations and asked: “Please give me the oral instruction you promised me last year.” [Mila] accompanied him for a certain distance, but then he said they had reached far enough. The Lama sat down on a mound with outstretched legs. As he understood this to be an occasion to request a blessing from his feet, [Gampopa] placed his head under each foot. Mila said: “For you, a pure bhikshu, it is not right to put your head under a yogin’s feet. I have given you the four empowerments in a single seat.” Gampopa, offering prostrations, asked for oral instruction. “This one is precious, I will not give it,” he said and went ahead in a happy mood for some distance. “Now I’ll go back,” he said. But he turned to [Gampopa] and said: “It might be very valuable, but it will be of no benefit if I do not give it.” He lifted his garment and showed his behind, entirely covered with

calluses. “Meditate like this...it is the most profound oral instruction!” he said.

* * *

Second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia (end 15th-early 16th century)

The Gampopa episodes in all versions in this group are identical to the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* until the end of song 41.5. At that point, some songs are added.⁶³ Then the texts hook up again with the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and follow them precisely until the end of the chapter (including the *bardo* song and the details of Tārā, the *torma* and the Jetsün’s words about Gampopa’s superiority as compared to himself).⁶⁴ At the end, the different versions of *A River of Blessings* include the behind-showing detail to Gampopa,⁶⁵ missing in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, DNM-RD and Ms-BL. Although these versions show a few differences in the order of the songs, they include them all, and the narrative is almost identical.

Tsangnyön Heruka

⁶³ One song that combines part of song 7.5 and song 27.2, e.g., DNM-RD 2006: 688; BCG-D 8: 415. One very long song about the seven precious ornaments of a king (*rgyal srid rin chen bdun gyi rgyan*), DNM-RD 2006: 689; BCG-D 8: 416. One song Mila requested Rechungpa to sing to Gampopa, DNM-RD 2006: 692; BCG-D 8: 414, Mila’s correction of Rechungpa’s song, DNM-RD 2006: 693; BCG-D 8: 415.

⁶⁴ See above. DNM-RD includes only the *bardo* song, not the other details.

⁶⁵ E.g., BCG-D 8: 431 (in *A River of Blessings*, Mila gives this ‘instruction’ to both Rechungpa and Gampopa!); it is missing in DNM-RD and Ms-BL.

Chapter 41 in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs, Dam pa sgam po pa'i skor*, "The Noble Gampopa"⁶⁶ contains the Gampopa episodes. After all the above, there is very little in Tsangnyön's version that had not yet appeared earlier. The songs included in the chapter first appear in their complete form in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, with the difference that the second song, 41.2, in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, *The Black Treasury* and Khachö Wangpo's text is addressed to Rechungpa instead of to Gampopa.

Tsangnyön picks up details from diverse previous versions and blends these into his narrative. For instance, the detail of the tea the Jetsün offered to Gampopa after seasoning it with his "secret water" already came in Gyalthangpa's and Sangyé Bum's versions, but not in the works influenced by *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, *The Black Treasury* and Khachö Wangpo's version. In these cases, it was substituted with the *chang*-drinking detail mentioned extensively in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (there had been a hint of a welcome with dark beer in the first autobiographical fragment of Gampopa). Tsangnyön Heruka kept both details.

The detail of the calluses covering Mila's behind, narrated in Darma Wangchuk's and Gyalthangpa's version, is not in Sangyé Bum's version and the works influenced by *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. There, Mila's last secret instruction is for Rechungpa, while Gampopa's last instruction is the *māhāmudrā* teaching of the nonduality of *prāṇa* and mind (*rlung sems gnyis med*). Tsangnyön Heruka opts for the former version.

Apart from choosing these details from Gampopa's lineage, Tsangnyön Heruka closely follows the version of *The Twelve*

⁶⁶ TN-Dha 632–59; Stagg 2017, 498–523.

Great Repa Disciples, most probably composed in Rechungpa's lineage. However, he omits some significant details from this version regarding Gampopa's questions about the differences between his Kadampa teachers' and Milarepa's approach. Below, I cite Tsangnyön's shortened version:

Then the Jetsün said, "Teacher from Ü, have you previously received abhisheka?"

Gampopa relayed that he had received some abhishekas and key instructions from previous gurus and told of how samadhi had arisen in his mind-stream.

The Jetsün burst out, "Haha! If you squeeze sand, you will not get oil. You will only get oil from mustard seeds. Meditate on my *a-tung* chandali, then you will see the essence of mind. For this practice, I am not saying that the abhishekas you received before are unqualified, but because the great power of *tendrel* is involved, you must have the blessing of my tradition."

Then, in accord with the tradition of the whispered lineage, with a sindhura mandala, Milarepa gave him the blessing of Vajrayogini. He was given the key instructions, and excellent experiences arose for him through meditation. Recollecting the instructions of his previous gurus, Gampopa did much analysis of the view, meditation, and conduct in order to cut through doubts and uncertainties toward the Jetsün. Then afterward he requested the key points of view, meditation, and conduct directly, and the Jetsün cleared all remaining uncertainties.⁶⁷

Tsangnyön's omissions and their significance are discussed above, in Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ TN-Dha 636–37; Stagg 2017, 501–2.

[ToC](#)

8 – SOME INTERESTING DETAILS FROM ZHIJÉ RIPA’S *ILLUMINATING LAMP OF SUN AND MOON BEAMS*

“The Life of Jetsün Milarepa. An Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams” (*rJe btsun mid la ras pa ’i rnam par thar pa gsal byed nyi zla ’i ’od zer gyi sgron ma*)¹ by Zhijé Ripa (g.Yung ston Zhi byed Ri khrod pa, born ca. 1320) is described by Andrew Quintman as a ‘historical biography’.² He points out that this is not a mere biography like the other ones found in the *Golden Rosary* collections, but:

It incorporates historical analysis, chronological clarifications, literary criticism, question and answer records, an atlas of sacred sites, an assessment of existing oral traditions, documentation of transmission lines, as well as a smattering of biographical narrative, all mixed together with a good deal of autobiographical reflection. The composition has the appearance of a work compiled from notes gathered over a long period of time, a process that Zhi byed ri pa himself describes in some detail. The text forms what in modern parlance might be called a “state of the field” survey of Mi la ras pa studies in the late fourteenth century.

¹ I have examined three versions of the text:

(1) In *’Bri gung bka’ brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*. 2004. 9: 247-494;

(2) In *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*. 2012. 19: 261-470;

(3) The e-text on BDRC (IE3JT13346).

The page numbers given here refer to the first mentioned version.

² Quintman 2012: 5

In the first part of the text, Zhijé Ripa presents a liberation story of Milarepa in the style of the *Golden Rosary* biographies in Rechungpa's lineage, very close to and containing almost all³ the same songs as Mila's life story in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*. He narrates the story in the form of two main chapters: the first one is his early life, and the second one is structured in the form of 18 qualities the yogin obtained on the path to realisation, each illustrated with a short narrative and song.⁴

Quintman has translated and exhaustively commented upon the first chapter of the *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams*, dedicated to the Jetsün's early life.⁵ This life story is much longer than the other biographies in that it contains details that are not present elsewhere.

The second chapter, divided into 18 qualities, is closer to the other biographies of Milarepa in Rechungpa's lineage. However, in the 17th quality, after the same songs as the ones included in the *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*, Zhijé Ripa adds more details, including information from Gampopa's, Rechungpa's and Ngendzong Tönpa's lineages.⁶ He dedicates about 70 pages to these extra stories, starting with a list of the non-human and human beings Mila submitted – including Naro

³ Zhijé Ripa adds a few short extra songs not included in *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*, such as, on p.303, a song to Geshe Tsapa called *stong nyid lung yangs ma* – about how Mila understands a family – and on p.305, another song in which he reiterates the advice of Marpa that a great meditator (*sgom chen*) should not stay in one single place.

⁴ See Song Chart 4.

⁵ Quintman 2012: 13-15 and 29-34.

⁶ Zhi byed Ri pa 2004, 9: 353-423.

Bönchung and his sister. He then gives a list of Mila's disciples,⁷ the different forms of samādhi Mila mastered,⁸ Mila's principal songs,⁹ his retreat places and caves,¹⁰ his sponsors, and many minor episodes not found elsewhere. The 18th quality, about the death episode, is also more detailed than in the other life stories. For the first time, it is a Geshe who causes Mila's death, not a Bönpo as in the previous stories.¹¹ After that follows a first colophon on the composition of the text,¹² yet another list of Mila's disciples,¹³ a list of masters from whom Zhijé Ripa received teachings, a description of how to visualise Milarepa¹⁴ and the final colophon of the text.¹⁵ He finished the main part of the work in 1373. Later, he made a few revisions containing some personal reflections and lineage transmissions, which he completed in 1381.¹⁶

In addition to all the information Andrew Quintman provided about this text and the author, I offer a translation of a few fragments I found particularly interesting.

§ 1 Zhijé Ripa's take on the story of Naro Bönchung and some considerations about the holy places of Tisé and Tsari.

⁷ Ibidem p. 355.

⁸ Ibidem p. 360.

⁹ Ibidem p. 361.

¹⁰ Ibidem p. 363.

¹¹ Ibidem pp. 423-446.

¹² Ibidem 446; for translation, see Quintman 2012: 23.

¹³ Ibidem 459.

¹⁴ Ibidem pp. 463. Quintman 2012: 17.

¹⁵ Ibidem pp. 466-67+470-72. Quintman 2012: 24-25.

¹⁶ Ibidem pp. 472-94.

- § 2 Zhijé Ripa's list of Mila's most important songs.
- § 3 A conversation between Milarepa, Gampopa and Likhori Charuwa regarding the difference in teachings transmitted to them and to Rechungpa
- § 4 A short anecdote regarding his sister Peta
- § 5 A conversation between Milarepa and eight junior *repas*¹⁷ regarding the Saṃvara Aural Transmission
- § 6 A brief anecdote expressing Mila's gratefulness to Lama Ngok
- § 7 A short fragment about Mila's death, different from the other life stories of Milarepa.
- § 8 Zhijé Ripa's position regarding the importance of Mila's disciples
- § 9 Zhijé Ripa's credentials as stated by himself

To conclude, I express a few perplexities that arose while reading this text.

Although my contribution is limited, I hope it encourages future researchers to study this work in its entirety.

1. Naro Bönchung, Tisé and Tsari

Zhijé Ripa's view on the Naro Bönchung episode and the holy places of Tisé (Mount Kailāśa) and Tsari is interesting for two reasons: first of all, because he refers to the Naro Bönchung story as "the theft" of Tisé, and second because he expresses his doubts about the holy places of Tsari and Tisé and questions whether Mila could have been to either place.

¹⁷ Junior/young *repas* stands for "rechungpas;" I use both terms.

pp. 359-360

After an impressive list of Mila's disciples – many of which are unknown to us – Zhijé Ripa gives a few names of persons who have been able to transform adverse circumstances into friends, thus entering the path. Kang Tisé Naro Bönchung, his sister, and Geshe Tsakpuwa,¹⁸ are among them.

Zhijé Ripa then continues:

At the time when he went to chase the Bönpo from the Tisé mountain, the Jetsün was accompanied by [seven] disciples: Shengom Repa, Likhör Charuwa, Zangmo Rema from Chungpa Trechag, and four Geshe Zaremas from upper Gungthang; [in total] they were eight, master and disciples. He sent Likhörba and Dzangmo down to Lowo, and the other six went up. With a challenge of magical powers, the Bönpo was sent away. The story of stealing Tisé is explained separately.¹⁹

pp. 367-370

Zhijé Ripa here mentions Marpa's advice to Milarepa of two special places where to meditate to reach realisation quickly: the snowy mountain range of Lachi and Menlung Chuwar. Marpa does not mention Tisé.

About the holy places of Tisé and Tsari, Zhijé Ripa writes:

¹⁸ See § 7, the geshe who poisoned Mila.

¹⁹ Unfortunately, the text does not include this separate explanation. To my knowledge, this is the first reference to Naro Bönchung in Buddhist literature. For details on the development of the Naro Bönchung story see Bock 2024:125-31. See also Vitali 2024: 11n9.

Regarding Tisé (spelled Te se) and Tsari, [there are many stories, such as] in the sūtra “When the previous Victorious One went to the village of Kushinagar” (?),²⁰ or the tale about the great master Padma going from Tibet to India,²¹ or about the time when the great Lord Atiśa went to Ngari,²² or when the great paṇḍita Shakyashri came from Central Tibet (?), or the tale of Marpa meeting Kukkuripa on the shore of the boiling poisonous lake(?). One could wonder whether these [tales] are referring to [places] similar to Tsa[ri] and Te[se].²³ [Tisé and Tsari] were not in Marpa’s prophecy command. As far as Tisé is concerned, regarding [Mila’s] stealing Tisé from the Bönpo, in the big namthar (*rnam thar chen mo*)²⁴ there is the story that the great Lama Jetsün, invited by King

²⁰ *sNgon bcom ldan bdas rtsa mchog gi grong khyer na byon pa'i mdo*; bhagavaccharīgārbhāparamanārthagocara-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra.

²¹ In his *Shel dkar me long*, “The Crystal Mirror: an Analysis which Briefly Explains the Chronicle of Past Events at the Great Snow Mountain Ti-se Together with the Great Lake Ma-dros-pa. A guidebook of Tisé,” Tenzin Chökyi Lodrö (bsTan ’dzin chos kyi blo gros, 1869–1906, p.134) cites the *dGongs ’dus lung bstan bka’ rgya ma* by Acharya Padma: “Tisé snow mountain resembles a crystal stūpa; to the east, there is the Zaphu valley of Shang.” The author was the 34th hierarch (*gdan rabs*) of the Drikung Kagyü lineage, the 6th incarnation of the ’Bri-gung Chungtsang rinpoché. (Huber 1999: 126-27). I thank Elena De Rossi Filibeck for sending me her summary and notes of this text.

²² Ibidem, p.136, “On the occasion when the Ngari king Lhatsün Jangchup Ö invited the noble glorious Atiśa to Guge, when Jowoje arrived in the plain in front of Tisé he said: “From the Tisé mountain I heard the Sthāvira ring the bell for noon, and then we also ate lunch”. In this way, the Indian paṇḍitas and siddhas identified Tisé as this mountain in Tibet.”

²³ *Tsa ’dra dang te ’dra yin nam bya ba ’dug la*.

²⁴ Unfortunately, Zhijé Ripa does not specify which *rnam thar chen mo* he refers to. The same biography is mentioned once more at the beginning of the text, concerning the origin of the name Töpa. Quintman 2012: 31n60 supposes this could refer to either Zhang Lotsāwa’s or Khyungtsangpa’s text.

Tsedé,²⁵ stayed at Tisé for one day and seized it chasing the Bönpo and his sister.²⁶ Regarding Tsari, there is no word of [Mila] going there. The Dharma Lord Sakya Panchen – emanation of Śākyamuni – and most other great Tibetan scholars all say that the Tibetan Tisé and Tsari are not the real [holy places prophesied in the scriptures] (*dn̄gos min*),²⁷ they are similar to Tsa[ri] and Ti[se] (*tsa 'dra te 'dra*), but they are

²⁵ Mnga' bdag rTse lde; Tse de was a king of the western kingdom of Tibet, Guge, who probably began his reign in 1057 (Stagg 2017: 494, note referring to Gyatso 2005: 75). About the episode of king Tsedé's invitation of Milarepa, see Vitali 2024: 9. Vitali refers to a namthar of Milarepa by one chos rje Byang chub 'od (date unknown), mentioning the invitation of Milarepa by king Tsedé. However, there is no explicit narrative in the various life stories proving he went there or not.

²⁶ *te se 'di bon po la phrog pa la / bla ma rje btsun chen po de / mnga' bdag rtse ldes gdan drangs na s/ zhag cig te ser bzhugs nas / te se phrogs / bon po ming sring bton pa 'i lo rgyus ni rnam thar chen mor gsal.*

²⁷ sTan 'dzin chos kyi blo gros, 136: Jetsün Sakya Paṇḍita has said: "That snow mountain is not Himavat. Lake Manasarovar is not the Anavatapta. The snow mountain you Kagyüpas identify as Mount Kailāśa is not the Himavat because it does not correspond to the one explained in the sūtras." Furthermore, he said: "This is not Himavat; the Himavat mentioned in the sūtras is 500 yojanas high (over 2000 km!), and a mountain with this characteristic does not exist in Tibet." Furthermore, he said: "Also, lake Manasarovar is not Lake Madrōpa (Anavatapta) because the Madrō Lake mentioned in the sūtras measures over 50 yojanas, and therefore it is not this one." Then he said: "You Kagyüpas, your treasured commentary on what you hold this snow mountain and this lake to be is contradictory with what is explained in the sūtras and the oral transmissions." Then, after this invective, Tendzin Chökyi Lodrö cites much of the 4th Shamar Chödrak Yeshe's (Chos grags ye shes, 1453–1505) confutation of the polemics around the identification of Himavat and lake Anavatapta. However, it is noteworthy that in Chödrak Yeshe's "Scholar's Earring" – *mkhas pa 'i rna rgyan* 1984: 27 – this negative comment against the Kagyüpas is not mentioned! For details about this dispute and its confutations, see Hartmann 2020: 171-91.

substitutes of the real [holy places].²⁸ Furthermore, a few great Zhijé practitioners, such as Jetsün Gyalwa Tenne (*rgyal ba rten ne*, 1127–1217)²⁹ and Dharma Lord Nyiseng (*chos rje nyi seng*) say that Dakpo Lhajé Rinpoche did not talk about these stories. These were considered holy places [only] by the later Dakpo lineage. The father and son – Lord Marpa and Jetsün Milarepa – and Lord Khyungtsangpa Jñānaguru and Zhang Lotsāwa from Ngari also do not explain this clearly. As for me, having explored different sūtras and tantra, I behave like a swan licking butter from the water.³⁰ I have not seen anything definite about Tisé and Tsari, so I dare not make a definitive statement. I found references to the shore of the river Sita³¹ and the Riwo Kangcen in the Vajradāka tantra (*rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i rgyud*)

²⁸ *Bod yul gyi Tsa ri Te se 'di gnyis dngos min/ Tsa 'dra Te 'dra yin pas dngos kyi go ni chod gsung bar 'dug la*. See also Vitali 2024: 7n3, who translates the passage as follows: “Most of the learned masters of Tibet, such as chos rje Sa skya pan chen, the incarnation of Shakyā Thub pa, hold that both Tsa ri and Te se of Tibet are not the authentic ones. [According to him], ‘something like Tsa’ and ‘something like Te’ should actually be interpreted in the sense that they are splinters [of the original ones].” Further, Vitali writes: “Sa skya pandi ta’s idea in *mDo gsum rab dbye* that Ti se is a splinter of another mountain brought to Pu hrang stod by Hanumanta reduces the axis mundi, sanctified by Buddhism, Hinduism and Bon, to a dependency of another holy site.”

²⁹ The Bdrc website cites rGyal ba rTen ne as a disciple of Gampopa Sönam Rinchen, Rechungpa and one Lama sPa tshabs. Some of his teachings are included in a Zhijé collection called *zhi byed nga bar phyi gsum gyi skor* (MW23911). Chos rje Nyi seng, also called Zhig pa Nyi seng, is said to be a disciple of rGyal ba rTen ne. TPNI: Rgyal ba TEN NE — (1127-1217) Also, Rten nas pa, Te ne. An earlier n. was 'Jig rten grags, which was the source of the other nicknames. A Zhi byed pa, he received the *chig brgyud* from Pa tshab.

³⁰ This may refer to the myth of the swan that can separate milk from water. Ref. Yajurveda shalok 73, ch – 19, explanation by Dr Tulsi Ram, “The man of genius and discrimination trained by divine sage, like a swan, separates milk from water, accepts the milk and rejects the water.”

³¹ One of the four rivers that originates from Lake Manasarovar.

and the Great Peacock sūtra (*rma bya chen mo'i mdo*),³² [in which it is said that] Shambhala is to the north [of the Sita River] and Tra and Nye to the south, but I leave apart things I am not sure of. Although I have not been to Tisé and Tsari, these are definitely powerful places for practice and I am convinced they are auspicious. Based on the words and teachings of previous teachers, Tisé Nyima Jangchup (Nyi ma byang chub?) and Tsari Jatang Repa (Bya btang ras pa?), I have inserted them in the catalogue [of powerful places].³³ Otherwise, there are none of the places where Jetsün Mila Rechen has resided that I do not know of, and I have included all of these in the catalogue. However, when the followers of Lama Milarepa take death as their foremost teaching, there is no need to stay in a single definitive place. I, Zhijé Ritroṇpa, do not reside in a single [particular] dwelling place. It is like this: in general, superior meditators are like thunder in the sky, middling ones like snow leopards in the mountains, and ordinary ones like jackals running up and down the mountains. The latter are the ones who need a place like a guest house [where to stay].³⁴

2. Zhijé Ripa's List of Mila's Most Famous Songs

pp. 361-362

³² *rma bya chen mo'i mdo*: full title *rig sngags kyi rgyal mo rma bya chen mo'i mdo*. (MW3CN20612)

³³ Zhijé Ripa mentions several times that he has made a separate catalogue of powerful places (*gnas kyi dkar chag bdag gis sbyar ba'i zur na yod do*), but it is not included in the text available to us.

³⁴ This last paragraph expresses Zhijé Ripa's criticism against the necessity to go on pilgrimage to special places. For more context about this kind of criticism, see Hartmann 2022.

Numberless are the songs [the Jetsün] sang in correspondence with other people's minds. Here [is a list of] the most famous ones:

- The first one, while he was residing with Noble Marpa: "Lord, Aksobya in essence, compassionate one / please let this beggar return to his homeland one time / to look whether the mortal frame of his mother's body is destroyed or not" [Zhijé R. 296, Quintman 104]. At that time, he was 39 years old.
- The next one: "Before, when there was a mother, there was no son" [Zhijé R. 302, Quintman 119, about essencelessness]
- Then he sang a song called *stong nyid lung yangs ma* to Geshe Tsapa (a teacher from his youth)³⁵ about what he understands as his family [Zhijé R. 303, not found anywhere else, not in the compendia]
- Then, the song in which he showed dreams as symbols, that goes *tha ba sra yang phed de mchi*. [Zhijé R. 304, Quintman 130, about the cultivation of his land]
- Then, the songs at *Kong rtse* [Zhijé R. 305 *rkang rtsen phug?*]³⁶ and at the White Rock (*brag dkar*) about the white clouds and the clouds from the south as well as the three cycles at White Rock [southern clouds come in song 6.1 (Stagg 67) but in TN the episode is located at *brag dmar chong lung*, not at *brag dkar*; southern clouds come also in 3.1 (Stagg 31), but this happens at Nyanang Tsarma instead

³⁵ Quintman, 2012: 30n59, explains that "Geshe Tsapa (Dge shes tsa pa Grags pa bsod nams) was a benevolent relative who helped Mila, his mother and his sister with their plight. He also is described as Mila's earliest tutor who taught him both logic and Nyingma doctrine." See Quintman's Appendix IV, 29-34.

³⁶ At *rkang tsen phug*, a song about bliss, similar to 21.2, not in Demchok Nyengyüi Biographies or the compendia.

of White Rock; *brag dkar mam gsum* is mentioned in *Clouds of Blessings*]

- Then, at Nyanam Jagphu [*rgyags phur*] he gave essential advice to Jomo Ormo,³⁷ [Zhijé R. 361] and at the nomadic settlement in Lachi, he sang of the good trees (*shing bzang?*)
- * Three cycles³⁸ at Ramding [Stagg 599, Chapter 51?]
- * Three cycles at Chuzang [Stagg 15, Chapter 2]
- * Three cycles on the song of the snow [Stagg 27, Chapter 3]
- “The six essential points of meditative experience” – *gnad kyi mdo drug* – to Ngagdormo in Tsarma, [Zhijé R. 329; 3.3, Stagg 36; in the compendia and TN the song is addressed to Shakyaguna instead of Ngagdormo]
- In Gunthang, the *rdzing brgyan ma*, “The story of the precious pond” [Zhijé R. 343, in the temple where the monks enclosed him and he came out; songs 44.1 & 61.9]³⁹
- The three cycles of *ling nga* [*ling pa brag?* Zhijé R. 345; the demoness is mentioned, in one song 45.12]
- The Kyangpen *bdun tshig ma* [Zhijé R. 335, the story of the weekly death ceremony for a Bönpo; Stagg 641-42, Chapters 54.3 & 54.4]⁴⁰
- * The song of *the 18 dzongs(?)*
- *Mon yul 'gro skor* – the cycle of going to the Mön region [Zhijé R. 353; how he tamed gods and demons]
- * The three cycles of the hunter at the *Sing kha* forest [the name of the forest is connected with the Mönyul region; the

³⁷ In the *Bod kyi lo rgyus* version p. 341: *gnad kyi zhal gdams*; in the Drikung version p.361: *gnas kyi zhal gdams*. This song seems to be the same as the *gnad kyi mdo drug*, “the six essential points of meditative experience” mentioned four song cycles later.

³⁸ *skor gsum*; I guess he means “the song cycle” because there are no three episodes (or six in the case of Tseringma).

³⁹ See below, Chapter 12.

⁴⁰ See below, Chapter 9.

famous Khyira Repa story is at Nyishang, Chapter 26, Stag 285]

- * “Preparing to have Joy at Death” – *’chi brod thigs tshags ma*, addressed to Seban Repa [Chapter 49, Stag 587; in the compendia and TN addressed to Rechungpa instead of Seban Repa]
- * The silver stūpa song (*ngul ’bum ma*) to Zhiwa Ö [Stagg 159, Chapter 17]
- * The three cycles of the bamboo staff to Jangbar (*byang [chub] ’bar*) at Chimlung [Stagg 192, 18.2]
- * The song to Lekse Bummé of not having time for five things [Stagg 582, 48.6]
- * The three cycles of the yak horn and the three cycles of the song of the wild asses to Rechung Dorje Drak [Chapters 38-39, Stag 445-465]
- * The song of the snow mountain at Kang Tisé [does he refer to Bonpo Ri, Chapter 46, Stag 567-575?]
- * The six cycles of Tseringma [Chapters 28-29-30-31, Stag 229-377]

In summary, he is famous for having sung 111.108 songs, as is clarified in the stories of Khyungtsangpa and Zhang Lotsāwa. However, I, Zhijé Ritropa, have seen about 10.000.

- * As for the most eminent song, he sang the *khör lo sgyur rgyal ma* at the palace of the emanation heroine Tashi Tsewang Rigdzinma, (*sprul pa’i dpa’ mo bkra shis tshe dbang rig ’dzin ma’i pho brang*), the hermitage of the nomadic settlement Menlung Chuwar.⁴¹

Comment:

⁴¹ I am not sure which song Zhijé Ripa refers to here; it seems to be linked to the Tseringma sisters, but he mentioned six cycles of Tseringma earlier.

Most of Mila's songs mentioned in this list are known from the *Golden Rosaries*. Zhijé Ripa uses the names of persons and places as they appear in the *Golden Rosaries*, even though they do not correspond to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Tsangnyön Heruka. In the principal part of the biography of Milarepa (quality chapters 1-17), he does not insert all the song cycles listed above: those indicated with an asterisk are not included. For instance, Zhijé Ripa does not mention the cycles of the yak horn, the wild asses, or Tseringma. However, he mentions the existence of these extra song cycles in the above list, which could mean he had already written his text following the Demchok Nyengyü Biographies, and he added these other cycles because these were circulating independently from the Golden Rosaries and *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Many other song cycles from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* have no place in his work. For instance, among the Jetsün's disciples, there is no mention of Paldarbum⁴² or Rechungma, even though Zhijé Ripa's list of male and female disciples is impressive because it includes many disciples unknown to us from other texts. The absence of these song cycles could mean he had no access to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, which would be rather strange for someone who asserts to have seen 127 different biographies of the Jetsün. Or else, even if he did not have access to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, he might have learned about these song cycles elsewhere. He might have read Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*, in which quite a few songs from *The Twelve Great*

⁴² See below, Chapter 10.

Repa Disciples are contained.⁴³ In fact, when checking the added song cycles in the above list, all but two are mentioned in Khachö Wangpo's text.⁴⁴ Overall, it seems that Zhijé Ripa based his work principally on very early texts, some of which we have not discovered so far.

3. Conversations Between Milarepa, Gampopa and Likhör Charuwa

pp. 378-381

Then Likhör Charuwa⁴⁵ and Dakpo Lhajé (Gampopa) asked the Jetsün: "When it will come to pass that we cannot meet the Jetsün anymore, to whom should we refer when we do not feel well?"

"That you do not feel well will not happen. However, when you feel confused, it would be suitable to ask Rechung Dorje Drakpa."

Likhörwa and Dakpo Lhajé asked the Jetsün again: "We both have served the Jetsün only briefly and have not received many oral instructions. Could you please tell us the main teachings and oral instructions?"

"There is nothing that you do not know already. However, the great being, Marpa, touched the feet of 108 Lamas to obtain

⁴³ We do not know the exact date of publication of *Clouds of Blessings*. However, given that Zhijé Ripa probably added this song list when revising his text (1381), Khachö Wangpo was thirty by that time. He may have finished *Clouds of Blessings* by then.

⁴⁴ See Song Chart 6. The two songs not mentioned in Khachö Wangpo's text are the one to Lekse Bummé and the last song, the '*khör lo sgyur rgyal ma*.'

⁴⁵ Li 'khor phyä ru ba is one of the monk disciples of the Jetsün. He is mentioned in Tsangnyön's Chapter 44, Staggyal 2017: 544-46.

their teachings and there is none of this which I have not received. I concentrated all this together and bestowed it only upon Rechung Dorje Drakpa, but to each of you other disciples, I gave cycles of instructions to sustain you.”

“In that case, are all these instructions a single cycle?” they asked.

The Jetsün replied: “Although all belong to the Buddha’s teachings, there are different ways of practising along the path. The six teachings of the path of means are oral instructions that belong to the Glorious Hevajra Tantra. The entrance towards these particular dharma teachings is the empowerment and blessing of Hevajra and Nairātmyā with the fifteen goddesses. The protector of the precepts is Gurgön (*gur mgon*), and the basic teaching support is the *Two Segments* (*brtag gnyis*). While staying with Marpa, I listened 16 times to the *Two Segments* and two more times while staying with Lama Ngok, so I received it eighteen times.”

They asked again: “Great Jetsün, what is this oral instruction that you have not given to any of the other great disciples except Rechungpa?” He kept silent for a while and then asked:

“Why do you ask this?”

“We would like to hear it so that later we can ask all of it from him,” they said.

“And if he doesn’t give it to you? He holds one oral instruction extracted from the ocean of the Demchok Khandro [teachings] which has the same meaning as the root tantra in 51 chapters and the mind instructions about consciousness ejection and so on like the ones I have given to you before,” he said.

“Yes, but what is the entrance (*chos sgo*) to this [particular] teaching?” they insisted.

“There are some extensive and abridged aspects of Saṃvara and Vārāhī,” he replied.

“And what are the instructions (*khrid*)?” they asked.

“There are six teachings regarding great bliss from the lower door (*'og sgo bde chen gyi chos drug*), and the instruction method (*khrid lugs*) is similar to that of the six teachings of the path of means (*thabs lam gyi chos drug*).”

“What is the background teaching (*rgyab chos*)?” they asked.

“It is called “The Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Lineage”(*rgyud pa yid bzhin nor bu*),” he said.

“And who is the protector of that teaching?”

“He is “The lord who holds a curved blade” (*gri gug can*). Gurgön and the holder of the curved blade of the great Lord Jowo Lhacig Atiśa’s Kadampas have the same essence; he is the wrathful aspect of the Victorious Hevajra,” he replied.

pp. 381-382

The Jetsün then asked Gampopa what the three beggars had told him before he came to meet the Jetsün. [the answer is identical to the one in Tsangnyön Heruka].⁴⁶

Then Jetsün asked: “And do you know who these three beggars were?”

“No, I don’t know, they did not say anything,” he replied.

It is said these three beggars were emanations of the Lords of the Three Families. (*rigs gsum mgon po*).

4. Conversation with Peta

p. 392

Mila said to Peta: “You are truly very kind. It is not that I have not taught the oral instructions [to you], but, sister, you have taken them up with little diligence. I have meditated until my buttocks became like this! If you too are diligent in your

⁴⁶ Stagg 2017: 494-95.

practice, your meditation will grow and you will develop qualities.” He showed his bottom part, and it had become like that of a monkey, it is said.⁴⁷

5. *Conversation with the Junior Repas*

This fragment is a conversation between Mila and some “junior repas” (the name indicates cotton-clad lay disciples, distinguishing them from monk disciples). Here Mila outlines the instructions included in the Samvara Aural Transmission. Compared to Zhang Lotsāwa’s “Summary” (*thim yig*), this explanation seems more clumsy and less structured.⁴⁸ The text seems to represent an earlier codification stage of the Aural Transmission. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to Zhang lo’s *thim yig*, in this case, there is no mention of the corresponding empowerment needed for each teaching. Unfortunately, Zhijé Ripa does not mention the source of these conversations, apart from his two main sources – Khyungtsangpa and Zhang Lotsāwa.

pp. 396-401

Once, eight junior *repas* asked: “Great Jetsün, of this famous Aural Transmission of the Dākinī that cannot be bestowed except in a single transmission, could you give us eight junior repas one cycle of instructions each?”

⁴⁷ In Rechungpa’s lineage this “special teaching” is given to Rechungpa; in Gyalthangpa and Tsangnyön Heruka it is given to Gampopa; in *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si) to both. See above, Chapter 7.

⁴⁸ On Zhang Lotsāwa’s *thim yig* and the Aural Transmission, see Torricelli 2001 and Sernesi 2007 & 2011. See also Chapter 3.

“That is how it is,” he said, “I don’t want to deceive you, but there is some danger so please do not talk about it to others. Except for the handsome Rechungpa,⁴⁹ I do not have the power to give the Aural Transmission entirely to anybody else.”

“Does this complete Aural Transmission have cycles of instructions?” they asked.

“You should ask this to Rechung-with-the-handsome-face himself.”

“Can’t you just tell us a little bit about it?”

“There are three root features (*rtsa ba’i chings gsum*): on the outer level, [there are] *Nirmāṇakāya* oral instructions which are crucial to clear doubts regarding the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Lineage. Internally, [there are] *Saṃbhogakāya* oral instructions, crucial to clear doubts regarding the Wish-fulfilling Gem of Dreaming.⁵⁰ On a secret level, [there are] *Dharmakāya* oral instructions – the Pointing-Out Wish-fulfilling Gem⁵¹ – crucial to clear doubts regarding the real nature of things, the fundamental reality of the path.”

⁴⁹ Here, Rechungpa is called *Ras chung bzhin legs po*, “the junior/young repa with the handsome face”.

⁵⁰ In Zhang Lotsāwa’s *thim yig* the second Wish-fulfilling Gem is called *smiṇ lam yid bzhin nor bu*, “the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Path of Ripening.” Calling it *rmi lam yid bzhin nor bu* cannot be a mere mistake by Zhijé Ripa or his scribe, because the same “mistake” appears in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (song 17.1, e.g., Ms-Oxford 92b; Ms-Newark 122a; [it was corrected to *smiṇ lam* in Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu, and RBC-Pt]) and in Shamar Khachö Wangpo’s *Clouds of Blessings*, p. 274. By contrast, in the ‘variant’ versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* we find *smiṇ lam*: Ms-Bordier 156b, Ms-BDRC 206b, Ms-Lhasa 157b.) For the different versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, see above, Chapter 1b.

⁵¹ Likewise, in Zhang lo’s *thim yig* the third Wish-fulfilling Gem reads *gsang ba ngo sprad chos sku’i gdams ngag grol lam yid bzhin nor bu*, “Secretly, the oral instructions pointing out the Dharmakāya, the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Path of Liberation.” In Zhijé Ripa’s text we find only *lam*, not *grol lam*. These two instances (*rmi lam* vs. *smiṇ lam* and *lam* vs *grol lam*, the latter only in Zhijé Ripa)

“What is the lineage succession?” they asked.

“It is as follows: Vajradhara, the Bodyless-one, Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, and me, Mid la,” he said.

At another time, some young *repas* asked,

“We understand that you do not give us seven junior *repas* an oral instruction each from the Aural Transmission. However, we would appreciate you could tell us about the different steps of oral instructions included in it.”

“If that is what you want, I can explain it to you: to bestow empowerment on the people, to bestow consecration of deities [on thangkas and statues], to hold funerary weekly ceremonies for the deceased. To give blessings when, relying on Heruka, discriminating wisdom (*shes rab*) is the principal point (*gtso bor byas nas*); to give empowerment when, relying on a powdered colour [*maṇḍala*], method/means (*thabs*) is the principal point.”

“Is there something else?” they asked.

“There are three cycles of oral instructions, containing three upadeśas (*man ngag*),” he replied.

“And what are these?” they insisted.

“They are called the oral instructions of the Ordinary Wish-fulfilling Gem, the Commitment Wish-fulfilling Gem and the True Nature Wish-fulfilling Gem.”

“And do these have upadeśas?” they asked.

“Yes, there are two of them,” he replied.

“Which are these?”

could mean that neither Zhijé Ripa nor Khachö Wangpo knew of Zhang lo’s *thim yig*. As far as Zhijé Ripa is concerned, this would be rather strange given that he constantly indicates Zhang Lotsāwa as one of his major sources. It could also mean that both terms, *smin lam* and *grol lam*, and the connection between each teaching and the empowerment required to introduce it, are codifications from a later time, implying that the *thim yig* is erroneously attributed to Zhang Lotsāwa.

“They are called father commands/pronouncements (*yab bka*’) and mother commands/ pronouncements (*yum bka*’).”

“Are these [mother pronouncements?] divided into groups?”

“Yes, there are three classes.”

“Which are these?”

“They are called: the king – the unchangeable dharmatā; the ministers – leaders of the three families; the people – accomplishing enlightened activities (*phrin las*).”⁵²

“Is there something else besides this?” they insisted.

“Regarding the mother class, there are ten yogas (*rnal ’byor bcu*)” [does this regard the king?]

“Can you please tell us about these?”

[Mila] smiled: “Developing the immeasurable mental attitude, developing the mental attitude of [being] the deity’s body, accomplishing the principal points of the mental attitude (*sems gnad don byed*), subduing *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs*, mental vajra-recitation, verbal vajra-recitation. In the completion stage: blending, consciousness ejection and equal taste, and, as enlightened activities, making tormas.”

“Can you tell some more than this?” they continued.

“There are three aspects also for the second point [the ministers]: praying to the Lama, empowerment for samādhi,

⁵² Sernesi 2007: 178.

(3.1.1) The king (*rgyal po*), which is the unchanging dharmatā (*chos nyid mi ’gyur ba*), is connected by the ZLTY [Zhang Lo Thim yig] with the sādhanas of Cakrasamvara and Vajrayoginī.

(3.1.2) The ministers (*blon po*), which are the leaders of the three [Buddha-] families (*rigs gsum las byed*), are a three-fold practice, listed in the ZLTY as: guruyoga (*bla ma rnal ’byor*), empowerment of samādhi (*ting nge ’dzin gyi dbang*) and recitation of the one-hundred syllables mantra (*yi ge brgya pa ’i bzlas pa*).

(3.1.3) The common people (*dmangs phal pa*), or the favorable actions (*’phrin las ’thun sbyor*), are the seven yogas: to eat, to dress, to sleep, to walk and sit, to bath, to make offerings, to utter mantras.

and purifying negativities with the seal of Heruka.⁵³ These three are the methods.”

“And further?”

“The third point [the common people] has seven aspects: yoga, food, clothing, conduct towards the six kinds of beings, sleep, dharma activities, and the yoga of bathing.”

“And what more is there?”

“In the father cycle, there are three preparatory yogas, three main practice yogas, and three final yogas. In all of these, there is blending and equal taste, and in the three of the second point [main practice yogas?] there are ritual feast offerings and accumulation of generosity to stabilise the development stage. For the third point [conclusive yogas?], there are seven yogas: [how] to eat food, to drink, to dress, to stay in one’s own place, to walk and sit, to bathe and to build tsa-tsas to expand merits.”

“And what more is there?”

“The second [Wish-fulfilling Gem], the Commitment Wish-fulfilling Gem, has again eight aspects. The commitments are: to maintain attention and mindfulness, to meditate on what has been pointed out, to rely on it and to act in secret, to be always free from accumulating, to eat and drink and to protect.”

“And what else?” they asked.

“In the first point,⁵⁴ there are six aspects: *gtum mo* – to recognise blissful warmth; consciousness transference – to apply the gold-making elixir; entering a dead body – shedding the snake-skin; dreaming – delusions naturally cleared away;

⁵³ *He ru ka’i yig rgyas sdig pa sbyang ba*; or would this be misspelt for *yig brgyas*, meaning the hundred-syllable mantra? In this case, it would be the hundred-syllable mantra of Heruka instead of Vajrasattva. Here we see a slight difference with the above 3.1.2 in Zhang Lo’s *thim yig*.

⁵⁴ This part of the text seems strange: normally speaking, it should detail the content of the Commitment Wish-fulfilling Gem, but it seems to give the same content as in the True Nature Wish-fulfilling Gem.

illusory body – natural liberation of the eight worldly dharmas; luminosity – eliminating the darkness of ignorance.”

“What more is there?” they asked.

“In the second point, there are five aspects in which to consider the individual personalities with their objective requisites and their method of practice.”⁵⁵

“In the third point, there are two aspects: the intermediate states illuminating primordial wisdom and the recognition of Mahāmudrā.”

“Is there still something else?”

“The True Nature Wish-fulfilling Gem has two aspects: the path of means (*thabs kyi lam*) and the path of liberation (*grol lam*). The first one, the path of means, has two aspects: the main part of the path and its branches. The main part can be divided into two: liberation through the upper door and great bliss through the lower door. There are five branches of the path of means: consciousness ejection (*'pho ba*), transference in another body (*grong 'jug*), dreaming, illusory body, and luminosity. The path of liberation is again twofold: illuminating primordial wisdom in the intermediate states and recognising Mahāmudrā.”

He also told a little about the nine cycles of the bodyless *dākinīs*. However, he did not clarify the complete cycles, to the other junior repas, only to Rechung Dorje Drakpa.

At another time, *Ngam blong ras pa* [for Ngendzong Repa?] asked: “Do I hold the complete Aural Transmission?”

“You have quite a few [of the instructions], but not like [the one with the] handsome face,” it is said that he said.

⁵⁵ *rTen gyi gang zag dang ni yul du dgos byed dang/ thabs kyi nyams su blang ba 'o*.
I am not sure about this translation.

Once, the young *repas* asked him: “We would like you to tell us at length about the Lineage Wish-fulfilling Gem.” “One time I will do so,” he said, “one person will come.” But he never bestowed it.

6. *About Ngok’s Importance in Milarepa’s Life*

The following short anecdote indicates the importance of Lama Ngok as Mila’s teacher. It also briefly cites the instructions Mila had received from Marpa: the Demchok Khandro Nyengyü, the mind instructions from the Wish-fulfilling Gems, and consciousness ejection.

p. 404

Once, when the Jetsün went to Lhodrak to offer prostrations in the sleeping room of Lord Marpa, he shed many tears. The young *repas* requested him not to cry. He replied: “ [I weep because] I remember Lord Marpa’s and his wife’s kindness.” At that time, he stayed there for seven days, but [in total] he went there fifteen times, earlier and later.⁵⁶ On the way back, the Jetsün went to the dwelling place of Nyag Yungtön Trogyal⁵⁷ and Shang Tanag gi Bönpö and sang several songs to the next of kin, while shedding many tears. The junior *repas* asked him not to cry. The Jetsün replied: “When I met the son (*jo sras*, son of Yungtön Trogyal?), he told me that Lama Ngok

⁵⁶ These trips back and forth to Lhodrak with visits of his previous teachers are later reflected in *A River of Blessings* and in Ms-BL, where they are included as a supplementary story from another biography. However, in this text Mila goes there with his disciples after Marpa has died, whereas in the other stories, he goes there while Marpa is still alive. See Chapter 5.

⁵⁷ gNyag g.yung ston khro rgyal, the magic teacher of Milarepa; Shangs rta nag gi bon po, a bön teacher.

had passed into Khecara.” The Jetsün shed many tears, as did Lama Ngok’s son [who was also present]. The junior *repas* requested him not to cry, and the Jetsün replied: “You might think that Mila has become extremely old now. Although I have not served him even with a single grain of material wealth, except for the teachings I received from the Lord of Lhodrak – the Demchok Khandro Nyengyü, the Wish-fulfilling Gems’ mind instructions, and consciousness ejection⁵⁸ – I owe everything to the kindness of Lama Ngok.”⁵⁹

It is unclear what the last sentence means: whether Mila refers to all the other teachings received through Ngok or whether he means that everything happened because of Lama Ngok’s kindness. Be that as it may, the passage indeed stresses the importance of Ngok in Mila’s life.

7. About Mila’s Death

This fragment narrates the episode of Mila’s death. I compare it to the same episode in the other sources.

⁵⁸ *'pho ba sdig sdugs* is how it reads in the Drikung version (p. 405) and the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* version (p. 379, but very unclear), whereas, in the BDRC text, it has been changed to *'khor sdig sdugs*. I guess this is an expression related to *'pho ba* practice, but I leave *bsdig sdugs* untranslated.

⁵⁹ *yang rje btsun gyi gnyag g.yung ston khro rgyal dang / shangs rta nag gi bon po'i gdan sa na yar byon nas / shul ma rnams la mgur mang rab gsung shing spyang mang po bsil ba la / ras chung rnams kyis mi bshums par zhu zhus pas / rje btsun gyi zhal nas / jo sras dang mjal bas / bla ma rngog mkha' spyod la gshegs pa'i lo rgyus rnams mdzad pas / rje btsun gyi spyang chab mang po byon pas / bla ma rngog gi sras kyang bshums pa la / ras chung rnams kyis mi bshums par zhu zhus pas / rje btsun gyi zhal nas / khyed rnams kyis mid la rgas 'chal du song 'dug bsam pa yin te / ngas nor zang zing gi zhabs tog ni nas 'bru gcig tsam yang byas pa med la / rje lho brag pa'i chos skor la / bde mchog mkha' 'gro snyan rgyud dang / sems khrid yid bzhi nor bu / 'pho ba bsdig sdugs dang bcas pa de ma lags pa / thams cad ni bla ma rngog gi sku drin yin gsung/*

pp. 424-446

As in most biographies (except in Tsangnyön's), the death episode is narrated in two ways. The first part narrates that the disciples with pure view experienced his passing in different ways:

Some saw him disappearing in a rainbow body, and some saw him being carried away by the *dākinīs* to the Khecara pure land without the episode of his illness.

The second part recounts the experiences of people without pure view who witnessed his illness and death. In all the other biographies, the culprit of Mila's poisoning was a jealous Bönpo. Instead, Zhijé Ripa is the first to introduce Geshe Tsakpuwa as the person who sends a leper woman with poisoned yoghurt to the Jetsün. Tsangnyön Heruka uses the same narrative in *Life*.

Zhijé Ripa gives a very detailed account, with numerous songs and miracles. At some point, Mila manifests as Vajrasattva and bestows the vase-empowerment on the Geshe to purify the obscurations of his evil mind. After this, he manifests as the perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, to give him the Vinaya rules of the Śrāvakas, and then he manifests numberless yidam deities such as Demchok, Hevajra and Guhyasamāja, who give empowerments and blessings. Some of these details are not included in Tsangnyön Heruka's version, but most of the narrative is.

8. Zhijé Ripa's Position Regarding the Importance of Mila's Disciples

Ngendzong Tönpa Bodhiradza made a detailed record of the Dharma teachings coming from the Noble Mila. Ngendzong Tönpa served Lama Mila for 27 years. [By contrast,] Rechung Dorje Drak served him without interruption for 22 years, but before and after [that period, on and off,] he was his servant for many more years. This description indicates that [Mila's] principal heart son was Rechung Dorje Drak. Besides, the stories of the junior *repas* can be read in their liberation stories. Dakpo Lhajé served him for no more than nine months. Anyway, I have not heard that what everyone [says] about the length of his stay and the teachings he obtained could be false.⁶⁰

9. Zhijé Ripa's Credentials

In his 2012 article, Quintman translates two fragments regarding the importance of Zhijé Ripa's work, which I cite here to give some perspective to my following conclusions.

- (Quintman 2012: 9-10). The Sa skya master Kun dga' rgyal mtshan Dpal bzang po (1310–1358) vouched for the author's

⁶⁰ *rje mid la'i chos skor la / ngam rdzong ston pa bhodhi ra dza zhib par byed do / ngam rdzong ston pas bla ma mid la ras pa lo nyi shu rtsa bdun [b]rten par 'dug go / ras chung rdo rje grags kyis bar ma chad par lo nyi shu rtsa gnyis [b]rten par 'dug / lar ni snga phyi rang la ni lo mang rab phyag phyi mdzad par 'dug go / don la thugs kyi sras mchog ni ras chung rdo rje grags pa rang lags so / gzhan yang ras chung rnam kyi lo rgyus rang rang gi nam thar na gsal lo / dvags po lha rje bas zla ba dgu las mi brten par 'dug / lar thams cad kyi 'o[ng] tshod dang chos la thob rdzun mi nyen no /*
Between brackets, the spelling of the *bod kyi lo rgyus* version. I am not sure about the translation of this last sentence.

credentials, recorded by Zhi byed Ri pa in the following way:

Then at Dpal Din ri Glang skor [Kun dga' rgyal mtshan] took my hand in his and said, 'From Gangs Ti se to Ri bo rtse lnga in China, there is no one with a greater knowledge of Lama Rje btsun Mi la ras chen's life story and history than you. Therefore, you should set down an extensive biographical record (yig cha nram thar) about him.'

Thus he urged me with great insistence.

- (Quintman 2012: 24-25). First, 269 years after the Great Rje btsun died, I put into words both an extensive and abbreviated Sun and Moon Beams in the Rtse mo ngang pa hermitage of Mnga' ris Mang yul Skyid grong. Then, 277 years after the Great Rje btsun died [i.e., eight years later], I [met] (1) Lama Ri khrod pa, the vajra holder Bsod nams rin chen who resided at Lama Mid la ras pa's seat at the great sacred site called Heruka's Palace of Sman lung Chu dbar; and (2) the kind lama, powerful lord of hermits endowed with supreme realization, the authentic being known as Rin chen gzhon nu. They carried out their intentions with utter purity, and in this way I was encouraged by the hermits of the three sacred sites. In particular, I was rendered assistance by Bsod nams mgon po, a dharma protecting minister for the one called Ta'i Si tu Chos kyi rin chen, an official endowed with faith toward the noble three jewels and a bhikṣu's attitude of enlightenment. Maintaining a totally pure mind stream focused on the happiness of beings, he encouraged me with great earnestness. Then, based upon the completely pure [attitude of enlightenment in its two modes of] aspiration and application, I expanded upon my previous [composition] a little bit. To summarize all of this: Wherever Lama Mid la ras chen's feet trod and whatever he said during the course of his entire life, I G.yung ston Zhi

byed ri khrod pa have been able to put into words without leaving out so much as a hair's tip.

Conclusion: Some Perplexities that Arose while Reading Zhijé Ripa's Work

Our first paragraph illustrates the controversial character of Zhijé Ripa. He describes – although very concisely – the episode of Milarepa “stealing” the holy place of Tisé from the Bönpo Naro Bönchung and places the latter amidst the disciples of Milarepa who have transformed evil circumstances into friends and thus entered the path. Zhijé Ripa says he has explained the episode in another instance, to which we unfortunately have no access. However, a few pages later, he engages in an animated discussion regarding the value of Mount Tisé as a holy place and makes us doubt whether the Jetsün has been there or not, saying that this pilgrimage site was not part of Marpa's prophecy command and that the importance of Tisé as a pilgrimage site became known relatively late, starting only with the disciples of Gampopa. Why would one describe the Naro Bönchung incident in such detrimental terms for the Jetsün if one is convinced that this is just a fable? If, as our author says, he is like a swan who takes only butter from the water – meaning he says only things he is sure of – then what is the point of talking about it?

The second fragment, the list of Mila's most famous songs, is another cause of perplexity. In the context of the Milarepian corpus, the *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams* has a precise date of composition (1373–1381). Thus, the work should be placed after the composition of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – supposedly thirteenth century – and more particularly after its ‘variant’ versions, in which the Third

Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339) is said to have played a role.⁶¹ However, as we have seen in § 2, there is no indication that Zhijé Ripa was aware of the existence of these texts. He only briefly references the existence of a few song cycles included in the Compendia, without referring to the works. From how he presents it, one could think that these were independent stories circulating at his time. The absence of any mention of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* is surprising – in particular after a sentence such as: *Wherever Lama Mid la ras chen's feet trod and whatever he said during the course of his entire life, I G.yung ston Zhi byed ri khrod pa have been able to put into words without leaving out so much as a hair's tip.* The most evident supposition is that these works were unavailable to him due to their limited circulation. As insinuated above, he might have read about these stories from other texts, for instance, Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*. The Second Shamarpa, a disciple of the Fourth Karmapa, was introduced to texts with limited distribution. When Khachö Wangpo wrote his liberation story of Milarepa in the style of the *Golden Rosaries* in Gampopa's lineage, unlike *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, he did not follow the 17-18 quality structure. He also did not include entire song cycles but selected only part of some of the new stories in the compendium not included in the *Golden Rosary* stories before him. Of course, these stories could have circulated independently from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. However, considering that part of the added songs contains verbatim citations from that text, it seems logical to conclude that *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* was the source of the supplementary material in *Clouds of Blessings*. If this

⁶¹ See Chapter 1d.

were the case, it would be proof of the existence of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* before Shamar Khachö Wangpo's as well as Zhijé Ripa's time.

Fragments 3, 4 and 5 are interesting because they describe the relationship between Mila and his disciples – and his sister – in a lively way. However, another element that raises perplexity is the description of the content of the Saṃvara Aural Transmission to eight junior repas (§ 5). The perplexity is due to the use of terminology that does not correspond with Zhang Lotsāwa's "summary" (*thim yig*) of this special transmission, even though Zhijé Ripa constantly repeats that Zhang Lo was one of his two primary sources of information. Here, we can make two suppositions:

- Zhijé Ripa did not have access to Zhang Lo's *thim yig* but only to his life story of Milarepa (unavailable to us)
- Zhang Lo's *thim yig* is wrongly attributed to him and should be dated later. As far as I know, it is included only in Jangchup Zangpo's sixteenth-century collection called *Demchok Khandro Nyengyü*. This wrong attribution would not be surprising, as more texts in the collection – especially *namthars* – are considered to be spuriously attributed to earlier masters.⁶² If this were the case, it would mean that the perfect construction of the *Demchok Khandro Nyengyü* codification was composed no earlier than the 16th century. On the positive side, the discussion with the junior *repas* translated in § 5 shows that this construction was well underway in the 14th century but not yet perfectly codified.

⁶² E.g., Roberts, P.A. 2007: 50.

Fragment 6 is interesting because it shows a very emotional side of Milarepa, a tribute to his master Ngok, whose importance most life stories of Milarepa – especially Tsangnyön’s – represent as largely incidental.

Fragment 7 gives a short overview of Zhijé Ripa’s “original” description of Mila’s death episode. In contrast to all the preceding life stories, Geshe Tsakpuwa provides the poisoned yoghurt to Milarepa. Tsangnyön Heruka will opt to follow this suggestion.

Fragment 8 shows Zhijé Ripa’s position regarding the lineages descending from Mila’s most prominent disciples. Our author seems not to doubt that Mila’s foremost disciple was Rechungpa, although he recognises Ngendzong Tönpa as having spent 27 years in a row with his teacher, accrediting him with writing down Mila’s teachings. Dakpo Lhajé (Gampopa) stayed with the master briefly (9 months). Zhijé Ripa ends this paragraph with a typical remark: that he has not heard that there is any falsehood in what everyone says about the length of Gampopa’s stay and the obtainment of teachings.

Keeping in mind Zhijé Ripa’s credentials cited in fragment 9, despite the perplexities mentioned above, this work should be considered a serious contribution to the Milarepian corpus from a historical and doctrinal point of view.

[ToC](#)

9 – THE DYING BÖNPO EPISODE IN THE GOLDEN ROSARIES, THE ZHEPÉ DORJE COMPENDIA AND TSANGNYÖN HERUKA’S CHAPTER 54

The episode under scrutiny here, which details how Milarepa facilitated a Bönpo follower’s liberation at the time of his death, is not only a significant event in Mila’s life but also a profound teaching moment for his sister Peta, inspiring her to delve into the practice of meditation.

In my approach to this analysis, I begin by dissecting the story as it appears in the hagiographies of Jetsün Milarepa, categorizing them into three groups based on their portrayal of Gampopa, Ngendzong Tönpa, or Rechungpa as Mila’s primary disciple. I then delve into the same episode as it is presented in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia. Finally, I compare these narratives with Tsangnyön’s version, providing a brief examination of the episode.

I chose this chapter because it is the only episode referring to a song cycle in Tsangnyön’s *Songs* in Möntsepa’s *Golden Rosary*. The other episodes in this biography relate to Tsangnyön’s *Life*. As such, the author must have considered it a crucial chapter.

Ngendzong Tönpa & Gungthang Repa (12th century)

Nine: the quality of repaying his parents’ kindness – *dgu pa yab yum gyi drin lan bsab pa ’i yon tan*.¹

¹ *Mi la rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyi mam thar* (twelfth century). See Chapter 4.

While the Jetsün was staying at Kyangpa Namkhai Dzong, a Bönpo requested a weekly funeral ceremony for his parents. Peta [heard this and] said: “You did not perform a weekly funerary service for our parents.”

“Yes, I did,” he said and sang:

After discarding their fleshly body, their monkey minds
Were both wandering alone
In a land where they did not know anybody;

I attracted them with my samādhi;
In the firepit of their illusory body
With the firewood of the seeds of the six kinds of beings
I planted the name card of the unborn;
I purified their corpses in a state of luminosity and
emptiness;
I performed a weekly ceremony, the essence of
appearance and emptiness;
I made tsa-tsas of the unborn;
As food, I offered them great bliss;
As a path, I showed them non-duality;
I performed the dedication as *mahāmudrā*
I uttered an aspiration prayer for bodhicitta;
Indeed, I repaid our parents’ kindness!

Thus he sang.

Golden Rosaries in Gampopa’s lineage: Gyalthangpa and Sangyé Bum (13th century)

In the *Golden Rosaries* in Gampopa’s lineage, the episode is missing in Mila’s biographies by Khyungtsangpa, Lama Zhang and Dönmo Ripa. We find it in the Mila biographies by Gyalthangpa and Sangyé Bum. Gyalthangpa does not include any song. Sangyé Bum narrates the story almost in the same way

as Gyalthangpa, but he also includes a song to Peta similar to the one in Ngendzong Tönpa's text and those in Rechungpa's lineage. Both episodes show no sign of friction between the Bönpos and Jetsün Mila.

*Gyalthangpa*²

Then, the Precious One went to the valley of Nyenam.
He liberated a Bönpo who was wandering in the *bardo*.
Geshe Darlo showed faith and devotion.
I prostrate with devotion to the One who brought the Sangha
to accumulate virtues.

The meaning is as follows:

Jetsün Milarepa then went to Nyenam. In Nyenam, a powerful and rich Bönpo named Shen Khrögyal, with faith in Jetsün, had served him with many offerings. For this Bönpo, the time of dying had arrived. For his last will, he took aside his eldest son and told him:

“I do not want any virtuous action [for my benefit]. I only want you to give my share of wealth to the Jetsün so that he protects me with his compassion.”

The son did as he had been told. Then, three days went by, and on the fourth day, [Jetsün] caught [the consciousness of the dead person] into a paper name card [with the dead person's name on it]; the paper was visibly shaking and [accompanied] with sound and light, it merged into the heart of the Jetsün. The Bönpo's wife and children were delighted and had faith. They developed great devotion.

At that moment Peta, who was present, started weeping.

² rGyal thang pa bde chen rdo rje (thirteenth century) *rJe btsun gyi rgyal po mid la ras pa'i rnam thar*, In *dKar brgyud gSer 'phreng*, 1973: 244-45.

The Jetsün said: “Don’t cry like this; what is the meaning of this?” Still sobbing, Peta replied:

“You have done this for all the people of this family; instead, for our parents, who committed many negative deeds, [you did nothing]. We do not even know where both have gone.”

The Jetsün replied:

“Both our beloved parents died overcome by the power of the Lord of Death. From the start until now, I have dedicated my body, speech and mind to virtuous actions. I have done all this so that whatever harm our parents may have done could be transformed into benefitting their minds. Just like [the liberation of the Bönpo] manifested, it cannot be otherwise than having manifested similarly for our parents. Don’t cry; I have accumulated the root of virtue for our parents!”

*Sangyé Bum*³

A faithful Bönpo from Nyenam Drak named Jampel had asked for teachings to the Jetsün and honoured him with his services. When his death was nearing, he called his daughter because she was more powerful than her brothers. Taking her as his witness, he said to his children:

“As my last will, I want you to give my share of wealth to the Jetsün to perform a feast gathering with a dedication prayer.”

Then, the Bönpo died and the sons did as he had asked. When the Jetsün caught his consciousness, the Bönpo appeared and ate part of the ritual offerings. He asked for empowerment. Jetsün bestowed it and showed him the way. The Bönpo then said:

³ Sangs rgyas ’bum (mid-thirteenth century) *Mi la ras pa’i rnam thar* In *Rwa lung gser ’phreng* 1975-1978, 1: 198-99.

“My Jetsün has this kind of teaching; therefore, I have asked him.” He prostrated, asked for blessings and then vanished into light.

The family and all the others were amazed and rejoiced, but his sister Peta was displeased and cried.

“What is wrong, Peta?” asked [the Jetsün].

“Elder brother, you can do this, but you didn’t do it for our parents who committed negative deeds.” The Jetsün replied:

“Peta, there is no need to feel bad for our parents. Previously, after they died, I completed everything, including the weekly virtuous ceremony, the food dedication, the cremation, and the dedication prayer.”

He sang:

When father and mother came under the power of the Lord
of Death
As a funeral ceremony for their body and monkey mind
On Chinese paper with which they were not familiar
I wrote a name card of nondual mind;
I caught [their consciousness] freed from attachment
And on the firepit of manifold perceptions
With the firewood of dual perception of subject and object
I lit the fire of self-liberating wisdom;
It consumed their corpses in inseparable luminosity and
emptiness;
I moulded tsa-tsas of nondual appearance and emptiness;
I made a food dedication of undefiled great bliss;
Showing the path of nonduality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa
I made a dedication that whatever appears should become
dharmakāya
And said a prayer of the unexpressible;
I correctly performed the weekly ceremony and the root of
virtue;
In this way, I repaid our parents’ kindness.

Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's lineage: Martön, Ogyenpa, Zhijé Ripa, Demchok Nyengyü Biographies, Jangchup Zangpo

In the *Golden Rosary* biographies in Rechungpa's lineage, we find the episode in one of the oldest among Mila's namthars, supposedly by Martön. We find it again in Ogyenpa's and Zhijé Ripa's texts, in the Demchok Nyengyü biographies, and in the summary of Jangchup Zangpo included in *Drikung Kagyu Great Dharma Treasury*.

In all these biographies, the narrative is very similar. As in the Ngendzong Tönpa version and the Gampopa strand, there is no friction between the Bönpos and the Jetsün. One song to Peta is included, similar to the one in the life story by Ngendzong Tönpa.

Martön (pp. 120-21.)⁴

To act for the benefit of the sick and the dying – *Na shi'i don mdzad pa ni*

An old Bönpo had continuously nurtured faith in the Lama.

His children told him:

“When a father and mother die, one has to perform some virtuous actions. We will do whatever you like.”

“Will you do as I like?” he asked.

“Yes, we will,” they replied.

“Then, take my daughter as a witness,” he said. So they did.

He then said:

⁴ BZ-Martön, Byang chub bzang po, *bDe mchog mkha' 'gro sñan rgyud*, (Ras chung snyan rgyud), 1973, 1:137. See Chapter 1a.

“Do not follow my Bön custom; give my belongings to the Jetsün.”

“But you should leave your wealth to your son,” they replied. By this, the old Bönpo understood they would do as they pleased. Thus, he gave his belongings to the Lama. Having offered all in this way, it did not disturb their eyes.

Then, the old Bönpo died indeed. [Mila] performed a weekly ceremony, and when he washed the old Bönpo, this one said: “Thank you very much.”

All saw this, but his sister was taken by sorrow. She said:

“He has such a power. However, our parents died while suffering, full of hatred. They will surely have gone to hell. Why did he not do it [for them]?”

The Jetsün replied: “I did offer a weekly ceremony for our parents. I transferred their consciousness to another place and made a food dedication. They are now established in bliss. The following is what I did:

After having abandoned their body [subject to] birth and
death, their monkey mind⁵
Was wandering in a land where it did not know anybody.

In the firepit of the illusory body
I attracted it with my samādhi;
With the firewood of the six kinds of beings in saṃsāra
I lit the fire of equanimity;
I cremated the corpses into appearance and emptiness;
The weekly ceremony consisted of luminosity and
emptiness;
As food, I offered them great bliss;
As a path, I showed them non-duality;

⁵ *Sems kyi spre 'u*; similar to Ngendzong Tönpa's *sems kyi bre 'u* and Sangyé Bum's *sems kyi spre*; this comes also in *A River of Blessings*.

I made tsa-tsas of the unborn;
The dedication I made was *mahāmudrā*;
I uttered a prayer of the unexpressible;
Indeed, our parents' kindness has been repaid!

Ogyenpa (pp. 224-25) ⁶

The quality of repaying kindness – *Drin lan bsab pa'i
yon tan*

A rich Bönpo from Nyanam had developed faith [in the Jetsün] and had continuously accumulated merit. He had requested the scriptural transmission of the Manjushri [mantra] recitation and instructions. Later, when he was on the point of dying, he called his children. He asked his eldest son to be his witness and said: “According to our family custom, when I die, you will need some wealth for food and drinks. Whichever part belongs to me, please offer it to Mila and request him to perform a weekly ceremony.” The eldest son said: “He should perform it to prevent our master from dying!”

They divided the wealth and offered it to Mila, saying: “Our father is old; he will die soon.” The Lama brought the rich man to a place with nice grass, and as soon as the Bönpo died, he performed a weekly ceremony. In the evening of the ceremony, he called the Bönpo's relatives, and they all arrived carrying plenty of meat and butter. That evening, on the site where he had purified the obscurations and made a dedication prayer, he caught the [consciousness of the Bönpo] and transferred it into an effigy. It was as if the Bönpo had arrived and vanished into the effigy. All rejoiced and were happy. Thus, the purification

⁶ O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, (1244) *The Life of Mi la ras pa* In *Bka' brgyud yid bzhin nor bu yi 'phreng ba*. 1982: 224-25.

of obscurations and the dedication of merits had been performed properly.

Meanwhile, Peta was weeping. She said: “For people who have gone through difficulties or have committed all kinds of wrongdoings, without any exception, you have done such a dedication of merits. But what for the kindness of our parents, especially our mother? You have not repaid their kindness or made a merit dedication.” To this [Mila] replied:

After having abandoned their fleshly body, their monkey
mind
Was wandering alone, without anybody else,
In a land where it did not know anybody;

I attracted it with my samādhi
And on the firepit of their illusory body
With the firewood originating from the six demons⁷
I lit the fire of the unborn;
I purified the corpses in luminosity and emptiness;
I made tsa-tsas of both appearance and emptiness;
As food, I offered them great bliss;
The dedication I made was *mahāmudrā*,
And I uttered a prayer of the unexpressible;
A long time past I made the root of virtue for our parents!

Zhijé Ripa (pp. 335-36)⁸ and *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*
(pp. 172-73)⁹

⁷ 'Dre drug skye ba'i bud shing la; in the other biographies, e.g., in *Zhijé Ripa*, it is rigs drug skye ba'i bud shing la.

⁸ Zhi byed ri pa (14th century), *rJe btsun mid la ras pa'i rnam par thar pa nyi zla'i 'od zer*, 2004, 9: 335-36.

⁹ *bDe mchog sñan brgyud Biographies* (15th century) *rJe btsun rin po che mi la ras chen gyi mam thar*, 1983: 172-73.

Tenth, the quality of repaying the parents' kindness – *bCu pa pha ma'i drin lan bsabs pa'i yon tan*

While he was staying at Kyangphen Namkha Dzong, a powerful Bönpo from Gungthang had secretly asked for instructions, although his family hindered him. At one point, he contracted a deadly illness, and, as he did not want to tell this, he talked about suicide and said he wanted to lay down his last will.

“We will do whatever you say,” they said.¹⁰

“Whatever wealth I have, you should bring it to Mila the Repa and request a weekly ceremony.”

He took his eldest daughter as a witness. The family kept his part aside until he died. When he died, they had the weekly ceremony performed. Later in the day, [the Jetsün] called the Bönpo's relatives. When he caught his consciousness, the Bönpo appeared; then, while washing the name card, he was cleansed and shown the way. He prostrated to the Jetsün and said: “Thank you for your kindness,” and went.

The family members of the Bönpo were amazed, but Peta's face grew very dark.

“How bad,” she said, “my brother has no shame! He left our parents in hell, whereas for other people, he did this!” [Jetsün] replied:

Under the power of the Lord of death

¹⁰ *Khyod rang gang zer byed pa yin byas pas*; In Demchok Nyengyü Biographies *Khyod rang ci dga' ba bya'i byas pas*.

Father and mother's body was left behind; there was only mind;¹¹

In a land where they knew nobody

They were wandering alone, without anybody else;

I caught [their consciousness] with my samādhi;

On the firepit of their illusory body

With the firewood of those born as the six kinds of beings

I lit the fire of the unborn;

I purified the corpses in luminosity and emptiness;

Appearance and emptiness was the weekly ceremony I performed;

I made tsa-tsas of the unborn;

As food, I offered great bliss;

As a path, I directed them towards non-duality;

The dedication I made was Mahāmudrā;

As a prayer, I uttered the unexpressible;

Indeed, I repaid the kindness of our parents!¹²

Jangchup Zangpo (pp. 58:165)¹³

Ninth, the quality of repaying kindness - *dGu pa drin lan gsab pa'i yon tan*

He had performed a weekly ceremony for a Bönpo, caught and merged him in the name card. Peta wept: “You did not do this for our parents.” The Lama sang in reply:

¹¹ 'Chi bdag dbang po pha ma yi/ lus kyi shing dor sems kyis byas; In Demchok Nyengyü Biographies, 'Chi bdag dbang song pha ma yi/ lus kyi shing dor sems kyi bya.

¹² Pha ma'i drin lan 'khor te mchi; In Demchok Nyengyü Biographies, Pha ma'i drin lan 'jol te mchi.

¹³ Bodhibhadra (Byang chub bzang po)(16th century), 2004, 58: 165.

With the firewood of those born as the six kinds of beings
I lit the fire of the unborn;
I purified the corpses in luminosity and emptiness;
I made tsa-tsas of both appearance and emptiness;
As food, I offered great bliss;
The dedication I made was *mahāmudrā*;
I made a prayer of aspiration in the unborn;
I have completed the virtue accumulation for father and
mother!

The first stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia: *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*¹⁴

Regarding the songs, *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* is the closest to what would become Tsangnyön's episode. The narrative, though, is quite different from Tsangnyön's. Here, the Bönpo himself explains to his relatives why the Bön doctrine is not good and why he has opted to follow Milarepa.¹⁵ Still, the antagonism which would be perceived later is absent: although the episode also denigrates the Bön doctrine, this happens in a less derogatory way. Four new songs are added to the episode, all later adopted by Tsangnyön, although in a different order.

Once, he was staying at Pori Potho Namkhai Dzong. A Bönpo in Nyenam said that Jetsün had turned away his mind from desire. Without the knowledge of his disciples, [the Bönpo] had

¹⁴ Ms-Oxford 67a-69a; RBC-Pt 167-73; Ms-Drukpa 97a-100b; Ms-Gansu 23:157-165; Ms-Newark 87a-90b ; Ms-Bordier 113a-116b; Ms-BDRC 144b-149b; Ms-Lhasa 107a-110b.

¹⁵ This particular detail is also found in another short anonymous biography included in the Paltsek's *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum*, "Bla ma mi la'i mam thar bsdu pa," 2011, 5: 98-125. The episode is found on p. 115.

occasionally given respectful services to Jetsün and secretly also asked him for instructions. This Bönpo had fallen ill and was near to die. His disciples told him he should leave a last will. The Bönpo said:

“If there is someone who will act according to my words, I have some things to say.”

All vowed to think about whatever that was.

“Well then, please call also my daughter,” he said. They also called the daughter.

She said: “Father, we will do whatever you say.”

Taking the girl as his witness, he gave his last will. He said: “Now, we, the ones called Bönpos, are wrong. The foundation [of our doctrine] is wrong because it is blind. The path is wrong because we do not avoid non-virtuous actions. The result is illusory because we are not reborn to anything else but great worldly gods or demons. The refuge is wrong because we pray to demi-gods, gods and demons. The motivation is impaired because, if we have one at all, it is to take care of our family; it does not reach any higher than that. Whatever is my share of wealth, please offer it to the Jetsün and his disciples and ask them to perform a weekly ceremony. If you will not do this, then it will be as if you killed me.”

They did as he told them. On the evening of the weekly service, a name card was made, and the Jetsün manifestly caught the Bönpo’s consciousness and restored his sensorial perceptions as vivid as they were before. Jetsün and his disciples sang the following song of guidance on the path to the name card.¹⁶

The support of the Kagyu lords’ blessing is excellent;
With it, one can attain the siddhi of the *dākinīs*’ lineage.
You disciple-sons with unerring dharma lineage:

¹⁶ Song 54.2, TN-Dha: 764, Stagg 2017: 640.

To purify the results of negative *karma*,
You must keep the vows within your mind-stream.

To be the resident lama of benefactors,
Bodhicitta and compassion must expand.

To be the master of an assembly of many,
You must have the qualities of realization.

To please the guru who is a siddha,
You need great perseverance and pure vision.

To partake of the food of the deceased,
You must have the good qualities of the path of seeing.

To guide the consciousness beyond this life,
Signs of the higher perceptions and accomplishments must
come forth.

To transform perceptions for those who have lost faith,
You must be able to create miraculous manifestations.

Today in the maṇḍala of the weekly rites,
We must help [the deceased] directly take hold of the path.

Bönpo benefactors and disciple-sons,
Do not have any doubts in your mind.

Thus he sang, and a sphere of rainbow light and a rain of
flowers appeared. The name card disappeared in the sky like a
whirling light. The Bönpo's disciples saw this. From the sky
came a sound that said:

“Jetsün, you have been very kind to me; if you were not here I
would have had no means of liberation.”

All heard this. “Today, it is like this; marvellous!” they said.

Jetsün replied with the following song:¹⁷

May I receive the wondrous guru's blessings.
I supplicate at the wondrous Marpa's feet.
With your kindness and devotion, please look upon all
beings in samsara with compassion.

First, I was able to meet this lord:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

I obtained the key instructions of the whispered lineage:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

I abandoned mundane, worldly deeds:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

I stayed in remote mountain retreats:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

Realization and experience arose from within:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

Alone, I developed endurance in hardship:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

I have no interest in the eight worldly concerns:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

I have been able to please my guru:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

¹⁷ Song 54.1, TN-Dha: 763, Stagg 2017: 639 (similar but not identical).

The way that this Bönpo gave his last testament:
This is the greatest of all wonders.

His disciples did as he asked:¹⁸
This is the greatest of all wonders.

This name card in a sphere of rainbow light:¹⁹
This is the greatest of all wonders.

Faith was born in this assembly here:
This is the greatest of all wonders.
Thus he sang.

His sister Peta was present. She shed many tears and said:
“You have this kind of power for other people. Now, tell me in
which way our parents died.”
The Lama replied: “You do not need to weep, I have guided
both our parents.”
“Then, explain to me how you guided them,” she asked.
In reply, he sang:²⁰

I supplicate the guru lords.
Accept me with your compassion, that I may repay my
parents’ kindness.

When mother left behind the casket of her body,

¹⁸ *Bu slob* instead of *nye ba* in TN-Dha.

¹⁹ *mTshan byang 'ja' 'od gur phub de*; in TN-Dha *gShin po thar par song ba de*: “he became liberated when dead.”

²⁰ Song 54.3, TN-Dha: 765; Stagg 2017: 641.

A few small differences: Tsangnyön: *sems bar dor 'khyams pa* instead of *sems 'khyam po stong nyid*; *gtsang shing dag pa'i zhing khams su*, missing in Tsangnyön; *khyod the tshoms mi dgos pe ta lcam* instead of *khyod sems chung mi dgos pre ta ma*.

and the king of kindness of my ancestors
 when they left behind their illusory bodies,
 I mixed their consciousnesses with my mind.
 It was absorbed into mind's nature, the heart of the
 Victorious Ones.
 A pure land of compassion and rainbow light dawned.
 Their bodies dissolved into the body of a deity, appearance
 and emptiness;
 A naturally existing deity was realised – How wondrous!
 Their speech mixed with ineffable sound-emptiness
 mantras;
 Spontaneously spreading mantra sounds: how wondrous!
 Their wandering minds were summoned through emptiness-
 samādhī:²¹
 Luminous empty awareness recognising itself.
 Mind's own place was seized, without any confusion,
 Free of movement and change – how wondrous!
 Throughout the period I engaged in practice,
 The fierce mantra of love and compassion
 Purified negativities and obscurations, day and night.
 The gateway of birth in samsara's six realms was cut.
 In a completely pure land,
 They were placed in an assembly of pure blissful ones
 Enjoying a wealth of pleasure and delight.
 In the pure realm of Sukhavati,
 A retinue of dakas and dakinis surrounds them.
 You don't need to worry, Petama!

Thus he sang. Peta's face lit up.

²¹ *Sems 'khyams po stong nyid ting 'dzing gyis bkug/ gsal stong rig pa rang ngo shes; in TN-Dha: sems bar dor 'khyams pa ting 'dzin gyis bkug gsal stong rig pa rang ngo sprad.*

“Well, if it was this way, that’s wondrous! Did you make a *maṇḍala*, a name card, *tsa-tsas* and so forth?” she asked. In reply, he sang:²²

Lord, protector of beings, I supplicate you.
Grant your blessing that I may repay my parents’ kindness.
Keep all the beings that are killed under your compassion.

In the mandala of great bliss free of duality
I placed the assembly of deities of self-awareness and clarity.
In the vase of tantra, scriptures and upadeshas,
I poured the cleansing water of the six paramitas.
The obscurations of avarice and the five poisons were purified.
With the amrita of the Kagyu gurus,
The ten empowerments were bestowed on their body, speech and mind.
The stages of the path and bhumis of realization:
I showed them to be great bliss, inseparable,
and made the tsa-tsa of the inseparable three kayas
I performed the weekly rite free of defilement.
For the anniversary of profound ensuing cognition,
I made the offering of the excellent antidote.
I dedicated with Mahamudra

²² Song 54.4, TN-Dha: 766; Stagg 2017: 642.

Again, a few differences: in Tsangnyön missing: *sems can thams cad drangs par thugs rjes zung*;

Tsangnyön *ngas bde chen gnyis med dkyil 'khor du*; Ms-Lhasa *gnas bde chen sems kyi dkyil 'khor du*; DNM-RD and A River of Blessings *ngas bden gnyis dbyer med kyi dkyil 'khor du*;

Tsangnyön: *lus ngag sems la dbang bzhi bskur*; Twelve Great Repa Disciples and DNM-RD: *lus ngag sems la dbang bcu bskur*.

And made the aspiration that is naturally, perfectly pure.
Myself, our parents and sentient beings,
All of our wishes were accomplished at once.
Remembering the kindness of the guru again and again,
I repaid the kindness of my parents.

After this song, she was delighted.
“Alala, this is beyond any measure! Now please guide me too,”
she asked, and without effort, she offered many prostrations and
then lost consciousness. When she recovered, her outlook
towards dharma was different from before. Jetsün asked her:
“If you practice dharma, will you be able to meditate?”
“There are other great meditators here, men as well as women.
Why should I not be able to meditate?” she asked. Without any
voluntary effort, her confidence and devotion were born. Jetsün
sang this song to see if he could benefit her mind.²³

I bow at the feet of Lord Marpa from Lhodrak,
Grant your blessing that anguished love toward relatives
may be pacified.
Accept me with compassion that my mind-stream may mix
with dharma.

Listen now, my sister Peta!
Since you were young, you’ve had no perseverance in
dharma.
To think you’ll practice when you are old, what good will
that do?
Not relying on the Jetsün guru,
what good will friendly gurus do?
Not meditating the whispered lineage key instructions,
What good does mere dry rhetoric do?

²³ Song 54.5, TN-Dha: 766, Stagg 2017: 643 (similar).

If you don't recognize your own mind,
What good does lots of training do?
If you don't seize your own place, the unborn,
What good do empty philosophical views do?
If experience doesn't dawn from within,
You will be but a hypocrite with many desires.
If you don't observe the show of interdependence,
You will be but a doubter with a high opinion of yourself.
If bodhicitta and compassion are not born within you,
You will be but a hypocrite with much to clear up.
If you don't think you can become enlightened,
You will say that you are talking dharma, while you are
wickedly striving for wealth.
If you don't work for the benefit of all sentient beings,
The love for your parents is but a cause for samsara.
If you don't practice in accord with the dharma,
You may be a near one, but you become a hated enemy.
People who harm their companions
May seem beautiful or not, but they are of the demon class.
If you don't meditate with devotion and from your heart,
You may seem like an instant meditator but your meditation
will be bad.
If you don't do what is useful or good,
You may seem like a good friend, but you will have many
regrets.
Your sorrow for the later sufferings of our mother
Means that your negativities and obscurations seem to be
purified.

This song benefitted her mind, and after [hearing it] she left
happily. Jetsün enclosed her in retreat and she spontaneously

developed excellent meditation skills. The Lama was pleased. “Her bad worries cleansed her negativities,” he said and sang:²⁴

Listen again, Petama,
If you do not turn away from dharma,
That will become a cause for the ending of bad things.
If you do not say harsh things to people,
You will be seen just like a god.
If you do not have ill will toward others,
Your own merit will flourish.
If you do not have great attachment to this life,
The next life will be happy and pleasant.
When you do not develop vanity and pride,
You’ll attain a pleasant and beautiful body.
If you can sustain your mind’s own nature,
You will quickly attain buddhahood.
If you can stay strictly in retreat without speaking,
You’ll be surrounded by the blessings of the dakinis.
If you do not have the desire for the well-being of the body,
The obscurations of karmic results will be purified.
If you can meditate continuously, until your death,
You’ll be a heroic Victorious One equal to the sky.
If your mind isn’t enwrapped by faults,
You will be received by dakas and dakinis.
If your conduct is in accord with dharma,
the dharmapalas and dakas will protect you.
If you supplicate the guru lord,
You will receive blessings and siddhis.
Understand this and put it into practice.
May you always enjoy bliss, happiness and glory.

²⁴ Song 54.6, TN-Dha: 767, Stagg 2017: 644.

Thus he sang. He gave her many teachings on karma, cause and effect. Peta developed confidence. She said: “If one cannot practise dharma, happiness cannot be obtained.” Thus, she became an excellent Togdenma.

Shamar Khachö Wangpo, Möntsepa, Dochen Rosary

The narrative and songs in the following three biographies – *Clouds of Blessings* by Shamar Khachö Wangpo,²⁵ the episode in Möntsepa’s collection²⁶ and in the Dochen Rosary²⁷ – are very similar. Here, the Bönpos rival Mila by setting up their own ceremony, and Mila defeats a demon who appears. There is a new, longer and more elaborate song, which still has many affinities with the song previously seen in Ngendzong Tönpa’s text and those in Rechungpa’s lineage. The narrative presented in this group of manuscripts is the one Tsangnyön adopted in *Songs*.

Shamar Khachö Wangpo (1: 291-93)

During his stay at the Nyenam Dröphuk, the Jetsün had taken an old Bönpo under his care and given him instructions. Later, the Bönpo fell ill. [To those surrounding him], [the Bönpo] said it would be helpful to invite the Jetsün. The Bönpo’s companions did not want to summon him, so he said: “If you do not invite my Lama, I will commit suicide.”

Then, they invited the Jetsün, and he performed consciousness ejection and a weekly service with the hundred-syllable mantra. The Bönpos also designed a maṇḍala and

²⁵ Zhwa dmar mkha’ spyod dbang po 1978, 1: 291-93.

²⁶ Mon rtse kun dga’ dpal ldan 1970: 162-64.

²⁷ mDo chen rosary fols. 117a-119b.

performed a ritual. The [deceased] Bönpo appeared manifestedly, and all saw him. The Jetsün said:

“Zhiwa Ö, go and take the Bönpo in front of the maṇḍala by the hand and ask him: “When Lama Jetsün gave us both empowerment at Nyenam Dröphuk, what was your secret name and what was my secret name?” ”

Zhiwa Ö did as he was told. The Jetsün came, and as [the ghost] could not withstand his splendour, he fled. The villagers all wondered where he had gone and followed him. When he had passed the village, he transformed into a jackal. He said:

“I am a local demon of Nyenam named Nga ra mi zen.”

The Jetsün caught him once more and bound him with an oath. The Bönpos and all the laypeople obtained faith and touched his feet.

Meanwhile, his sister asked: “Please be kind and perform a weekly service like this for our mother too.” The Jetsün sang:

I bow down to the precious Lama.
Incomparable protector of the beings,
Supreme being Marpa, who has abandoned all errors,
Please grant me your blessings.

Of this vessel, my old mother’s body,
Day and night have I purified its obscurations.
When she left the remains of her illusory body,
And her consciousness was wandering in the *bardo*,
I showed her body as the body of a deity, inseparable
appearance and emptiness.²⁸

²⁸ Zhwa: *lus snang stong dbyer med lha skur bstan*; In both Möntsepa and *Dochen Rosary*: *lus snang srid dbyer med lha skur sgoms*, I meditated her body as the body of a deity, inseparable appearances and possibilities.

Her speech counted mantras of the unexpressible, sound
 and emptiness.
 Her mind became the visualisation of samādhi.
 I cut off the path that leads to wander in the six realms.
 In the maṇḍala of inseparable great bliss
 I gave the four empowerments to the disembodied mind.²⁹
 With the continuous flow of the six pāramitās,
 I washed the stains of avarice and the like.
 I settled her on the path of nondual great bliss.
 I said an aspiration prayer utterly pure by nature.
 In *mahāmudrā*, she developed joy.
 I made tsa-tsas of spontaneously born trikāya;
 I performed a weekly service of the undefiled.
 Indeed, I have repaid our parents' kindness.
 Did you understand this, Petama?

Möntsepa (pp. 162-64) and *Dochen Rosary* (pp. 117a-119b)
 The episodes in both texts are identical.

During his stay at Nyanam Dröphuk, Peta cooked food for
 him. All the Bönpos of that place were jealous and had no
 devotion to the Jetsün. At Nyenam Lashing, one old Bönpo had
 unmeasurable faith in Jetsün. At one point, he was caught by
 illness. At that time, he said to all his family members:
 “There is this yogin with his disciple; invite both of them so
 that he can give me some teachings and a blessing.” The family
 members said:
 “This will hinder our Bönpo vows, as he is the greatest of our
 enemies. What will happen if we invite him?” The Bönpo had
 a daughter, so he said:
 “Bring Khrichungma here.”
 “What is it?” she asked.

²⁹ In the *Dochen Rosary*: *dbang cig* instead of *dbang bzhi*.

“They are not inviting the Lama to whom I am devoted. I have only a short time left to live; therefore, I will commit suicide. Please tell our relatives to let go of this bad talk.”

The girl explained to the relatives that he would commit suicide if they did not invite the Lama. If he committed suicide, it would be a shame for the relatives. So they summoned [the Jetsün].

The Jetsün asked for a *torma*, and they gave him food. The Bönpo asked the Jetsün for instructions on consciousness transference and a weekly ceremony when he died.

“I do not want to wander in saṃsāra,” he said, “Jetsün, please know this!”

He died the following morning. While they were performing the weekly ceremony, they invited the Jetsün. The family made rituals according to Bönpo custom, and a weekly ceremony was performed in Milarepa’s way. Peta, who was serving the Jetsün, also came.³⁰ She went near where the Bönpos performed their weekly service. Near the Bönpos’ maṇḍala, she saw the deceased old Bönpo, greenish in colour. He was eating and drinking a lot of the offerings that were present. All the Bönpos told her:

“Take a look, Peta Gon Kyid. Milarepa despises our dharma method, but we Bönpos catch the dead person manifestedly. Is the dead person present near your maṇḍala? Of course not! This means that our practice is easier to accomplish.” Peta wondered if they could be right. She went near to the Jetsün and said:

“Brother, they have caught the dead Bönpo, he is there.” The Jetsün smiled and said:

“Is that so? Did they catch the Bönpo? Zhiwa Ö, go and pull the Bönpo’s finger and ask him if he remembers what was his secret name, before, when he asked for the profound tantric

³⁰ In the *Dochen Rosary* also Zhiwa Ö is mentioned here.

empowerments from the Jetsün at Nyenam Dröphuk. Then I will also come.”

While the Jetsün was preparing [to go there], [the demon] could not withstand Zhiwa Ö. He felt the danger and, with a loud voice, he fled. All the Bönpos and all the people thought that the deceased person had gone. At one side of the mountain, he transformed into a jackal, while from his mouth [the following words] were spoken:

“I am a local mountain god of Nyenam named Nagpo Mi zan.³¹ I am a demon who takes away life energy. I am not the dead person.” The Jetsün said:

“When I liberate the deceased, I bring them in the rows of the Vidhyādhara Dorje Chang. How do you perform the weekly ceremony?”

Peta was weeping copiously. “Our parents did not receive a similar weekly ceremony,” she sobbed. The Jetsün replied:

“This is the kind of weekly ceremony I performed for our mother.” Mila sang the song of the weekly ceremony for his mother (*ma rgan bdun tshig gyi mgur*).³²

*Second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia*³³

The second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia repeat the same narrative and songs of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, with the difference that in the *Dark/Black Treasury* (DNM-RD) one extra song is added – the one first seen in Ngendzong Tönpa’s biography of Milarepa – and in *A River of Blessings*, before the Ngendzong Tönpa song, the song from the Shamar group is also

³¹ In Möntsepa *Nag po nga ra mi zan*, in *Dochen Rosary: Nag po mi zan*.

³² The song is almost identical to the one in Khachö Wangpo’s text.

³³ DNM-RD 2006: 222-29; Ms-Smith fols. 120b-123b; Ms-India 1: 407-17; Ms-Drepung: 1:346-44; BCG-D 7: 407-16; BCG-Si 1: 429-38; Ms-BL fols. 140a-145a.

inserted. As if to say: we have collected all the songs related to this episode, not only the ones of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. Apart from these two songs, the chapter is identical to *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. The manuscript at the British Library (Ms-BL) follows precisely the version of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, without any additional song.

Tsangnyön Heruka's Collected Songs of Milarepa

The title of the chapter in this work is “The Hook of Compassion for the Dead, and Establishing His Sister Peta in Enlightenment.” *gShin don thugs rje'i lcags kyu dang sring mo pe ta byang chub la bkod pa'i skor*.³⁴

The narrative corresponds to the one included in the Shamar group of manuscripts. Tsangnyön Heruka elaborates further on the episode, adding the anecdote of the rebirth of the Bönpo as a worm under a mound of dung and the subsequent liberation from this dreadful fate. In this way, Tsangnyön Heruka ridicules the Bön doctrine. The songs in Tsangnyön's chapter are identical to the ones in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. This shows that Tsangnyön mixed the narrative of the Shamar group of manuscripts with the songs of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Here comes the new anecdote, not found anywhere else.³⁵

The Jetsün said: “Your dharma shows the path for *Yama's* messenger. But I show the way for those who have died.”

³⁴ TN-Dha: 760-68; Stagg 2017: 637-45.

³⁵ TN-Dha: 762; Stagg 2017: 638.

The relatives of the Bönpo who had died said: “Does the Jetsün see the one who has died? If you can’t see him, how can you show him the path?”

“I see him. Because of the negative karma that he had previously committed, and by lacking just a slight bit of virtue, he has been born as a small, long-bodied bug in the upper valley, under a mound of yellow dried dung. I will now take him to the place of liberation.”

“Then, let us be witness to this so that we may believe you; show us how you take a bug to liberation.”

“Very well, let us proceed,” the Jetsün said.

Then all of the people who were gathered there together went to the mound of dried yellowish dung. First, Milarepa called out the man’s secret name, “I am your guru Milarepa! Come here!” he said. Then out from under the dung came the bug who then coiled up in the Jetsün’s lap and lay there. The Jetsün taught some dharma and then performed transference, ejecting the bug’s consciousness.

The dead body of the bug gave off subtle rays of light that dissolved in the Jetsün’s heart center. After mingling with the Jetsün’s mind for a while, the consciousness of the man became a brilliant glowing white A syllable. It was ejected from the Jetsün’s heart center into space and went higher and higher in the sky. Then he uttered: “The precious Jetsün has placed me in the bliss of liberation. Thank you!” Seeing this, everyone believed what had happened...

COMMENT

Throughout the study of the episode in the different texts, we can identify three different, although similar, song-groups:

(1) the so-called “Ngendzong Tönpa-song”, shared by Ogyenpa, Sangyé Bum, Zhijé Ripa, the Demchok Nyengyü biographies and the summary made by Jangchup Zangpo. It is introduced

again in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia (*Dark/Black Treasury* and *A River of Blessings*).

(2) the so-called “Shamar-song”, shared by Shamar Khachö Wangpo, Möntsepa and Dochen Rosary. It is also re-introduced in *A River of Blessings*, but not in *The Dark/Black Treasury*.

(3) the song group in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and its ‘variant’ versions, shared by all versions of the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia and Tsangnyön Heruka.

Here, the “Ngendzong Tönpa song” is elaborated and divided into two separate songs (54.3 and 54.4), and four new songs are added to the episode. In the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, the earlier songs (the ‘original’ Ngendzong Tönpa and Shamar songs) are repeated once again.

Interestingly, the confrontation between the Bönpos and Jetsün Mila becomes sharper as time passes. In the Shamar group of texts and Tsangnyön’s version, the Bönpos are also building a maṇḍala, competing openly with the Jetsün.³⁶ Surprisingly, this element is not included in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia. Could this be proof that these late compendia, although dating from more or less the same period or even slightly later than Tsangnyön’s work, were indeed independent of his influence?

[ToC](#)

³⁶ For a discussion about Tsangnyön’s sharper antagonism towards Bön, see Chapter 2.

10 – LIFE AND SONGS OF THE GLORIOUS LAUGHING VAJRA

In this chapter, I translate three episodes from the Zhepé Dorje Compendia and compare them to those in Tsangnyön's *Life and Songs* and the *Golden Rosaries* whenever the episode is also narrated there.

I – MEETING PALDARBUM

Tsangnyön Heruka recounts the episode of Jetsün Mila's meeting with the female disciple Paldarbum in Chapter 14 of his *Songs*. The chapter is a paradigm of how Tsangnyön first accentuates the socially disparaged position of women compared to men and then shows they can also become excellent meditators and yoginīs by renouncing their social position. Tsangnyön stresses this disparity by adding songs about the female condition in most chapters dealing with women. Besides the Paldarbum story, this is also evident in Chapters 25 (*Meeting Rechungma*), 29 (*Garland of the Light of Amrita*) and 37 (*Sahle Öd*).¹

Paldarbum's story and her name as one of the Jetsün's female disciples do not appear in the *Golden Rosaries*. We meet her only starting from the first-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia (13th century): all versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* contain a shortened version of what later became Tsangnyön's narrative. Whether her story circulated orally before that time or

¹ See Chapter 2, "Tsangnyön's Attitude Towards Women."

was a creation by the compendium's author(s) is unknown. However, it was preserved intact for over 200 years, with only minor variations.

The *Dark/Black Treasury* and the British Library manuscript follow the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* narrative. In contrast, all versions of *A River of Blessings* expand on the narrative with a long song describing the woes of the female condition and some extra songs in the question-and-answer exchange between Paldarbum and Milarepa, demonstrating the evolution of the story in different texts.

* * *

*The Twelve Great Repa Disciples,*² *The Dark/Black Treasury*
(DNM-RD), *Life and Songs in a British Library manuscript*
(Ms-BL)³

Among all the texts I studied, the 13th century text “Life and Songs of the Glorious Laughing Vajra” (*dPal bzhad pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar 'gur cings dang bcas pa*), also known as “The Twelve Great Repa Disciples” (*Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis*), is of particular significance as it marks the first appearance of Paldarbum's story.

² See Chapter 1b and Song Chart 7.

In the different versions of “The Twelve Great Repa Disciples,” the episode is found on the following pages: Ms-Oxford: 100a-102b; RBC-Pt: 263-269; Ms-Drukpa 146b-150a; Ms-Gansu 24:16-22; Ms-Newark: 132b-136a; Ms-Bordier: 170b-175a; Ms-BDRC: 225b-230b; Ms-Lhasa: 170b-174a. See Song Chart 8. DNM-RD 1(2006, Ziling version) 407-15; Ms-BL ff. 203a-207a.

³ See Song Chart 8. DNM-RD 1(2006, Ziling version) 407-15; Ms-BL ff. 203a-207a.

In the chapter titled *Gung thang lho sgo'i skor*, The Episode at the South Gate of Gungthang,⁴ we read:

Then, the Jetsün proceeded from the South Gate of Gungthang. Many people were gathered there, playing various games. Amidst them, there was a lively noble lady. She asked: “Yogin, where do you come from? Who are your parents and your family?” He replied with the following song. [Here follows song 21.1 from Tsangnyön’s chapter “Meeting Darma Wangchuk,” the first 13 lines explaining his family origin]⁵.

She replied: “O, how wonderful! However, worldly beings like us do not understand this; what do you mean?”

He sang again [Here follows the rest of song 21.1].

Then she replied: “Great! [In the case of us worldly beings] if we do not have children or wealth, we are considered beggars. [By contrast], you did not seem interested in samsaric appearances when you came amongst us.”

He sang in reply: [Here follows song 21.2, about samsaric suffering]⁶.

The lady developed faith. She asked: “Yogin, do you have a dharma lineage?”

He replied with the following songs: song 14.2 from Tsangnyön’s chapter “Meeting Paldarbum,” about his lineage; 14.3, about the gurus he had faith in; 14.4, about empowerments; 14.5, about instructions; 14.6 – about *Chö* practice (*gcod*)⁷

⁴ See Song Chart 7, 15th quality, The quality of greater blessing power.

⁵ TN-Dha: 370; Stagg 2017: 213.

⁶ TN-Dha: 371; Stagg 2017: 215.

⁷ TN-Dha: 306-308; Stagg 2017: 136-138. Stagg 2017: 143-145.

[14.7, about *Phat*, is missing]⁸. Then follow 14.8, about his experiences, and 14.9, about confidence.⁹

After these songs, the lady had great faith. She invited him inside the house and served him. She then asked him how to meditate, offering a song about her lack of time for practice [Tsangnyön's song 14.12].¹⁰ Mila replied with songs 14.14-15-16, about meditation instructions.¹¹

Based on the Lama's instructions, she meditated and developed excellent experiences. Finally, the Lama sang another song of advice about the four things to leave behind [song 14.13, about preparations for future life].¹² Then he said: "Courageous towards dharma and in fear of *samsāra*, you are "the courageous and fearful lady!"¹³ She meditated on the instructions and became a marvellous, outstanding yoginī, holder of the Aural Transmission.

⁸ In Ms-Drukpa (148b) and Ms-Gansu (24:19), in contrast to all the other versions of the Zhepé Dorje Compendia – first as well as second stratum – the instruction on *Phat* is added, as in Tsangnyön's song. Both are late versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. The question arises whether, in these cases, this instruction was included by copying Tsangnyön's text or whether Tsangnyön had copied it from some other, unidentified text.

⁹ TN-Dha: 308-309; Stagg 2017: 139.

¹⁰ TN-Dha: 370 Stagg 2017: 141

¹¹ TN-Dha: 312-14; Stagg 2017: 143-45.

¹² TN-Dha: 311; Stagg 2017: 142.

¹³ *khyod chos la dpa' / 'khor ba la sdar ba'i dpa' sdar 'bum yin* [or: *'khor ba la sdang ba'i dpa' dar (bsdar/sdar) 'bum yin*]. This sentence is the etymological explanation of her name, *dpa' sdar 'bum*. In Ms-Oxford, RBC-Pt, Ms-BDRC and Ms-Lhasa this spelling is kept only at the end of the episode to clarify the meaning of the name, while in song 14.13, the first line of each verse, *a nge nya ma dpal dar 'bum*, has been adapted to the later spelling. The other versions, Ms-Newark, Ms-Bordier, (but also DNM-RD and Ms-BL), keep the spelling *dpa' sdar 'bum* throughout that song. In Ms-Lhasa: *khyod chos la dpa' / 'khor ba la sdar ba'i dpal sdar 'bum*. I think *'bum* does not stand for 100 000 here; it seems to indicate the name of a lady, like Leksebum, Zhigmobum, etc.

As can be seen, the episode is similar to how Tsangnyön Heruka presents it. The few differences between all these and Tsangnyön's versions are the following:

- In the first part of the episode, we find two songs later used by Tsangnyön in another chapter, whereas the first song in Tsangnyön's chapter, addressing the old lady, is missing.
- The question-and-answer exchange between Mila and Paldarbum is identical, except that the stanza about "Phat" is missing.
- Tsangnyön's songs 14.10 and 14.11, in which the lady explains her situation as a woman and Mila's replies, are missing.
- Song 14.13 comes at the end of the episode, whereas Tsangnyön places it before.
- The explanation of the lady's name, *dpa' sdar 'bum*, is missing in Tsangnyön's version, and the name has been changed to *dpal dar 'bum*.

*A River of Blessings*¹⁴

A River of Blessings has a few differences, both in the narrative and the songs.

Then the Jetsün proceeded from the South Gate of Gunthang to ask for alms. He arrived at three plots of cultivated land. In the middle one, there was an old lady called Mother Chökhonma. [The Jetsün] asked: "Hi there, would you give some alms to his yogin?" The old lady replied: "The field to my

¹⁴ See Song Chart 8. Ms-Smith ff. 202a-205a; Ms-India 2: 172-179; Ms-Drepung 2: 28-42; BCG-D 8: 122-40; BCG-Si 2: 670-84.

right belongs to my son, the one to the left to my daughter, and I have to take care of all three.” She gave him three ears of corn she was holding in her hand and said: “I never saw people like you. In summer, you beg for butter and cheese, in winter, you beg for wine.”

“To accumulate merit, please give me something more,” he insisted.

“You bad, stupid beggar! If you have a place where to go, then go!” She threw a handful of ashes in the Jetsün’s face.

He sang the following song to Chökhonma (a song about the old grandma, very similar to 14.1).¹⁵

With this song, he had touched her heart. She said: “You know everything about the way I am! Please sing this song again.” He did so, and she requested: “Please stay here.” He remained there for seven days. Within that time, she meditated on inner heat (*gtum mo*) and turned her mind away from worldly concerns. It is said that she became capable of wearing only a single cloth.

He then went to the village to beg for food. “Please give some food to this yogin,” he asked. “Below the village, there is a benefactress called Sönam Drön. She has great wealth and gives offerings to high Lamas and lowly beggars,” he was told. When the Jetsün went there, Sönam Drön arrived, carrying a child and driving a flock of goats. He said: “I heard that you have accumulated merits in your past lives, and now you have great wealth, and you make offerings to high Lamas and lowly beggars. Could you please offer today’s food to this yogin?”

“Let me carry up these goats first, then I will give you food,” she replied.

“O, benefactress, please forget your affairs and hasten up! I, the yogin, need to go. Please bring me the food first,” he said.

¹⁵ TN-Dha: 303; Stagg 2017: 133.

“I will not ask for any work from you, don’t brag like this!” she replied. “Which is your lineage?” [from here follow the same songs as in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*: 21.1 & 2, 14.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 9]. The lady became faithful, invited him inside the house and provided services.

That night, she invited Leksebum, Zhigmobum, Tsünchung Men, Dorjé Men, Khujuk Men, Zhiwatso and Padma Cham, and they all gathered. They offered a copious ritual feast with meat and *chang* to the Jetsün and his disciples and requested him to stay for seven days. In the evenings, they asked for Dharma teachings. In particular, the lady disciple Paldarbum pleased the Jetsün offering him body, speech and mind, and also some wealth. She thought: “That I have obtained a human body is something rare. To have met such a Precious One is a great fortune. I must ask this Lama for a dharma teaching.” She offered the following request in a song:

O Precious Lama!

O Precious Jetsün!

One, this inferior birth in an inferior body,

Two, the great stinginess of this family of demonesses,

Three, the enormous wrong views of this grasping mind:

Seeing these three I feel sad.

Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.

Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.

Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma instructions.

One, the great burden of getting up first,

Two, being the last to go to bed at the end of the day,

Three, letting life go by in continuous distractions:

Seeing these three I feel sad.

Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.

Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.

Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma instructions.

One, the fruit of this auspicious birth fading and ageing,
Two, the many requirements of this samsaric household,
Three, being crushed by an evil companion's mind:
Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.
Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma instructions.

One, elevated views but coarse behaviour,
Two, high-sounding talk but weak practice,
Three, this constantly busy, dirty rational mind:
Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.
Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma instructions.

One, little resilience and no tenacity,
Two, little intelligence and weak perseverance,
Three, strong tendency to dodge dissatisfaction:
Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.
Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma instructions.

One, losing the splendour of the body one first had,
Two, meanwhile, to be bereft of food and wealth,
Three, finally, being hit by utensils and covered with blame:
Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.

Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma
instructions.

One, on the outside, the flesh becomes dry and wrinkled,
Two, in between, flesh and blood dry up and become weak,
Three, inside, the dried-up ash-coloured radiance becomes
lean:

Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.
Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma
instructions.

One, during the day I am distracted with samsaric work,¹⁶
Two, at night I am distracted in a sleep of stupidity,
Day and night, I am distracted with food and clothing:
Seeing these three I feel sad.
Even though I feel sad, I still do not remember the dharma.
Even when remembering dharma, I postpone it.
Please think of me with kindness and give me dharma
instructions.
Please give me a teaching to become a buddha.
Please give me a teaching to become enlightened.

She asked again: "Precious Lama, please give me meditation
instructions."

He replied: "There is no need to give a meditation instruction.
Those who accumulate provisions cannot focus on meditation,
and you are such a person."

¹⁶ These three lines are included in the song 14.12 in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, TN-Dha: 370; Stagg 2017: 141.

“Please give me some meditation instruction anyway!” she pleaded. He then sang the song of four examples with their meaning, making five. [here follow songs 14.14, 14.15 and 14.16].¹⁷

After this song, the female disciple meditated one-pointedly, but her thoughts went to her worldly occupations. She approached the Lama and told him: “My mind wanders to my obligations in the village.”

“When concentrating only on the dharma, the thought of practising dharma contrasts with having many thoughts about the village. You have to leave everything behind. Let it go!” he said and sang the song of the four things to leave behind [song 14.13].¹⁸ After that, he said: “You are courageous towards dharma and in fear of saṃsāra; you are the courageous and fearful lady.” [*dpa’ sdar ’bum*]. She meditated with zeal and offered the following song of recognition of the True Nature just as it is:

O you Precious Lama!

O Precious Jetsün!

The view: mind's nature, like the sky;

Meditation: uninterrupted, like the ocean;

Conduct: without attachment, like a bee;

The result: self-luminous, like the sun;

Experiences: blissful and luminous, like space;

Realisation: confident, like a mountain;

Knowledge: variegated, like a forest;

All these are magical manifestations of the mind

There is no need to look at the words, only the meaning.

Please give me instructions concentrated on the essence of the meaning.

¹⁷ TN-Dha: 312-14; Stagg 2017: 143-45.

¹⁸ TN-Dha: 311; Stagg 2017: 142.

He replied with the following song:

Raise a flag in the expanse of the blue sky;
Run a horse on top of the snowy mountain;
Build a door above the red rock;
Sow a field in the middle of the ocean;
Invite a guest to the land of *pretas*;
Lead an army into the hell realms.

After this song, the female disciple Paldarbum replied:

This flag I should raise in the expanse of the blue sky,
Are you not afraid it might be severed?
That horse running on top of the snowy mountain,
Are you not afraid it might rip off its reins?
That door built above the red rock,
Are you not afraid the craftsman might fall?
That field that is sown in the ocean,
Are you not afraid its seeds might rot?
That guest who is invited to the *preta* land,
Are you not afraid its good fortune might be cut off?
That army led into the hell realms,
Are you not afraid the commander might get hurt?

The Jetsün replied again:

That flag raised in the expanse of the blue sky
Is the raised flag of a vast and spacious view.
Why fear that flag to be severed?
A yogin is free of hope and fear!

That horse running on top of the snowy mountain
Is the running horse of spontaneity without hindrance,
Why fear its reins might be ripped off?

A yogin is free of hope and fear!

That field that is sown in the depths of the ocean
Is the sown seed of the spontaneously existing Trikāya.
Why fear its seeds might rot?
A yogin is free of hope and fear!

That door built above the red rock
Is the door built with method and wisdom.
Why fear the craftsman might fall?
A yogin is free of hope and fear!

That guest invited to the *preta* land
Is the guest of love and compassion.
Why fear its good fortune might be cut off?
A yogin is free of hope and fear!

That army led into the hell realms
Is the army of the absence of life and death.
Why fear the commander might die?
A yogin is free of hope and fear!

A special samādhi was born in the mind of the female disciple Paldarbum. The unmistakable realisation of *mahāmudrā* arose in her mindstream. From that moment onwards, she saw the Jetsün as the manifestation of a buddha and pleased him always with the triple offerings. This girl and companion received the great Jetsün's oral instructions. Her mind was liberated and she was the main benefactress of the Jetsün. The Jetsün was also pleased. Here ends the exchange of questions and answers with the female disciple Paldarbum.

As can be seen, the version of this chapter in *A River of Blessings* is more elaborated than the other versions, even more so than in Tsangnyön's.

- The narrative frames of the different parts of the episode are far more articulated than in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, including even the names of the persons encountered
- The song to the old lady, similar to the one used by Tsangnyön, is sung at a separate event. It is not directed to Paldarbum's mother-in-law. However, this song seems to have become very popular in the late 15th-early 16th centuries, given that we find variations of it on multiple occasions, none of which is identical to Tsangnyön's choice:
 - In the Dark/Black Treasury (DNM-RD), a similar song is found in a chapter called *a phyi snang ma'i skor* – The Episode of A Grandma.¹⁹
 - That same song is found in Ms-BL, in the chapter *brag dmar spo thon lcam lhan cig skyas pa'i sgron me* – The Episode at Drakmar Pothön with Cham Lhencigkyepai Dronmé
 - Similarly, the song is also present in Ms-Smith and Ms-India, in a chapter titled *'a phyi snang ma dang mgon mo lcam* – the Episode of Grandma Nangmo and Sister Gönmo. What's interesting is that it is repeated twice in both these versions, raising questions about the significance of this repetition and its potential impact on the narrative. We find it also twice in Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si, this time in a chapter called *nus pa che ba'i mgur tshogs* – A Collection of Songs about Greater Abilities.

¹⁹ DNM-RD 1: 360; Ms-BL f. 354b; Ms-Smith f. 175b/176b; Ms-India 2: 68/73; Ms-Drepung 1:515/20; BCG-D 8:55/50; BCG-Si 2: 612/615.

- Moreover, in Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si,²⁰ there is another similar but slightly different song in the chapter *thor bu'i skor* – A Cycle of Song Fragments.
- Last but not least, the same song as the previous one is found in four late versions of “The Twelve Great Repa Disciples,”²¹ in a chapter called *a phyi snang ma'i skor* – The Episode of Grandma Nangmo.
- The main part of the story corresponds to that of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, except for the extension of song 14.12, which includes the rhetoric of the inferiority of women
- The last part of the chapter includes an interesting question-and-answer fragment between Milarepa and Paldarbum.

COMMENT

Considering the above, one gets the impression that the changes seen in the later versions of the Zhepé Dorje Compendia could be related to a changed attitude towards female practitioners: a more vital awareness of the inferior position of ladies in the Tibetan community, be it old ladies or young ones, but also their capacity to reach spiritual development just like men, provided they give up their worldly commitments. That we find these songs in other texts besides Tsangnyön's *Songs* and that these songs are not identical to the ones in his work rules out that they had been copied from one to the other. Rather, it could indicate a “trend” that had developed in Tibetan society or Tibetan literature.

[ToC](#)

²⁰ Ms-Drepung 2: 110; BCG-D 8:217; BCG-Si 2:761.

²¹ Ms-Oxford 118b; RBC-Pt 313; Ms-Drukpa 170b-172b; Ms-Gansu 24:74-76. Although these four versions belong to the first-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, some chapters are added with songs that became famous after the 15th century, proof of the late date of these versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

II – THE EPISODE AT THE ZANGYÜ KITCHEN (BZANG RGYUD PHYAG TSHANG GI SKOR)

In this chapter, I aim to compare and analyse one Zhepé-Dorje-Compendia-episode – The Episode at the Zangyü Kitchen, *bzang rgyud phyag tshang gi skor*–²² with the corresponding Chapter 24 in Tsangnyön Heruka’s *Songs*, “Meeting Shengom Repa.”²³ The focus is on identifying and understanding the differences that emerge from this comparison. First of all, the episode appears in the late versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Oxford+RBC-Pt, Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu), in which new songs circulating in the 14th-15th centuries were included that are not seen in the earlier versions. The absence of this and two more episodes in the other – earlier – versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* indicates that these extra episodes were added later.²⁴

Secondly, in the second stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia, the episode is absent in the manuscript at the British Library (Ms-BL), in the 2006 computerised version of *The Dark/Black Treasury* (DNM-RD-1), and the presumably earlier versions of *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Smith and Ms-India). However, it does appear in the later versions Ms-Drepung, BCG-Drikung and BCG-Sikhron, as well as in the more recent *Dark/Black*

²² Song Chart 7: Ms-Oxford 114a-118b; RBC-Pt 300-13; Ms-Drukpa 172a-170a (some confusion with the page numbers!); Ms-Gansu 24: 59-74;
Song Chart 8: DNM-RD 3 (2013) 546-563; [missing in DNM-RD 2006!]; Ms-Drepung 1:486-98; BCG-D 8: 20-35; BCG-Si 2: 574-87.

²³ Stagg 2017: 247-65.

²⁴ See Chapter 1b.

Treasury versions DNM-RD 2 (2011) and DNM-RD 3 (2013).²⁵ This chronological pattern suggests that all the versions where the episode is found are likely to be dated around the same time or after the publication of Tsangnyön's *Life and Songs*.

The episode starts as follows:

At Zangyü in the western region,²⁶ there was a settlement of rich nomads. A wealthy man called [Tongjé] Mamökhen,²⁷ who had seven sons, had fallen ill. One of the sons went to have a divination done for him. According to the divination prophecy, he would recover if a hundred yaks, a hundred goats and a hundred sheep were slaughtered for ransom. The son gathered the yaks, goats, and sheep from the mountain, and when everything was ready for the slaughter, a grand böñ ritual was performed.

Meanwhile, in Tö Kangchung Gomang,²⁸ Lama Milarepa had been meditating in retreat for six years and seven months, observing silence. That month, on the morning of the eighth day of the waxing moon, four beautiful consorts, emanations of the five classes of *ḍākinīs*, came to him and said: “Yogin, step on the path of this sash (cloth) on the rock and go to Zangyü in the western region. There you will find eight beings with fortunate karma.” They sang:

²⁵ See Song Chart 8. That the 2006 edition of DNM-RD does not include the chapter is surprising. Was this a simple oversight of the compilers or was the chapter added to the later versions for completeness?

²⁶ *sTod bzang rgyud*.

²⁷ [*sTong rje*] *Ma mo khan* (in this case the name *sTong rje* mentioned in Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu and BCG).

²⁸ DNM-RD-3, Ms-Oxford/ RBC-Pt *stod gangs chung sgo mang*; Ms-Drukpa *stod gangs chung sgo mangs*; Ms-Gansu *bod gangs chung sgo mangs*; BCG *stod gong chung sgo mong*.

Ema, yogin observing silence²⁹
 Yogin from Kangchung [Kongchung]³⁰
 You, the solitary lion of Kangchung Gomang
 Brave courageous one,³¹ listen to us.

We four *ḍākinī* sisters gathered here³²
 Come as friends to you, the lion cub,
 This morning, on this instantly spread rug,
 Please step on the path of this cloth on the rock.
 No need for auspicious circumstances or dreams:
 In that nomad land in the Tö region
 You will arrive as soon as the sun rises.
 Go in the mountain light of central Tö.³³

The Lama thought: “I have nothing to do but benefit other beings. Benefitting beings is what I need to do.”

Thus, holding his breath while practising guru-yoga, he set forth on the path of that cloth in the early morning of the eighth day of the month, immersed in the state of mahāyoga. Without any hindrance, he proceeded a full cubit into the air.

²⁹ DNM-RD-3 Ms-Oxford/RBC-Pt, Ms-Gansu *gsung bcad*; Ms-Drukpa *gsung spyad*; in BCG: *gsang spyod*, secret conduct.

³⁰ Ms-Oxford, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu *gangs chung can gyi*; DNM-RD+RBC-Pt *gangs chung yul gyi*; BCG *gong chung can gyi*.

³¹ DNM-RD-3, Ms-Oxford/ RBC-Pt, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, Ms-Drepung and BCG-D *dpa' rtsal can*, in BCG-Si *dpal rtsal can*-glorious.

³² In BCG the *ḍākinīs* are 5,

³³ Ms-Oxford+Ms-Drukpa. *stod yul dbus kyi gsang 'od du gshegs 'tshal*; RBC-Pt + DNM-RD-3: *stod yul dbus kyi gangs 'od du gshegs 'tsal*; Ms-Gansu *stod yul dbus kyi bsrang mdo ru gshegs 'tsal*; Ms-Drepung+BCG *stod yul dbus kyi gang 'od du gshegs 'tsal*.

Along the road, a wolf appeared in the middle of a sheep herd, but with a single finger snap, he transformed the wolf into a five-coloured rainbow and it dissolved. So it is said.

A little later, three crows were picking on the corpse of a rabbit. The Lama threw his acacia *mālā*, and the three crows dissolved into it. So it is said.

To a sheep herder sitting there, the Lama said: “This one here is the Lama who will later show you the present appearances as dharmakāya. Please do not block the luminous aspect.”³⁴ Leave it alone. Know it as pure emptiness, pure clarity and joy.” Thus, the sheep herder was liberated. So it is said.

Then [the Jetsün] proceeded miraculously. The sun came up as soon as he arrived at a meadow in the Dolpo forest. He prayed to his previous masters; an auspicious circumstance was created, and he arrived at Tö Zangyü. There, he met a woman who was fetching water. He asked her if someone among the people could give him provisions. The woman told him: “A rich man called Tongjié Mamokhen, with seven sons, lives in this village. The father has fallen ill, and they are performing a grand bön ritual. You will definitely receive alms if you go there.” The Jetsün left. Taking a piece of cloth with him, he tied his acacia *mālā* around his waist, and held his *bamen*-horn cup. The dogs were chasing him, so he entered quickly.

The central part of the episode is identical to the one in Tsangnyön’s chapter, with a very long song in which Milarepa uses the structure of a Bön ritual to express dharma content.³⁵ The episode ends right after the song,

³⁴ Ms-Oxford *gsal cha ma 'gag*; RBC-Pt.+DNM-RD-3+Ms-Gansu *gsal bya ma 'gag*; Ms-Drukpa *gsal bya ma dgag* BCG-D *gsal bya ma 'ga'*; BCG-Si *gsal stong ma 'gag*.

³⁵ TN-Dha: 403-16; Stagg 2017: 250-63

All eight, father and sons, became followers of Lama Jetsün. They practised at Kangchung Gomang and became eight marvellous holders of Lama Jetsün's Aural Transmission.

* * *

Looking at the content of this episode, the first thing we notice is the place where the episode is happening: here, it is a nomadic settlement in the western region called Zangyü, whereas, in Tsangnyön's case, the central action takes place at Lapuk.

As in Tsangnyön's story, there is a (slightly different) prophecy and a song of the *dākinīs*. These narrative differences, while subtle, hold significant implications for our understanding of the influence of the narratives on each other. There is also a short miraculous encounter with a sheep herder, who receives brief *mahāmudrā* pointing-out instructions and is liberated on the spot. On the contrary, the shepherd in Tsangnyön's version receives more general preliminary instructions and teachings on śamatha, after which he becomes an attendant of the Jetsün named Dziwo Repa/Lugdzi Repa.³⁶ This name seems to be a conflation with another Lugdzi Repa found in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia.³⁷ In the latter case, the shepherd hears Milarepa sing a song in which he tells that only very few people take dharma seriously. Upon hearing the song, he becomes faithful and follows him as his attendant, receiving the name Lugdzi Repa.

³⁶ TN-Dha: 399; Stagg 2017: 248; at first, the shepherd's name is Dziwo Repa, but two lines below, it is Lugdzi Repa, clearly the same person.

³⁷ E.g., Ms-Lhasa 148b, DNM-RD-1 341; Ms-Smith 163b; BCG-Si 548.

The song in the central part of the narrative, identical to the one in Tsangnyön's version, shows the Jetsün as quite accommodating concerning the Bön healing ritual of offering a ransom. However, the song illustrates the path of healing from the illness of ignorance in pure dharma terminology. Even though there is no open criticism regarding the Bön ritual, in this way the superiority of Buddhist dharma versus Bön is shown.

The result of the song is remarkably different: whereas, in the *Zhepé Dorje Compendia*, the father and his sons are converted, go to meditate and become holders of Mila's Nyengyü Transmission, Tsangnyön further elaborates on the difference between Bön and Buddhist dharma, laying words of trust in Buddhist dharma in the mouth of the Bön disciples. In particular, here is what one of the sons, who would become the disciple Shengom Repa, has to say:

Generally, the words and appearances of the genuine dharma and the Bön religion are similar. However, there is a difference in compassion and activity. In particular, when performing the rituals of the Way of Shen, in the end at least one sentient being will be slaughtered. The sources of refuge and objects of veneration are only worldly deities. From doing these practices, at the moment of death, one has no confidence at all and one dies with a sense of fear and terror. Therefore, now, I too will turn from Bön and practice the dharma.³⁸

The least we can say is that the Bön religion is marked out as inferior to Buddhist dharma. In the three chapters dedicated to Mila's relationship with the Bön religion in Tsangnyön's *Songs*

³⁸ TN-Dha: 415; Stagg 2017: 264.

³⁹ Mila's attitude is more intense when compared to the same stories in other collections, ranging from arrogant (Naro Bönchung)⁴⁰ to slightly superior (Shengom Repa)⁴¹ to ridiculing (Chapter 54).⁴²

What does this tell us about the Zhepé Dorje Compendia? As mentioned, the episode in these compendia was clearly of a late origin, around or after the publication of Tsangnyön's *Life and Songs*. Therefore, one could suppose that the chapter had been quickly added to the compendia after reading the Madman's work. However, the fact that the episode in the compendia is somewhat mitigated compared to Tsangnyön's version – a detail we also see in the other episodes dealing with Bön religion – indicates this might not be the case. A more reasonable hypothesis could be that new stories circulating independently in the 14th–16th centuries, possibly linked to guide books to pilgrimage sites such as Tisé and Tsari, were eventually added to the manuscripts. The question of whether there was any influence of Tsangnyön's work on the Zhepé Dorje Compendia thus remains open.

[ToC](#)

³⁹ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ TN-Dha: 376-86; Stagg 2017: 223-32. This chapter is included only in DNM-RD, whereas in *A River of Blessings*, there is but a brief mention in prose of a dispute between Jetsün Mila and Naro Bönchung. See Bock 2024:125-31.

⁴¹ TN-Dha: 399-414; Stagg 2017: 247-65.

⁴² TN-Dha: 778-72; Stagg 2017: 637-47.

III – THE EPISODE AT THE TSIBRI MOUNTAIN IN THE GYAL REGION OF LATÖ (LA STOD RGYAL GYI RTSIB RI’I SKOR)

The episode here analysed is a song cycle titled “The Cycle at Tsbri, in the Gyal Region of Latö” (*la stod rgyal gyi rtsib ri’i skor*). It comes in two late – probably sixteenth century – versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, namely Ms-Drukpa and Ms Gansu.⁴³ I first translate the entire story and then go back, looking for parts of the story described in earlier *Golden Rosary* collections and later works,

⁴³ Ms-Drukpa 165b-167a; Ms-Gansu 24: 41-46. The episode and the songs are not contained in other versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

Yang grong phu lung gi dgon par rje btsun la gdams ngag zhu ba mang du byung bas / rdzing bu rgyan chu mig pa’i dge ’dun rnams kyis sdig pa sog pa’i las byed zer bas / nyin cig bla ma rdzing bu rgyan du ’gro gsung pa la / ’khor kun gyis der mi gshegs par zhu byas pas ma gnang bar / ras chung pa la sogs pa ’khor ’ga’ byas nas phyin nas / sgo ma che ba’i rtsar bsdad tsam na / btsun chung rnams[btsun pa] gro la ’dus pa’i sa nas / btsun chung cig gis sprang po la kham zan skyal bas /rje btsun dpon slob mthong ba dang nang du song nas/btsun pa la ’o skol gyi rgyal sgo’i rtsa na mid la dpon g.yog ’dug byas pas / gnas brtan de na re / brdungs las thong zer nas gza’ mi [bza’ ba] rnams byung ba dang bla ma dgyel nas rtsog gsubs srag ma gtab brdungs pas / brdungs pa’i rjes thams cad dang na tsha rnams nang gi g.nas brtan de la byung ngo / khyod yul gi ston mo rnams bsdus nas de nas bza’ mi dgos zer ba/ da ’dir sdod zer nas / mchod khang du bcug nas sgo la lcags rgyab nas phyin tsa na / bla ma phyir ngos la bzhugs nas ’dug / yang mchod khang du bcug ka ba dang sprel/ lcags du bcug nas bzhag pas kyang phyi na ’dug / yang nang la mi dga’ bar ’dug pa phyir bud zer nas bton pas bla ma dgul ma nus / der yo log nas byung bas kyang dgul g.yo ma nus te / phyir ma bthon pa dang btsun pa kun yid ma ches te / tsug yin dris pa s/ bla ma’i zhal nas / shel sgongs bar do’i sems bzhin du / kun la sgrib med thogs brdugs bral / bzung mi zin cing btang mi ’thengs / skar mda’ lta bu’i spyod ’gros ’di / ma dad sel phyir rngal ’byor ngas / dad log snang ba bsgyur ba yin / da yang spyod pa mi byed do / rang snang shes pa dga’ ba yin / gsung ngo / ngo mtshar ba dang dad par gyur nas / da spyod pa mi mdzad pa ci lags zhus pas / ma dad snang ba bsgyur ba dang / nyams myong gong du bogs ’don dang / ’bras bu ngo sprod byed pa gsum / spyod pa byed pa’i dus yin te/gzhan du de ltar ma yin ces / bla ma rje’i zhal nas gsungs zhes te / de phyin chad nas btsun pa de rnams kyang sdig mi sog par zhabs rtog byed par gyur to /

from the twelfth through the sixteenth century. I end with some comments on how Tsangnyön Heruka renders the episode.

So, let's start with *Ms-Drukpa* and *Ms-Gansu*, the only *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*-versions to contain a song cycle by this name.

During the Jetsün's stay at a monastery in Phulung village, many people came to request oral instructions. They told him that the members of a monk community at the pond of the beautiful spring (*rDzing bu rgyan chu mig pa*) behaved badly and accumulated negative actions. One day, the Lama said he wanted to go there. All those in his entourage told him not to go, but he did not listen. He went there with Rechungpa and some others from the entourage. While they were sitting near the main entryway, some monks were gathering wheat. One young monk, who went to offer food to a beggar, saw the Jetsün and his disciples. He entered the monastery and said to the [other] monks: "Mila and his disciples are near our main entryway." The eldest monk said: "Beat him up and throw him out." Some householders arrived there, and the Lama fell while they beat him up violently. After beating him up, all took him to the elder, who said: "You have collected so much food and drinks from the village; you do not need food. Stay here now!" They put him inside the temple, locked the door with an iron bolt and went outside. However, the Lama was also sitting outside. They brought him inside the temple once more and tied him to a pillar, again bolting the door with iron. Once more, the Lama was outside. "Well then, if you do not like it inside, then get out," they said and tried to throw him out, but they could not move the Lama. Then they all came but still could not move the Lama and did not manage to throw him out. All the monks could not believe it. "Why is this?" they wondered. The Lama sang:⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Songs 44.1 &. 44.2, TN-Dha: 673; Stagg 2017: 542.

Like a crystal ball, like the *bardo*-mind
 Nothing can obscure me; I am free of hindrance.
 I cannot be caught or sent away.
 This way of acting, like a shooting star,
 I, the yogin, performed it to eliminate your absence of
 faith,
 Transforming it into faith and changing your outlook.
 Now, I will act no more.
 I am happy with what I perceive!

Thus he said. They marvelled and were full of faith. “Why will
 you not act anymore?”

To transform the outlook of those without faith,
 To bring enhancement to the experience one has,
 And to point out the fruition, these are the three.
 These are the times to perform such deeds.
 At other times one should not do them, it is taught.
 This is what the lord guru said.

Hereafter, all the monks stopped committing harmful deeds,
 and they served the Lama.

* * *

Later, the Jetsün thought of going on a quest for alms.⁴⁵ He had
 a pot for cooking nettles and a kapala, which he carried in a bag.

⁴⁵ TN-Dha: 167, Quintman 2010: 151 (similar but not exactly same). Ms-Drukpa:
yang rje btsun chen po phyi zas kyi ro snyoms ldom bu la gshegs par dgongs nas
/ zwa tshod pa'i khog ma cig dang / thod phor cig yod pa dra ba'i nang du bcug
ste khur nas spang kha cig la byon pas / dka' thub mdzas pa'i stobs kyis zhabs
'jam por song ba des spang kha cig la 'dred nas dra ba rbab la song /de'i rjes la

His legs were weak due to his ascetic life; when he reached a meadow, he slipped, and his bag fell. He went to catch it, but the pot was broken, and a mass of nettles in the form of the pot was all that remained from inside. He became sad, but at the same time, he was also amazed. As he saw this, he sat down to think about it. At that moment, seven robbers arrived on their way to their place to sow wheat. The head of the robbers said: “It is said: the saliva of a good man hopes for food from a bad one.⁴⁶ Gather some food for this yogin and give it to him.” As soon as his body was refreshed, the head of the robbers said: “Yogin, you may be wise but you are miserly. You are not able to provide food and clothing. Instead, if you come with us, you can have tasty food, wear warm clothes, ride a nice horse as fast as the wind, and wear the three kinds of weapons, sharp as thorns.” The Jetsün then sang:⁴⁷

Within the mountain hermitage, my body,
 Inside the temple, my breast,
 At the top of a triangle, my heart,
 The stallion of mind rides like the wind.

To catch him, what lasso will catch him?
 To tether him, to what stake will I tether him?

*byon pas / khog ma chag nas / nang nas zwa'i khog ma cig byung nas 'dug pas /
 thugs skyo 'am mtshar ba cig byung nas / de la gzigs rtog mdzad kyin bzhugs pa
 dang / jag pa mi bdun byung bas / khong gi rtsar gro btab pa dang / jag dpon na
 re / bzang po'i kha chu la ngan pa'i lto re bya ba yin / rnal 'byor pa 'di la yang
 kham zan bsdus la byin cig zer nas / kham zan byin pas / sku zhos pa tsam du gyur
 jag dpon na re / rnal 'byor pa khyod grung po mig rtsa can cig 'dug pa la / lto
 gos gyis ma khyogs par 'dug pa nged kyi zla la phyin na zas zhim po za gos dron
 po gon nas rta bzang po rlung 'dra ba zhon 'khor gsum tsher ma 'dra ba btags
 pas chog 'deng zer ba la / rje btsun gyis mgur 'di gsungs pa yin (song almost
 identical to Tsangnyön's, except 6 stanzas are missing)*

⁴⁶ Isn't this a beautiful aphorism? It is not found in any of the other texts.

⁴⁷ TN:Dha: 168, Quintman 2010: 151 (similar but not exactly same).

If hungry, what food will I give him?
If thirsty, what drink will I give him?
If cold, in what corral will I board him?

To catch him, I catch with the lasso of non-duality.
To tether him, I tether with the stake of meditative
absorption.
If hungry, I feed him the lama's oral instructions.
If thirsty, I water him at the river of mindfulness.
If cold, I board him at the corral of emptiness.

For saddle and bit I use method and wisdom.
For crupper and girth I strap changeless stability.
I fasten the reins of the life-force subtle winds.
Upon him rides the young child of pristine awareness.
For a helmet he wears the Great Vehicle mind
generation
And dons armor of study, contemplation, and
meditation.
On his back he carries the shield of patience.
In his hands he wields the long spear of the view.
Fixed at his side is the sword of wisdom.
The smooth arrow shaft of the all-basis
Has the warp of non-anger straightened out.
It is fletched with feathers of the Four Immeasurables
And tipped with the arrowhead of sharp wisdom.
Nocked with the profound path of means
In the bow of emptiness,
I draw back an arm-span, the expanse of union,
And fire the arrow across the land.
For targets I hit the faithful,
My prey is the demon of clinging to "I".
Racing up, I arrive at the line of enlightenment.
Racing back, I sever the root of life's round.
Racing such a horse, I win buddhahood.

Thus he sang. The chief of the robbers became faithful. Later, he brought him a big turquoise. Arriving near the Jetsün, he first offered a small gift. The Jetsün said: “Offer me also the turquoise you had intended to give me.” The robber thought: “The yogin does have higher perceptions. I will accept him as the Lama on whom to rely.” He asked Lama Jetsün for the Aural Transmission and [started to] meditate. He became one of the Jetsün’s four heart sons, an outstanding [practitioner] named Drigom Lingarepa from Mus Tamo. [Here ends] the cycle at Gyal gi Tsbri in Latö.⁴⁸

Now let us see what we find about this story in the earlier life stories of Milarepa.

To start with, in *Ngendzong Tönpa*’s 12th century *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra Victory Banner* (on the occasion of Mila’s meeting with Dharmabodhi, in the 12th quality, titled ‘his fame spread in the ten directions of India and Tibet’),⁴⁹ we read:

The people said: “So much noise is made about this one called Milarepa, but there is little substance. He is but one naked shameless man. A real practitioner is someone like Bari Lotsāwa. That one is more amazing! He wears nice *dharma*

⁴⁸ Ms-Drukpa: *zhes gsungs pas / jag dpon de dad par gyur nas / phyis g.yu rdog che ba cig khyer nas / bla ma rje btsun la mjal du byung ste / phyag rten chung ba cig sngon la phul ba dang / rje btsun gyi zhal nas / nga la bsngos pa'i g.yu de yang phul gsungs pas / khong gi rtog pa la rnal 'byor pa mngon shes mnga' bar 'dug pas / nga'i brten rung gi bla ma nyan par 'dug snyam nas / bla ma rje btsun la snyan brgyud mams zhus nas sgoms pas / thugs kyi sras bzhi'i ya bar gyur pa / mus ta mo'i 'bri bsgom gling dga' ras pa bya ba'i ngo mtshar cig byung skad / la stod rgyal gyi rtsibs ri la gsungs so.* in Ms-Drukpa: “This is what he told at Letö (las bstod) Gyal gyi Tsbri ri.”

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4.

garments, gives food and wealth to the people, and speaks pleasant words in the monastery.”⁵⁰ Saying this, they lost faith in the Jetsün. At that point, to clear their loss of faith, the Lama rode a lion into the sky; he emanated in a crystal *stūpa* shining with light and disappeared like a shooting star. He sang:

Like the *bardo* mind, a deer on top of a ridge⁵¹
Nothing can obscure me; I am free of hindrance;
I cannot be caught or sent away.
This way I moved, like a shooting star,
Was to transform your outlook devoid of faith.
Now I shall not act anymore.

In this short fragment, two things become clear. First, the song already existed in the same way as in our episode and Tsangnyön’s *Songs*. Second, even though that is so, the song appears in a different context.

In this life story, there is no mention of a broken pot or meeting Drigom Repa.

Let us now look at how the episode is rendered in Gampopa’s lineage.

I first consider the 12th century life-story by
Gampopa/Khyungtsangpa.⁵²

⁵⁰ Pt: *gling la nga snyan pa brjod*. I take it to stand for *ngag snyan pa brjod*; RD: *gling lang snyan pa brjod*.

⁵¹ Pt & RD: *she’u sgang bar do’i sems bzhin du* (I am not sure of the translation of *she’u sgang*); TN-Dha: 673, song 44.1: *shel gong bar do’i sems bzhin du*; Stagg 2017: 542 (mistranslated: like a crystal ball or a sentient being in the bardo instead of: like a crystal ball, like the bardo-mind). In all the other versions, we find *shel sgong*.

⁵² Quintman 2014a: 193.

At one time, [the monks of] a minor religious center in Gungthang became jealous of the lama's great merit. Intending to disgrace [Milarepa], they invited him [to their center]. When he arrived, the monks said: "Since you are an accomplished master, you will serve as our resident priest." They placed him inside the chapel and drew the lock. When they went outside, the lama was there. Not believing it was him, they looked inside and saw him inside too. The monks understood he was indeed an accomplished master, and they all begged his forgiveness.

In the above fragment, we find a brief description of the episode with the monks, without song. In this life story, the broken pot and meeting Drigom Repa are not mentioned.

Next comes the 13th-century account by *Dönmo Ripa*,⁵³ very close to the above fragment.

Once Mila went to Sodugyenre in Ronphu. Some monks came to him, saying disrespectfully: "Yogin, you have no need of food or clothing. Please be an object of offering for us." So saying, they put him in a shrine and locked the door. But when they went outside, they saw Milarepa, and when they returned to the shrine, he was there as well. Seeing this, they recognized that he was a siddha and they developed deep devotion.

In *Gyalthangpa's* 13th century *Life Story of Mid la ras pa, King of the Jetsüns*,⁵⁴ the episode with the monks becomes more elaborated. The tone is more aggressive. There is one slightly different song. No mention is made of the broken nettle pot or meeting Drigom Repa.

⁵³ Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, 1990: 131.

⁵⁴ Tiso 2014: 230-33.

Then, at that time, among the monks of sNyenam, Gungthang, and elsewhere, hatred arose against the Saint. There was a small *vihāra* named rDzing bu where the monks said to the Saint: “You are someone who adheres to false views.” They struck the cotton-clad *yogins* with rocks and heaped immense abuse on them. One day, the Saint went there and said: “Today I want to go to the *vihāra* at rDzing bu. The Master and three disciples, these four, went. There were many good dogs of that *vihāra*. None of these dogs bothered the Saint and his disciples. They licked them and were happy. Then a monk arrived. The Saint and his disciples were recognized. The monk said: “O deceitful Mila—master with disciples—why have you come to our place? To beat us up?” Just then, ten monks arrived. They all cruelly beat and dragged off the Saint and his disciples, but no harm came to the Saint, not even one thing. Then they said: “Even when beaten nothing happens to these rogues. We’ll tie them up one by one with iron, put them on the pinnacle of the monastery, and leave them there.” They took them all and handcuffed them and left them all, master and disciples, well tied up. Then the Saint said: “*Phat!*” All of them who had been bound, master and disciples, were set free. Their captors, the monks, were now tied up! Then several other monks showed up and said: “This rogue knows a lot!” The rest of the monks came and said: “Tie this rogue up well!” “Throw him off a cliff! Come on!” Each monk went and brought a rope. They tied the Saint up tightly. Fifteen monks tried to drag him down the hill, but they couldn’t move the Saint. They tried everything, but nothing happened; they could not harm him. In that place, on that occasion, the Saint performed a great deed with his power. He pulled outside all the people and objects that were stored inside. He brought the animals that were corralled outside, inside! In short, in this way he turned everything inside-out. All became

terrified and fearful. They made offerings to the Saint. The Saint offered this song:

I, the yogin Milarepa
Possess unobstructed power that cannot be challenged⁵⁵
Yours is a monastery of impure beings
With no devotion, wrong views, and slander
Who capture, tie up, strike, and beat others.
This is not good; I want no part in this and recur to action.
I recur to action to counteract your previous boastful acts.
If you have faith, then offer faithful reverence,
Crush your lack of faith to powder!

A rain of stones fell from space and the abbot and the leaders of that monastery, with all the monks, placed their heads beneath his feet; they became faithful and devoted. These things the Saint did as miracles and displays of magical power. He completely subdued those impious beings after they had captured him, and they became devoted. This is the explanation.

Next comes the episode in the 13th quality, “Great conduct” (*spyod pa che ba’i yon tan*), in the Milarepa *namthars* in Rechungpa’s lineage.

In the 12th-century life story by *Martön Tsultrim Jungné* included in Jangchup Zangpo’s *Demchok Nyengyü* manual, this is how the story goes:⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Gyalthangpa 1973: 251: *nga rnal ’byor pa mid la ras pa la / ma stobs kyi nus pa thogs med yod / ma dag ’gro ba’i dgon pa khyod / mi mos log ltas bkur pa ’debs / brdeg brdung bzung bkyigs ci yang byes / nga mi nyan mi the spyod pa mtshong / nga ma cha yu log spyod pa byed / khyod dad na dad pas gus pa phul / mi dad thal ba rdul du rlog.*

I have partially retranslated the song.

⁵⁶ Byang chub bZang po 1973: 116-17. For attributing the life story to Martön, see Chapter 1a.

At a monastery called Dzingbu Chumig, [the monks] said: “The yogin is a great liar.” They did not have devotion for him. The Lama said: “I want to go to Dzingbu Chumig.” They discussed it and some [disciples] were displeased, but he went. When the Jetsün arrived at the monastery, they told him: “You accomplished one; tell us which is your view.” [Meanwhile], they closed him inside the temple with an iron bolt. The Jetsün then passed through the wall and came outside. [At the same time], he was also sitting inside, so they could not believe it. Then the elder said: “Bring a rope and tie his legs!” They did so, but the elder himself got tied up, and his neck was blocked. They all started to have doubts. The Lama said: “Bring many ropes.” Some grabbed his legs, some pushed him, others said: “Throw him out.” They did all this but could not manage to move him. Then all became faithful and offered him services. He sang:

In a place called Dzingbu Chumig,
You cannot hold me nor send me away.
Like a crystal ball, like the *bardo* mind,
I am free of all veils and obscurations.
Fire does not burn me, and water does not carry me away.
This way of acting, like a tiny star,
I perform it to block the lack of faith.
Now, I will not act anymore.
Thus he sang.

In the 13th-century *Ogyenpa* life story of Milarepa,⁵⁷ here is what we find:

⁵⁷ O rgyan pa 1982: 231.

While he was meditating in Nyanam in Gungthang, the monks fled there to meditate. They also went there especially when there was a feast with ritual offerings. However, these logicians accumulated bad karma. In particular, at Drokha gSum Dzing rdu rGyen Chu mig, they said he was a great nihilist and chased away the *repas* with stones. The Lama heard about this and knew he had to subdue them. Therefore, he said he was going to Dzingbu Gyenchung. His entourage told him: “When our monks went there before, they beat them up and cut off their path; it is not good to go there.” “I will go anyway,” he replied and did so. Four of them went, the Lama and his disciples. When they entered the enclosure, the dogs arrived momentarily but turned back to eat their food. A *torma* bearer came outside. He recognised them and returned inside saying: “Mila has appeared at our enclosure.” The monks picked up sticks and ran out to beat him up. They were throwing stones as big as a rock but could not do anything. They then closed him inside the offering hall, but he came outside in front of the door. Then they brought him to the shrine hall and tied him to a pillar, with his hands tied behind his back. They made a fire below him, bolted the door with iron and left him there. When they went out of the door, he again appeared. Looking inside, they saw that the person who had tied him up was now tied up himself. They all ran towards him, grabbed his hand, pulled and tried to drag him to the cliff, but they did not manage. Then they realised they could not do anything to him. Lama Mila then sang:

Like a crystal ball, like the *bardo* mind,
I am free of obscurations and hindrances.

He added:
You cannot catch me nor send me away.
This way of acting, like a shooting star,
I performed it to eliminate [your] lack of faith.
Now I will not act anymore.

Saying this, he disappeared into the sky, like a shooting star.

The 14th-century *Demchok Nyengyü Biographies*⁵⁸ and *Zhijé Ripa*⁵⁹ tell the story as follows:

14. The quality of great conduct

While the Jetsun was staying in Gungthang, there was a monastic school at Dzingbu Gyengyi Chumig where [the monks] did not behave well, and whenever a *repa* arrived, they chased him away. One day, the Jetsün said he wanted to go there, and although they admonished him to delay it, he did not listen and went. When he arrived at the gate, he met someone carrying a *torma*, who said: “Mila is here.” All yelled and pulled and beat him and the like. Saying: “You do not need food,” they left him inside a house and bolted the door with an iron lock. He came outside, and, as they could not believe it, they brought him to a shrine hall inside the house, tied him to a pillar and bolted the door again, but the one who had bound him was bound himself. Amazed, they said: “If you don’t like it, we will push you.” “No, you won’t,” he replied. They all turned back to push him but did not manage. “How is this?” they wondered. He sang:

Like a crystal ball, the *bardo* mind,
Unobscured and free from any hindrance,
I cannot be caught or sent away.
I have adopted this kind of conduct similar to a shooting
star,
To clear away [your] lack of faith.

⁵⁸ *bDe mchog sñan brgyud biographies*, 1983: 178.

⁵⁹ *Zhi byed ri khrod pa* 2004, 9: 344.

Now, I will not act anymore.

Next, we study the episode in *Shamar Khachö Wangpo's Clouds of Blessings* (14th century).⁶⁰ This is the first source mentioning the episode of the broken nettle pot and Mila's song of explanation – similar in style, but with quite a few differences to the one seen in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.

One day, he met some hunters. At that time, his small pot for cooking nettles broke, and a nettle mass [in the form of the] pot came out of it. The hunters said: "The nettle pot you wanted broke, and [now there is] an unwanted nettle pot. Is the yogin not saddened by this?" He replied:⁶¹

Within the temple in my breast,
At the top of a triangle, my heart,
The stallion of the unsubstantial mind rides like the wind.

⁶⁰ Zhwa dmar mKha' spyod dbang po, "Clouds of Blessings," (*byin rlabs kyi sprin phung*). 2010: 380-82.

⁶¹ Clouds of Blessings: gnas byang khog stod kyi lha khang na / zur gsum snying gi dbu rtse su / sems dngos med kyi rta pho rlung ltar 'phyo / rta 'dzin na zhags pa gang gi 'dzin / ltogs na zas su ci bzhin ster / skom na ltung ba ci zhig blud / 'khyags na ra ba gang gi 'tug / 'dogs na phur pa gang la 'dogs / rta de la sga srab ji 'dra gtod / zhon mkhan gang dang gang gyis byed / 'phros pa gang gi 'phrang la 'bros / rgyug pa gang gi thang la rgyug / snyog pa gang gi dgongs pa snyog / sngan ched la glu la skyor ma myong / de ring tshig la gsal cig 'debs / rta 'dzin na yengs med zhags pas 'dzin / ltogs na phyag chen ljags pa ster / skom na dud rtsi 'i chu rgyun lud / 'phyags na stong nyid ra bar 'jug / 'dogs na ting 'dzin phur pas 'dogs / sems nyid 'od gsal sga srab gtod / zhon mkhan rnal 'byor bdag gis byed / lta ba mihon pa 'i zhwa rmog gyon / shes rab gsum gyi phod dkar btsugs / thos bsam mang po 'i 'jol khrab gyon / ye shes chen po 'i mdung rings gzung / dgra 'khor ba 'i g.yul ngo bzlogs sam snyam / 'bros pa 'khor ba 'i 'dam las 'bros / rgyug pa bde chen thang la rgyug / snyog pa rgyal ba 'i dgongs pa snyog / nga rlung gi rta pho de ltar rgyug /

To catch him, what lasso will catch him?
If hungry, what food will I give him?
If thirsty, what drink will I give him?
If cold, in what corral will I board him?
To tether him, to what stake will I tether him?
Which saddle and bit will I give to this horse?
Which kind of rider will mount him?
If he escapes, to which narrow passage will he flee?
When he gallops, to which plain will he gallop?
Which intention will he strive for?

Before, I never repeated my song,
But now I have to clarify my words.

To catch the horse, I catch him with the lasso of non-
distraction.
If hungry, I feed him *mahāmudrā* instructions.
If thirsty, I water him with the continuous flow of nectar.
If cold, I board him at the corral of emptiness.
To tether him, I tether him with the stake of samadhi.
For saddle and bit, I give him mind's nature and
luminosity.
His rider am I, the yogin.
I don the helmet of the highest view.
I don the white gown of the three wisdoms.
I fasten the reins of plentiful study and contemplation.
I wield the long spear of great primordial wisdom.
I think of repelling the attack of the enemy, saṃsāra:
The mire of saṃsāra is what I try to escape from.
I gallop to the plain of great bliss,
And strive for the intention of the Victorious One.
That is the kind of horse I ride
You patrons, may you stay well!

After he had said this, they all became full of faith.

The episode at the monastery is narrated as follows:⁶²

At the large three-mouth spring in Drin, people often denigrated [the Jetsün]. When he went there with his disciples, they were beaten up and attacked in various ways. They brought him to jail and bolted the door with an iron lock, but as they went outside, he was already outside. They brought him inside again and tied him to a pillar, but the person who had tied him up was tied up in turn. Then, many people pulled and pushed him to bring him outside, but they could not move him even for the slightest bit. Then he sang:

Mind's nature, like a crystal ball,⁶³
Is free of obscurations, free of all suffering.
By catching it, it will not be caught; sending it away will
not succeed.
This way of acting like a shooting star,
I performed it to eliminate [your] lack of faith.
Now, I will act no more

While he proceeded, all had become faithful and offered him many prostrations and circumambulations.

Our next witnesses of the episode are found in the *second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia*. Here, there is no uniformity

⁶² Zhwa 2010: 457-58; 1978: 294 (Rumtek version). In this narrative, there is no mention of monks or a shrine hall (*btsen khang*); instead, those who denigrate are the local people, and they enclose him in a prison (*btson khang*). This interpretation is followed in *A River of Blessings*, but not in Tsangnyön's work.

⁶³ Zhwa: *shel sgong lta bu'i sems nyid de*; this line slightly differs from the other versions where we read *shel sgong bar do'i sems bzhin du*. *A River of Blessings* follows Shamar's version, whereas Tsangnyön follows the earlier version.

among the different versions. We see the first episode, about the monks enclosing the Jetsün, in *A River of Blessings*, but in different song cycles between groups A and B.⁶⁴ It also appears in Ms-BL but not in DNM-RD.

The people from the three-mouths' spring at Drin denigrated Mila in many ways, saying he was a crazy old imposter. The Jetsün and his disciples went there, and they tied him with iron and put him in a shrine hall, but he was outside even before them. Again, they brought him inside and tied him to a pillar with a long chain, but those who had tied him were tied in turn. Many local people tied a rope around him and pulled him, but, like a mountain, they could not move him to carry the burden. Then he said:

Mind's nature, like a crystal ball,
Is free of obscurations, free of all suffering.
By catching it, it will not be caught; sending it away, it will
not go.
This way of acting like a shooting star,
I performed it to eliminate [your] lack of faith.
Now, I will act no more.

After saying this, all the men and women from that place obtained faith in him and offered him excellent services and reverences.

⁶⁴ Regarding the different versions of *A River of Blessings*, see Chapter 1d. In the 14th quality, *brin gyi la so 'i skor*: Ms Smith 169b, Ms-India 2:50. In the 14th quality, *nus pa che ba'i mgur tshogs*, Ms Drepung 534-36; BCG-D 8:78-80; BCG-Si 2:629-31. This second group includes both versions, first Shamar's and then the one in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.

In the manuscript at the British Library, the first fragment (about the monks enclosing him) is narrated almost identically to the one in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.⁶⁵ In a separate song cycle, “The cycle at Tsibri in the Gyal region of Latö” (*La stod rgyal gi rtsib ri'i skor*, same title as Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu),⁶⁶ the second episode, about the broken pot and meeting Drigom Ling Khawa is almost identical to the fragment translated from Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, except that it starts by saying that the Jetsün was meditating at Tsibri in the Gyal region of Latö.

Finally, we arrive at the narrative of these two episodes in *Tsangnyön Heruka*’s work.

Here, we see it is divided into three different fragments:

- The episode at the monastery is elaborated at the beginning of Chapter 44, titled “Likor Charuwa.”⁶⁷ It includes the same two songs as Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.
- The episode of the broken nettle pot is included much earlier, in the *Life of Milarepa*.⁶⁸ Here, we find a new song: the song of the broken pot, found only in this work:

I once had a pot, now I do not.
 This case illustrates every composite thing.
 It exemplifies human bodies of leisure and opportunity.
 This being so, I Mila the yogin
 Will press on my practice without distraction.
 This clay pot so important, the whole of my wealth,
 Becomes my lama in the moment it breaks,

⁶⁵ This first fragment comes in the 13th quality, *Khu byug dban pa rdzong gi skor*, Ms-BL 180b.

⁶⁶ Ms-BL 47a-48a.

⁶⁷ TN-Dha: 672; Stagg 2017: 541-42.

⁶⁸ TN-Dha: 167-69; Quintman 2010: 150-52.

Teaching impermanence, how amazing!

Here, the persons he encounters are hunters instead of robbers. They hear him sing and ask him why he does not lead an everyday worldly life, to which he replies with a song almost identical to the one in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu.

- The last part of the fragment, meeting Drigom Lingkhawa, comes in Chapter 16.⁶⁹ The chapter is introduced as follows:

Once, the Jetsun Milarepa was doing his practice while residing at Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain in Latö. At that time, the leader of a band of bandits, along with several of his henchmen came upon the Jetsun.

Here, the mountain is called Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain instead of Gyal-gyi Tsib Mountain. Mila sings a song of praise to this place, not included in our fragment in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, but included separately (only the song) in the later versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*⁷⁰ and all the second-stratum *Zhepé Dorje Compendia*:

- In *A River of Blessings*, the song of praise comes as the first song in the Khyira Repa chapter,⁷¹ where it is introduced by saying that the Jetsün and two disciples went to meditate in a place called Nyishar/Nyishong, in the south of Gyal gyi Tsibri.

⁶⁹ TN-Dha: 321-22; Stagg 2017: 155-57.

⁷⁰ See Ms-Oxford 124a and RBC Pt 327, in the added cycle of minor songs (*'gur phran*); Ms-Drukpa 291b and Ms-Gansu 25: 45, in the added songs to the cycle of advice before Rechungpa's departure to Central Tibet (*dbus gtad zhal ta'i skor*).

⁷¹ Ms-Smith 153a; Ms India 1: 518; Ms-Drepung 1:433; BCG-D 7:503; BCG-Si 2:523.

- In DNM-RD, it comes after the episode of the bamboo staff,⁷² at the end of the 14th quality, as a separate song of praise to the place.
- In Ms-BL, it comes as an introduction to the Zhiwa Ö story.⁷³ Mila sang the song while meditating at Tsibri with two disciples. There, he had a dream in which a ḍākinī told him he had to go to meet one of his main disciples [Zhiwa Ö].

CONCLUSION

This episode shows how the same content – at least part of it – was transmitted through time, from the 12th through the 16th centuries.

- Our research reveals that the first episode of the evil monks is present in all the *Golden Rosary* texts we examined, albeit with slight variations. It is notably absent in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, except in the two latest versions we scrutinized, Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu. We also find it in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's biography of Milarepa, albeit with a slight difference in the included song. This episode is further scattered in various locations across all the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia versions. This demonstrates how these later compendia incorporate and preserve elements from the earlier *Golden Rosaries* that had been omitted in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.
- The episode of The Broken Pot, a significant addition to the narrative, is not found in the *Golden Rosaries* or the earlier versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. It makes its first appearance in Shamar Khachö Wangpo's life story of Milarepa. Subsequently, it is integrated into the latest versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu) and Ms-BL, but not in the other second-stratum Compendia. This

⁷² DNM-RD 2006: 375.

⁷³ Ms-BL 47.a-48a.

evolution of the narrative underscores the dynamic nature of storytelling and the continuous reinterpretation of Milarepa's life.

- In Tsangnyön Heruka's work, we find both episodes scattered on different occasions. Besides, Tsangnyön adds one extra song, the Song of The Broken Pot. He also changes the name of the Tsibri Mountain to Shri ri, adding a song of praise to the place, which is again found in all the later *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* (inclusive of Ms-Oxford and RBC-Pt) and second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia.

One might think that the added details in the later compendia could be influenced by Tsangnyön Heruka, considering that these were probably composed after Tsangnyön published his work. However, I think this is not the case because we notice that these other compendia did not reproduce exactly what Tsangnyön had written. A more reasonable hypothesis could be that in the 14th–16th centuries, new independently circulating stories were eventually added to the Zhepé Dorje Compendia.

[ToC](#)

11 – INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN INNER WINDS AND OUTER PERCEPTIONS OF NON-HUMAN BEINGS

A Short Explanation Attributed to Lord Barompa [Darma Wangchuk]

Three versions of *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si) contain a captivating addendum attributed to Lord Barompa, a unique inclusion missing in all other versions of the Zhepé Dorje Compendia.¹ Barompa Darma Wangchuk (1127–1199), a direct disciple of Gampopa, is the author of this addendum that sheds light on some of the most intriguing, magical aspects of Mila’s life stories.

Here, I humbly present a provisional translation of the fragment. I ask for your understanding and forgiveness for any possible mistakes, as I am not well-versed in the tantric content.² In the spirit of Barompa himself, I seek the forgiveness of the Lamas and the *Dākinīs* for my attempt to translate this!

¹ Ms-Drepung 2: 367-72; BCG-D (8: 508-13); BCG-Si 2: 1034-37. A Taklung lineage history called *Taklung Religious History – An Ocean of Marvels* (*sTak lung chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtso*) compiled in 1609 by Taklung Ngawang Namgyal (W17276) includes a short life story of Milarepa (pp. 145-58) in which the hindrances Mila encountered – such as attacks of demons and the like – are explained in terms of blockages of the channels, winds and drops, very similar to Barompa’s text. In that text, our first episode is recounted on p. 151, the second, third and fourth on p. 154, and the last on pp. 155-56.

² Some clarification of the episode can be found in Karmapa Rangjung Dorje’s *zab mo nang don*, “The profound Inner Principles,” translated and annotated by Callahan 2014.

By the power of his meditation on the path, the great Jetsün, the powerful yogin Töpagpa, Shu Ananta,³ straightened the channel knots in his body with the quintessence of the winds. Because of the separation of the inner quintessence and the dreg elements, all kinds of visual appearances arose as a result: unfriendly appearances such as armies of gods and demons, friendly appearances such as *ḍākinīs* making pleasant sounds, and, in between these two, all kinds of other visual appearances.⁴ So it is said.

While meditating at the Lingpa-Rock-with-Vulture-Nests,⁵ after the terrifying dusk had fallen, [Mila] heard a scratching noise from a crack in the rock. Then, from amidst the rock came a flash of red light. A red man riding a musk deer, headed by a woman, arrived in front of the light. They circled [Mila] from the left side. The man jabbed him with the elbow and disappeared, who knows where. The woman transformed into a red bitch. She grabbed his left toe, holding it for a long time. At that moment, he heard a song about the spontaneous liberation of obstacles.⁶ He replied [with a song].⁷ As a result of this, he sang the song about the definitive meaning of the

³ In the text: Shu a nan ta; it is probably a misspelt Sanscrit translation for Töpagpa (instead of Shrut Ananda).

⁴ *rJe btsun chen po rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug thos pa dga' shu a nan tas lam sgom stobs kyi lus kyi rtsa bdud mams rlung gi dvangs mas drangs nas / nang kham s dvangs snyigs 'byed pa'i rten 'brel nas / lha 'dre'i dmag byung ba la sogs pa mi mthun pa dang mkha' 'gro mas 'dod yon gyis rol mo la sogs pa byed pa mthun pa dang / bar ma la sogs pa du ma'i mthong snang byung skad de /*

⁵ Tib. *Ling pa'i brag rgod tshang can*. The episode is narrated in Tsangnyön's *Songs* Chapter 4, The Rakshasa Demoness of Lingpa Rock, TN-Dha: 229, Stagg 2017: 43.

⁶ Song 4.2, TN-Dha: 230, Stagg 2017: 45.

⁷ Song 4.3, TN-Dha: 232, Stagg 2017: 48.

appearance-flaring-and-penultimate experiences.⁸ Finally, she disappeared.

Here, the scratching noise is the life wind; the light is the downward-clearing fire; these are experiences of discomfort and harshness. Circling him from the left means that the elements [dhātu, constituents] were gathered from the top of the lalanā [left channel]. That an elbow hit him and the man disappeared means that the energy of the white element from above had gone downwards. Her holding him by the toe means the fire energy had infused [the white element] and was held without leaking. Her becoming invisible means that it had become stable in the lower tip.⁹

* * *

While he was staying at the Lachi pass, meditating in the acacia forest at the mouth of the river, a worldly spirit, a *ḍākinī*,¹⁰ came

⁸ Song 4.9, TN-Dha: 240, Stagg 2017: 56.

⁹ *De yang ling pa'i brag rgod tshang can la bsgoms pa'i tshe / srod 'jigs yol tsam na / brag gseb na bshud pa tser ba cig grag / de nas brag bar na 'od dmar khyug pa zhig byung / de'i sna la mi dmar po gla ba zhon pa zhig sna bud mad cig gis khrid nas g.yon phyogs nas bskor te byung / mi des gru tho gcig brgyab nas gar song cha med du song / bud mad de khyi mo dmar mo gcig tu song nas zhabs g.yon pa'i the 'ong la yun ring bzung / dus der nam mkha' nas bar chad rang grol gyi glu snyan du grags pas lan btab / de la brten nas nyams snang mchad thob gsum gyi nges don mgur du gsungs so/ mthar mi snang bar gyur to / de la bshud pa ni srog gi rlung / 'od ni thur sel gyi me ste / de rnams tsub zin gyi tsub nyams yin pas g.yon nas bskor te byung / zhes pa ni / rkyang ma'i sgo nas kham s' du ba / gru tho gcig brgyab nas gar song cha med du song ces pa ni / steng[stong] gyi dkar cha'i nus pa 'og tu song ba / mthe bong nang nas bzung ba ni / me'i nus pa zhugs pas 'dzag med du bzung ba / mi snang bar gyur ces pa ni / 'og gi sna rtser brten pa yin no.*

¹⁰ This episode is narrated at the end of Tsangnyön's Chapter 27, The Offering of the Khokhom King and the Scrutiny of Tseringma, TN-Dha: 450, Stagg 2017: 306. In Tsangnyön's text, the *ḍākinī* is identified as Tseringma.

and tried to create obstacles. He arrived unabashedly naked and enjoyed a low-class girl. He looked in a silver mirror, and she saw their bodies [Mila's and the girl's] dissolve into the sky. It is said [the *ḍākini*] went back without harming him.

Enjoying a low-class girl means developing the three joys by relying on an inferior object. Looking in a silver mirror means recognising co-emergent joy. Dissolving in the sky means that the three appearances [appearance, flaring and the penultimate] dissolve in luminosity.¹¹

She came back while he was staying at Chonglung Rock.¹² Wearing the clothing of the sun and moon, his head was adorned with a flower garland and his body was smeared with ashes and menstrual blood. He held a parasol in his right hand and a victory banner in the left. Riding on a lion, he proceeded into the sky. Then she saw him vanish. That time also, she went back without finding [the occasion to hurt] him.

¹¹ *La phyi sna yon chu mdor seng ldeng gi nags la bsgom shing bzhugs pa'i dus su / 'jig rten mig[mī] bsgyur gyi mkha' 'gro mas bar chad rtsom du phyin pa'i snang ba la / bag med gcer bur byung nas rigs ngan gyi bu mo la longs spyod pa dngul dkar gyi me long lta / sku lus nam mkhar thim pa zhig mthong / de la ma tshugs par log skad/ de yang rigs ngan gyi bu mo la longs spyod pa ni/ yul dman pa la brten nas dga' ba gsum skyes pa/ me long la lta ba ni/ lhan skyes kyi dga' ba ngos bzung ba/ nam mkhar thim pa snang gsum 'od gsal du thim pa'o.*

¹² This episode follows the previous one, TN-Dha: 450, Stagg 2017: 306. *Yang mchong lung gi brag la bzhugs pa'i tshe phyin pas / nyi zla gos su gyon / me tog gi phreng ba dbu la bcing / lus la thal[thar] chen raktas byugs / g.yas na gdugs / g.yon na rgyal mtshan thogs / seng ge la bcibs nas nam mkhar gshegs / de nas mi snang bar gyur pa zhig mthong nas skabs der ma rnyed pas log skad de / de yang nyi zla gos su gyon pa ni / 'bar 'dzag dbu mar 'dres pa / me tog gi thod ni dvangs ma'i bdud rtsi 'dus pa / g.yas g.yon gyi gdugs dang rgyal mthan ni/ ro rkyang gnyis kyi lung dbu mar 'dus pa / seng ge la bcibs nas nam mkhar gshegs pa ni / dvangs ma spyi gtshug tu gdrang pa / mi snang bar gyur pa ni sgyu lus 'od gsal du thim pa'o.*

Wearing sun and moon as clothing means blazing [heat] and dripping [bodhicitta] had mixed in the central channel. The flowers on his skull indicate that quintessence-nectar had been gathered. The parasol to the right and the victory banner to the left indicate that the rasanā and lalanā [right and left channels] had united in the central channel. Proceeding in the sky while riding a lion means that the quintessence had been brought to the crown of the head. Vanishing means that the illusory body had dissolved into luminosity.

* * *

She came once more during his stay at Chuwar.¹³ That time, she saw him [sitting] in lotus posture on three spears [on a trident?] on an island in the lake, wearing a blazing mass of flames, a venomous snake tied around his skull, his back leaning against the blade of a sword, playing upon the orb of a wish-fulfilling jewel, and swallowing a mountain. As she was taken with doubts, she went back, it is said.

Here, the lake indicates the water-wind; the mass of flames, fire; the sword, air; the mountain, earth; the venomous snake, the space-wind. Sitting in lotus posture on spear points means that the ten winds had united at the lower end of the central

¹³ In Tsangnyön's *Songs*, all three episodes with Tseringma (the above two and this one) are recounted in a song by the *dākinīs*, 29.6, TN-Dha: 485, Stagg 2017: 343. *Yang chu bar na bzhugs pa 'i tshe phyin pas rgya mtsho 'i gling na mdung gsum la dkyil krung bcas / me phung 'bar ba gos su gyon / dug sprul thod du bcings / ral gri 'i so la rgyab gtad pa / yid bzhin nor bu sgong du rtse / ri bo khyur mid du za ba mthong nas the tshom du gyur nas log skad / de yang rgya mtsho ni chu rlung / me dpung me / ral gri rlung / ri bo sa / dug sprul nam mkha 'i rlung / mdung rtse skyil krung bcas pa ni / dbu ma 'i mar sna rlung bcu gcig tu gyur pa / nor bu ni dkar dmar 'bros ded kyi bde ba dbu mar thim pa 'o.*

channel. The jewel means that the pursued fleeting bliss of the white and red [bindus] had dissolved into the central channel.

* * *

Later, in the male dragon year, after midnight on the eighth day of the second summer month, at Chuwar, five terrifying, enormous, rude flesh-eaters (piśaci) assembled all the ghosts of phenomenal existence, the complete eight classes of gods and demons. They showed unpleasant forms, uttered unpleasant sounds and performed hostile magical tricks.¹⁴

As these [appearances] are interconnected with the channels and the winds at the throat cakra, the five piśacis [appeared] by untying the *om lam mam sam tam*¹⁵ channel knots, and the army of gods and demons appeared by untying the channel knots originated from this. Thus, he saw an assembly of yakshas and rakshasas yielding a variety of weapons, extending bodyless hands. They shook plants and forests and agitated the earth, stones, mountains and rocks. The sky changed, the earth trembled, and the like. As the knots untied, the winds entered the channels and the pure and impure [quintessence and dreg] elements of the winds separated. When the elements gathered

¹⁴ This episode is narrated in Tsangnyön's *Collected Songs* in Chapter 28, in the form of a song by Milarepa (song 28.1, TN-Dha: 452, Stagg 2017: 308). That these last two episodes were narrated in song form starting with *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and that both songs were not inserted in Kongtrul's *gdams ngag mdzod*-commentary on the *Tshe rings skor gsum* (see Chapter 1a – Ngendzong Tönpa – and Chapter 12) seems to be another indication that the Tseringma chapters in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* were a reworking of earlier extant texts written by Ngendzong Tönpa and maybe also by Barompa Darma Wangchuk.

¹⁵ For minor differences in the three witnesses, see the syllables between brackets in the transcription below, note 18.

inside,¹⁶ he saw a red, blood-dripping, jackal-faced lady hit the lake. When they entered the central channel, a laughing skeleton-woman lifted Mount Meru into her lap. When the pure aspects/quintessence of the red and white [bindus] separated from the impure/dreg aspect, a lady in the form of the very fearful Lord of Death clashed the sun and the moon together. When the pure aspect of the elements in the minor channels gathered in the central channel, he saw a loud, laughing, coal-black woman throwing planets and stars in a plain. While experiencing melting bliss, a beautiful, smiling girl seduced him. Due to the earth wind, the four directions were surrounded by a pit; due to the fire wind, the sky was filled with fire; due to the water wind, the earth was filled with water; due to the air wind, the four boundary points were protected by giants who uttered terrifying, unpleasant, roaring growls. Then, the energy of the pure and impure bindu increased. Before becoming stable, it increased slightly above, and as a sign that the defiled joy was blocked, the five piśacis from before transformed into the five worldly *ḍākinīs*.¹⁷ They brought a sapphire ladle filled with gayal yoghurt and laid out a vast array of offerings. Donating [to Mila] various kinds of

¹⁶ *Khams rnams nang du bsdus pas*. See Stagg 2017: 308, last note: “Gathering the constituents [or dhatus] of vital energy refers to yogic energetic practices. Wherever visualization is focused, the vital energy gathers there. Through this kind of practice, the vital energy currents are said to gather and then enter, dwell, and finally dissolve in the particular chakra upon which one is focused. In ultimate yogic practice, the energies enter and dissolve into the central channel, discursive thought is arrested, and the experience of nonconceptual bliss-emptiness occurs.” (Kongtrul 2007: 391).

¹⁷ This last part of the episode is narrated in Tsangnyön’s Chapter 29, TN-Dha: 468, Stagg 2017: 326.

ordinary accomplishments, they requested him how to develop the supreme enlightenment mind.¹⁸

* * *

Lord Barompa [writes]: “Here I explained some particular visions in the deeds of the Jetsün [mentioned] in his biography, that is to say, how, through the interconnections of the inner essence of the winds inside him, the yogin Mila experienced

¹⁸ *Yang chu bar na chu pho 'brug gi lo dbyar zla ra ba 'i tshes brgyad kyi nam gung yol tsam na / 'jigs shing mi bsrün pa 'i sha za chen mo lngas / snang srid kyi lha ma srin sde brgyad lha 'dre thams cad 'tshogs nas mi sdug pa 'i gzugs dang / mi snyan pa 'i ngag dang / mi 'tshams pa 'i cho 'phrul sna tshogs bstan pa de dag kyang / mgrin pa 'i rtsa rlung gyi rten 'brel yin te / om lam mam sam tam [om lam lam sam tam/om lam mam pam tam] gi rtsa mdud grol ba las/sha za ma lnga / de las skyes pa 'i rtsa mdud grol ba las / lha 'dre 'i dmag tshogs gnod sbyin dang /srin po 'i tshogs mtshon cha sna tshogs thogs pa / gzugs med lag pa brkyang pa/ rtsi shing nags tshal 'gul ba / sa rdo ri brag rgod pa / gnam 'gyur ba / sa gyo ba la sogs par snang ba / mdud pa grol nas rtsa nang du rlung zhugs pa 'i rlung kham s kyi dvangs snyigs 'byed pa la / kham s rnams nang du bsdus pas na/dmar mo khrag 'dzag lce spyang gdong / rgya mtsho tub kyis 'debs pa mthong /dbu mar 'jug pa ni / keng rus bzhad pa 'i bud mad kyis ri rab pang du 'debs pa dang / dkar dmar gyi dvangs snyigs 'byed pa ni / rab 'jigs gshin rje 'i gzugs can mas / nyi zla cha long rdeb pa dang / rtsa bran gyi kham s rnams dvangs ma dbu mar 'dus pa na / sol ba 'i bud mad rgad gyangs can / gza' skar thang la 'bebs pa dang / de la zhu bde nyams su myong bas na / mdzes shing 'dzum pa 'i bu mos bslu brid byed pa dang / sa rlung las phyogs bzhi 'obs kyis bskor ba de / me rlung nam mkha' me yis 'grigs pa dang / chu 'i rlung las sa gzhi chu yis 'khengs pa dang / rlung gi rlung las mtshams bzhi gyad kyis bsrung ba dang / yi ge rnams 'jig pas mi snyan pa 'i nga ro grogs pa la sogs pa rnams so / yang thig le dvangs snyigs stobs 'phel ba / cung zad gyen du 'phel zhing brtan 'dod pa 'i sngon du / zag bcas kyi dga' ba 'gags pa 'i rtags la / sngar gyi sha za lnga po 'jig rten gyi d'akki ma lngar gyur nas / ba man gyi zho mu men gyi skyogs gang drangs/ mchod pa rgya chen po bshams / thun mong gi dngos grub sna re phul nas byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa zhus so//*

non-human beings outwardly. May the Lamas and the *Ḍākinīs* forgive me for writing this.”¹⁹

[ToC](#)

¹⁹ *rJe 'ba' brom pas / rje btsun gyi rnam thar mdzad pa'i nang nas / rnal 'byor mi la'i nang rlung bcud kyi rten 'brel las / phyi mi ma yin gyi 'char sgo sogs kyi bshad pa snang ba zur du phyung nas / 'di bris bla ma mkha' 'gros bzod par mdzod//*

12 – THE TSERINGMA CHAPTERS AND THEIR COLOPHONS

From a literary perspective, the chapters featuring the dialogues between Milarepa and the five Tseringma sisters in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs* (Chapters 28-31) stand out as a unique element within his text. Van Tuyl¹ considered them "an old document integrated into the *Mi la ras pa'i mgur 'bum*." The present study reveals that Tsangnyön seems to have entirely integrated these chapters from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. The chapters are marked with colophons that credit Ngendzong Tönpa and Repa Zhiwa Ö as the authors, adding to their significance.

The Tseringma chapters are not extensively narrated in the *Golden Rosary* life stories of Milarepa. In Ngendzong Tönpa's *Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner*,² there is no mention of the Tashi Tseringma episodes, and neither is there in the life stories of Milarepa in Rechungpa's lineage. However, in Ngendzong Tönpa's biography by Dampa Rechen and Götsang Repa, there is mention of him writing these episodes:

Zhiwa Ö had received teachings from Jomo Tashi Tseringma that [Mila] had not taught to any human being: "The Three Tseringma Cycles: Liberation from the Narrow Paths of the Intermediate States," three unknown cycles" (*Tshe rings skor gsum / bar do 'phrang sgrol / ma grags skor gsum*). According to the words of Zhiwa Ö [referred to him] at the forest Om Chung Pal, the venerable Ngendzong Tönpa composed these in

¹ Van Tuyl 1975: 23-36.

² See Chapter 4.

beautiful verses. Three times [he?/they?] had asked the great Jetsün [Mila] to review the text before [Mila] finally accepted.³

In the lineages descending from Gampopa, three *namthars* mention these chapters:

- Dönmo Ripa mentions the episode recounted in Tsangnyön's Chapter 29, about the illness of Tashi Tseringma and its causes, without including any song.⁴
- Gyalthangpa narrates the first episode – Tsangnyön's Chapter 28 about the attack of the army of demons. He also gives a few verse lines of songs contained in this and the next chapter.⁵
- Sangyé Bum only mentions that there is a story with songs, where Mila binds the ladies under oath at Menlung Chuwar.⁶

The long Tseringma song cycles first appear in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. This compendium bears a colophon stating that:

This Life [of Mi la ras pa] has been written down for the benefit of worthy meditators, by/in the words of/ the twelve great *repa* sons such as Ngendzong Tönpa Bhodhirādza and the others.

In this short essay, I examine the colophons of the four chapters in the various Zhepé Dorje Compendia and compare them with Tsangnyön's. By checking all versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum *Zhepé Dorje*

³ See Chapter 1a.

⁴ Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen 2006: 139-41.

⁵ Gyalthangpa 1973: 241-44, Tiso 2014: 222-26. Songs 28.2-3-4-55 and 29.3.

⁶ Sangyé Bum 1975 1: 201.

Compendia, some differences among the texts come to light that bring the suspicion that these full-blown episodes might not be the original work of Ngendzong Tönpa described above by Dampa Rechen.

Quintman translates the colophons of these four chapters in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.⁷ Comparison these colophons with those in other recently found versions of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*,⁸ we see they are identical, except for a few minor differences. The *Black Treasury* in Rangjung Dorje's Collected Works and the Life-and-Songs-of-Milarepa manuscript at the British Library also bear identical colophons. By contrast, in *A River of Blessings*, the following differences appear.

- The first Tseringma Chapter (28), “The Garland of an Array of Pearls” (*mu tig gi phreng ba*), in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* is attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa alone. The colophon first states him as the author. Then follows a lengthy extension in which the author (Ngendzong Tönpa) says the narrative was sealed by Mila's command and should be kept secret. It is noteworthy that a very similar colophon

⁷ Quintman 2014a: 199-202. He also gives the Wylie transliteration.

⁸ For the different versions of the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje compendia (*Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings* and a British Library manuscript) see Blancke 2024. This colophon is found on the following pages: Ms-Oxford 129a; RBC-Pt 344; Ms-Drukpa 182b; Ms-Gansu 24: 92; Ms-Newark 162b; Ms-Bordier 206a; Ms-BDRC 269a; Ms-Lhasa 202b, DNM-RD-2006 514; Ms-BL 248b.

constitutes the final *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*’ colophon!⁹ Regarding the differences among the texts:

- In group A of *A River of Blessings* (Ms- Smith and Ms-India), the four Tseringma episodes are not considered as different chapters – they bear a single end title, “The Main Cycles of Tashi Tseringma”¹⁰ – and there is no colophon at the end of the text corresponding to the first and second chapters.
- In group B of *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si),¹¹ the episode is attributed to both Ngendzong Tönpa and Repa Zhiwa Ö. The lengthy extension is missing.
- In Tsangnyön’s *Songs*,¹² the colophon is brief, similar to the first part in the *Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. There is a slight variation in the title: *mu tig rgyan gyi phreng ba*. As we will see below, Tsangnyön places the lengthy part of the first-episode colophon at the end of the third Tseringma chapter.

- The colophon of the second chapter (29), “Questions and Answers [regarding motivation], Garland of Nectar Light”,¹³

⁹ Quintman 2014a: 203.

¹⁰ Tib. *bkra shis tshe ring ma’i skor te che ba’o*, Ms-Smith 253a, Ms-India 2: 342.

¹¹ Ms-Drepung 2:131; BCG-D 8: 240; BCG-Si 2: 780. *rje ras pa chen po mtshan brjod par dka’ ba’i dpal bzhad pa rdo rje dang / ’jig rten mig bsgyur gyi mkha’ ’gro ma lnga’i zhus lan snyan ngag mu tig gi phreng ba zhes bya ba / ngan rdzong ston pa bo dhe ra tsa dang / ras pa zhi ba ’od gnyis kyis yi ger bkod pa rdzogs so*.

¹² TN-Dha: 467; Stagg 2017: 323.

¹³ Tib. [*sems bskyed*] *dris lan bdud rtsi ’od kyi phreng ba*. Quintman 2014a: 201. Ms-Oxford 136b; RBC-Pt 365; Ms-Drukpa 196a; Ms-Gansu 24:113; Ms-Newark 174b; Ms-Bordier 219a; Ms-BDRC 285b; Ms-Lhasa 214a; Ms-Drepung 2: 154;

– except for the compendia in group A of *A River of Blessings*, without colophon – is similar in all versions, including Tsangnyön’s. Interestingly, according to this colophon, Repa Zhiwa Ö met the visibly manifest Tashi Tseringma and verified with her [the song exchange between the Jetsün and the five Ḍākinīs regarding the development of the supreme-path motivation]. Afterwards, he met the Jetsün three times and received his approval [instead of Ngendzong Tönpa, or both of them]. Later, Ngendzong Tönpa and the yogin Zhiwa Ö discussed the meaning of [the Jetsün’s] extraordinary speech,¹⁴ without adding or subtracting anything, without over- or under-statement, and put it into well-arranged writing.

- The third Tseringma chapter’s colophon is brief.¹⁵ It explains the exchange between the Jetsün and the Ḍākinīs regarding

BCG-D 8: 264; BCG-Si 2:800; DNM-RD-2006: 538; Ms-BL: 261a. TN-Dha: 489; Stag 2017: 346.

¹⁴ Tib. *rang dga’ ma yin pa’i gsung don rnams*; in RBC-Pt and DNM-RD *rang ‘ga’*, ‘extraordinary’. In Ms Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, this part of the sentence is eliminated and two sentences are added: *ma ‘ongs pa’i gang zag skal pa dang ldan pa ‘ga’ dang ‘ga’ tsam gyis don du zhus pa’o / dag cing gtan la yang phab bo*, “They discussed it for the benefit of some future fortunate beings, ascertaining that it was right.” This formulation corresponds more or less to Tsangnyön’s version.

In group B of *A River of Blessings*, the part of Zhiwa Ö meeting Tseringma and asking the Jetsün’s permission is missing. The colophon is shorter: after stating the title, it jumps directly to Ngendzong Tönpa and Zhiwa Ö’s discussion and composition.

¹⁵ Quintman 2014a: 202; Ms-Oxford 144b; RBC-Pt 389; Ms-Drukpa 211b; Ms-Gansu 24: 135; Ms-Newark 187b; Ms-Bordier 235a; Ms-BDRC 305a; Ms-Lhasa 227b; Ms-Smith 151b; Ms-India 2: 337; Ms-Drepung 2: 180; BCG-D 8: 293;

the *bardo*. The chapter is titled '*phrang sgrol gnad kyi bar do*, "The key points for liberation from the narrow paths of the bardo"¹⁶ and is said to have been put into writing by both Ngendzong Tönpa Bodheratsa and Zhuyé Repa Zhiwa Ö. Most versions are identical, except for the following:

- In group A of *A River of Blessings*, the colophon ends like the other versions, without mentioning the authors.
- In group B of *A River of Blessings*, the same colophon, after giving the title '*phrang sgrol gnad kyi bar do*, adds another title: *mu tig gi rgyan phreng zhes bya ba*.
- Tsangnyön first gives the short colophon of group A, without the authors' names. He ends the colophon with the name *mgur chu gser gyi phreng ba*, a title not found anywhere else. *mGur chu* meaning 'the base of a stupa,' literally the title would be "Garland of the Golden Stupa-

BCG-Si 2: 825; DNM-RD 2006: 567; Ms-BL 275b; TN-Dha: 515; Stagg 2017: 373.

¹⁶ This expression, '*phrang sgrol gnad kyi bar do*, in other instances, is called *bar do gnad kyi 'phrang sgrol*. Both expressions are used in the Zhepé Dorje Compendia, in Yangönpa's text (see below, note 26) and in Tsangnyön's *Songs*. It is not used in the two doctrinal *bardo* texts translated in Chapter 13. Kongtrül (see below) does not use this expression either, except when concluding the third episode with the following words: '*di'i don rgyas par chos drug gi bar do'i khrid dang / khyad par rgyal ba yang dgon pas mdzad pa'i bar do 'phrang sgrol gyi gzhung lhan thabs dang bcas pa rnams las shes par bya'o*.

"The extensive meaning of this can be found in the *bardo* instructions in the Six Teachings and Gyalwa Yangönpa's extensive textual tradition on the *bardo 'phrang sgrol* and its extension. (the latter two Yangönpa texts are called *bar do 'phrang sgrol gnad kyi gdams pa* (e.g., 1973: 341-526) and *bar do 'phrang sgrol gyi lhan thabs* (e.g., 1973: 527-614).

Base.”¹⁷ As mentioned above, at this point Tsangnyön inserts the long colophon found after the first episode, attributing the chapter to both *repas*, adding that they offered these notes as a respectful service.¹⁸

- The fourth colophon is almost identical in all versions.¹⁹ Titled “Garland of Clouds of Bliss-emptiness Wisdom” (*bde stong ye shes sprin gyi phreng ba*), it is attributed to “The worthy ones known as Ngendzong Tönpa Bodheratsa and Repa Zhiwa Ö.” It is said that, after offering a ritual feast and a maṇḍala and making supplications, they put the text into writing.

—In Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, after this colophon, the lengthy part of the first colophon is once more repeated and it closes with the title *mu tig phreng ba*.

—All versions of *A River of Blessings*, after the same colophon as the others, add the following closing sentence to the four chapters:²⁰ “These are the main among all the Tashi Tseringma cycles.”

¹⁷ According to Yongey Mingyur rinpoché, *mgur chu* should be read as *mgul chu*, “Golden Necklace Garland” (personal communication).

¹⁸ Tib. *rje mnyam pa med pa'i rnal 'byor pa chen po ras kyi na bza' can dang / mtshan ldan gyi phyag rgya ma bkra shis tshe ring ma spun lnga'i zhus lan du gnang ba / 'phrang sgröl gnad kyi bar do las / slad nas ras pa rnam gnyis kyis bka' bgro bar mdzad de / mchan zhabs tog tu phul ba rdzogs so.*

¹⁹ Ms-Oxford 145b; RBC-Pt 392; Ms-Drukpa 213b; Ms-Gansu 24:138; Ms-Newark 189b; Ms-Bordier 237b; Ms-BDRC 308a; Ms-Lhasa 229b; Ms-Smith 253a; Ms-India 2: 342; Ms-Drepung 2: 185; BCG-D 8: 298; BCG-Si: 2: 830; DNM-RD 2006: 571; Ms-BL 277b; TN-Dha: 520; Stagg 2017: 381.

²⁰ Tib. *de thams cad bkra shis tshe ring ma'i skor te skor che ba'o.*

- In *The Black Treasury*, the episode ends with: “All these are the cycles regarding Tashi Tseringma.”
- Tsangnyön also uses this colophon. After the title, he adds:²¹

The two brother *repas*, having made a request and offering a mandala, were happily granted permission [to write this down].

SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA

For these dharma cycles of Tseringma, the command seal is the Glorious Shepa Dorje, the one who taught them. The secret seal is the requester, the five dakini sisters. The two samaya seals are the compilers, Acharya Bodhiraja and Repa Shiwa Ö. By placing there three seals, this wondrous and supreme dharma is thus completed.

These full-blown song cycles are not found in other life and song stories of Milarepa. They are missing in the 14th century *Golden Rosaries* in Rechungpa’s lineage, such as the Demchok Nyengyü biographies or Zhijé Repa’s *Illuminating Lamp of Sun and Moon Beams* (completed in 1381). Tseringma is only mentioned among the beings the Jetsün subdued in these biographies. In Zhijé Ripa’s work,²² in a list of Mila’s most famous songs, there is mention of a few song cycles contained

²¹ TN-Dha: 520; Stagg 2017: 381. Tib. *ras pa mched gnyis kyis mandal phul nas zhus pas dgyes bzhin gnang ba sa ma ya rgya rgya rgya / tshe ring ma’i chos skor rnams la mchad pa po dpal bzhad pa rdo rje’i bka’ rgya / zhu pa po mkha’ ’gro mched lnga’i gsang ba’i rgya / sdud pa po a tsa rya bo dhi rā dza dang / ras pa zhi ba ’od gnyis kyi dam tshig gi rgya ste / rgya rim pa gsum gyis bdab pa’i chos ngo mthar smad du byung ba rdzogs so.*

²² See Chapter 8.

in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* but he might have learned about these cycles from the Second Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings* (1350–1405).²³ The latter dedicates 20 pages to Mila's meetings with Tseringma. He recounts the episodes and cites a fair number of songs (mostly just a few verse lines, but also some complete songs).²⁴ He seemingly based these on *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. However, he does not mention Ngendzong Tönpa, Zhiwa Ö, or the colophons.

It's important to note that the Tseringma episodes, while primarily found in the life stories of Milarepa, are also partially recounted in other texts. This partial recounting adds a layer of complexity to the narrative, as it provides different perspectives and interpretations of the episodes.

- Group B of *A River of Blessings* (Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si), includes a short addendum by Barompa Darma Wangchuk (1127–1199), discussed above, in Chapter 11.²⁵ However, Barompa only describes a few episodes, concentrating on the yogic aspect of Mila's encounters, without any songs.
- Yangönpa (*rGyal ba Yang dgon pa*, 1213–1258) recounts these episodes in his *History of Liberation from the Narrow Paths of the Intermediate States: Answers to Questions of*

²³ Zhwa dmar mKha' spyod dbang po 2010: 401-22.

²⁴ See Song Chart 6.

²⁵ Ms-Drepung 2: 367-72; BCG-D (8: 508-13); BCG-Si 2: 1034-37. See the translation in Chapter 11, *Interconnections between Inner Winds and Outer Perceptions of Non-human Beings*, by Lord Barompa Darma Wangchuk.

Tseringma (*Bar do 'phrangs grol gyi lo rgyus tshe ring ma'i zhus lan*).²⁶ In the first episode of his text – Tsangnyön's Chapter 28 – he reiterates the same explanations as the ones mentioned by Barompa. He then narrates the episode as we know it from Tsangnyön's work. There are no songs; the text only mentions “Then he sang,” and for each song, there is an interlinear addition of the first verse line.²⁷ Next, he explains the second, third and fourth incident of Barompa's text, in a way similar to the latter.²⁸ After, he describes Chapter 29.²⁹ Then follows a detailed narrative of Tseringma's illness and the explanations on the intermediate states³⁰ (as in Tsangnyön's Chapter 30). He concludes the stories by saying that the *dākinīs* offered the four joys to Mila. However, the chapter on *karmamudrā* in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* – Tsangnyön's Chapter 31 – is not mentioned by Yangönpa

²⁶ In: *Collected Writings of rgyal ba yang dgon pa rgyal mtshan dpal* 1984, 2: 29-46. [in another version, published at Darjeeling (1973: 615-53), the title is *Bar do 'phrangs grol gyi lo rgyus gsal ba bzugs so*]. This text is part of one of Yangönpa's three mountain-teaching cycles (*ri chos skor gsum*). See Sernesi 2022: 484-86 on the *History of the Mountain Teachings*.

²⁷ These interlinear additions are probably from later times; the additions are missing in the Darjeeling version (1973). The following songs of Chapter 28 are mentioned: 28.2-3-4-5 (TN-Dha: 452-54-57-61; Stagg 308-11-14-18)

²⁸ Chapter 11. Besides the explanations of the outer experiences due to the development of the vajra body, Yangönpa also includes references to the stages on the path (e.g., *ro gcig ma rtogs / spros bral thar thug pa ro gcig tu 'pho kha yin*).

²⁹ Here, songs 29.2-3-5-6 are mentioned, TN-Dha: 469-72-81-84; Stagg 326-30-39-42.

³⁰ Identical as in Ms-Oxford fol. 143b, TN-Dha: 512-14, and Stagg 2017: 371-72. Here, songs 30. 2-3-4-6 are mentioned, TN-Dha: 496-99, 504-10; Stagg 354-57-62-69.

(nor by Kongtrül). None of the colophons are included, and Ngendzong Tönpa or Zhiwa Ö are not mentioned.

- A *Taklung Religious History – An Ocean of Marvels* (*sTak lung chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtso*)³¹ compiled in 1609 by Taklung Ngawang Namgyal, includes a short life story of Milarepa in which the hindrances Mila encountered – such as attacks of demons and the like – are explained in terms of blockages of the channels, winds and drops, very similar to Barompa's text. He recounts the episode narrated in Tsangnyön's Chapter 28.³²
- In the *Treasury of Oral Instructions* (*gDams ngag mdzod*) Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé ('*Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas*, 1813–1899) comments on "The textual tradition of the three Tseringma cycles" (*Tshe ring skor gsum gyi gzhung*).³³ He divides the text into three "question-and-answer dialogues" (*zhus lan*) between Mila and Tseringma. In the first dialogue, concerning Mila's attitude towards the threats of the demons who had come to harm him, Kongtrül includes Tsangnyön's songs 28.4 and 28.6.³⁴ The second dialogue, in which Mila bestows teachings on karma, cause and effect, bodhicitta and relative and absolute truth, includes

³¹ *sTag lung chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*, 145-58.(W17276).

³² Ibidem 155-56.

³³ dPal mkhor lo bde mchog ngam rdzong snyan brgyud kyi man ngag rtsa ba tshe ring skor gsum gyi gzhung. In *gDams ngag mdzod* 1971, Marpa Kagyu 8: 104-120.

³⁴ In "Garland of an Array of Pearls" (*Mu tig rgyan gyi phreng ba*), Tsangnyön's songs 28.4 and 28.6; e.g., Ms-Oxford fols. 126b and 128b; TN-Dha: 457 and 465; Stagg 2017: 315 (part of the song); he then jumps to Tsangnyön's commentary (Stagg p. 320) and part of the song on p. 321.(he leaves out the introductory verses to the songs).

song 29.4 and part of 29.5.³⁵ The third dialogue contains the song of six types of intermediate states – song 30.5 –with the commentary on it.³⁶ Kongtrül leaves out most of the narrative and the *ḍākinīs*’ songs. He concentrates exclusively on the doctrinal aspect of the questions and answers. He omits the “garland” titles from *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*. He ends the text as follows:³⁷

Thus, these three vajra teachings, known as “The three Tseringma cycles,” extracting the nectar of the meaning of the ultimate sūtra and secret mantra instructions, show the complete unmistakable circumstances of the path to awakening for a being. The first cycle shows the ordinary path, particularly the intended meaning of *mahāmudrā* and its enhancement through secret conduct. The second shows the gradual path for the three kinds of persons, the oral

³⁵ In “Garland of the Light of Amrita” (*bDud rtsi ’od kyi phreng ba*), e.g., Ms-Oxford fols. 132a and 134a; TN-Dha: 475 and 481; Stagg 2017: 330 and 334.

³⁶ In “Garland of Golden Stupas” (*mGur chu gser gyi phreng ba*), e.g., Ms-Oxford fols. 142a and 143b; TN-Dha: 507 and 512; Stagg 2017: 366 and 371.

³⁷ Tib. *de ltar tshe rings skor gsum du grags pa’i rdo rje’i gsung gsum ’di rnams mdo sngags kyi gdams pa mtha’ dag gi don gyi bcud phyungs te / gang zag gcig ’tshang rgya ba’i lam gyi cha rkyen tshang ba ma nor bar bstan pa yin te / skor dang pos lam thun mong pa dang / khyad par phyag rgya chen po’i dgongs don / bogs ’don gsang spyod dang bcas pa bstan / gnyis pas bstan pa yongs rdzogs gi gdams ngag skyes bu gsum gyi lam rim dang / dpal me tri pa’i bzhed pa ltar dbu ma zung ’jug rab tu mi gnas pa’i dgongs pa bstan / gsum pa mthar thug rdo rje theg pa bla med kyi lam gnad thun mongs ma yin pa bsre ’pho gnad kyi mtshams byor bar do rnam pa drug gi sgo nas bstan pa yin la / ’di rnams las ’phros te / gdams ngag nā ro chos drug la rgyes par ras chung snyan brgyud / ’bring po ngam rdzogs [ngam rdzong!] pa’am zhi ba ’od kyi bsnyan brgyud / bsdus pa dwags po snyan brgyud gsum du grags pa’i lam ’bring po’i chos skor rnams byung ba yin pas / rgyes par de dag gi gzhung dang man ngag gi yi ge las shes par bya’o.*

instructions of the complete doctrine, and, following the view of the glorious Maitrīpa, the utterly non-dwelling unified *madhyamaka* intent. The third shows the essence of the ultimate unsurpassable *vajrayāna* path, based on the practice of the six *bardos*, the essence of the extraordinary merging and transference [practices]. These irradiate from the oral instructions of the Six Teachings of Nāropa. They are known as three paths: the extensive one – the Rechung Nyengyü; the intermediate one – the Ngendzong Nyengyü; and the abbreviated one – the Dakpo Nyengyü. The [present song cycles] come from the dharma cycles of the intermediate path. They can be known extensively from the textual tradition and the words of the pith instructions.

- The *Drikung Kagyü Great Dharma Treasury* (*'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mDzod chen mo*)³⁸ includes three unknown cycles of the Aural Transmission (*sNyan brgyud ma grags skor gsum*) that also contain questions from Tseringma to Milarepa. In the first one, “The Precious Light Garland” (*Rin po che 'od kyi phreng ba*, pp. 3-11), Mila explains the refuge and bodhicitta vows. In the second, “The Wish-fulfilling Gem Garland” (*Yid bzhin nor bu'i phreng ba*, pp. 13-39), Tseringma asks about the Secret Mantra paths of ripening and liberation. Both texts are attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa. The third cycle, “The Garland of Pearls: Questions and Answers regarding the Intermediate States” (*Bar do zhus lan mu tig gi phreng ba*, pp. 40-71) is attributed to Götsang Repa’s oldest *repa* disciple (*rGod phrug ras pa snying po*). Without entering into detail about the latter three texts, it is interesting to note that the “garland” titles used

³⁸ *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* 2004, 61: 3-71. Although the first two cycles are attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa, I suspect these to be posterior due to their scholastic content.

here, which are very similar to – and partially overlap – the titles in the Tseringma chapters in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* and Tsangnyön's *Songs*, are not used by Kongtrül nor by Yangönpa.

Conclusion:

From the above, we learn that the Tseringma episodes, although not included in the early *Golden Rosary* collections, were known from the early times. This is evidenced by Barompa's account of the first instances of Mila's encounters with Tseringma, as detailed in Chapter 11. Another proof is found in Ngendzong Tönpa's biography, which records his transcription of these episodes. However, the episodes in their extensive form were only committed to writing during the era of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, likely in the early thirteenth century. Yangönpa's reference to the songs further confirms the existence of *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* during that period. In Chapter 1a, I explain why Ngendzong Tönpa is unlikely to be the author of these extensive stories, particularly due to the stark contrast in writing style between these chapters and his other texts. This essay further supports this argument by meticulously analysing the discrepancies in the chapter colophons and considering later works that do not attribute these episodes to Ngendzong Tönpa. Therefore, I propose that these intricate Tseringma episodes may be a reworking of an original text by Ngendzong Tönpa.

[ToC](#)

13 – MILA’S INSTRUCTIONS ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATES

This chapter contains a translation of two doctrinal texts regarding the intermediate states attributed to Jetsün Milarepa.

The first text, included in the Ngendzong Aural Transmission collections (*Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud*), is titled “Nondual Self Arising Instructions on Mahāmudrā – Illuminating Primordial Wisdom – and Instructions on the Intermediate States.”¹ The text is attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa, who is said to have collected Mila’s words. As indicated in the title, it comprises instructions on *mahāmudrā* and instructions on the intermediate states. Here, I offer the translation of the second part.

The second text, included in the manuals of the Rechung Aural Transmission (*Ras chung snyan brgyud*), is titled “Profound Instructions Pointing Out the Intermediate States for Reaching the End of the Path with the Mind.”² Said to be an oral instruction from Milarepa to Rechungpa, Jangchup Zangpo and Jamgön Kongtrül attribute it to Milarepa. In contrast, Pema Karpo (Padma dkar po, 1527–1592) attributes it to Zhang Lotsāwa (Zhang lo tsā ba Grub pa dpal, † 1237). Unlike the first text, the second one contains only the *bardo* instructions, whereas the *mahāmudrā* instructions are redacted in a separate text.

These texts are of great interest as they not only illustrate the theories on the intermediate states at the time of Milarepa, but also show the evolution of instructions over time. From

¹ *gNyis med rang 'byung gi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed dang bar do'i gdams pa.*

² *bDe mchog snyan brgyud kyi lam blo nas gcod pa bardo ngo sprod kyi gdams ngag zab mo.* See also Tiso, 2019.

comparing the two, first of all, we see a few differences in terminology due to the lineage in which the teachings were transmitted. Secondly, it is also noteworthy that the instructions have become more elaborate over time.

The doctrinal content of both texts is partially expressed in one of the song cycles in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*, titled '*phrang sgrol gnad kyi bar do*, "The key points for liberation from the narrow paths of the *bardos*."³ Tsangnyön Heruka inserts this song cycle verbatim in his *Songs*, in Chapter 30, "The Five Tseringma Sisters' Investigation: Golden Garland of Stupas." It includes a song by Mila to the Tseringma sisters (30.5), which Mila later explains in prose.⁴

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Caroline McAuley for her invaluable contribution in revising the English version of my original Italian translation.

From The "Aural Transmission of Ngendzong", Instructions on the Intermediate States

Three versions of this text are studied here, two of which – DK & Pt – are modern editions based on copies of a manuscript recovered from the Drepung Nechu Lhakhang.⁵ The text is relatively short.

³ The expression '*phrang sgrol gnad kyi bardo* is sometimes given as *bar do gnad kyi 'phrang sgrol*, *bar do 'phrang sgrol*, or *gnad kyi 'phrang sgrol*. See Chapter 12.

⁴ Stagg, C., 2017: 366-73. Song 30.5 is on pp. 367-68, the explanation on pp.371-73.

⁵ *gNyis med rang 'byung gi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po ye shes gsal byed dang bar do'i gdams pa*.

I bow down to the Precious Lama.

There are three [aspects of] oral instruction on the intermediate states for identifying primordial wisdom:

- (1) the intermediate states according to the embodiment⁶
- (2) signs of certainty in the intermediate states
- (3) the results after the intermediate states have been pointed out

(1) The intermediate state according to the kind of embodiment, has three [aspects]: the intermediate state between birth and death, the intermediate state in dreams, and the intermediate state of becoming.

The intermediate state between birth and death refers to the interval between taking birth from one's mother until death; [in this state] one has a karmically matured body.

From the moment one goes to sleep until one wakes up, [one experiences] the intermediate state of sleep. [In this state,] one has a body of habitual tendencies.

From the moment breathing stops until one is born in another body, [one experiences] the intermediate state of becoming. [In this state,] one has a mental body.

This explains [the first point] the intermediate state according to the kind of embodiment.

DK=in 'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo – *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud smad cha* 64: 569-73.

Pt=in dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe snying zhib 'jug khang – *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud kyi skor*, 2011, 11: 319-22.

Bir=in *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud kyi skor*, 1985: 246-51.

⁶ DK: *lus ldan bzhi* should be read as *lus ldan gzhi*, as in the Bir and Pt versions.

(2) The signs of certainty in the intermediate states are threefold: when one has gained the inner experience of co-emergence,⁷ as an outer sign, dreams manifest as illusions; as an inner sign, one obtains power over channels, winds and drops (*nāḍī, prāṇa, bindu*); as a secret sign, the primordial wisdom of unification (*zung 'jug gi ye shes*) shines forth without effort.

(3) The results after the intermediate states have been pointed out are threefold: from birth to death, [one recognises] the intermediate state between a previous and later [instant of] consciousness; in dreams, [one recognises] the intermediate state between a previous and later dream image; in becoming, [one recognises] the intermediate state at the moment of death.

From birth to death, the [instruction on the] intermediate state between an earlier and later [moment of] consciousness is two-fold: pointing out the intermediate state with an example and the actual intermediate state that has been pointed out.

This is the example for pointing out the intermediate state: in the period after the summer clouds and mists have disappeared and before the winter winds and storms arise, when, in the morning at sunrise, one looks from above a high mountain, a naturally pure, luminous sky shines forth without obstructions, unchanging. With this example, the actual intermediate state [that has to be recognised] is pointed out, as if the Buddha were pointing his finger at it. And where is this? It is between a previous and later [moment of] consciousness: when an earlier thought has ceased, one should not keep track of the past. As

⁷ DK, Bir, Pt: *nang du lhan cig skyes pa nyams su blangs pas*; note this terminology is not present in the next text.

long as the later moment of consciousness has not arrived, one should not go to welcome what is not yet born.⁸ Between both a previous and later moment of consciousness lies one instant of inseparable co-emergent primordial wisdom. It is unexpressible, innate, and does not need to be meditated upon. One should meditate quietly, recognising this reality.

Meditating in this way, three kinds of experiences appear: the aspect of luminosity, without anything obscuring it, the essence of unbiased emptiness and the experience of unconditioned bliss. These three arise in a completely perfect way, as the essence of an unadulterated meditative state.

Practising this way, the empty essence shines forth as dharmakāya; the blissful experience shines forth as sambhogakāya; the luminous appearance shines forth as nirmānakāya; these three inseparably together [arise] as svabhavikakāya, great bliss untainted by the faults of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

The dream state, the intermediate state between a previous and later dream image, has to be learned from the oral instructions on dreaming.

The intermediate state of becoming, at the moment of death, has three aspects: [individuals of] superior abilities will identify the luminosity; [individuals with] intermediate abilities will identify the illusory body; ordinary [individuals] will be able to direct their consciousness to a special place.

Those with superior abilities [have to realise] two [things] to identify luminosity: how to block the appearances on the path and identify the dharmakāya luminosity. The method to block the appearances on the path is as follows: the eye-sense-power

⁸ DK, Pt: *ma skyes pa de gdong mi bsu*; Bir: *ma skyes pa de sdong mi bsu*.

subsides into the visible forms. In the same way, the nose-sense-power subsides in the smells, the ear-sense-power into sounds, and the tongue-sense-power into tastes. The sense of touch degenerates. The earth element subsides into the water element, the water element into the fire element, the fire element into the air element, and the air element into consciousness. When the air element subsides into consciousness, there follow four instants during which the signs of appearance, increase and the like emerge. When consciousness subsides into luminosity, the two bindus meet at the heart level by their interdependent relation. The primordial wisdom of co-emergent bliss-emptiness⁹ shines forth effortlessly as luminous dharmakayā.

When individuals with superior abilities identify this luminosity, they simultaneously obtain realisation, liberation, and awakening. There is no reason why the intermediate state of becoming should arise.

For individuals with intermediate abilities who identify the illusory body but not the innate luminosity, the appearances of the intermediate state will arise. In this case, there are impure illusory bodies and pure illusory bodies. However, this has to be learned from oral instructions.

Individuals with normal abilities should remember loving kindness and compassion to direct their consciousness to a particular object, and, again and again, they should aspire to enter the womb of a specific vessel, such as a royal family and the like. In the same way as a cannonball that reaches wherever one intends it to, in the next life, they will become enlightened.

⁹ *bde stong lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes.*

This [instruction] has been written down to avoid oblivion. If I have displeased the *ḍākinīs* and the dharma protectors, I pray they bear with me, as this was not what I wished.

Ngendzong Tönpa wrote down these words of the great Jetsün [Milarepa].

From the “Aural Transmission of Saṃvara” : Profound Instructions Pointing out the Intermediate States to reach the the end of the path with the Mind¹⁰

The text here translated is included in three manuals: the “Aural Transmission Lineage focussed on Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravarahī” (*bDe mchog mkha’ ’gro sñan rgyud*, Ras chung sñan rgyud) compiled by Jangchup Zangpo (Byang chub bzang po, 16th century);¹¹ the “Old Manuscripts of the Vajravarahī Aural Transmission Lineage” (*mKha’ ’gro snyan brgyud kyi yig rnying*) compiled by Pema Karpo (1527–1592);¹² and in the fifth volume of the “Treasury of Oral Instructions” (*gDams ngag*

¹⁰ *bDe mchog snyan brgyud kyi lam blo nas gcod pa bardo ngo sprod kyi gdams ngag zab mo*. Spelling differences in the title: *lam blo nas spyod pa/ lam blo nas gcod pa*. In Pt the title is *snyan brgyud las bar do blo chod kyi gdams pa*. In the expression, ‘*lam blo nas gcod pa*’, *lam* = the path; *blo nas* stands for *sems nas*: one reaches the end of the path by recognising the mind through the instructions (oral explanation by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoché). See also Callahan 2023: 191n23, who opts for the translation “Arriving at the end of the path through recollection” based on Pema Karpo’s explanation, according to which “arriving through recollection” means that when we simply recollect the instructions in our minds, at that time, through that refreshing of our memory, we arrive at the end of the path.

¹¹ BZ= Byang chub bzang po: *bDe mchog mkha’ ’gro sñan rgyud* (Ras chung sñan rgyud) 1973, 2: 481-97.

¹² PK= Padma dkar po *mKha’ ’gro snyan brgyud kyi yig rnying*, 1982, 2: 99-128.

mdzod) by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yes, 1813–1899).¹³ Two modern editions copied from a manuscript recovered from the Drepung Nechu Lhakhang are also studied: the first one, in the 2004 Drikung Kagyü Chödzö Chenmo,¹⁴ and the second, in a 2011 book-form edition by the Paltsek publishing house.¹⁵ Said to be an oral instruction from Milarepa to Rechungpa, Jangchup Zangpo, Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye and the modern editions attribute the text directly to Milarepa. In contrast, Pema Karpo attributes it to Zhang Lotsāwa (Zhang lo tsā ba Grub pa dpal, † 1237), which seems more likely.

My translation is based on examining these five witnesses, with notes indicating the differences among the versions. Comparing this text with the previous one attributed to Ngendzong Tönpa, we see that, although the core instructions are identical, many new elements have been added through time.

* * *

Namo Guru Deva Ḍākinī

The instructions pointing out the intermediate states with which one reaches the end of the path with the mind are threefold :

- (1) the intermediate states according to the embodiment
- (2) signs of certainty in the intermediate states
- (3) the results of pointing out the intermediate states

¹³ JK= 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *gDams ngag mdzod*, 1971, 5: 344-59.

¹⁴ DK= Ras chung snyan brgyud, *sNyan brgyud las bar do blo chod kyi gdams pa bzugs so*, 2004, 60: 163-86.

¹⁵ Pt= *Ras chung snyan brgyud skor* 2011, 4: 367-85.

(1) The intermediate state in three types of embodiment

In the intermediate state of appearances, from birth to death, one has a body of flesh and blood, ripened [from past *karma*]. From birth to death, a long life can last one *kalpa*; a short life can mean death arrives immediately after birth. Both are “intermediate states between birth and death.”¹⁶ During this interval, one should practise the union of the development and completion stages.

In the intermediate state of dreaming, [the result of] habitual tendencies, one has an oniric body of habitual tendencies. From the moment of falling asleep until waking up, a long dream can last one *kalpa*; in a short dream, one wakes up immediately. Both are “intermediate states of dreaming.”¹⁷ During this interval, one should practise [lucid] dreaming and luminosity.

In the intermediate light-and-shade state of becoming, one has a mental body. If the period between death and rebirth is long, it could last one *kalpa*; if short, one could take a new body immediately. Both are “intermediate states of becoming.”¹⁸ One should practise the union of illusory body and luminosity.

(2) Signs of certainty in the intermediate states

For ordinary individuals who have trained their minds with sacred commitments¹⁹ and meditation on the *bardo* instructions, the sign that they will awaken to buddhahood in the *bardo* is being able to manipulate their dreams²⁰ [during dream yoga] in

¹⁶ The last three sentences are missing in BZ.

¹⁷ The last three sentences are missing in BZ.

¹⁸ The last three sentences are missing in BZ.

¹⁹ *dam tshig gis*; in Pt & DK: *tshig gis*.

²⁰ JK & DK: *rmi lam spel sbyangs*; PK: *rmi lam la spel sbyangs*; Pt: *rmi lam dpe la sbyangs*.

this life. As an outer sign, appearances manifest as dreams or illusions.

For those with moderate abilities who have trained their minds with meditation, the sign that they will awaken to buddhahood at the moment of death is being able to practise the development and completion stages during their dreams and recognising luminosity during their sleep. As an inner sign, they obtain dominion over the channels, winds and drops (*nāḍī, prāṇa, bindu*).

For superior individuals who have obtained full mastery of the ultimate, the signs that they will be liberated and awaken to buddhahood in this life consist in realising the indivisibility of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and fully comprehending the union of the two truths. As a secret sign, the defilements manifest as primordial wisdom. Moreover, the dharmakāya – luminosity by nature, in which all mental elaborations have subsided – shines forth, bringing to extinction the veils of ignorance. Through familiarisation with compassion, the saṃbhogakāya adorned with the attributes of beauty manifests to teach Dharma to bodhisattvas residing on the various stages. If aspiration prayers are pure, the nirmāṇakāya manifests; if impure, the appearance of a being in [one of] the six conditioned realms manifests.

(3) The results of pointing out the intermediate states

- The intermediate states [of individuals] with three [levels of] abilities²¹
- Three phases, with three types of *bardo*
- Mergings in the three *bardo* paths

²¹ JK: *dbang po gsum gyi bar do*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *dbang po sku gsum gyi bar do*: “the bardo of the three *kāyas* [according to] the capacities [of the individuals].”

- *The intermediate states for beings with three [levels of] abilities*

Those with superior abilities [experience] the intermediate states from birth to death (*skye shi'i bar do*).²²

Those with moderate abilities [experience] the intermediate state of being escorted and welcomed.²³

Those with normal abilities [experience] the intermediate state of entering a womb.²⁴

Superior individuals will know the [following] three intermediate states between birth and death:

The intermediate state between a previous and later [instant of] consciousness has two aspects: pointing out the intermediate state with an example and the meaning of the intermediate state thus pointed out.

First, the sky is used as an example to point out the real meaning of the intermediate state – the intermediate state of ultimate reality (*chos nyid bar do*).

[However, when we say] “sky” [this can have] five aspects. It can be:

A cloudless blue sky, or

A changing, multi-coloured, cloudy sky (both are not the sky of ultimate reality)

²² Pt & DK: *skye shi shes pa snga phyi'i bar do*, “the intermediate state between birth and death, between an earlier and later [moment of] consciousness.”

²³ Pt & DK: *rmi lam dran pa snga phyi'i bar do*, “the intermediate state of dreaming, between earlier and later dream images.”

²⁴ Pt & DK: *srid pa 'chi ka ma'i bar do*, “the intermediate state of becoming, at the moment of dying.”

A sky showing different shapes, such as caves, openings, etc.

Sky can be a name²⁵ given to a female or a male.

An ornamental sky [in a painting], with linings of vanishing threads.²⁶

None of these are the sky of ultimate reality.²⁷

Then, what is [the sky] indicating [ultimate reality]?

In the early morning on full moon days in the second winter month, between the sunrise on top of the mountains and when it becomes hot, the celestial space appears luminous and crystal clear. In that lapse of time, ultimate reality is naturally present to all beings in the six realms, for a [period of] time depending [on their capacities].²⁸ For those with superior abilities, it manifests for three hours, for those with intermediate abilities for two hours, for those with normal abilities for one hour.²⁹ However, those who do not possess these instructions will not identify it.

²⁵ In Tibetan *Nam mkha'* can be a personal name.

²⁶ Tib. JK: *rgyan nam mkha' ban bun gyi skud pas bres pa*; BZ: *brgyan nam mkha' ri mo la sogs pa ste*: as an ornament, the sky can be like a painting; PK, Pt & DK: *rgyan nam mkha' ban bun gyi skud pas bris pa*: as an ornament, the sky can be painted with evanescent threads.

²⁷ Tib. JK, PK, Pt & DK: *de rnams chos nyid kyi nam mkha' ma yin*; in BZ: *de rnams bar do ngo sprod dpe'i chos nyid bar do ma yin no*: these are not the intermediate state of ultimate reality pointed out through an example.

²⁸ Tib. JK: *dus der rigs drug thams cad la chos nyid rang bzhin gyis gnas pa dus gsum gyi rten 'brel gyis*; BZ, PK, Pt & DK: *dus der rigs drug thams cad la chos nyid rang bzhin gyi[s] rnam par dag pa dus kyi rten 'brel gyi[s] dbang po rabs la chu tshod gsum etc.*

²⁹ Tib. “*chu tshod*: in modern times this is one hour; in ancient times it indicated twenty-four minutes.” (Tony Duff, *The Illuminator Dictionary*). Thus, in our text, it would be approximately one and a half hours, one hour, and twenty-four minutes.

Or else, in the period between summer and winter, when the rains and clouds and mist have cleared all the dust, before the arrival of winter storms, a clear sky manifests naturally. At that time, there is no appearance or non-appearance, shape, colour or size.

These are examples indicating the intermediate state of ultimate reality. One needs to learn from the oral instructions how to practise the meaning of the ultimate reality pointed out with the example of the sky.

Secondly, [how] the real meaning of the intermediate state is pointed out.

In all the *sūtras* and *tantras* it is said that all beings possess the essence of buddha nature, but as it is naturally hidden, they do not understand it as their essence. Even though the siddhas say: “Consider mind as the sky³⁰ and all phenomena as the expanse of the sky,” [from the example] one does not get certainty about what is called “buddha”. However, it is not that [the example] does not fully identify the intent of the Buddha, the intermediate state of ultimate reality.³¹ Rather, it is to be considered like a finger indicating: the intermediate state of ultimate reality, the buddha, is [like this].

And where is this [to be found]? It is [to be found] in between a previous and later [instant of] consciousness:³² when the previous [moment of] consciousness is finished, one should not

³⁰ Pt & DK: *sems can ni nam mkha' lta bur bzung bya ste* “Consider sentient beings as the sky.”

³¹ Tib. JK & DK: *des na sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa chos nyid kyi bar do tsir gyis zin pa 'di min pa med*; PK, BZ & Pt: *ngos tsir gyis zin pa med*.

³² Tib. JK: *shes pa sa spyi gnyis kyi bar du*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *shes pa snga spyi gnyis kyi bar du*.

follow its tracks. As long as the future [moment of] consciousness is not yet born, one should not anticipate it. In between these two – the previous and later [instants of] consciousness – [lies] the consciousness of the present moment. It does not rely on anything. It is free from mentally elaborated thoughts, inexpressible, and cannot be shown by an example. This [consciousness] is pointed out as the unborn dharmakāya.³³ Rest in it. Do not get distracted from it, [remaining] without any thought of resting or not resting. In the interval free of thoughts about past and future, meditate this consciousness, this essence,³⁴ for short periods but many times, to avoid the arising of thoughts – the petty thieves, demons of meditation. Untouched by previous and later,³⁵ it is ‘in between’. Being without any support, it is ‘in between’. Not relying on anything, it is ‘in between’. Since it is free from the dualistic mind formulating thoughts, it is called ‘in between’. Thus, in this intermediate state of consciousness, let the mind rest, free of any activity, without getting distracted by any reference point or caught by any concept. This intermediate state of ultimate reality (*chos nyid bar do*) is free of the concepts of resting or not resting. It is not something material, but it is self-aware. Not being solid, it is not compounded by colour or shape. At the same time, it is not unsubstantial since it continues to arise. It is devoid of essence, not being permanent; it also is no nothingness, being self-luminous. Since it is not an entity, it cannot be examined,

³³ Tib. JK, Pt & DK: *chos sku skye med du ngos lhan sprad*; PK: *ngo lhan gyis sprad*; BZ: *ngo lhan cig sprad*.

³⁴ Tib. JK & PK: *shes pa ngo bo de la*; BZ: *shes pa ngo bo stong pa de la*, “this consciousness, this empty essence.” Pt & DK: *shes pa do do(!) de la*.

³⁵ Tib. JK, PK, Pt & DK: *de snga ma dang phyi ma la ma reg pas*; BZ: *de ltar shes pa snga ma dang phyi ma la ma reg pas*, “thus, untouched by a previous and later consciousness.”

but it also is not a non-entity, as, by nature, it is free of elaborations. It has no limits, so it cannot be grasped. As it has no centre, nothing is seen when looking at it. As it cannot be indicated, there are no examples, but it is not that it has no example since it is like the sky. It is inexpressible in words because it is free of conventional designations, but it is also not beyond the reach of words, as it is the cause of all expression.

However, whereas the sky is empty and without awareness, mind's essence is empty but aware.³⁶ So, although the essence [of both, sky and mind] is void, they are differentiated by their characteristics.³⁷

Rest in this without interruption.

There are six methods to rest in it:

rest without a support, like the sky;

rest without interruption, like a river;

rest without a reference point, like a flower in the sky;

rest in clarity, like the centre of the sun;

rest without being covered by flaws, like a lotus flower;

rest, letting thoughts vanish in ultimate reality as if they were mist.

In this way, even when various thoughts are moving, recognise them as manifestations of the liveliness of awareness: they belong to the dimension of luminosity. The nature of the mind, unobscured by symbols, is luminosity. Nondual awareness and emptiness, it is [the] union [of both]. Like a trace of bird flight, free of thoughts of before or after, it is an intermediate state.

³⁶ In Pt & DK the following is added: *tshig tu brjod du med te tha snyad dang bral/ bdag ma grub ste rtag na med/ bdag nyid ma yin te spros brag gi bdag nyid can/ mtha' ma grub ste 'dzin pa dang bral/ dbus ma grub ste ltos pas dben pa.*

³⁷ Tib. JK: *mtshan nyid sna tshogs su gnas pa*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *mtshan nyid sna tshogs su snang ba*, "they appear with different characteristics."

Being the root of all phenomena, it is self-aware. Manifesting without a body, it is dharmakāya. Since it fulfils all wishes, it is a precious gem. Thus, in this intermediate state of consciousness, do not get separated even in the slightest way from fully experiencing the dimension of awareness. If you get separated even slightly from this experience, however high your realisation might appear, you will have no power over your mind. Therefore, see to it that you remain inseparable from the [recognition of the] intermediate state of ultimate reality.³⁸

The intermediate state in between a previous and later dream image (rmi lam dran pa snga phyi'i bar do)

Dream images can be threefold: memories, such as Dipankara, can remain fixated; images about the future can arise, such as Maitreya; images about the present can arise, such as Śākyamuni. Without thinking of anything past or future, one should lie down recognising nondual primordial wisdom. When the intermediate dream state at night and the intermediate state during the day become of a single taste,³⁹ through the samādhi of luminosity all ignorance is conquered and during sleep, [all] thoughts are blocked. Thus, the unchanging dharmakāya is obtained.⁴⁰ The supreme [state] is obtained with this same body.

³⁸ Tib. JK: *chos nyid bar do ngo shes pa dang mi 'bral bar bya'o*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *chos nyid bar do'i shes pa dang mi 'bral bar bya'o*, “do not get separated from the consciousness of the intermediate state of ultimate reality.”

³⁹ Tib. JK: *ro gcig par'gyur te*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *gcig par gyur te*, “become the same.”

⁴⁰ Tib. JK: *des chos sku 'gyur ba med par thob ste lus 'di nyid la mtshog thob*; BZ & PK: *des chos sku la bor ba med pa thob ste lus 'di nyid la mchog thob*, “thus one obtains the dharmakāya without losing it, one obtains the supreme state with this same body;” Pt & DK: *des chos sku la bar do med pa thob ste/ lus 'di nyid la mchog thob*, “thus one obtains the dharmakāya, without intermediate state; with

This is called, “To have completed all there is to do, to have laid down the burden.” Such [a person] will not see the intermediate state at the moment of death or the intermediate state of becoming. The true nature of luminosity is spontaneously realised. [This is] the samādhi of great bliss.

The intermediate state of becoming ⁴¹ *at the moment of dying*
(srid pa 'chi kha ma'i bar do)

Individuals with superior abilities will experience the intermediate state of luminosity. [Individuals with] moderate [abilities] will experience the intermediate state of being escorted and welcomed. Ordinary [individuals] will experience the intermediate state of entering a womb.

For superior individuals, there are two [aspects]

- (a) how the appearances on the path are blocked
- (b) how the experience of luminosity arises

(a) *the appearances on the path are blocked through a double [process of dissolution]*

During the **coarse dissolution**, when [the] earth [element] dissolves into [the] water [element], one cannot hold the body. The four limbs drop to the ground, the teeth become dirty, and saliva from the mouth and mucus from the nose is produced.

When [the] water [element] dissolves into [the] fire [element], mouth and nose become dry, one cannot fold one's

this same body, one obtains the supreme state.” Note: in JK *mtshog thob* probably stands for *mchog thob*.

⁴¹ Tib. JK: *srid pa 'chi kha ma'i bar do*; in PK: *'chi ka ma'i bar do* (without *srid pa*); Pt & DK: *srid pa 'chi ka ma'i bar do*.

limbs, and as one develops more heat than before, one feels feverish and sweaty.

When [the] fire [element] dissolves into [the] air [element], the radiance of one's complexion is lost, and the nostrils become flat (literally: the bird wings of the nose break). The bodily heat is absorbed. [In case] one takes rebirth in a higher realm, it concentrates upwards; if one goes in the lower realms, it concentrates downwards. One does not recognise people.

When [the] air [element] dissolves into consciousness, a wheezing sound emerges. Breathing becomes constricted, the eyes turn upwards and the hands move to and fro. At that moment, clarity arises from mind's nature. As the eyes turn upwards, a death rattle comes forth. Simultaneously with this dissolution of the four elements, the sense objects, such as visual forms, sounds, etc., also dissolve.

During the **subtle dissolution**, when consciousness dissolves into "appearance,"⁴² as an inner sign, something similar to smoke appears; as an outer sign, it is as if there is a moonrise.

⁴² Tib. *snang mched thob gsum*, "The second part [of dissolution] consists of the experience of three coloured spaces. They appear consecutively and are called: 1) *snang ba* "appearance;" 2) *mched pa* "flaring," and 3) *nyer thob* "penultimate," q.v. for more. They correspond to the re-absorption of the white element, the red element, and the final meeting and absorption of the two at the heart centre. When the dying person enters any of these stages, they experience only space filled with white, red, or blackness respectively. Therefore, the person is said to have entered the *dkar lam*, "whiteness," *dmar lam*, "redness," and *nag lam*, "blackness" respectively" (The Illuminator Dictionary). For a more detailed explanation of this process see Dzogchen Ponlop, *Mind Beyond Death*, 2006: 135. I have used his alternate translation of *mched pa* as "increase" and *nyer thob* as "attainment."

The forty types of concepts generated from attachment are blocked.⁴³ Even if one should meet a beautiful goddess, no desire would arise. At this time, the mind is sometimes clear, sometimes dull.

When “appearance” dissolves into “increase,” as an inner sign, one experiences a firefly-like [luminosity]; as an outer sign, it is as if there is a sunrise. The thirty-three types of concepts generated from aversion are blocked. Even if one should meet a hated enemy there would be no sense of aggression. The consciousness has become clearer than before.

When “increase” dissolves into “attainment,” as an inner sign, something like a butter lamp [-luminosity] is experienced; as an outer sign, something like darkness arises. The seven types of concepts generated from delusion are blocked. Even if one would be left in the middle of a dark forest, there would be no delusion. At this time, consciousness becomes much clearer compared to before. For those who have not meditated in the past, this is a time when they are afraid of emptiness.

When “attainment” dissolves into luminosity, as an outer sign, it is as if there is dawn and daybreak; as an inner sign, one experiences something like a cloudless sky. All defilements and even the most subtle habitual tendencies are blocked. It is a time when consciousness is clear and empty, without limits or centre.

(b) how the experience of luminosity arises⁴⁴

⁴³ In PK, the order of the blocking of thoughts is inverted: here, instead of attachment come thoughts generated by aversion, and vice versa.

⁴⁴ In JK: 'od gsal 'char tshul; BZ, PK, Pt & DK: 'od gsal nyams kyi 'char tshul. .

This moment is crucial to experience the dharmakāya fully. The paternal drop (*bindu*) in the shape of [the syllable] HANG, located at the top of the head, comes down. The maternal drop, located four fingers below the navel in the “crow face”-vein – the seed of *tummo*-fire in the form of a “short A,” a vertical line – goes up. The unobscured consciousness, the essence of bliss and emptiness, is located [at the heart level]. When these three meet in the empty lotus at the heart level inside the central channel (*avadhūti*), the primordial innate nature is perceived, unborn and free of obscurations. Thus, spontaneously, without any elaboration, the dharmakāya shines forth in the mindstream. Due to previous meditations, dharmakāya is recognised as such. It is like when a small child meets its mother: even if other people say, “This is not your mother,” it would not be deceived. For a *yogin* with such knowledge, at the very instant when the awareness is separated from its [material] support,⁴⁵ the consciousness, moved by the wind (*prāṇa*) of primordial wisdom, will exit from the crown of the head and go to the dharmadhātu palace or to a pure saṃbhogakāya land. Therefore, for this kind [of being], this [state] is called “the luminosity at the moment of death” (*'chi kha'i 'od gsal*) or “the luminosity of one’s own nature” (*rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal*) or “the fruition-luminosity” (*'bras bu'i 'od gsal*) or “the ultimate dharmakāya” (*mthar thug chos sku*).

⁴⁵ Tib. JK, PK, Pt & DK: *rig pa rten dang bral ba skad cig ma de la*; BZ: *rag pa rten dang bral ba'i skad gcig ma*, “at the very instant when it is separated from its coarse material support.”

Individuals with moderate [abilities] [will experience] the intermediate state of being escorted and welcomed (*skyel bsu'i bar do*).

If one has not accustomed oneself to the [above-mentioned] kind of luminosity but [instead] has trained in [other kinds of meditations], such as guru yoga, at the moment of death, one will be escorted and welcomed.

This has six [aspects]: the escorting and welcoming of a blessing-bestowing Lama, a yidam who grants realisations, an obstacle-eliminating *ḍākinī*, dharma friends who provide favourable conditions, the Aural Transmission lineage that points out experiences, and other wish-fulfilling gems [such as dharma protectors].⁴⁶

First, about the Lama. When one diligently practises guru-yoga meditation, the Lama who bestows blessings in one's meditative concentration, becomes the escort. In the future, the Lama will manifest spontaneously to welcome. If, in between the time of escorting and welcoming, one has freed oneself from the latent imprints of the six realms⁴⁷ and recognised the mind as dharmakāya free of elaborations in the intermediate state of ultimate reality,⁴⁸ [the moment of death] will transform into the state of perfect enlightenment. This

⁴⁶ In JK, the dharma protectors are added to the text; they are not mentioned in PK, BZ, Pt & DK.

⁴⁷ Tib. JK: *rigs drug gi bag chags bral nas*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *rigs drug gi jag pa [byag pa] kha btab ling[li] btang nas*, "if one has dispersed the interferences of the robbers of the six realms."

⁴⁸ Tib. JK: *chos nyid kyi bar dor sems chos sku spros bral ngo 'phrod nas*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *chos nyid kyi bar do[r] chos nyid kyi sems chos sku spros bral ngo 'phrod nas*, "If one has recognised the intrinsic mind as dharmakāya free of elaborations in the intermediate state of ultimate reality."

principle applies to the yidam, *dākinī*, dharma protectors, vajra brothers and the wish-fulfilling gems of the Aural Transmission lineage.

Ordinary [individuals] will experience the intermediate state of entering a womb (*mtshams sbyor gyi bar do*).

Those who have trained somewhat less in guru-yoga or similar [practices] will not be able to abide [in the nature of the mind], and the luminosity *samādhi* will make them panic.⁴⁹ Bound by ignorance – the root of the three *prāṇas* –, they will wander in the intermediate state. They should enter a womb by applying the [following] oral instructions.

Thus, in the “appearance” at the moment of death, [they will experience] something like a moonrise, and when this [state] has been reabsorbed, it will transform into the life-sustaining wind.

In the “increase” [moment], [they will experience] something like a sunrise; when it is reabsorbed, it becomes the wind that coexists with fire.

In the “attainment” [moment], [they will experience] something like daybreak; when it is reabsorbed, it becomes the refining wind.

When the luminosity is thus reabsorbed, it becomes ignorance.

In this way, bound by ignorance – the root of the three *prāṇas* –, [the consciousness] rides the karmic winds, and at the

⁴⁹ Tib. 'od gsal ba'i rting nge 'dzin la 'jigs skrag gi blo byung te; Pt & DK: 'jigs skrag gi omitted

moment of being expelled from any one of the nine doors, if there has been no previous meditation, it will be carried away without choice by the strongest among the winds and made to wander in the intermediate state, etc. If there has been meditation in the past, when entering a womb, the consciousness will be more powerful and it will be made to go to a higher realm or any place for which it has trained.

- *Three types of bardo, in three different phases*

[This section has] three [aspects]: the explanation of how to awaken in the first intermediate state, the *bardo* in which [one has] all qualities (*yon tan rdzogs kyi bar do*); the explanation of how to awaken in the second *bardo*, the intermediate state of falling back into conditioned existence (*'khor ba lugs kyi bar do*); the explanation of how to awaken in the next life, the intermediate state of [choosing] a womb in an appropriate family (*rigs mthun mngal gyi bar do*).

How to awaken in the first intermediate state, the bardo in which [one has] all qualities

Until four and a half days after death, one has the feeling of being drunk with *chang* or hit by an infectious disease. Then, one regains consciousness. One sees one's relatives but knows one is dead, and one realises: "I am wandering in the *bardo*." This [thought] is unpleasant, and because the consciousness does not have any [material] support, it is not able to remain. Wherever one goes, one doesn't know [anybody], and one has the experience as if it were dawning, as if being in the twilight between light and darkness (*snang mun gyi rang 'od skya rengs shar ba lta bu*). At that time, one suffers, feeling extremely tired,

exhausted, sad⁵⁰ and thirsty, driven by the power of karma to the four continents and each of the six conditioned realms etc. Wherever one wants to go, enemies, such as the Lord of Death, do not allow it; they hurt and harm, creating suffering. In search of protection, one remembers the previously meditated yidam, and, as the karma of the habitual tendencies with which one was familiar awakens, like a fish jumping out of the water, one transforms into a saṃbhogakāya, called “the *bardo*-saṃbhogakāya.” However, it is not that one pretends to be a saṃbhogakāya when this is not the case: [calling this the *bardo*-saṃbhogakāya means that] this *bardo*-body⁵¹ is endowed with the seven qualities of a saṃbhogakāya:

- Uncovered by any veil, it is a mental body that appears without being tangible.
- It has the splendour of a fully blossomed flower.
- It possesses the five types of higher perceptions with which it is fully aware of whatever moves on the surface or remains hidden in the depth of one’s mind and that of other [beings].
- Through various miraculous powers,⁵² it can reach anywhere, without any obstacle: in Bodhgaya, in blessed places, in the womb of a mother, and, besides these three, [also] in any other place.
- Emanating billions of light rays, it can appear in all directions.
- Possessing the magical faculty of perfect recall,⁵³ it

⁵⁰ Tib. JK: *skyo zhing skom pa*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *skres shing skom pa*, “hungry and thirsty.”

⁵¹ Tib. JK, PK, Pt & DK: *bar do’i lus*; BZ: *bar do’i lha sku*, “the body of a *bardo*-deity.”

⁵² Tib. *rdzu ’phrul gyi shugs*; Pt: *rdzul ’phrul gyi shugs*.

⁵³ Tib. *mi brjed pa’i gzugs*; Pt: *mi brjed pa’i gzugs*.

remembers past and future lives etc.

- This body is adorned with the major and minor marks and an aura of six feet (a fathom/an arm-span).

Moreover, although this *bardo*-saṃbhogakāya can be more or less pure according to the degree of familiarity [with meditation], there is none among all the *bardo*-beings who will not face it.⁵⁴ Therefore, to be able to enter the saṃbhogakāya realm at the time of the *bardo*, in this life one should meditate the samādhi of the development stage, [as] appearance without self-nature, so that, like a child nestling in its mother's lap, one will go to the land of one's friend, the yidam, in the form of⁵⁵ a saṃbhogakāya perfectly adorned with jewels, or to the land of a celestial vidyādhara.

How to awaken after seven weeks of transmigration,⁵⁶ during the intermediate state of falling back into conditioned existence.

If one cannot remain stable in the development stage, the awareness, separated from its material support, flickers back and

⁵⁴ Tib. JK, PK, Pt & DK: *kha yar ba ni med pa med do*; BZ: *kha yar ba la ni nges pa med do*, "it is not certain how they will face it." (The meaning of *kha yar ba* is not clear to me).

⁵⁵ Tib. JK: *longs sku'i rnam pa'am*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *longs ku'i sa'am*: "one will go to the land of one's friend, the yidam, a saṃbhogakāya perfectly adorned with jewels, or ...".

⁵⁶ Tib. *gnyis pa 'khor ba lugs [ldog] gi bar do srid pa zhag bdun phrag bdun pa la sangs rgya bar bstan pa ni* [In PK & BZ: after 2 weeks]. Pt & DK: *gnyis pa 'khor ba lugs kyi bar do srid pa bar do gnyis pa la sangs rgya bar bstan pa ni*, "Second, how to awaken in the second intermediate state of becoming, the bardo of falling back in conditioned existence."

forth⁵⁷ and feels unhappy. Through the power of attachment to the body, one will be bound by ignorance – the root of the three *prāṇas* –, and through latent instincts, one will assume a mental body. From ignorance emerges “attainment”, and the seven [types of] concepts originating from delusion arise. “Attainment” develops into “increase”, and from this, the thirty-three [types of] concepts originating from aversion arise. “Increase” develops into “appearance”, and from this, the forty [types of] concepts originating from desire/attachment arise. The three root poisons simultaneously develop into the eighty [types of] concepts. Fettered by the five [types of] obscurations, etc., this mental body becomes confused, and thus, the mind as it previously appeared is restored.⁵⁸

If during this process there is a habitual tendency of meditation,⁵⁹ one who has [received] *bardo* instructions should apply the instructions to block the entrance into a womb. At that time, as thoughts develop from the three poisons, a relationship of attachment-aversion develops towards a father and mother. When consciousness, driven by the wind of karma, is on the point of entering into a womb, like a fish jumping out of the water, one should meditate on the development stage, like an illusion. At the moment of dissolution [of the visualisation], one should meditate on luminosity, to block well [the entrance into the womb]. If it is not blocked, one should think of the couple

⁵⁷ Tib. JK: *phyod kyis song ba*; PK: *phyad kyis song ba*; BZ: *chad song ba*; Pt & DK: *chod kyis song ba*.

⁵⁸ Tib. JK: *sor du chud pa*, to restore; BZ: *sor chud par*; PK: *so ru tshud pa*; Pt & DK: *so ru chud pa*.

⁵⁹ Tib. JK, BZ, PK: *de'i dus su bsgoms pa'i bag chags yod la*; Pt & DK: *de'i dus su gom pa'i bag chag med la*.

as the Lama united with his consort, and request realisations.⁶⁰ If it is [not] blocked in this way, attachment and aversion will [not] be reversed.⁶¹ Then, it will be blocked if one thinks: “In the past I did like this and [as a consequence] I had to wander in saṃsāra. If I do it again, I will have to wander again, so I should not do this.” Moreover, one should meditate this ordinary mental body as a deity’s, the deity’s body as an illusory body, the illusory body as luminosity, and luminosity as union. Meditating this way, one will be freed from a womb in forty-nine days. If one closes it in the first week, meditating as above in the other [weeks] will be without difficulty. If one has trained in this way, one will obtain the unified [state] of [the path of] learning (*slob pa’i zung ’jug*). If one manages without training, one will reach the unified [state] beyond learning (*mi slob pa’i zung ’jug*). In this way, [falling back into] cyclic existence is blocked.⁶² Moreover, if in this life one has trained on the path of messengers considering attachments as faulty, at the time of the *bardo*, taking the example of the aspirations of a fearless person, one will befriend the *dākinīs* of the three places and go to a pure happy *dākinī* land or some pure land connected with one’s pure aspirations.

⁶⁰ In BZ: *bla ma yab yum du bsams la dbang zhu/ yi dam la yab yum du bsams la dngos grub zhu*, “one should imagine the couple as the Lama united with his consort and request empowerment, or as the yidam united with his consort and request realisation.”

⁶¹ Tib. JK: *des kyang khegs na chags sdang bzlog pa te*, “if it is blocked by this, attachment and aversion will be reversed;” BZ & PK: *des kyang ma khegs na chags sdang bzlog pa [ldog pa] te*: if it is not blocked, attachment and aversion will be reversed; Pt & DK: *des kyang ma khegs na chags sdang ’dog pa ste*: “if it is not blocked aversion and attachment will stick.”

⁶² JK & BZ: *de ltar srid pa khegs pa*; PK & Pt: *de ltar sred pa khegs pa*, “in this way craving is blocked.”

*How to awaken in the next life, [by choosing] a suitable womb
in the bardo*

One with little training [in meditation] will enter into a womb. Through the evil habitual tendencies deposited in the all-base consciousness, craving and desire/attachment to this life will come to light, and one will experience the appearance of a father and mother having sexual intercourse, in whichever of the six realms one will take rebirth. At the same instant in which attraction and aversion to this arise, one's perception gets deluded through karma, and one enters the womb. *If one has not realised the uncontaminated mind in this life,*⁶³ *by taking a contaminated body, the mind becomes conceptual, [not?] the ultimate reality.*⁶⁴ *Generally speaking, the womb-entrance is like a [single] stalk to reap [all] the fruits pervading this great earth: bardo-beings, as numerous as the dust particles in a sunray, [want to] take a body, and if they do not obtain it, they go on trying.*⁶⁵ *Those who take a male rebirth feel attraction towards the mother and aversion towards the father; those who take rebirth as females feel attraction towards the father and aversion towards the mother. Both rebirths*⁶⁶ *occur through the conjunction of attraction and aversion.*

⁶³ The text in italics is absent in BZ: 494. Instead, at this point in BZ, there is an addition: *sdzus skyes dang drod sher skyes ni*, "regarding a miraculous birth or birth from heat and moisture," so the next sentences refer to this kind of miraculous birth or heat-and-moisture birth only.

⁶⁴ Tib: *tshe 'dir sems zag med ma rtogs pas lus zag bcas len pa'i sems rtog bcas 'byung ba chos nyid do*. It looks to me as if one word has been omitted, it should become *chos nyid med do*.

⁶⁵ Tib. *mi thob nas sbyangs pa yod*.

⁶⁶ JK: *skye gnas gnyis ka*; PK, Pt & DK: *skye gnas bzhi ka*: all four rebirths. Including heat-and-moisture birth and miraculous birth?

*I will now give instructions regarding the place where to take rebirth. Some [people] know the instructions, others do not.⁶⁷ Those who know are those who possess instructions for the bardo, who possess higher perceptions, or [who understand] through the power of prayers. In any case, it is advisable [to enter] the womb in an auspicious family, such as that of a spiritual friend, a royal family, a Brahmin, etc., or [the family of] a skilled dharma practitioner. Suppose one is to take rebirth in a higher realm. In that case, one will have the experience of dismounting on a platform of jewels in a mountainous region or arriving at the beautiful house of a god or in a forest adorned with paradise-like flowers, etc. If rebirth takes place in the lower realms, one will feel naked, pushed by the wind, escaping in panic, etc., and one will think of finding shelter under an overhanging rock, a cave, a grass-heap (*sbar sbur?*), a dense grove, an abandoned or old house, thus entering into a womb. It is crucial to make many pure prayers, wishing to meet a dharma-practising family or the Aural Transmission teachings, etc. With the wish to [enter] into a good womb, one should aspire to take rebirth as a human being, meditating oneself inside a palace, [in the form of] a deity, [seated] on top of a lotus and a sun and moon disk.⁶⁸*

⁶⁷ JK: *de la skye gnas gdams par bya ste/ gdams shes pa dang ma shes pa ste*; PK, Pt & DK: *de la skye gnas 'dams par bya ste/ 'dams shes sam na shes te* "Here, they have to choose a place of rebirth. Those who know how to choose are:"

⁶⁸ In BZ also this part is missing. Instead, the following is added: *'jigs pa de la sdang zhing 'phrad kyi dogs pa dang/ gnas de la chags shing bral gyi dogs pa'i chags sdang gis 'tshams sbyar nas lus len par byed do/ de yang mngal skyes dang sgong skyes mams ni/*, "One fears to meet this terror and to be separated from this place to which one was attached. The combination of aversion and attachment makes one take a body. Moreover, regarding birth from a womb or an egg." As we can see, in BZ, a clear distinction is made between different kinds of births.

Then the consciousness enters from the father's mouth and from the vajra path it falls [into the lotus];⁶⁹ through the power of karma, one feels pleasure. The father's triangular drop (*bindu*), the mother's three essential drops, and the consciousness come together, and with this as the dominant condition, the four elements adhere. Furthermore, the basis is wind (*prāṇa*), and its function is inhaling, keeping the breath, exhaling and making the embryo grow. The function of fire is to protect the embryo from becoming rotten and getting lost and to generate strength⁷⁰ and warmth. The function of water is to see to it that the embryo does not disintegrate but remains cohesive and that the body develops harmoniously. The function of earth is to make it solid, by generating flesh, bones, nails⁷¹ and the like. The sensorial bases of the body come forth⁷² and develop. Then, the embryo takes an ovoid shape. During the first week, it becomes a quivering mass, in the second [week] it is a creamy mass, in the third [week] a rounded mass, in the fourth [week] it solidifies, in the fifth [week] it is an oval mass, in the sixth week, it has the shape of a fish.⁷³ This first existence is situated at the navel, where it remains⁷⁴ in the shape of the seed syllable of *tummo*, an A-stroke. In the seventh week, the limbs and minor parts of the body are formed. Then, [the embryo] remains in the womb for nine or ten months, as if in ten stages. From the fifth month

⁶⁹ Tib. JK: *rdo rje'i lam nas mar lung ste*; BZ, PK, Pt & DK: *rdo rje'i lam nas padmar lung bas*.

⁷⁰ Tib. JK: *stong sa*; probably spelling mistake; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *stobs*: strength.

⁷¹ Tib. JK: *sha rus chen po*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *sha rus sen mo*, "flesh, bones, nails."

⁷² Tib. JK: *'bur du gtod de*; PK & BZ: *'bur du bkod de*; Pt & DK: *'bur du 'god cing*.

⁷³ Tib. JK: *khyab 'jug nyi'i rnam pa can*, which would mean "the form of Vishnu as a sun"; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *khyab 'jug nya'i rnam pa can*, "the form of Vishnu as a fish," one of the incarnations of Vishnu called Matsya.

⁷⁴ Tib. JK: *lta ba nas chags ste*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *lte ba nas chags ste*.

onwards, if it is a male, it will grow in the shape of a vajra, feeling aversion towards the father and attraction towards the mother, and it will be located on the right side of the mother, with the head turned to the back. If it is female, it will grow in the shape of a bell, feeling aversion towards the mother and attraction towards the father, and it will be located on the left side, with the head facing the front side. In that period, it does not need food because the prāṇa-mind (*rlung sems*) remains in the central channel (*avadhūti*). It possesses higher perceptions. Once the body is formed, it becomes subject to the negative influence of hot and cold, etc. From the tenth month, the wind that causes movement,⁷⁵ entering from the mother's right nostril, enters the embryo's left nostril. The father's drop in the shape of [the syllable] 'Hang' is brought to the top of the head [whereas] the mother's essence in the shape of an 'A-stroke' is brought four fingers below the navel. With the pushing wind, [the embryo] turns upside down, and with the sound of A and Hang, it comes to the womb entrance as an emanation body dressed with dharma-clothing – the amniotic sac. Joining the hands on the head, it has the nature of an emanation body possessing discipline, etc., to act for the benefit of other beings. But, even so, as the cataract of ignorance obscures it, it does not recognise [its nature], and [only] after having met with a spiritual teacher who teaches the Aural Transmission and having obtained oral instructions will it reach enlightenment without being obstructed by other rebirths.

• *Mergings on the [three] bardo paths*⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Tib. *skyod byed kyi rlung*.

⁷⁶ Tib. JK & PK: *sre ba lam gyi bar do*; BZ, Pt & DK: *sre ba lam gsum gyi bar do*: "merging: the *bardo* of the three paths."

The mergings on the bardo paths are threefold: those with desire/attachment should merge the desire/attachment with the uncontaminated state in the *bardo* between birth and death; those with delusion should merge delusion with luminosity in the dream *bardo*; those with aversion should merge aversion with the illusory body in the *bardo* of becoming.

Four mergings in the bardo between birth and death for those with desire/attachment

- Through *samayamudrā*, merge the illusory body with the absence of clinging
- Through *dharmamudrā*, merge [emptiness]⁷⁷ with luminosity
- Through *karmamudrā*, merge great bliss with the absence of outflow
- Through *mahāmudrā*, merge unification with nonduality

In this way, the desire to reach enlightenment should be mixed with the desire/attachment of a sentient being.

To merge [great bliss]⁷⁸ with the absence of outflow through *karmamudrā* has three [aspects]:

- Followers of the path of liberation should practise the absence of thoughts using liberation through the upper door, based on the instructions on the *prāṇa* movement

⁷⁷ Tib. JK: *chos kyi phyag rgyas 'od gsal du sre ba*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *chos kyi phyag rgyas stong nyid 'od gsal du sre ba*.

⁷⁸ Tib. JK & PK: *las kyi phyag rgyas zag med du sreba*; BZ: *las kyi phyag rgyas bde chen zag med du sreba*; Pt & DK: *las kyi phyag rgyas bde chen zung 'jug tu bsre ba*, “To merge great bliss with unification through *karmamudrā*.”

and relying on the luminous and aware wisdom mudrā⁷⁹ (jñānamudrā).

- Followers of the path of passion should practise bliss using great bliss through the lower door, based on the instructions on placed bodhicitta⁸⁰ and relying on a qualified karmamudrā.
- Those who alternate both paths should practise abiding using the nondual unification of the upper and lower doors, based on the instructions on the channels (*gnas pa rtsa'i gdams ngag*) and relying on [the merging⁸¹ of] both mudrās.

Four mergings of delusion with luminosity in the dream bardo for those who are deluded

- Merging the ordinary body with the body of a deity equalises their taste in their illusory nature.⁸²
- Merging illusion with dreams equalises their taste in suchness.

⁷⁹ Tib. JK, PK & BZ: *mi rtog pa 'od rig ye shes kyi phyag rgya*; Pt & DK: *mi rtog pa 'od kyi rig ma ye shes kyi phyag rgya*.

⁸⁰ Tib. *bkod pa byang chub sems kyi gdams ngag*; this refers to the use of the term bodhicitta as the male and female essences in the practice of *karmamudrā*.

⁸¹ Tib. JK: *bsre ba dang phyag rgya gnyis ka la brten te nyams su len pa'o*; PK: *gsal ba dang phyag rgya gnyis ka la brten te nyams su blang pa'o*; BZ: *gsal ba phyag rgya gnyis ka la brten te nyams su blangpa'o*, “should practice relying on luminosity and both mudrās.”; Pt & DK: *phyag rgya gnyis ka la brten nas nyams su blangpa'o*, “should practice relying on both mudrās.” [This last interpretation seems more meaningful].

⁸² Tib. JK: *ro snyoms*; PK, BZ, Pt & DK: *ro mnyam*: “They are of the same taste.” This difference is systematically maintained in the mergings for delusion and aversion.

- Merging sleep with meditative absorption (*bsam gtan*),⁸³ equalises their taste in the luminosity of one's own nature.⁸⁴
- Merging the nirvāṇa one wishes to realise with saṃsāra equalises their taste.

Four mergings of aversion with the illusory body in the bardo of becoming for those with aversion

- Merging the object of one's attachment and aversion, such as father and mother, with one's Lama equalises their taste.
- Merging [thoughts of] attachment and aversion⁸⁵ with the uncontaminated experiences [resulting from] empowerments equalises their taste.
- Merging the mental body with the mind in which attachment has been abandoned as if it were an illusion,⁸⁶ equalises their taste.

⁸³ Tib. JK, PK, Pt &: *gnyid bsam gtan du sre zhing rang bzhin gyi[s] 'od gsal du bsre ba*; DK *gnyid bsam gtan du sre zhing rang bzhin 'od gsal du ro mnyam pa*; BZ: *gnyid bsam gtan gyi 'od gsal du sre zhing*, "by merging sleep with the clear light of meditative absorption."

⁸⁴ Tib. JK, PK & BZ: *rang bzhin gyi[s] 'od gsal du bsre ba*; Pt & DK: *rang bzhin 'od gsal du ro mnyam pa*, "They are of the same taste in the luminosity of one's own nature." In my translation, I opt for the second version.

⁸⁵ Tib. JK: *chags sdang gyi rtog pa dbang gi nyam myong zag med du bsre zhing*; BZ & PK: *chags sdang dbang gi nyam myong zag med du bsre zhing*, "by merging attachment and aversion with the uncontaminated experiences of empowerment." Pt & DK: *chags sdang dbang gis nyon mongs zag med du bsre zhing*.

⁸⁶ Tib. JK: *yid kyi lus chags spang gyi sems rgyu ma lta bu dang bsre zhing*; PK, Pt, DK & BZ: *yid kyi lus chags sdang gyi sems rgyu ma lta bu dang bsre zhing*, "Merging the mental body with the mind of attachment and aversion as if it were an illusion" (This seems to me the most plausible); (in BZ *dang bsre zhing* has been omitted).

- Merging the virtuousness one wishes to accomplish with the negativities equalises their taste.

May these instructions pointing out the intermediate states bring to light luminosity, and may these words or conventions be remembered through time. This completes the pointing-out instructions for the *bardo*.⁸⁷ [ToC](#)

⁸⁷ Tib. JK, Pt & DK, here add the “Jetsün’s entrustment seal” (*rje btsun gyi gtad rgya*), a short text in which Mila entrusts the teachings to Rechungpa and seals them. The *bardo* text ends here in PK & BZ, and the ‘entrustment seal’ is inserted separately (PK, 2: 449-53; BZ, 1: 371-73). The entrustment seal does not seem part of the present *bardo* instructions; therefore, I have not included it in the translation. However, BZ at this point includes the last sentences of the *gtad rgya*: *ngo sprod bar do ‘i gdams pa ‘di / bla ma dang mkha’ ‘gro ‘i gsung bzhin du / ga nam grod phug dgon pa ru / rdo rje rgyal mtshan brtse bas bris / phyogs dus bde legs ldan gyur cig / rje mi la ras pas ras chung rdo rje grags pa la gtad pa rdzogs so* / “These instructions pointing out the intermediate state / following the words of the Lama and the dākinī / at the remote place, the belly cave in Ganam (misspelt for *gnya’ nam* – in the *gtad rgya* it is spelt *gnya’ nang*) / were written down with love by Dorje Gyaltsen. May they bring happiness and goodness in [all] directions and times. Herewith, the entrustment by Lord Milarepa to Rechung Dorje Drakpa is completed.” For a translation of the Jetsün’s entrustment seal, see Chapter 6.

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APPENDIX: SONG CHARTS

This appendix contains eight song charts, in which the songs are indexed with their corresponding number in Tsangnyon's work (the chapter number, followed by the song number inside the chapter, e.g., 1.1) and the page number where each song is found in the studied texts.

- (1) in Tsangnyön Heruka's work, the Zhepé Dorje Compendia and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's biographies of Mila and Gampopa
- (2) in Ngendzong Tönpa's biography of Milarepa (translated in Chapter 4)
- (3) in the early Mila biographies in the lineages coming from Gampopa
- (4) in the early Mila biographies in Rechungpa's lineage
- (5) in the biographies of Rechungpa
- (6) in the biographies connected with Shamar Khachö Wangpo
- (7) in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*
- (8) in the second-stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia

SONG CHART 1

Outline of the Chapters and Songs in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Mi la'i mgur 'bum* and location of the songs in *The Twelve Great Disciples*, *The Black Treasury*, *A River of Blessings*, and Shamar Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings* and *Banner of Pervasive Renown*

TN-Dha = Tsangnyön Heruka's *Mi la'i rnam mgur*, published in Dharamshala/Delhi 1990. (W21762)

RBC = *Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis*, "The Twelve Great Repa Disciples"; Ms-O=Oxford version; RBC-Pt=Paltsek version, 2011. (W1KG14335) (vol. 1).

DNM-RD = *mDzod nag ma* "The Dark/Black Treasury" In Rangjung Dorje's *Collected Works*, Ziling version 2006. (W30541)

BCG-D = *Byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun* "A River of Blessings" In '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, vols. 7 & 8. (W00JW501203)

ZHWA = Shamar Khachö Wangpo. *Byin rlabs kyi sprin phung* "Clouds of Blessings" (biography Milarepa) *Kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan* "Victory Banner of Pervasive Renown" (biography Gampopa). 1978 vol. 1, pp. 188-433. (W23928)-*dbu med* version (W2CZ7838).

Quintman: *The Life of Milarepa*, 2010

Stagg: *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa. A New Translation.*, 2017

CHAPTER & SONG NUMBER	TN-DHA 1488-1490	STAGG	Ms-O/RBC-Pt 13 th century	DNM-RD late 15 th century	BCG-D late 15 th century	ZHWA late 14 th century
<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 1 <i>MI MA YIN GYIS MTHO 'TSHAMS PA DAM LA BTAGS PA'I SKOR</i> THE BINDING UNDER OATH OF HARM INFLICTING SPIRITS</p>						
1) <i>Mi la shing thun gyi skor</i> – Mila gathers wood						
1.1	197	6	22.b/48	70	vol. 7-172	271 (8 v)
1.2	199	8	23.a/50	72	vol. 7-175	—
1.3	200	9	23.a/51	74	vol. 7-176	271 (13 v)
1.4	201	11	23.a/52	75	vol. 7-177	—
2) <i>La phyi la byon pa chu bsang gi skor</i> – Journey to Lachi Chuzang						
2.1	206	17	23.b/54	77	vol. 7-183	269 (all very short)
2.2	208	18	24.a/55	79	vol. 7-186	—
2.3	209	20	24.a/56	78	vol. 7-185	270
2.4	210	21	24.b/57	81	vol. 7-187	270
2.5	211	22	25.a/58	81	vol. 7-188	—
3) <i>Gangs mgur gyi skor</i> – The song of the snow						

3.1	219	31	28.a/65	90	vol. 7-200	245 (complete)
3.2	222	34	27.a/63	88	vol. 7-196	—
3.3	223	36	29.a/68	93	vol. 7-206	—
3.4	226	39	26.a/60	85	vol. 7-191	—
3.5	227	40	26.b/61	86	vol. 7-192	—
4) <i>Ling pa brag srin mo'i sko</i> – The rakshasa demoness of Lingpa Rock						
4.1/9	229/240	43/58	39.a-43.a/92-104	124/137	vol. 7-276 /293	233-songs hinted at with 4 lines; 8 missing
5) <i>Rag ma'i skor snga ma</i> – The prior visit to Rakma						
5.1/5	243/249	59/66	—	—	—	—
6) <i>sKyang phan nam mkha' rdzong gi skor</i> – Kyangpen sky fortress						
6.1	250	67	20a/44	66	vol. 7-166	—
6.2	251	68	22.a/47	68	vol. 7-170	—
6.3	252	69	20a/45	66	vol. 7-167	—
6.4	253	70	20.b-21.b/46	68	vol. 7-169	—
7) <i>Yol mo gangs ra'i skor</i> – The Yolmo snowy range						
7.1	255	73	34.a/80	107	vol. 7-237	—
7.2	256	75	35.a/83	111	vol. 7-242	—
7.3	257	76	30.a/70toRechunpa!	96	vol. 7-213	—
7.4	259	78	35.b/84	112	vol. 7-243	—
7.5	260	79	36.a/85	114	vol. 7-245	299
7.6	261	80	32.b/82	109	vol. 7-239	—
7.7	263	82	36.b/86	116	vol. 7-246	—
8) <i>Phug ron lha'i bu mos mchod pa'i skor</i> – The offering of the pigeon goddess girl						

8.1/4	265/269	87/91	76.b-77.b/193-195	264/267	vol.7-457/460	—
<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>SKAL LDAN THUGS SRAS RNAMS SMIN GROL LA BKOD PA'I SKOR</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE RIPENING AND LIBERATION OF THE FORTUNATE HEART SONS AND DAUGHTERS</p>						
9) Brag skya rdo rje rdzong gi skor tsho snga ma – The prior visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress						
9.1	270	95	122.a/324	460	—	—
9.2	271	96	121.b/321	455	vol. 8-201	—
9.3	272	97	121.a/320	455	—	—
9.4	273	98	123.a/325	460	vol. 8-203	278
10) Ras chung pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Rechungpa						
10.1	276	103	107.a/282	415	vol. 8-154	—
10.2	276	104	107.b/282-284	416	vol. 8-154	—
10.3/4	279/281	106/107	—	10.4-459 (similar)	—	—
11) rTsa phu ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Tsaphu Repa						
11.1	283	111	176.b/477	714	vol. 7-436	—
11.2	283	112	176.b/478	715	vol. 7-438	—
11.3	285	113	—	289	vol. 7-249	—
12) Rag ma'i skor phyi ma – The later visit to Rakma						
12.1/6	286/289	115/118	104.b-105.b/278-81	431/434	7:146/149	—
12.7/10	291/296	119/124	—	—	—	—
13) sTon pa sha kya gu na rjes su bzung ba'i skor – Accepting the teacher Shakyas Guna						

13.1	298	127	—	460	vol. 8-202	—
13.2	298	128	—	—	—	—
13.3	300	129	122.a/321	—	—	—
13.4	300	130	—	—	vol. 8-189	—
14) dPal dar 'bum gyi skor – Meeting Paldarbum						
14.1	303	134	119.a/315	360	vol. 8-217	—
14.2/6	306/308	136/138	101.a/265-266	409/411	8: 129/130	307: 14.2
14.7	308	138	—	—	—	—
14.8/9	308/309	139	101.b/266-267	412	vol. 8-131	—
14.10/11	309/310	139/140	—	—	—	—
14.12/16	311/314	141/145	101.b-102.a/267-68	414/415	vol.8-134/37	—
15) Se ban ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Seben Repa						
15.1	315	147	88.a/232	346	vol. 7-543	—
15.2	316	148	88.a/231	345	vol. 7-542	—
15.3	317	150	87.b/230	344	vol. 7-541	227 (complete)
15.4	319	151	87.a/229	343	vol. 7-539	—
16) 'Bri sgom ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Drigom Repa						
16.1	321	155	124.a/327	—	—	—
17) Ras pa zhi ba od kyi skor – Repa Zhiwa Ö						
17.1/30	324/352	160/177	92.a-100.a/241-262	378/406	7:94/122 (17.29 missing)	273-17.1 complete 275:17.2&3 276-277: 17.26-17.27
18) Ngan rdzong ston pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Ngendzong Tönpa						

18.1-2-3 18.4	354/358 362	191/195 199	108.a-110.a/284-87 —	365/369 709	vol.8-157/60 vol. 8-184	241/242 (few lines) —
19) <i>Dam pa rgyags phu pa dang mjal ba'i skor</i> – Meeting Dampa Gyakpupa						
19.1	364	203	—	471	vol. 8-40	278
20) <i>Khar chung ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor</i> – Meeting Kharchung Repa						
20.1/3	365/368	207/210	—	316/318	—	—
21) <i>Ras pa dar ma dbang phyug dang mjal ba'i skor</i> – Meeting Repa Darma Wangchuk						
21.1/2	370/371	213/215	100.a-100.b/263-64	407/408	vol.8-127/28	—
21.3	372	216	120.b/318	—	vol. 7-255	—
21.4	373	217	120.a/316	—	—	—
21.5	374	218	120.b/318	—	vol. 8-206	—
21.6	375	219	120.a/317	374	—	281
22) <i>Na ro bon chung gi skor</i> – Taming Naro Bönchung						
22.1/3	378/285	224/230	—	440/448	mention,no songs	—
23) <i>Brag skya rdo rje rdzong gi skor tsho phyi ma</i> – The later visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress						
23.1	388	233	113.a/297	492	vol. 8-179 & 45	—
23.2/3/4/5/6	389/392	234/238	78.a-79.b/196-198	283/285	7:477/481	283/284 (4-6 lines)
23.7	383	240	79.b/199	287	vol. 7-490	—
23.8	385	241	—	—	—	—
23.9	397	244	91.a/239	358	vol. 8-13	—
24) <i>gShen sgom ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor</i> – Meeting Shengom Repa						

24.1	399	247	114.a/301	—	vol. 8-21	—
24.2	403	250	115.a/304-313	—	vol. 8-24	—
25) Ras chung ma dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Rechungma						
25.1/2	416/418	267/270	145.b-146.a/392-94	576/577	8:302-304	282 (14 & 7 lines)
25.3/4/5/6	422/426	275/279	—	—	—	—
25.7/8	427/428	280/281	(25.7)112.b/296	582/583	8:308-309	—
26) Khyi ra ras pa dang mjal ba'i skor – Meeting Khyira Repa						
26.1/2/3/	431/434	286/288	84.a-84.b/221-222	325-327	vol.7-504-508	—
26.4	436	290	86.a/225	-331	vol. 7-512	—
26.5	438	292	85.b/224	-329	vol. 7-510	—
26.6/8	439/441	294/296	86.b-85.a/227	332-328-333	vol.7-515-509	—
27) Kho khom rgyal pos mchod cing tshe ring mas glags blta phyir myal ba'i skor The offering of the Lhokhom king and the scrutiny of Tseringma						
27.1	444	300	—	-320	—	301
27.2/3	446/447	302/303	—	—	—	299-301
27.4	449	304	113.b/298	-493	vol. 8-180	—
27.5	450	306	74.a/184	-247	vol. 7-444	303 (4 lines)
28) Tshe ring mched lngas drod nyul ba dang zhus lan gyi rim pa-mu tig rgyan gyi phreng ba The five Tseringma sister's investigation – Garland of an array of pearls						
28.1/6	451/464	307/321	125.a-128.b/329-342	496/511	vol. 8-222/239	248/251(28.4 complete) [28.1 missing]
29) Tshe ring mched lngas drod nyul ba dang zhus lan gyi rim pa-bdud rtsi 'od kyi phreng ba The five Tseringma sister's investigation – Garland of the light of amrita						

29.1/6	467/484	325/342	129.b-135.a/343-360	515/534	vol. 8-240/264	252/254 (29.1 missing)
30) <i>Tshe ring mched lngas drod nyul ba dang zhus lan gyi rim pa-mgur chu gser gyi phreng ba</i> The five Tseringma sister's investigation – Golden garland of stupas						
30.1/7	489/515	349/373	136.b-142.b/365-378	539/567	vol. 8-264/283	257/258 (30.1 missing; 30.5 complete)
31) <i>Tshe ring mched lngas drod nyul ba dang zhus lan gyi rim pa-bde stong ye shes sprin gyi phreng ba</i> The five Tseringma sister's investigation – Garland of clouds of bliss-emptiness wisdom						
31.1/2	517/518	377/378	144.b/389-390	568-569	vol. 8- 283-284	60 (only in dbumed text; complete)
32) <i>Ras pa rdo rje dbang phyug gi skor</i> – Meeting Repa Darma Wangchuk						
32.1/2	-521/523	384/385	81.b-82.a/214-215	303/305	vol. 7-228/236	302 (32.1-16 lines,32.2 missing)
33) <i>Dharma bo dhi dang mjal ba'i skor</i> – Meeting Dharmabodhi						
33.1/8	525/530	385/392	74.b-76.b/187-191	250/255	vol. 7-447/454	304 (33.8-9 lines)
34) <i>Phrag dog gi rtsod pa rdzu 'phrul dang nus pas bzlog pa'i skor</i> Winning the debate arisen through jealousy with power and magic						
34.1/9	533/547	396/408	47.a-50.b/115-123	155/165	vol. 7-321/333	293 (34.6 complete ; 34.8 few v; 34.6 BDRC 35 —
34.10	553	414	—	163	—	—
34.11	554	415	—	242	—	306
35) <i>Ras chung ti pu'i skor</i> – Rechungpa and Tipupa						
35.1/2/3	558/559	420/422	51.a/51.b	169/171	7:338/340	—
36) <i>Mes sgom ras pa'i skor</i> – Megom Repa						

36.1/2/3	562/564	425/428	—	—	—	—
37) <i>Sa le 'od kyi skor</i> – Sahle Ö						
37.1/4	566/572	432/438	—	—	—	—
37.5/6	575/576	441/442	—	594/595	vol. 8-67/69	280/281 (37.5 complete)
38) <i>g. Yag ru'i skor</i> – The story of the yak horn						
38.1/8	579/590	445/456	56.b-61.a/141-152	187/200	vol.7-304(38.6)	286: 38.6 & 7
38.9/10	592/593	459/460	—	717/719	vol. 8-448	—
38.11/12	595	461/462	61.b-62.a/154	202/203	vol. 7-373/374	—
39) <i>rKyang mgur gyi skor</i> – Song of the wild asses						
39.1/2	599/601	467/469	62.b-63.a/156-159	-206/208	vol. 7-387/393	287 (39.1); 306
39.3	602	470	—	—	—	—
39.4/7	603/608	471/475	63.b-65.a/159-162	-210/213	vol. 7-394/398	—
39.8	608	476	—	-214	vol. 7-399	—
39.9/11	609/611	476/478	65.a-66.a/163-165	-215/220	vol. 7-401/404	287 (39.9)
40) <i>gLan sgom ras pa'i skor</i> – Lengom Repa						
40.1	613	482	—	720	—	—
40.2	614	482	—	243/720	—	—
40.3	615	483	163.b/439	243/654	vol. 8-375	306
40.4	616	485	—	150	vol. 7-307	—
41) <i>Dam pa sgam po pa'i skor</i> – The noble Gampopa						
41.1	626	492	167.a/448	665	vol. 8-389	339 Gampopa bio(41.1+2)
41.2	634	499	149.a/402	—	vol. 8-321	237- (to Rechungpa!).
41.3	637	502	168.b/454	672	vol. 8-397	347 Gam bio complete
41.4/5	641/644	506/509	170.b-171.a/458-461	678/684	vol. 8-391/392	353/363 Gam bio complete

41.6	649	515	—	694	vol. 8-416	300 Mila bio complete
41.7/8	653/656	518/521	173.b-175.a/469-473	696/701	vol. 8-422/429	364/370 Gam bio complete
42) Lo ston dge 'dun gyi skor – Lotön Gendun						
42.1	659	525	—	—	vol. 7-493	—
42.2	660	526	—	—	vol. 7 -492	—
42.3/4	661/662	527/529	—	—	—	—
42-5	664	530	—	—	vol. 8-182	—
42.6	666	532	—	—	—	—
43) 'Bre ston gyi skor – Dretön Repa						
43.1	667	536	119.b/315	—	—	—
43.2	668	537	164.a/440	656	vol. 8-377	—
43.3	670	539	—	710	vol. 8-185	—
44) Li skor phyä ru ba'i skor – Likor Charuwa						
44.1	673	542	—	—	vol. 8-78 & 80	294
44.2/5	673/676	542/545	—	—	—	—
44.6	677	546	—	—	vol. 7-139	—
<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 3 KHA 'THOR SNA TSHOGS KYI SKOR MISCELLANEOUS STORIES</p>						
45) Bu slob dang nya ma'i zhus lan gyi skor – Replies to the questions of students						

45.1/2/3/4/ 45.5	678/679 679	549/550 551	— —	604/606 —	vol. 7-486/487 —	— —
45.6	680	552	121.b/321	—	—	—
45.7	680	552	122.a/322	—	—	—
45.8	681	553	187.b/503	246	vol. 7-442	277
45.9/10	682/683	554/555	—	—	—	—
45.11/12	684/685	556/557	89a-b/235-236	350/351	vol. 8-6 ;	296 (45.12)
45.13	686	558	124.b/328	—	vol.8-311 (45.12)	—
45.14	687	559	—	—	—	—
45.15	688	560	103.b/272	420	vol. 8-142	—
45.16	689	562	124.a/327	—	—	—
45.17/18	691/693	564/565	—	—	—	—
46) <i>Bon po ri'i skor</i> – Bönpo Mountain						
46.1/5	695/699	567/571	147.b-148.b/398-401	585/589	vol. 8-315/321	266 (46.1/2/3/4 complete in 1 song ; 46.5 p 268)
46.6	700	573	149.b/404	—	vol. 8-323	237
47) <i>dBang bskur dang rab gnas kyi skor</i> – Bestowing abisheka and consecration						
47.1/2	702/703	575/576	90.a/236	713/714	vol. 8-9(47.2)	305
48) <i>gShen dor mo dang legs se 'bum gyi skor</i> – Shendormo and Leksé Bum						
48.1/5	704/707	577/580	106.a-106.b/278-281	434/438	vol. 8-150/152	—
48.6	709	582	103.a/271	419	vol. 8-141	—
48.7/10	710/712	583/586	103.b-104.b/273-274	421/423	vol. 8-143/145	—
49) '<i>Chi brod thigs tshags ma'i skor</i> – Preparing to have joy at death						

49.1	713	587	80.a/208	296	vol. 7-494	239 (complete)-307
49.2	714	588	32.a/75	102	vol. 7-222	—
49.3/4	715/717	589/591	31.a/73	99/100	vol. 7-219/220	—
50) Chang glu'i skor – Going for refreshment, and the beer-drinking song						
50.1/2	719/720	593/594	89.a-b/233	348	vol. 8-4/6	—
50.3	721	595	—	—	vol.8-9(narrative)	—
50.4/5	721/722	596	—	—	vol. 8-48(50.4)	—
51) Ram sdings gnam phug ma'i skor – Ramding sky cave						
51.1	724	599	80.b/210	299	vol. 7-496	—
51.2	725	600	80.a/209	298	vol. 7-495	—
51.3	727	602	18.a/39	59	vol . 7 134	282
51.4	728	603	—	—	—	—
51.5	729	603	81.b/213	302	vol. 7-498	dbu med text 64
51.6	729	604	32.b/77	104	vol. 7-225	—
51.7	730	605	32.b/76	104	vol. 7-224	—
52) Ras chung bdus bzhud kyi skor – Rechungpa's departure for Central Tibet						
52.1	733	608	153.b/411	611	vol. 8-333	—
52.2	734	609	151.a/408	607	vol. 8-328	—
52.3/4	734/735	609/610	152.b/409	608/607	vol. 8-329/330	—
52.5	736	611	151.a/408	607	vol. 8-329	—
52.6	737	612	154.a/413	613	vol. 8-336	302
52.7	738	614	152-153.a/410	609	vol. 8-332	—
52.8	739	615	154.b/415	615	vol. 8-338	—
52.9	741	617	156.a/418	621	vol. 8-344	—
52.10/11	742/743	618/619	155.b/416-417	617/618	vol. 8-342/343	—

52.12	744	620	—	621	vol. 8-347	—
52.13/14	745/746	620/621	156.a-157.a/419-420	622/623	vol. 8-346/348	—
52.15/16/17	747/750	622/626	157.a-158.a/422-424	626/629	vol. 8-348/356	—
52.18	751	627	—	—	—	—
53) Thong la'i skor – Tongla						
53.1/2/3	754/757	630/632	82.b-83.b/217-219	308/311	vol. 7-431/436	272 (53.1)
53.4	758	633	90.b/237	313	vol. 8-10	272
54) gShin don thugs rje'i lcags kyu dang sring mo pe ta byang chub la bkod pa'i skor The hook of compassion for the dead, and establishing his sister Peta in enlightenment						
54.1	763	639	67.b/169	224	vol. 7-409	—
54.2	764	640	67.a/168	222	vol. 7- 408	—
54.3/4	765/766	641/642	68.a/169-170	225/226	vol. 7-410/411	292 (54.4)
54.5/6	766/767	643/644	68.b-69.a/171-172	227/228	vol. 7-413/415	—
55) Nya nang pa'i nya ma rnams la mjug gi zhal gdams gsungs pa'i skor Final advice to the students of Nyanang						
55.1	769	647	177.a/480	721	vol. 8-444	—
55.2	769	648	72.b/182	240	vol. 7-439	—
55.3	770	648	177.a/479	716	vol. 8-459	—
55.4	771	649	—	—	—	—
55.5	772	650	177.b/480	722	vol. 8-445	—
56) Lha rje gyang nge'i skor – The physician of Yangé						

56.1	774	653	121.a/320	104	vol. 7-225	—
56.2	775	655	111.a/292	482	vol. 8-171	—
56.3	777	656	110.b/290	481	vol. 8-170	278
56.4	778	658	111.b/293	484	vol. 8-173	—
57) dBus bzhud phyi ma'i skor – The later journey to Central Tibet						
57.1	780	661	—	—	—	—
57.2-3-4	781/783	662/664	163.a-b/436-438	651/653	vol. 8-372/374	—
57.5-6-7	784/785	665/666	—	602/603	vol. 7-484/485	—
57.8	785	666	—	—	—	—
57.9	785	667	66.b/166	221	vol. 7-405	—
57.10-11	787	668/669	178.b/484	726/727	vol. 8-449/450	—
57.12	788	669	179.b/486	729	vol. 8-452	—
57.13	788	670	179.a/485	728	vol. 8-451/453	311(complete)1
57.14	789	671	162.a/435	732	vol. 8-457	—
58) bKra shis brtsegs kyi skor – Tashi Tsek						
58.1/2/3	791/792	673/675	150.a-b/405-406	598/600	vol. 8-324/326	—
59) Brin gyi nya ma spyi'i skor – The students of Drin						
59.1	794	677	—	—	—	—
59.2	795	679	—	256	vol. 8-73	—
59.3	796	680	—	—	—	—
60) bDud bzhi las rgyal ba dang sngags pa'i zhus lan gyi skor – Victory over the four Maras, and the response to a Mantrika						
60.1	798	683	—	—	—	—
60.2	799	684	—	—	vol. 8-86	297/299 (60.2/3/4/5/6
60.3	799	684	—	—	vol. 8-76	complete)

60.4	800	685	182.b/495	743	vol. 8-77 & 473	
60.5/6/7	800/801	686	—	—	—	
61) <i>Bu slob rnams spro ba bskyed pa bkod pa sku'i rdzu 'phrul bstan pa'i skor</i> The disciple-sons' developing delight, and displaying miracles of his body						
61.1/6	803/807	689/694	70.a-71.b/175-180	232/237	vol. 7-418/424	—
61.7	808	696	—	453	vol. 7-249	265
61.8	810	698	72.b/182	239	vol. 7-438	—
61.9	811	699	69.b/174	231	vol. 7-417	—
62) <i>dGu pa-gzugs sku chos dbyings su thim pa</i> (3rd column = twelfth chapter of the 'Life of Milarepa', Quintman 2010)						
62.1	814	178	25.b/59	460	—	—
62.2	821	183	—	—	—	—
62.3	824	186	182.a/493	741	vol. 8-469	—
62.4	830	192	183.a/496	744	vol. 8-474	—
62.5	832	194	185.a/499	748	vol. 8-479	—
62.6	834	196	—	—	—	—
62.7	839	199	184.b/497	745	vol. 8-476	—
62.8	843	202	—	—	—	—
62.9	844	204	186.b/503	752	vol. 8-489	—
62.10	849	208	—	—	—	—
62.11	851	210	—	—	vol. 8-484	—
62.12/13	854/856	212/214	188.a&b/507-508	757/758	vol. 8-494/495	313/314 (complete)
62.14	858	216	—	—	—	—
62.15/16	860/862	218/221	189.b-190.a/512	761/763	vol. 8-498/500	—

SONG CHART 2

Episodes and songs identified in the early life stories of Milarepa in Gampopa's lineages *Gampopa/Khyungtsangpa, Lama Zhang, Dönmo Ripa, Gyalthangpa, Sangye 'Bum*

The episodes outlined here regard the period after Mila's departure from Marpa, corresponding to Tsangnyön Heruka's *Songs*. The first part of Mila's life – in Tsangnyön's *Life* – is not part of this outline. Here, there are few songs, and some are only hinted at with the title, or in some cases 1 or 2 verse lines are given. For details, see Chapter 1a.

Episodes and songs	Gampopa/ Khyungtsangpa (12 th century)	Lama Zhang (1122–1193)	Donmo Ripa (13 th century)	Gyalthangpa (13 th century)	Sangyé 'bum (13 th century)
Meditating at brag rta so; song 1.3	—	—	189, 1 line	—	180, no song
On the way to Nepal, song 1.3	—	—	190, 2 lines	—	—
Remembering the Lama	—	—	—	231, no song	181- no song, dreaming about the lama; mention <i>rmi lam gyi mgur</i>
Episode with the pigeon	—	—	191, no song	—	182, no songs
Singing for a yogin, song 1.4	—	—	191: 7 lines	—	—
Monks closing Mila in their temple	24	335	192	249-251:elaborate, 1 song not in TN	—
Meeting Rechungpa	—	—	192-194	—	—

Meeting Rechungma, song 25.1	—	—	195-196; 1 line	—	—
Meeting Ngendzong Jangchup Bar; song about ploughing, song of the bamboo staff+meeting Ngendzong Repa	—	—	196, only mentioned, title song 18.1+18.2	—	—
song 2.2 , 1 line	—	—	197	—	—
Mila tells Likor Charuwa to visit his mother, but he arrives too late and finds her dead	—	—	197	—	—
Meeting Ngag Dormo and Jomo Urmo	—	—	197-198	—	183
Episode at Lachi, song of the snow 3.1 and 3.3	24-25, only title 3.1	337-338, title 3.1	198-199, only title 3.1	231-236; 3.1 -almost complete	186-190: 3.1 + 3.3 complete
Episode at Singala Forest	—	—	—	236-238; 7.1 , 4 v.; 32.1 (similar to song of false needs)	205: hunter tries to hit Mila with arrow; 1.3 -2 lines
Obstacles created by <i>lha 'dre</i> on the way to Lachi songs 2.1 , 2.3 , 2.2 , 2.5	—	—	200-mention of song to <i>lha 'dre</i>	—	200- 2.1 complete; 201- 2.3 (6 lines); 2.2 complete; 203- 2.5 complete
Advice to Dampa Jag Phuwa	—	—	200	—	191: mention song 19.1 , but to Rechungpa
Meeting Ngendzong Repa-Song of the staff 18.1-18.2	25 – 18.2 only title	338: 18.2 -3 lines	— (above, 196)	—	192- 18.2 , only mention of song

Episodes in La Tö: death rites and horse offering; Meeting three men in LaTö and making promise; <i>Prāṇa</i> problem Episode dying Bönpo and Peta	26	338-340	201-202	244-245: episode dying bönpo: TN chapters 24+54; Peta asks what he did for their parents	193-194 198-199 with song similar to 54.4
Episode with different sponsors in Drin and foresight Jetsun	—	340	203	—	194
Episode at Drakmar Potho; song about vultures 1.3	26: 1 line, similar 1.3 , 'og na thang dkar rgod po 'phyo ba'i mgur	340, 1.3 , 1 line	203, 1.3 , 2 lines	—	—
Episode 1 & 2 Lama becoming invisible	26-27	341	194:similar but with 1 female sponsor; 204:same incidents	—	195
Episode falling off the cliff songs 60.2-60.3-60.4	27	341	204-205	—	195- elaborated repeated 197, songs similar to 60.2-60.3-60.4
Episode transformation in crystal <i>stūpa</i>	27	341	205	—	—
Episode doubter/Mila riding a lion	27	341-342	205-206	—	195
Episode qualities of the lama/horn <i>stūpa</i>	28	342	206	—	196
Episode flying because of snowfall	28	342	206	—	196

Episode encounter Lekse-Gampopa, enquiring about Mila's fasting	29	342:Gampopa asks if it is true 4 mounds of rice were enough	206, = Lama Zhang	—	196 question to Jetsun by Gampopa no Lekse
Episodes Tashi Tseringma songs 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, 28.5, 29.3	—	—	207-214: narrative chapter 29: Tseringma's illness (no songs)	241-244; few lines of songs similar 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, 28.5, 29.3	201 - story with songs at Menlung Chuwar only mentioned.
Episode conversion of Darlo song 34.8	—	—	—	245-249: elaborate; song similar 34.8 ; 5 emanations of Jetsün to convince him (= in kyang chapter)	—
Episode Darma Ten	—	—	214 (Darma Stag)	—	—
Episode vase initiation and thangka consecration Songs similar to 47.1 & 47.2	—	—	—	251-253: songs 47.1 & 2 (similar)	199-200 (= Gyalthangpa)
Episode with monkeys teasing Jetsün; he jumps on a branch and falls off	—	—	—	—	200, song not in TN
Episode with patrons and patronesses: who can serve him first or later	—	—	—	253-254	—

Episode ganachakra 84 Mahasiddhas and dedication by Tārā	—	—	—	254-255	—
Episode with his wanderings and display of miracles	—	—	—	255-259	—
Episode of Mila's death Final considerations	— 30: he was a being who saw the truth of ultimate reality	— 342: emanated being who saw the truth of ultimate reality	214-215: emanation body who manifested ultimate understanding of the truth of ultimate reality	259-265: ≠ people saw ≠ ways of dying 6 yogins with pure vision saw him disappearing in rainbow body; for others, story of bönpo giving poisonous present	206-208; 6 disciples with pure vision saw him apply phowa making hole in his cloth and go to Khachö 6 with impure vision saw story bönpo

SONG CHART 3

Outline and Songs in “The Complete Liberation of Mila Vajra-Victory Banner”

Mi la rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar bzugs so

by Ngendzong Tönpa/Gung Repa

Pt: In *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum*, dPal brtsegs, 5: 126-153. (W1KG14335)

RD: In *Karma pa rang jung rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, 4: 83-124) (W30541)

TN-Dha: *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur*, Bod gzhung shes rig dpar khang Dharamsala (H.P. India), 1990. (W21762)

This life story of Jetsün Milarepa was written down by Gung Repa according to the words of his teacher Ngendzong Tönpa (12th century). In contrast to Rechungpa's lineage, here we find 20 different qualities instead of 17/18. However, most of the songs in both groups of life stories are the same. (compare with Song Chart 4). See translation of the life story in Chapter 4.

QUALITIES	SONG NUMBER or title and location in TN-Dha, Quintman & Stagg	Pt. PAGE	RD PAGE
1. <i>rigs dang 'brel ba dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of enduring difficulties related to this family	no songs	126	84

2. <i>ting nge dzin dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba'i yon tan</i> ; the qualities of spiritual experiences related to samādhi	- <i>'khor ba la snying po med</i> -TN-Dha 133, Quintman 119; 9 lines;	132	91
	- <i>mnyam pa nyid kyi sa zhi</i> -TN-Dha 145, Quintman 130; 17 lines	133	93
3. <i>khyer so bstan pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of showing the right approaches	songs 6.1 & 6.3, Stagg 67 & 69	134	94
4. <i>phyogs bzhir snyan pa'i grag pas khyab pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of his fame spreading in the four directions	song 3.1, Stagg 31, song of the snow	136	96
5. <i>bsgoms nyams bde bar shar zhing</i> ; the arising of blissfull meditation experience	song 27.3, Stagg 303	138	99
6. <i>snang ba mthun rkyen du shar ba'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of phenomena arising as skinful means	part of song 32.1, Stagg 383	139	99
7. <i>dran pa thams cad lam mkhan du shar ba'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of all thoughts arising as a guide on the path	song 7.5, Stagg 79	139	101
8. <i>chos brgyad mgo gnon pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of suppressing the 8 worldly concerns	song TN-Dha 140, Quintman 126	140	102
9. <i>[yab] yum gyi drin lan bsab pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of repaying his parent's kindness	song 54.3, Stagg 641	141	103
10. <i>phyi rol gyi lus [yul] la thogs rdugs med par shar ba'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of becoming unobstructed by external objects	song 34.8, Stagg 408	142	104
11. <i>ye shes kyi sgron me bltams pa'i [mnyam pa'i]nyams kyi yon tan</i> ; the quality of the experience of bearing the torch of wisdom	song 35.1& part of song 35.3 Stagg 420 & 422	143	105
12. <i>lha'i skur gyur pa'i yon tan/rgya dang bod kyi phyogs bcur snyan pas khyab pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of	song 27.5, Stagg 306 songs 33.8, Stagg 392;	144/155	106/107

being transformed in the body of a god/the quality of his fame spreading in the 10 directions in India and Tibet	song 44.1, Stagg 542		
13. <i>gzhan gyi spyod pa gsal ba'i yon tan</i> /dam tshig sems dpa' dang ye shes sems dpa' dbyer med du gyur ba'i yon tan; the quality of eliminating [obstacles] to the conduct of others/the quality of the samaya-being and the wisdom-being becoming unseparable	song 45.12, Stagg 557 similar to song 47.2, Stagg 576	146	108
14. <i>sems la dbang thob pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of obtaining power over the mind	song 47.1, Stagg 575	147	110
15. <i>mngon par shes pa mnga' ba'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of possessing clairvoyance	song not in TN, in Rechung's lineage Demchok NyengyüBio/Zhijé Ripa under <i>byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan</i>	147	110
16. <i>byin rlabs phul du phyin pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of attaining outstanding blessing power	song 60.2, Stagg 684	148	110
17. <i>'byung ba dbang du 'dus pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of gaining mastery over the elements	song 60.3 + 60.4 together Stagg 684-685	148	111
18. <i>'bras bu la re ba med pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of not hoping for a result	song 60.5 + 60.6 together Stagg 686	149	112
19. <i>sku'i spyod yul bzad pa'i tshul sna tshogs su bstan pa'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of showing a vast range of physical activities	not in TN, episodes in Gampopa lineage song TN-Dha 250 (as a reply to the demons) Stagg 68	150	114
20. <i>'bras bu sku gsum rang dang zhen gyi don 'byung ba'i yon tan</i> ; the quality of the fruit of the trikayā operating for his own and others' benefit	song in part 62.12, TN-Dha 854, Quintman 212	151	114

SONG CHART 4

Outline and Song Index in The Life of Milarepa in the Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's Lineage

BZ-Martön=*Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*. In: *bDe mchog mkha' 'gro sñan rgyud*, 1973, 1: 97-125.
(W24891)

Ogyenpa=*bKa' brgyud yid bzhin nor bu yi 'phreng ba*, 174-235. (W23181)

DNG-Bio=*bDe mchog snyan brgyud kyi rnam thar skor*, 160-189. (W21145)

Zhijé Ripa=*Nyi zla'i 'od zer sgron me*, In *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, 9: 247-484.
(W00JW501203)

BZ-Drikung=*rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* In *sNyan brgyud kyi brgyud kyi yid bzhin nor bu'i phreng ba* In *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mDzod chen mo*, 58 (Si):160-171.
(MW00JW501203_19A276)

S=Christopher Stagg's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa. A New Translation*

Q=Andrew Quintman's *The Life of Milarepa*

TN-Dha=Tsangnyön Heruka's *Mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur*, Dharamshala edition 1990

The songs examined are those contained in the second section of the biographies, *ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba'i yon tan*.

SONG CONTENT IN THE EPISODE	BZ-MARTÖN (12 th century) ¹	OGYENPA (13 th century)	DNG-Bio (14 th century)	ZHIJÉ RIPA (14 th century)	BZ-DRIKUNG (16 th century)
1) 'Khor ba la nying po med par shes pa'i yon tan: the quality of knowing that samsāra is essenceless					
song <i>snying po med</i> Q 119 —	111- 10 lines —	1 200- 11 lines —	155-11 lines —	302- 12 lines 303 song to Geshe Tsapa	160- 10 lines —
2) rMi lam brda ru shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of having symbolical dreams					
song <i>mnyam pa nyid kyi sa gzhi</i> -Tn 145, Q 130 —	(under heading 1) 112 —	2 200 —	156 —	<i>Ting nge dzin shar ba'i yon tan</i> ; 304 305:songxsister and aunt about village woes	162 —
3) bDe 'drod ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan: the quality of recognising blissful warmth					
6.1+6.3 together <i>Brag dkar Taso nyima dzong</i> Staggy 67-69, Tn-250-2 —	2. 113 (4lines, then reference to <i>mgur 'bum</i>) —	3 201- <i>dGa' bas bde 'drod 'phro ba'i yon tan</i> ; 205 —	<i>dKa'bas gtum mo bde drod 'phrod pa'i yon tan</i> 158- <i>Brag dkar Po thon nam mkha' rdzong</i> (rest =Zhijé Ripa) —	<i>dKa'bas gtum mo bde drod 'phrod pa'i yon tan</i> ; 313- <i>gNas Brag dkar ta so dbu ma'i rdzong</i> -315: about shame	162 song: <i>Brag dkar ta so dbu ma dzong</i> —
4) Zas gos kyi 'dun pa dang bral ba'i yon tan: the quality of being free of the wish for food and clothing					

¹ Compared to the other *Golden Rosaries*, this one follows a subdivision in only 7 qualities (see comments and index at the end of the chart). Therefore, I have indicated its quality numbers in the text, while following the outline of the other manuscripts.

song of the snow 3.1 Stagg 31 3.3 Stagg 36 53.1 -Dampa Sangyé- Stagg 630	3 -113 (7 lines) _____ _____	4 210- 3.1 , short; 213 2x,complete; 216- 3.3 ±complete; 219- 53.1 [not in other]	165- 3.1 complete; 168- 3.3 title <i>gnad kyi</i> <i>mdo drug</i> _____	326- 3.1 , complete 329- 3.3 , only title _____	162- <i>la phyi</i> <i>gangs mgur chen</i> <i>no</i> ; 3.3 only title _____
5) Nyams myong bde bar shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of experiences manifesting as bliss					
27.3 -song about happiness, Stagg 303	6f -121- <i>mNgon shes</i> <i>kyi snang ba bde bar</i> <i>shar ba 6f1.bDe ba</i> <i>dngos: 27.3: 3 lines</i> ref. <i>mgur 'bum</i>	5 220- 27.3 -5 lines as in Tn,rest ≠ (=Zhijé Ripa and DNG-Bio)	168- 27.3 -5 lines same as = Ogyenpa & Zhijé Ripa	330- 27.3 -5 lines same as Ogyenpa and DNG bio.	162- 27.3 -5 lines same,
6) rTogs pa lam mkhan du shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of the realisations arising as guides					
- 7.5 about guides, Stagg 79 - 7.7 overcoming fear Stagg 83	6f2 - <i>bDe ba lam</i> <i>mkhan: 121-7.5- 3</i> lines, ref. <i>mgur 'bum</i> _____	7 222- mix 7.5 & 7.7	169- mix 7.5 & 7.7	331- mix 7.5 & 7.7	163- mix 7.5 & 7.7
7) sNang ba mthun rkyen du shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of appearances arising as skillful means					
- 32.1 song <i>dgos sgyu</i> <i>chung</i> Stagg 384	6f3 - <i>bDe ba mthun</i> <i>rkyen 121-3 lines,</i> reference <i>mgur 'bum</i>	6 221- 32.1 small part, ±Zhijé Ripa &DNG bio	170-small part, then ±Zhijé Ripa& Ogyenpa	333-, 4 lines, ±DNG-bio &Ogyenpa	163 -4 lines, ±DNG-bio & Ogyenpa
8) Nye 'brel chos brgyad rang grol ba'i yon tan: quality of self-liberation from relatives and worldly concerns					
-episode with aunt and Peta, -song to aunt Tn-140 Q126 -song about not wanting monastery (not in Tn)	6f4 -122- <i>chos</i> <i>brgyad rang grol-</i> 4 lines=Tn total 10 lines to aunt -122	8 222- 4 lines from song to aunt, = BZ- M and Zhijé Ripa -224	122-4 lines song to aunt, =BZ-M and Zhijé Ripa _____	334- song x Peta, aunt is a witch (= in BZ-M) _____	164- 4 lines Tn; total 12 lines to aunt; 165-song x lCamme

-song about begging (no Tn)	-122	-224	—	—	-165
9) Chos brgyad rang grol du shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of the eight worldly concerns arising as self-liberated					
-song not wanting monastery - about begging	contained in previous section	contained in previous section	9-172-(= Zhijé Ripa) -172	9-334- (=DNGbio); -335	contained in previous section
10) Pha ma'i drin lan bsab pa'i yon tan: the quality of repaying the parents'kindness					
Bönpo story and song to Peta, 54.3+ 54.4, S 641- 42	6e- 119-na shi'i don mdzad pa:	9 -224; 225- song ± 54.4; ±Zhijé Ripa	10 173- song mix 54.3-54.4, = Zhijé Ripa	10 336 54.3- 54.4 =DNG bio	9-165- 54.3- 54.4, shorter
11) Lha'i lhar gyur pa'i yon tan: the quality of becoming a god amongst gods					
- part of 27.5-S306 - part of 33.8 S393 (Dharmabodhi)	—	10-225; 226= Zhijé Ripa/ DNG bio -227	11-173= Zhijé Ripa & Ogyenpa 175-	11337= DNGbio and Ogyenpa -339	10-165- 4 lines 27.5; ±33.8
12) rTsod pas mi rdzi ba'i yon tan: the quality of not being oppressed by a debate					
-34.8, S 408 -10 pāramitās -song to LamTön	4-114 2 lines -115-2 more lines, -115	11 -228 (= BZ-M, ZhijéR./DNGBio) —	12-175- (=BZ-M, Zhijé R.&Ogyenpa) —	12-340=BZ-M, Ogyenpa DNGbio) —	11-166= BZ-M , Ogyen, DNG bio —
13) Ye shes kyi sgron me bltams pa'i yon tan: the quality of upholding the lamp of primordial wisdom					
Rechungpa returns from India, Mila shows miracles, no friction 35.1 mix 35.3 S 421-22	5-115- no songs, only narrative —	12 -230, closer to TN thanZhijé Ripa/ DNG- bio (title missing)	13-177,=Zhijé Ripa (forgot dgos rgyu gsum)	13-342=DNG- bio but complete	12 -167-Mention: look in Rechungpa's life
14) sPyod pa che ba'i yon tan: the quality of great conduct					
narrative of miraculous body displays to gods and demons	6a-116-no songs, narrative miraculous body displays	13-232-44.1; 61.9 (2	14-178- 44.1; 61.9 (2 lines = Tn, 2 ≠)	14-344-44.1; 61.9 (2 lines l=Tn, 2 ≠).	13 -167- 44.1; 61.9

-44.1; S 542 -61.9; S 699 -17.1; S 160 -60.3; S 684	6b -'byung ba bzhis mi rdzi ba-116- power over earth element 44.1;61.9 -117-power over water: 17.1, 2 lines, ref. mgur 'bum -118 power over fire, no song; power over wind 60.3 (similar)	lines like in TN, 2 ≠) .= BZ-M, Zhijé Ripa, DNG bio — —	= BZ-M, Zhijé Ripa and Ogyenpa — —	= BZ-M, Ogyenpa, DNG-bio — —	— —
15) Nus pa che ba'i yon tan: the quality of great power					
45.12 S. 557 healing power, not in TN	6d Subduing lha ma yin: -mention Lingpa brag srin mo 119- 45.12(5 lines) Mention Tashi Tseringma; healing power: 2 small songs	14 -235-45.12 (5 lines); 236- 4 lines song not in TN about healing power (no title)	15 180- 45.12 (5 lines) 4 lines like Ogyenpa about healing	15 346- 45.12 (5 lines) 4 lines like Ogyenpa about healing	14 -167-mention power to do 'pho ba and power over Ling pa brag srin mo; healing power;1 song not in TN
16) Byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan: the quality of great blessing					
-47.1; S 575 -47.2; S.576 -episode with tiger, noTN -episode he gets hurt by tree -60.2;S. 684 -60.5;S. 686	6c-118-power on wisdom gods: 47.2; 47.1 6g 123- song 4 lines; song 60.2; 60.5 : 3 v episode what is a siddha	15 -236; 237-47.1 (4 lines); 238-47.2 (4 lines, ≠Tn) — —	16 181-Episode tiger, song with 4 lines 182-60.2; 47.2 (4 lines) 47.1 (5 lines) —	16 346 Episode tiger song 4 lines - 347-60.2;47.2 (4 l); 47.1 (5 lines)- submitted Brag Srinmo-Tseringma —	15 168-vase empowerment 47.1 and thangka consecration 47.2 — —

17) Ting nge 'dzin gyi rtsal rdzogs pa'i yon tan: the quality of completing the ability of samādhi					
-60.6 S. 686;-60.5, S 686 -60.3 S 684;-60.4, S 685 -60.2; S 684	—	16 -238-60. 6 (5 vs+6 vs) 60.5; 239-60.3; 60.4;- mention subduing Lingpa <i>Brag Sin mo</i> & Tashi Tseringma	17 183-60. 6 (5 lines) 184-60.6 (6 more lines);60.5	17 350-60.6 (in different pieces);351-60.5; 352-60.3;60.4	16 169-1small song not in TN; 60.2;60.3;60.4; 60.5;60.6
18) Phyag rgya chen po ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan: the quality of recognizing mahāmudrā					
before he died his entourage saw many signs song of the <i>dākinīs</i> 62.12 (TN Dha 854, Q 212)	7 -123- 2 songs, similar Ogyenpa. 124-cause of death = poisoning because of a Bönpo; song of the <i>dākinīs</i> 62.12 (TN Dha 854)	17 -241-Jetsün asks Drigom what will happen when he dies; Drigom replies, 2 small songs (= BZ-M and DNG-Bio; 62.12, song of the <i>dākinīs</i> , sung by Jetsün.242-at the moment of death 12 people, 6 yogins with pure vision saw him disappear to mKha' spyod; 6 with impure	18186-Jetsün asks Drigom will happen when he dies; Drigom answers; when Rechungpa arrived from dBus 2 small songs=BZ-M/ Ogyenpa (<i>sems kyi ma bu</i> , = BZ-M, ≠ <i>chos nyid ma bu</i> in Ogyenpa. 12 people present; 6 yogins with pure vision + 6 with impure vision, = Ogyenpa -187-62.12, song of the <i>dākinīs</i> sung during the	18-different from others; long (423-452). 1st part = DNG-Bio 424- 12 present 427 GesheTsaphu-wa + leper woman (detailed). Some songs np Tn: the geshe repents.436-names of the 12 people. 444-62-12. 446-450 colophon. Later development: Rechungpa's late arrival, other	17-179-Mila says at the moment of death he will be perceived in different ways; one song = Zhijé Ripa and DNG-Bio; when he actually dies follows song 62.12.

		vision saw leper lady sent by the Bönpo	cremation preparations	disciples scold him. 453aboutGampopa	
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COMMENTS

All these texts produced in Rechungpa's lineage from the 12th through the 16th centuries describe the life of Jetsün Mila in terms of the qualities he had achieved to reach realisation. In all these versions, the qualities and the songs included are almost identical.

OUTLINE OF THE QUALITIES IN MARTÖN'S MANUSCRIPT

The quality sequence in Martön's text is different from that in the other texts. The text is divided into only 7 qualities, and the presentation is clumsy.² The different subtopics are highlighted in yellow:

- 1) *khör ba snying po med pa rtogs shing rang rgyud thul ba*; subduing his mindstream after realising the essenceless-ness of *samsāra*.
- 2) *bde drod ngo phrod pa*; recognising blissful warmth.
- 3) *lto gos kyi mdud pa rang sar grol ba*; self-liberation of the knots of food and clothes.
- 4) *brtsod pas mi rdzi ba*; not being oppressed by a debate.
- 5) *ye shes sgron ma bltams pa*; upholding the lamp of primordial wisdom.
- 6) *sgrub pa thob pa'i spyod pa*; conduct after having obtained realisation. This is again divided into 6 points:
 - 6a: *rdzu phrul lus kyi dkod pa bstan pa*; showing magical displays of the body.
 - 6b: *'byung ba bzhi mi rdzi ba*; overpowering the four elements.
 - 6c: *ye shes lha la dbang bskur ba zhu ba*; requesting initiation to the wisdom deities.
 - 6d: *lha ma yin bran du bkol ba*; subduing demi-gods.
 - 6e: *na shi'i don mdzad pa*; act for the benefit of the sick and the deceased.

² About the author of this text, see Chapter 1a: 31-35.

-6f: *mngon shes kyi snang ba bde bar shar ba*; blissful manifestations of his foreknowledge. These are again subdivided into 6f1) *bde ba dngos*; real bliss; 6f2) *bde ba lam mkhan*; bliss as guide; 6f3) *bde ba thun rkyen*; bliss as skillful means; 6f4) *chos brgyad rang grol*; self-liberation of the eight worldly dharmas
 -6g: *byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan*: the quality of great blessing (this section was not included in the outline at the beginning of the text, but seems to be added at the end
 7) *phyag rgya chen po rang grol ba*; the self-liberation of mahāmudrā.

OUTLINE OF THE QUALITIES IN THE OTHER GOLDEN ROSARIES IN RECHUNGPA'S LINEAGE

Here, the subdivision in qualities and the order in which these are presented remains almost identical, except that in Ogyenpa and BZ-Drikung the 8th and 9th qualities are united, so that there is a total of 17 qualities, whereas in Demchok Nyengyü Bio and Zhijé Ripa these are separated into two different qualities, bringing the total to 18 qualities. Therefore, the quality numbers are highlighted from that point onwards in the chart. Also, in Ogyenpa's text, the qualities 6 and 7 are inverted, and the title of the 12th and 14th quality is missing.

SONG CHART 5

Outline and Songs in *The Life of Rechungpa* in Golden Rosaries in Rechungpa's Lineage

BZ-Martön=*bDe mchog mkha' 'gro sñan rgyud*, 1973, 1:125-150. (W24891)

Gyalthangpa=*dKar brgyud gser 'phreñ*, 341-385. (W23436)

DNG-Bio=*bDe mchog snyan brgyud kyi mam thar skor*, 191-241. (W21145)

Möntsepa=*dKar brgyud gser 'phreng* compiled by Mon rtse pa kun dga' dpal ldan, 165-187. (W30123)

BZ-Drikung= '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, 58 (Si)-171-194. (W00JW501203)

The chapters reported are in the section *Ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba'i yon tan*

SONGS	BZ-MARTÖN (12 th century)	DNG BIO (14 th century)	GYALTHANGPA (14 th century)	MONTSEPA (15 th century)	BZ-DRIKUNG (16 th century)
1) nyams myong bde bar shar nas gsung bzhin bsgrubs pa (BZ-M)- bde ba ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan (others): the quality of recognising bliss					
song about present happiness compared to before	1a <i>bde ba</i> : 127	199: same song as BZ-M	348: same song as BZ-M	167: same song as BZ-M	172: same song as BZ-M
2) bka' bzhin grub pa'i yon tan: the quality of practising according to [the lama's] command					
-trip to India. 35.1 -S 420	1b 128: 13 lines	201: 2 ls(in bio Mila)	350: 2 lines, Mila bio	168: in prose	173: mix 35-1&35.3
- 35.2 -S 421	—	202: 4 lines	350: 4 lines	—	173: 4 lines
-song to the king	129	203	352	168	175
-song of joy to Tipupa	129	—	—	—	song previous hardships
-song requesting teachings	—	204	353	169	175
-song about lineage	130	205	354	170	176

-song by Tipupa promising teachings	130	206	355	170	176 (summary)
-song xTipu about hardships	130	207	355	170	177
-song of thanksgiving	—	207	355	170	177
-wishes to Tipupa	—	208	356	171	177
-song to Bharima	—	208	356	171	177
-song 27.3 , S 303	132 (longer than TN, grong 'jug + phyagchen+phowa)	209 (no grong 'jug no phowa)	357 (no grong 'jug no phowa)	171 (no grong 'jug no phowa no phyag chen)	177
-song 38.2 , S 447	132	209	357	172 (5 lines)	177
-song 39.9 , S 476	133	211	358	172	178
<i>btsod pa ldog nas lung bstan pa</i> (BZ-M)) 3) <i>rtsod pa zlog pa'i yon tan</i> (others): the quality of refuting arguments in a debate					
-song 39.10 , S 478	2a 134	210	359	172	178
4) <i>rtogs pa'i sgron me ltam pa'i yon tan- mkha' gros lung stan pa'i yon tan</i> (BZ-M): the quality of upholding the torch of realisation/ prophesy of a ḍākinī					
conversation with Rechung; questions like Tilopa to the <i>ḍākinī</i> ; (<i>sku yi me tog, gsung gi bdud rtsi, thugs gi sgron me</i>)	this part is included in the next section	213	360	6 175	6 180
then 45.1, 2., 3 , S 540-550		213	360	175	181
45.4 , with part of 13.3 ; S 551-127; 45.5 , S 551		214	360	176	181
		215	361	176	181
5) <i>rmi lam brdar shar ba'i [dkrol ba't] yon tan</i> (BZ-M, Montsepa, BZ-D); <i>bla mas lung stan pa'i yon tan</i> (DNG-Bio, Gyalthangpa)-the arising of symbolic dreams					

57.5, 57.6, 57.7 Rechung's dreams- S 665; 13.3, 45.3, 45.4	2b) 135 136 (=above)	215-217 —	362-363 —	174-174 —	179 —
6) mkha''gros lung stan pa'i yon tan-the quality of receiving prophesies by a dākinī					
on Jetsuns future disciples	—	218	364	4) 173	4) 179
7) gsung bzhin ldoms nas the tshom bcad pa: (BZ.M) 7) gsung bzhin ldoms pa'i yon tan (others) the quality of begging for alms as per [the lama's] command					
snyan rgyud entrustment to Rechungpa 57.10 , S 668 52.10-52.11 , S 669 52.14 , S 671	3a) 137 137 138 —	219 221 (2x) 222 223	365 366 (2x) 367 368	176 177 177 178	182 182 183 184
8) the tshom gsal ba'i yon tan - the quality of overcoming doubts					
meeting Balpo Asu with Lhacham and Ra Sher nang; meeting Tsur tön; short visit to Mila and departure to dBus	3b) 140	225	370	178	185
9) yi dam zhal mthong nas (BZ-M)- 9) bla ma yi dam gyi zhal mthong ba'i yon tan (DNG Bio+Gyalthangpa) - yi dam lha'i zhal mthong ba'i yon tan (Montsepa+BZ-D) – the quality of seeing the face of the lama and the yidam deities					
Rechungpa meditates in Yarpo; sees the face of the yidam and the Lama but is not sure. Mila sends a yogi to check; the yogin	4) 141	230	375	181	185

returns with a written song					
10) rkyen ngan grogs su shar ba'i yon tan – the quality of negative circumstances arising as friends					
about Lhacham who ill treats him; Rechungpa leaves and goes to Ra Shernang; some songs of Rechungpa. <i>yul zag med kyi grogs su shar ba</i> : song about happiness (only BZ-M)	4a) 143 147:	232 —	376 —	181 —	186 —
11) byang chub bsems pa'i spyod pa mdzad pa'i yon tan – the quality of applying the conduct of a bodhisattva					
how Rechungpa helps Lhacham and the uncle	included in previous section	234	378	183	188
12) rmi lam brdar shar ba'i yon tan – the quality of the arising of symbolic dreams					
one dream and its interpretation	—	237	380	184 (<i>snang ba</i> -mistake in title)	189
13) snang ba brdar shar ba'i yon tan – the quality of the arising of symbolic appearances					
all phenomena appear as illusions	—	237	380	184	189
<i>brda' dkrol ba</i> (BZ-M)- 14) <i>dpa' bo'i brda dkrol ba'i yon tan</i> (others) – the quality of resolving the symbols the <i>vīras</i>					
Rechungpa resolves the symbolical meaning of a request of some <i>vīras</i>	4b) 148	238	381	185	190
15) <i>dpa' mo'i brda dkrol ba'i yon tan</i> - the quality of resolving the symbols the <i>vīrinis</i>					
Rechungpa resolves the symbolical meaning of a	included in 4b) 149	239	381	186	191

request of some <i>vīrinīs</i>					
16) <i>gn̄yis med kyī br̄da dkrol ba'i yon tan</i> – the quality of resolving nondual symbols					
Rechungpa resolves the symbolical meaning of a request of a group of <i>vīras</i> and <i>vīrinīs</i>	included in 4b 149	240	382	186	192
17) <i>shing gi lha mo la chos gsungs pa'i yon tan</i> – the quality of teaching to the tree goddesses					
Rechungpa teaches to the tree goddesses	included in 4b 149	242	384	187	193

COMMENTS

Comparing these life-stories, we note that Martön's text has the same kind of "clumsy" subdivision as his text on the *Life of Milarepa* (Song Chart 4). However, generally speaking, the song contents in all 5 manuscripts are roughly identical. The order of the different qualities varies slightly in Möntsepa, so I have highlighted the quality number. The Demchok Nyengyü Bio and Gyalthagpa texts are almost identical. Regarding song 27.3, Martön lists the following practices: *gtum mo*, *'od gsal*, *rmi lam*, *'pho ba*, *grong 'jug*, *bde chen*, *phyag rgya chen po*, *bar do*. In later times *grong 'jug* and *phyag rgya chen po* disappear from the list, whereas *'pho ba* is sometimes included, sometimes not. This song does not appear in *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples* nor in *The Black Treasury*; in Ngendzong Tönpa's text this part of the song is absent. I suppose these differences reflect changes that had happened in the lineage with the passage of time. I take it to be an indication that Martön's text was very early, as *grong 'jug* was eliminated later on.

SONG CHART 6

Outline with Songs in Shamar Khachö Wangpo, Möntsepa and Dochen Rosary

ZHWA = Shamar Khachö Wangpo: Biography Milarepa and Biography Gampopa

Byin rlabs kyi sprin phung, (W23928); *dbu med* BDRC version (W2CZ7838); *bod kyi lo rgyus nam thar* version, in bold. (MW1KG10687_7B4AD9)

Kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan, (W23928); *dbu med* BDRCversion (W2CZ7975)

Möntsepa: Biography Mila *rJe btsun Mi la ras pa'i nam par thar pa*. (W30123)

mDo chen Rosary: Biography Mila-*rJe tsun chen po'i nam thar ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i zhus lan dang bcas pa zab par bdog go*. (W21237)

TN-Dha = Rus pa'i rgyan can (Tsangnyön Heruka). *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur bzugs so*

N.B. In the Rumtek version of Khachö Wangpo's *Collected Works* some pages are missing. When not available, I indicate the page number in the BDRC *dbu med* version. In the third column, the numbers in bold indicate the pages in the *bod kyi lo rgyus nam thar* version.

Byin rlabs kyi sprin phung- Life of Milarepa, Clouds of blessings				
Episodes	SONG NUMBER or title with location in TN-Dha	ZHWA	MÖN TSEPA	MDO CHEN ROSARY
Episode when reaching in his village after departure from Marpa	song 'khor ba la snying po med-TN-Dha 133-Quintman 119	223/ 371	149	98.b
Episode at Drakar Taso: meeting hunters	song 15.3 complete (<i>bde ba lnga'i mgur</i>), Stagg 150	227/ 375	153	103.a
Episodes at Drakmar Pothon: Peta and Dzesse; the broken nettle-pot; hunters	-song <i>bde ba ngo phrod pa'i mgur</i> (TN-Dha 157, Quintman 141, only some lines same)	BDRC 34 / 378	156	106.a
	-about Bari Lotsawa; <i>chos brgyad spangs pa'i mgur</i> , TN-Dha 175, Quintman 157)	—	157	107.a
	-about Peta and aunt <i>a ne khrel 'dod kyi mgur</i> (different song than TN)	—	158	109.a
	- 34.7 Stagg 404[but to Peta, not Rechung] -Quintman, 151, TN-Dha 168	BDRC 35/ 379 BDRC 38/ 381	— 161	— 111.b
Episode at Lingpa Drak	4.1-2-3-4-5-6-7 (6 or 4 lines) 4.8 missing 4.9 (longer, not complete) -Stagg 56-58	BDRC 39/ 382 [4.3 etc 233]		
Episode at Singala Forest	song 3.1 (2 lines) -Stagg 31	235/ 386		
Episode of the pigeon	only narrative, no song	236/ 387		
Episode meeting Rechungpa	-song 41.2 (to Rechungpa instead of Gampopa) mixed with 46.6 - Stagg 499/567	237/ 388		
	-song 49.1- complete - Stagg 587	240/ 391		
Meeting the rich man of Ngendzong	song 18.1 , 4 lines; 18.2 , 13 lines; 18.3 , 6 lines Stagg 191-195	241/242- 393/394		

Episode meeting benefactress Dormo and departure to Lachi	detailed story song 3.1 complete – Stagg 31	243/395- 245/398	—	112b narrative Tn 116b 3.1 3ls
Episodes with Tashi Tseringma	28.2 (9 ls)/ 3 (9 ls). 4(complete) / 5 (6 ls)/ 6 (8 ls) Stagg 307-325 29.2 (15 ls) / 3 (6 ls) / 4 (7 ls) / 5 (12 ls) / 6 (12 ls) / 7 (13 ls) Stagg 325-349 30: [narrative identical to RBC ³ /TN] 30.2 (5 ls) / 3 (9 ls) / 4 (4 ls) / 5 (<i>bardo</i> -song, (complete) Stagg 349-377 31.1 (complete);2 (complete) Stagg 377-383	248/253- 402/408 253/254- 409/410 255/262- 410-418 BDR60/64 418/422		
Episode at <i>Brin gyi spro bde phuk</i>	51.5 (7ls)[to Dorje Wangchuk instead of Rechungpa] Stagg 603 61.7 (8 ls) Stagg 696	BDRC 64/ 422 265/ 423		
Episode at Bonpo Ri	46.1/2/3/4 united in 1 song (small differences) 46.5 (long piece but not complete- <i>ang drug rnal 'byor nyams kyi glu</i>) Stagg 567-573	266/ 424 268/ 427		
Episode Lachi Chuzang	2.1 (4 ls) / 3 (4 ls) / 4 (9 ls) Stagg 17-21	269-270- 428-429		
Episode Chonglung Drakmar Pothon: remembering the Lama	1.1 (8ls) / 1.3 (13ls) – Stagg 6-10	271/ 429		
Episode Dampa Sangyé (different context)	53.4 (15ls) about crazyness 53.1 (4 ls) Stagg 633-630	272/ 431		

³ RBC = *Ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis*, “The Twelve Great Repa Disciples”.

Episode meeting Zhiwa Ö	17.1 complete / 2 (10 ls) / 3 (4ls); then offering of all his belongings just listed; 26 (about suicide, long but incomplete; 27 (3ls) - Stagg 160-63; 181-83	273-277- 432/437		
Episode settling a dispute between benefactors	45.8 (16 ls) Stagg 554	277/ 437		
Song about impermanence to Lhaje Yangnge	56.3 (4 ls) Stagg 656	278/ 438		
During Tönpa Shakyagu's tsog-offering	19.1/35.3 (8 ls) – Stagg 203; 9.4 (25 ls) Stagg 98	278/ 439		
Episode in Drin: cultivating field	4 lines of song not in TN-Dha, not found	279/ 440		
Episode Salle sGron	37.5 (complete); 37.6 (half) Stagg 441-43	280-81/ 440-42		
Song to Repas	21.6 (4 ls) Stagg 219	281/ 442		
Song to benefactress Tashi Tsek	51.3 (6ls)-song of 12 forgotten things - Stagg 604	282/ 443		
At the Korala pass	20.1 (7 lines) Stagg 207	282/ 443		
Rechungma (name not mentioned, 5 girls)	25.1 (14 ls); 25.2 (7 ls) Stagg 267-270	282-283/ 443-445		
Episodes with Rechungpa: enhancing his experience, Trip x India (4 teachings to take), return with pride, yak horn & kyang	23.2 (4 ls); 3 (6 ls); 4 (4 ls); 5 (6 ls); 6 (7 ls) S. 234-238 38.6 (4 ls); 38.7 (4 ls); Stagg 453-55 [no miracle with <i>kyang</i>]; 39.1 (10 ls); list of Mila's miracles; 39.9 (4 ls). Rechung faithful Stagg 467-476	283-284- 445-446 286-287- 448-450		
Episode Drakar Taso prophecy Gampopa's arrival (as in RBC's)	Rechungpa asks who will be the lineage holder. Same as [RBC-Pt 440] 43.2 song about guides- <i>skyid pa bgyad kyi mgur</i>	289/ 452		
Episode with aunt	same as <i>Golden Rosaries</i> song to aunt, 5 ls	291/ 453		

Episode dying Bönpo and Peta ⁴ - <i>ma rgan bdun tshigs gi mgur</i>	song 54.4 (incomplete) Stagg 642	292-293/ 453-456	161: detailed narrative 164: = Zhwa	117a :detailed narrative 119a: = Zhwa
Episode Tönpa Darlo	song 34.8 (6 ls); 34.6 complete ; Stagg 401-8	293/ 456		
Episode of putting him in jail (nomonks/monastery)	song 44.1 (shorter) Stagg 542	294/ 457		
Manifesting various forms	unidentified song (4 ls)	295/ 458		
Episode of being hit by a stone; at Laso monastery in Drin	no song, episode narrated in TN-Dha Chapt 50-Stagg 595; song 45.12 (5 ls) Stagg 557	295/296- 458/459		
About healing power About fear of tiger	2 songs like <i>Golden Rosaries</i> like <i>Golden Rosaries</i>	296-297- 459-460		
Showing miracles	60.2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 complete Stagg 684-686	297-299- 461-463		119b nosong
Episode songs to Gampopa	mix 7.5 (part-Stagg 79); 27.2 Stagg 302; 41.6 (complete) Stagg 515 (bardo song)	299-300- 463-466		
Episode in Mön	27.3 (11 ls) Stagg 303; 32.1 (21 ls) Stagg 383; 52.6 (12 ls) Stagg 612	301-302- 466-467		
Gifts from Kokhom king	27.5 (4 ls) Stagg 306	303/ 468		
Episode meeting Dharmabodhi	(Mila displays miracles) 33.8 (10 ls, similar)Stagg 392	304/ 469		
Vase initiation & thangka consecration	47.1 (4 ls); 47.2 (3 ls) Stagg 575-576	305/ 470		122a-b, no songs
-Dedication prayer-bcom ldan 'das rdo rje sgrol ma-Reply to	(no song) 34.11 (16 ls) Stagg 415	305/ 471 306/ 471		

⁴ See the translation of this episode in Zhwa, Möntsepa and mDo chen Rosary in Chapter 9.

Lcam Lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron me				
-Reply to request for building monastery	40.3 (12 ls); Stagg 484;	306/ 472		
- <i>mi rtag pa bskul ba'i mgur</i>	49.1 (5 ls) Stagg 587	307/ 472		
Episode visit Tashi Tseringma-lineage song	14.2 (5 ls) Stagg 136	307/ 473		mention; <i>tshe rings skor 3</i>
Episode talk with Drigom about how he imagines Mila's death	song like in <i>Golden Rosaries</i> (last song in Ngendzong Tönpa Chapter 4 (11 ls)	309/ 474		
Death episode for those with impure vision: bönpo sends leper woman with yoghurt-arrival Rechungpa from Loro	57.13 (complete) ; Stagg 670 62.11 (complete) ; 62.12 (complete) Quintman 210-212	311-316- 475-483		123a:death episode, no songs
List of disciples: 8 repa brothers, 9 great sons, 8 yogini sisters	Tashi Tseringma submits gods and demons, Ngags skyes lhan cig skyes pa'is sgronme submits secret superior beings; mgon po zla 'od gzhon nu submits human beings	316/ 483		
<i>Kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan - Life of Gampopa, Banner of All-Pervading Fame</i>				
Meeting Mila	41. 1 (each stanza 2 lines less)+ 2 together (only last stanza) Stagg 492+499	339		
Conversations with Mila	about previous instructions, Nyengyü, <i>shor sa 4</i> importance of practice (very close to RBC)	BDRC 20-22 345-347		
Training with Mila	41.3 (complete) -Stagg 502; gtummo instructions <i>gtum mo shing gshags la me sbar ba lta bu' gdams ngag</i> ; meditation expriences	347-352 353-363		

	41.4 (complete);41.5 (complete); Stagg 506-514 advice after the song (competition with Seban and Rechung's dreams, missing in RBC &TN)	
Departure to Central Tibet	41.7 (complete)- Stagg 518; Mila gives <i>rlung sems gnyis med kyi ngo sprod</i> [in Ms-O <i>phyag rgya chen po rlung sems gnyis kyi ngo sprod</i> ; last admonishments and advice not to stay with ordinary people: 47.8 (complete)- Stagg 521; episode of calluses absent	364-370

SONG CHART 7

Life and Songs of the Glorious Laughing Vajra Outline and Song Chart in “The Twelve Great Repa-Disciples”

Ms-O: Oxford version, no title

RBC-Pt: *rje btsun chen po mid la ras pa'i rnam thar zab mo*, Paltsek version

Ms-Drukpa: *rje btsun mid la ras pa chen po'i mgur 'bum*, BDRC

Ms-Gansu: *rNal 'byor dbang phyug mi la chen po'i rnam thar bka' 'bum chen mo grub thob ras pa bcu gnyis kyis bsgrigs pa ngo mtshar kun 'dus*; kan su'u rig gnas dpe skrun khang

Ms-N: Newark version-*rje btsun chen po mid la ras pa'i rnam thar zab mo*, Newark museum

Ms-Bordier: *rje btsun mi la bzhad pa rdo rje' 'gur 'bum rnam thar 'bril ba*, Foundation Alain Bordier Switzerland

Ms-BDRC: BDRC database; title not readable;

Ms-Lhasa: manuscript found in the Drepung Archives, no title

Q= Quintman's translation of Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa*, 2010

S= Stagg's translation of Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa. A New Translation*, 2017

TN=Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life and Songs of Milarepa*; song numbers, e.g., 1.1= chapter one, song nr 1 inside the chapter

Legend: **first column red mentions** = added songs; **1-10**= cycle placed in another location; **episode missing**=not classified under the same cycle-title; (1-10)=same songs in another location; **Ms-Lhasa**: extra song cycle not in the other compendia

CONTENT	Ms-O/RBC-Pt	Ms-Drukpa	Ms-Gansu	Ms-Newark	MS-Bordier	MS-BDRC	Ms-Lhasa	
prayer of praise	-1	-1	-3	-1	-1	-1	-1	
rigs dang 'brel ba dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan: the quality of enduring difficulties linked to his family								
lnga la gong ma'i skor early part of Mila's life								
	2a-12b	1-26	2a-18a	22:226-46/ 23:1-9	1b-15a	2a-20a	2b-23b	2b-17b
-family background	-2a	1	-2a	-226	-2a	-2a	-2b	-2b
-learning black magic	-3a	3	-4a	-230	-2b	-3a	-3b	-3b
-learning hail storms	-3b	4	-4b	-231	-3a	-4a	-3b	-4a
-learning dzogchen	-4b	6	-6a	-233	-4a	-5a	-5b	-5b
-searching for Marpa	-5a	7	-7a	-235	-5a meeting	-5b meeting 7a	-6b meeting 7a	-6a-meeting
-asking teachings + working	-6a	8	-8a	-240	-5b	-8a	-7b	-7a
-departure to Ngok	-7a	12	-10b	-241	-8a	-11a	-11b	-8a
-return to Marpa,teachings	-8a	14	-11b	-243	-8b	-12a	-13b	-10b
-song tashi shok, Q 75	-8b	15	-12b	-245	-9b	-13a	-14b	-12a
-song copper kettle (not in TN)	-9a	17	-12bisb	-246	-10a	-14a	-16a	-13a
-list transmitted teachings + song Q107	-9b	18	-13a	-Vol. 23: 3	-11a	14b+15a	-17a	-13b
-song by Marpa (not in TN)	-10a	20	-14a	-2	-11b	-16a	-18b	-15a
-song going home Q111	-10b	21	-14b	-3	-12a	-16b	-19a	-15a
-song by Marpa Q 111	-11a	22	-15a	-4	-12b	-17a	-20a	-16a
-song 4 pillars by Marpa	-11b	23	-16a	6(7-8 missing)	-13b	-18b	-21b	-16a
ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel ba nyams su myong ba'i yon tan 17 – 17 qualities connected with meditation experiences								
1)'khor ba la l'khor ba'ij snying po med pa'i yon tan-snga la bar ma gnyen 'dun gyi skor: the quality of essencelessness of saṃsāra; central part of the earliest episode, about family								

-reaching village, song Q122	12b-14b -13a	26-31 27	18.a-21.a -18b	23: 9-14 -9	15a-18b -15b	20b-23b -20b	23b-28a -23b	17b-20b -18a
-song Q 119	-13b	29	-19b	-11	-16a	-22°	-24b	-19°
-song to aunt Q 126	-14a	30	-20a	-12	-17a	-22b	-25b	-20a
-song aunt=witch (not in TN)	-14b	30	-20b	-13	-17b	-23a	-27a	-20a
2) rmi lam brda'[brdar] shar ba'i yon tan-snga la 'og ma : the quality of dreams arising as symbols; last part of the earliest episode								
-song about cultivation, Q 130	14b-19b -15a	31-43 31	21a-28b -21a	23: 14-26 -14	18b-23b -18b	23b-31a -23b	28a-37b -28a	20b-30a -21a)
-song negative aspects of samsara, Q 132	-15a	32	-21b	-15	-19a	-24b	-29a	-21b
-at Drakar Taso, vow to practice	-15b	33	-22a	-16	-19b	-25a	-30a	-22a
-song Q 135	-16a	34	-22b	-17	-20a	-25b	-30b	-22b
-song Q 134	-16a	34	-23a	-17	-20b	-26 a	-31a	-23a
-sPo ri spo thon, Q 147	-16b	36	-24a	-19	-20a	-26b	-32a	-24a
-story+song to Peta, Q 143	-17b	38	-25a	-21	-20b	-27b	p33-34 missing	-25a
-51.3, song S 602, about absence of shame	-18a	39	-26a	-23	-21a	-28b	-35a	-26a
-song to Peta, Q 157	-18b	41	-27a	-24	-22b	-29b	-36a	-26b
-song to Peta, Q 145	-19a	42	-28a	-26	-23a	-30b	-37b	-27b
-long extra song to Peta	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	28a-30a:
3) bde drod ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan : the quality of recognizing blissful heat-								
<i>spo ri spo mthon gyi skor</i> : episode at Poripothon								
-song about shame, Q 161	19b-21a -19b	43-47 44	28b-31a -28b	23: 26-31 -27	23b-26a -24a	31 a-33b -31a	38a-42a -38b	30a-33a -30b
-6.1, qualities sporispatho, S 67	-20a	44	-29a	-28	-24b	-31b	-39a	-31a
-6.3, song of feeling good, S 69	-20a	45	-29b	-29	-25a	-32a	-40a	-31b

-6.4, song 12 points of mind, S 70	-20b	46	-30b	-30	-25b	-33a	-41a	-32a
-6.2, song view,med,conduct S 68	-22a	47	-30b	-30	-25b	-33a	-41b	-32b
<i>brag dmar chong gling gi skor</i> : episode at Chongling Red rock								
	21a-22b	47-53	31a-34b	23: 31-39	26a-29a	33b-37b	42a-47a	33a-36b
1.1,song remembering guru S 6	-21b	48	-31b	-32	-26b	-34a	-42b	-33b-
1.2,song after vision Marpa, S 8	-22a	50	-33a	-35	-27b	-36a	-44a	-34b
1.3, x atsaras:praise of place, S 9	-22b	51	-33b	-36	-28a	-36b	-45a	-35b
1.4, about fearlessness, S 11(in 2 parts)	-23a	52	-34a	-37	-28b	-37a	-45b-	-36a
<i>la phyi chu bzang gi skor</i> : episode at Lachi Chuzang								
	22b-25b	54-59	34b-38a	23: 39-45	29a-32a	37b-41a	47a-51b	36b-40a
-2.1, song S 17	-23b	54	-35a	-39	-29b	-37b	-47a	-37a
-2.3, song S 20	-24a	55	-35b	-41	-30a	-38b	-48a	-37b
-2.2, song S 18	-24a	56	-36a	-42	-30b	-39	-48b	-38a
-2.4, song S 21	-24b	57	-37a	-43	-31a	-39b	-50a	-39a
-2.5, song S 22	-25a	58	-37a	-43	-31a	-40a	-50b	-39a
<i>gshin dor mo'i skor</i> : episode with Shindormo								
	25b-26b	59-62	38a-40a	23: 45-49	32a-33b	41a-44a	51b-54a	40a-42a
-song Q 178	-25b	59	-38b	-45	-32a	-41-2a	-52a	-40a
-3.4, song S 39	-26a	60	-39a	-46	-32b	-41-2b	-52b	-41a
-3.5, song S 40	-26b	61	-39b	-47	-33a	-43a	-53b	-41b
4) zas gos kyi 'dun pa dang bral ba'i yon tan: the quality of being free from desire for food and clothing								
<i>gangs 'gur gyi skor</i> : the episode of the song of the snow								
	26b-29b	62-70	40a-45a	23: 49-57	33b-37b	44a-49a	54b-61a	42a-46b
-3.2, song S 34	-27a	63	-41a	-50	-34a	-44b	-55b	-42b
-3.1, song of the snow, S 31	-28a	65	-42a	-52	-35	-46a	-57a	-44a
-3.3, song S 36	-29a	68	-43b	-55	-36b	-47b	-59b	-45b

5) nyams myong bde ba la [bde bar] shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of experiences arising as bliss								
<i>ras chung zhal 'jal gyi skor</i> : episode of meeting Rechungpa								
-story meeting Rechungpa	30a-31b	70-74	45a-48a	23: 70-74	37b-40a	49a-52a	61a-65b	46b-50a
-7.3, song S 76, to Rechung instead of nuns	-30a	70	-45a	-70	-37b	-49a	-61b	-47a
song <i>zhen pa bzlog pa'i 'gur</i> (not in TN)	-30b	71	-46a	-71	-38a	-50a	-62b	-48a
49.3, song at meat market S 590	-31a	72	-46b	-72	-39a	-50b	-63b	-48b
-49.4, song S 591	-31a	73	-47a	-73	-39a	-51a	-64b	-49a-
6) rtogs pa lam du shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of realisation arising on the path								
<i>mon gyi shing ri 'i skor</i> : episode at Shing mountain in Mön								
	31b-33b	74-79	48a-50b	23: 62-67	40a-42b	52a-54b	65b-69b	50a-52b
-49.2, song S 588	-32a	75	-48a	-64	-40a	-52a	-66a	-50a
-51.7, song S 605	-32b	76	-48b	-64	-40b	-52b	-66b	-51a
-51.6, song S 604	-32b	77	-49a	-64	-41a	-53b	-67b	-51b
-song Q 210	-33a	78	-49b	-66	-41b	-54a	-68b	-52a
-song not in TN, to Rechungpa	-33b	79	-50a	-66	-42a	-54b	-69a	-52b
<i>sing ga la'i nags gseb kyi skor</i> : episode in the Singala forest								
	33b-34b	79-83	50b-52b	23: 67-71	42b-44a	54b-57a	69b-73a	52b-55a
-7.1, song S 73	-34a	80	-50b	-67	-42b	-55a	-70a	-53a
-song about happiness (not in TN)	-34a	81	-51a	-69	-43a	-55b	-71a	-53b
-7.6, song S 80	-34b	82	-51b	-70	-43b	-56a	-71b	-54a
<i>dpal gro stag tshang gyi skor</i> : episode at Paro Taktsang								
	34b-37a	83-87	52b-54b	23: 71-76	44a-46b	57a-60a	73a-77a	55a-57b
-7.2, song S 75	-35a	83	-52b	-72	-44b	-57a	-73a	-55a
-7.4, song S 78	-35b	84	-53a	-73	-45a	-58a	-74a	-55b
-7.5, song S 79	-36a	85	-53b	-74	-45b	-58b	-75a	-56a

-7.7, song S 82	-36b	86	-54a	-75	-46a	-59a	-75b	-56b
7) snang ba mthun rkyen du shar ba'i yon tan: the quality of appearances arising as skillful means								
<i>skyid phug nyi ma rdzong gi skor</i> : episode at Kyiphug Nyima Dzong								
song praise to place (not in TN)	37a-38b	87-92	54b-57a	23:76-81	46b-48b	60a-62b	77a-80b	57b-60a
-32.1, song S 384-(few lines)	-37a	88	-55a	-76	-46b	-60a	-77a	-57b
-51.3, song S 602 (few lines)	-37b	89	-55b	-78	-47a	-60b	-78a	-58a
	-38a	91	-56b	-80-	-48a	-62a	-79b	-59b
brag skya rdo rje rdzong gi skor : episode at Drakya Dorje Dzong(only in Ms-Lhasa)								
-a rabbit appears riding a fox and threatens Mila with bow and arrow, wearing a straw shield (similar TN Chapter 6, S 67)								-60a-61a
-song to the threatening appearance, not in TN, similar to 1.4, S 11;								-60a
-the ghost disappears, Mila sings about feeling good (similar 6.3, S 69) * explanation of syllables in <i>phyag rgya chen po</i> (≠TN)								-60b
<i>ling pa'i skor che ba</i> : the main episode at Lingpa								
	38b-44a	92-106	57a-64b	23: 81-95	48b-56a	62b-71b	80b-92b	61a-69b
-4.1, song S 43	-39a	92	-57b	-81	-49a	-63a	-81a	-61b
-short reply Mila-not in TN	-39b	94	-58a	-83	-49b	-64a	-82b	-62b
-4.2, song S 45	-40a	95	-58b	-84	-50a	-64b	-83a	-63a
-4.3, song S 48	-40b	96	-59b	-86	-51a	-65b	-84b	-64a
-4.4, song S 50	-41a	98	-60b	-88	-52a	-67a	-86b	-65a
-4.5, song S 51	-41b	99	-61a	-88	-52b	-67b	-87a	-65b
-4.6, song S 52	-41b	100	-61b	-89	-53a	-68a	-87b	-66a
-4.7, song S 53	-42a	101	-62a	-90	-53b	-68b	-88b	-66b
-4.8, song S 55	-42b	103	-63a	-92	-54a	-69b	-90a	-67b
-4.9, song S 56	-43a	104	-63b	-93	-54b	-70	-91a	-68a
8) chos brgyad rang grol du shar ba'i [rang sar grol ba'i] yon tan: quality of spontaneous liberation of the eight dharma								
<i>l) gnyen bdun rang sar grol ba'i skor</i> : episode of the spontaneous liberation of family ties								
	44a-45b	106-10	64b-67a	23:95-100	56a-58a	71b-74b	92b-95b	-69b-72a

song <i>zhen pa rang sar log pa</i> not in TN	-44a	106	-65a	-96	-56a	-72a	-93a	-69b
-song not in TN, to aunt	-44b	108	-65b	-97	-56b	-72b	-94a	-70b
-song not in TN, to aunt	-45a	109	-66b	-98	-56b	-73b	-95a	-71b
2) <i>chos brgyad rang sar grol ba-snye nam drod phug gi skor</i> : episode at Nyenam Dröphug, spontaneous liberation of the eight worldly concerns								
	45b-46b	110-13	67a-68b	23:100-103	58a-59b	74b-76b	95b-99a	72a-74a
song about solitary life in retreat, not TN	-45b	110	-67a	-100	-58a	-74b	-96b	-72a
-song about sustenance, no Tn	-46a	111	-67b	-101	-58b	-75a	-97a	-73a
-song about untimely begging, no Tn	-46a	112	-68a	-102	-59a	-75b	98a/99a [placed after 88b]	-73b
9) <i>rtsod pas mi rdzi ba'i yon tan</i> : quality of not being hindered by debate								
<i>dar lo'i skor</i> : the episode with Darlo								
	46b-50b	114-24	68b-74b	23:103-14	59b-65a	76b-83b	99a-108a	74a-81a
-34.1, song S 396	-47a	115	-69b	-105	-60b	-77b	-100b	-75a
-34.2, song S 397	-47b	116	-69b	-105	-60b	-78a	-101a	-75b
-34.3, song S 398 (on rtsa lung)	-47b	117	-70a	-106	-61a	-78a	-101a	-76a
-34.4, song S 398 (mahāmudrā)	-48a	117	-70b	-107	-61b	-78b	-102a	-76b
-34.5, song S 399	-48a	117	-70b	-107	-61b	-79a	-102a	-76b
-34.6, song S 401	-48b	119	-71b	-109	-62b	-80a	-103b	-77b
-34.7, song S 404	-49b	120	-72b	-110	-63a	-81a	-105a	-78b
-34.10, song S 414	-49b	120	-73a	-112	-64a	-82a	-106a	-79b
-34.8, song S 408	-50a	122	-73a	-112	-64a	-82b	-106b	-80a
-34.9, song S 410	-50b	123	-74a	-114	-65a	-83a	-107b	-80b
<i>ti pu'i skor</i> : the episode with Tipupa								
(most songs not in TN)	50b-56b	124-40	74b-82b	23:114-29	65a-73a	83b-94	108a-121a	81a-90b-
-song Rechung about happiness	-51a	125	-74b	-115	-65b	-84a	-108b	-81a
-35.1, song S 420	-51a	126	-75a	-115	-65b	-84b	-109a	-81b

-35.2, song S 421	-51a	126	-75a	-116	-66a	-85a	-109b	-82a
-35.3, song S 422	-51b	127	-75b	-117	-66b	-85b	-110a	-82b
-song not in TN, to the king	-52b	129	-76b	-119	-67b	-86b	-111b	-83b
-song not in TN, to Tipupa	-52b	129	-77a	-120	-68a	-87a	-112b	-84a
-2 songs, about lineage, not in TN	-53a	131	-77b-78a	-121	-68b	-88a	-113b	-84a+85a
song x rMa + 'Gos lotsawa no Tn	-53b	132	-78b	-122	-69a	-88b	-114b	-85b
-song offering silver mandala	-53b	132	-78b	-122	-69a	-89a	-114b	-86a
-song by pandita, not in TN	-54b	134	-79b	-124	-70a	-90a	-116a	-87a
-song to Tipu, about hardships	-54b	135	-80a	-125	-70b	-91a	-117a	-87b
-song by Tipu, well-wishing	-55a	136	-81a	-126	-71b	-91b	-118a	-88b
-song to Tipu, well-wishing	-55b	137	-81a	-127	-71b	-92a	-118b	-89a
-song to Barima	-55b	138	-81b	-128	-72a	-92b	-119a	-89b
-song requesting explanations	-56a	139	-82a	-128	-72b	-93a	-120a	-90a
<i>zhal ta yo bde'i skor</i> : the episode of a happy encounter								
	56b-59a	140-47	82b-86b	23:129-37	73a-77a	94a-99a	-121a-127a	90b-95a
-38.1, song S 445, <i>bde ba</i> 25	-56b	141	-83a	-130	-73b	-94b	-121b	-91a
-38.2, about trip x India, similar	-57a	141	-83b	-131	-74a	-95a	-122a	-91b
-song by Mila, about happiness	-57a	142	-83b	-131	-74a	-95a	-122b	-92a
-38.2, song S 447 (only part)	-57b	143	-84a	-132	-74b	-95b	-123a	-92b
-38.3, song S 448	-57b	143	-84b	-133	-75a	-96a	-123b	-92b
-38.4, song S 450	-58a	145	-85a	-134	-75b	-97a	-125a	-93b
-38.5, song S 451	-58b	146	-86a	-136	-76b	-98a	-126a	-94b
-extra song by Rechungpa, repeating what he brought from India	—	—	—	—	—	-99a	-126b	—
<i>g.yag ru'i skor</i> : the story of the yak horn								
	59a-62a	147-55	86b-91a	23:137-45	77a-81a	99a-105a	127a-134b	-95a-100a

-38.6, song S 453	-59b	148	-87a	-138	-77b	-100a	-128b	-95b
-38.7, song S 455	-60a	149	-87b	-139	-78a	-100b	-129a	-96b
-38.8, song S 457	-61a	152	-89a	-141	-78b	-102b	-131b	-98a
-38.11, song S 461, <i>chog pa 8</i>	-61b	154	-90a	-143	-80b	-103b	-133a	-99a
-38.12, song S 462, <i>mi chog pa 8</i>	-62a	154	-90b	-144	-80b	-104a	-133b	-99b
<i>rkyang 'gur gyi skor</i> : the story of the song of the <i>kyang</i>								
	62a-65b	155-16	91a-95b	23:145-54	81a-85b	105a-111a	134b-142a	100a-105b
-39.1, song S 467	-62b	156	-91b	-146	-82a	-106a	-135b	-101a
-39.1, same song, throat S 468	-63a	157	-92a	-147	-82b	-106b	-136a	-101b
-39.2, heart S 469	-63a	158	-92b	-147	-82b	-107a	-136b	-101b
-39.2, same song, navel 469	-63b	158+59	-92b	—	(no navel)	-107b	-137a	-102a
-39.4, song S 471	-63b	159	-93a	-148	-83a	-108a	-137b	-102b
-39.5, song S 472 (upper song)	-64a	160	-93b	-149	-83b	-108a	-138a	-103a
-39.6, S 472 (part lower song)	-64a	160	-94b	-150	-84a	-108b	-138b	-103a
-39.7, song S 475	-65a	162	-94b	-151	-84b	-109b	-140a	-104a
-39.8, song S.476, upper song	—	—	—	—	—	—	-140b-	—
-39.9, song S 476 (lower song)	-65a	163	-95a	-152	-85a	-110b	-141a	-105a
<i>mkha' 'gro lung bstan gyi skor (mchong lung gi skor)</i> : episode of the dakini's prophecy-(episode at Chonglung)-								
	65b-67a	164-67	95b-97a	23:154-57	85b-87a	111a-112b	142a-144b	105b-107a
-39.10, song S 478	-66a	164	-95b	-154	-86a	-111b	-142b	-105b
-39.11, song S 478 (lower song)	-66a	165	-96a	-155	-86b	-111b	-142b	-106a
-57.9, song S 667	-66b	166	-96b	-156	-86b	-112a	-143b	-106b
10) [pha ma'i] drin lan bsab pa'i yon tan : the quality of repaying his parents' kindness								
	67a-69a	167-73	97a-100b	23:157-65	87a-90b	113a-116b	144b-149b	107a-110b
-54.2, song S 640	-67a	168	-97b	158-3x page nr	-87b	-113b	-145b	-107b
-54.1, song S 639	-67b	169	-98a	-161	-88a	-114a	-146a	-108a

-54.3, song S 641	-68a	169	-98b	-162	-88b	-114b	-146b	-108b
-54.4, song S 642	-68a	170	-99a	-162	-89a	-115a	-147a	-109a
-54.5, song S 643	p. missing	171	-99b	-163	-89a	-115b	-148a	-109b
-54.6, song S 644	-69a	172	-100a	-164	-90a	-116a	-149a	-110a
11) spyod pa che ba'i [chen po'i] yon tan: the quality of great conduct								
<i>sgyu phrul rig pa'i skor</i> : the story of knowing to display magic								
	69a-72b	173-81	100b-104b	23:165-74	90b-94b	116b-122a	149b-156b	110b-115b
-61.9, song S 699	-69b	174	-101a	-166	-91a	-117b	-150b	-111b
-61.1, song S 689	-70a	175	-101b	-167	-91b	-118a	-151b	-112a
-61.2, song S 691	-70b	176	-102a	-169	-92a	-119a	-152b	-112b
-61.3, song S 691 (lower song)	-70b	177	-102b	-169	-92b	-119a	-153a	-113a
-61.4, song S 692	-71a	178	-102b	-170	-93a	-120a	-153b	-113b
-61.5, song S 693	-71b	179	-103a	-171	-93b	-120b	-154b	-114a
-61.6, song S 694	-71b	180	-103b	-172	-93b	-121a	-155a	-114b
-song about examples for songs	-72a	181	-104a	-173	-94a	-121b	-156a	-115a
<i>lcam me'i skor</i> : the episode with Chamme								
	72b-73a	181-84	104b-106a	23:174-77	94b-95b	122a-123b	156b-158a	115b-117a
-61.8, song S 698	-72b	182	-104b	-174	-94b	-122a	-156b	-115b
-55.2, song S 648 (prophecy sun-moon disciples)	-72b	182	-105a	-175	-95a	-122b	-157a	-116a
-song not in TN, advice to yogins	-73a	183	-105b	-176	-95b	-123a	-157b	-116b
12) lha'i lhar gyur pa'i yontan: the quality of becoming a god amongst gods								
<i>'om chung nags 'dabs ma'i skor</i> : episode at the outskirts of Omchung forest								
	73a-74b	184-87	106a-107b	23:177-81	95b-97b	123b-125b	158a-161a	117a-119a
-45.8, song S 553	-73b	184	-106a	-177	-96a	-123b	-158b	-117a
-27.5, song S 306	-74a	186	-107a	-178	-97a	-124b		-118a

- extra song to Rechungpa	-74a	186	-107a	-179	-97a	-125a	-pages 160a 160bmissing	-118b
<i>bal yul nags ma'i skor</i> : episode at the Nepali forest (Dharmabodhi)								
	74b-76b	187-92	107b-10b	23:181-86	97b-100b	125b-129a	161a-165b	119a-122a
-33.1, song S 387	-74b	187	-108a	-181	-98a	-126a	-161b	-119a
-33.2, song S 388	-75a	188	-108a	-182	-98b	-126b	162a(before 161a)	-119b
-33.3, song S 388 (lower song)	-75a	188	-108b	-182	-98b	-126b	-162b(before 161a)	-120a
-33.4+5, songs S 390 (2 songs)	-75b	190	-109a	-183+184	-99a-99b	-127a	-163a -163b	-120b-121a
-33.6, song S 391	-75b	191	-109b	-184	-99b	-127b	-164a	-121a
-33.7, song S 391 (lower song)	-76a	191	-110a	-185	100a	-128a	-164b	-121b
-33.8, song S 392	-76a	192	-110a	-186	100b	-128b	-165a	-122a
<i>phug ron sngon mo'i skor</i> : the episode of the blue pigeon								
	76b-78a	192-96	110b-112b	23: 186-90	100b-102b	129a-131b	165b-168b	122a-124b
-8.1, song S 87	-76b	193	-111a	-187	-100b	-129a	-165b	-122b
-8.2, song S 88	-77b	195	-111b	-188	-101a	-129b	-166b	-123a
-8.3, song S 90	-77b	195	-112a	-189	-101b	-130b	-167a	-123b
-8.4, song S 91(slightly different)	-77a	194	-112b	-190	-102a	-131a	-168a	-124a
<i>rje btsun dang bu mo yid phrog ma gnyis kyi zhus lan</i> (only in Ms-Lhasa and in the second stratum, e.g., DNM-RD 268-82; BCG-D 7: 463-77; Ms-BL 91a-100b)								
long story of question and answers between Jetsün and a beautiful lady								124b-132a
13) <i>ye shes sgron me [b]ltams pa'i yon tan</i> : the quality of upholding the torch of wisdom								
<i>brag steng rta sgo la sogs pa'i skor</i> : episode on top of the Taga Rock and the like								
	78a-79b	196206	112b-115b	23:191-95	102b-105a	131b-134a	168b-172b	132a-134b
-23.2, song S 234	-78a	196	-113a	-191	-102b	-131b	-169 a	-132a

-23.3, song S 235	-78b	197	-113a	-191	-103a	-132a	-169b	-132b
-23.4+5, song S 236+237	-78b	198	113b+114a	-192+193	-103b	-132b	-170 a+170b	-133a+133a
-23.6, song S 238	-79a	199	-114a	-193	-104a	-133a	-170b	-133b
-23.7, song S 240	-79b	200	-114b	-194	-104b	-133b	-171b	-134a
11 small extra songs	_____	201-06	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Dom lung brag gseb kyi skor</i> : episode at Domlung Rock								
	79b-81a	206-13	115b-17b	23:195-59	105a-106b	134a-136b	172b-176a	134b-136b
-49.1, song S 587	-80a	206	-115b	-196	-105a	-134b	-172b	-134b
-51.2, song S 600	-80a	208	-116a	-197	-105b	-135a	-173b	-135a
-51.1, song S 599	-80b	210	-116b	-198	-106a	-135b	-174b	-135b
-song about view, med, conduct	-81a	211	-117a	159misplaced	-106b	-136a	-175a	-136a
-extra song, rang sems gros 'debs kyi mgur	_____	212	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>brag dkar rta so'i skor</i> : episode at Drakar Taso								
	81a-82b	213-16	117b-19b	23:159-202	106b-108b	136b-139a	176a-178	136b-138b
-51.5, song S 603 (lower song)	-81b	213	-117b	159(mispl.)	-107a	-136b	-176a	-136b
-32.1, song S 383	-81b	214	-118a	-199	-107a	-137a	-177a	-137a
-32.2, song S 385	-82a	215	-118b	-200	-107b	-138a	-177b	-137b
							178a.b.missing	
<i>thong la'i skor</i> : episode at Thongla (Padampa Sangyé, in some versions <i>thog la</i>)								
	82b-84a/	216-20	119b-21b	23:202-06	108b-110b	139a-141 a	178-182a	138b
-53.1, song S 631	-82b	217	-119b	-203	-109a	-139a	-179a	-139a
-53.2, song S 632	-83a	218	-120b	-204	-109b	-140a	-180b	-139b
-53.3, song S.632	-83b	219	-120b	-205	-110a	-140b	-181a	missing140-44a
<i>khyi ra ba'i skor</i> : episode with the hunter								

-26.1, song S 286-in 2 parts	84a-87a -84a	220-28 221	121b-26b -121b (no pagenr)	23: 206-13 -206	110b-114b -110b	141a-146a -141b	182a 191b -182b	missing page 147b
-26.2, song S 287-in 2 parts	-84b	221	-123a	-207	-111a	-142a	-183a	
-26.3, song S 288-in 2 parts	-84b	222	-123a	-208	-111b	-142b	-184a	
-26.7, song S 295	-85a	223	-123b	-208	-112a	-143a	-184b	
-26.5, song S 292	-85a	224	-124a	-209	-112b	-143b	-185a	
-extra song not in TN	-85b	224	-124b	-210	-112b	-144a	-186a	
-26.4, song similar S 290	-86a	225	-125a	-211	-113a	-144b	-186b	-144a
-26.6, song S 294	-86b	227	-125b	-212	-114a	-145a	-187b	-144a
-26.8, song S 296	-86b	227	-126a	-213	-114a	-145b	-188b	-144b
extra part to hunter's wife; (also in 2nd stratum)	—	—	—	—	—	—	-189b	-145b
	—	—	—	—	—	—	-190a	-146a
<i>ra rdzi ras pa'i skor</i> : episode with the goat herder								
45.14, S 558 (in 'gur phran +2nd stratum)	(124b)	(328)	(286a)	(25:36)	—	—	191b-192b	147b-148b
<i>lug rdzi'i skor</i> -episode with the sheep herder								
-song not in TN (also in 2nd stratum)	—	—	—	—	—	—	192b-193b	148b-149b
<i>gtsang g.yag ru gron khang gi skor</i> : episode at the yak hom inn in Tsang (some versions <i>g.yas ru</i>)								
-15.4, song S 151	87a-88b -87a	228-32 229	126b-29a -126b	23:213-18 -214	114b-117a -115a	146a-149a -146b	193b-198a- -193b	149b-152a -149b
-15.3, song S 150	-87b	230	-127b	-215	-115b	-147b	195-6a[2x same pagenr]	-150b
-15.2, song S 148	-88a	231	-128a	-216	-116a	-148a	-196b -197b	-151a

-15.1, song S 147	-88a	232	-128b	-217	-116b	-148b		-151b
14) nus pa che ba'i yon tan: the quality of greater power								
<i>brin gyi la so'i skor</i> : episode at Laso in Drin [<i>bring</i>]								
	88b-90a	232-34	129a-31a	23:218-22	117a-119a	149a-152a	198a-201a	152a-154b
-50.1, song S 593	-89a	233	-129a	-219	-117a	-149b	-198b	-152b
-45.11, song S 556	-89a	234	-129b	-220	-117b	-150a	-199a	-153b
-50.2, song S 594 (lower song)	-89b	235	-130a	-220	-118a	-150b	-199b	-154a
-45.12, song S 557	-89b	236	-130b	-221	-118b	-151b	-200a	-154a
-47.1, song S 575-	-90a	236	-131a	-222	-119a	-151b	-201a	-154a
-47.2, song S 576	-90a	236	-131a	-222	-119a	-152a	-201a	-154a
<i>a phyi snang ma'i skor</i> : episode with a grandma								
(first song 2 parts)	90a-91b	234-40	131a-32a	23:222-27	119a-121a	152a-156a	201a 205a	154b-156b
-53.4, song S 633, about craziness	-90b	237	131b+31b.a	-223	-119b	-152b	-201b ⁵	-154b
-23.9, song S 244	-91a	239	-131bis.b (2x f.131)	-225	-120b	-154a	-204a	-156a
15) byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan: the quality of greater blessing power								
<i>chu mig dngul 'bum gyi skor</i> : episode at Silver Spring [in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu not a separate song cycle but part of Zhi ba 'od kyi skor]								
	91b-99a	240-60	132a-44b	23:227-39/ 24:12	121a-131b	156a-169a	205a -223b	156b-169 a
-17.1, song S 160	-92a	241	-133a	-228	-121b	-156b	206a ²⁰⁷ missing	-157 a
-17.2, song S 162	-92b	242	-134a	-230	-122b	-157a	-208 a	
-17.3, song S 163	-92b	243	-134b	-231	-122b	-157b	-208b	

⁵ In Ms-BDRC fol 203 missing.

-17.4+5, song S 164 (2 songs)	-93a	244	-134b+ 35a	-231+232	-123a+b	-158a	-209a	pages158a-b,159a-b,160a-b missing	
-17.6, song S 165 (lower song)	-93b	245	-135b	-233	-123b	-158b	-209b		
-17.7, song S 166	-94a	245	-135b	-233	-124a	-159a	-210a		
-17.8, song S 167	-94a	246	-136a	-234	-124a	-159b	-210 a		
-17.9, song S 167 (lower song)	-94a	246	-136a	-235	-124b	-159b	-210b		
-17.10, song S 168	-94a	247	-136b	-235	-124b	-160a	-211 a		
-17.11, song S 169	-94b	248	-136b	-236	-125a	-160b	-211b		
-17.12, song S 170	-94b	248	-137a	-236	-125a	-160b	-212 a		
-17.13, song S 170 (lower song)	-95a	249	-137b	-237	-125b	-161a	-213 a		
-17.14, song S 171	-95a	249	-138a	-238	-126a	-161b	-213b		
-17.15, song S 172	-95a	250	-138a	-238	-126a	-162a	-214 a		
-17.16, song S 173	-95b	250	-138b	-239	-126b	-162a	-214b		
-17.17, song S 173 (lower song)	-95b	251	-139a	missing	-126b	-162b	-215 a		
-17.18, song S 174	-96a	251	-139a	missing	-127a	-163a	-215b		
-17.19, song S 175	-96a	252	-139b	-Vol.24:2	-127b	-163b	-216b		
-17.20, song S 175 (lower song)	-96b	253	-140a	-3	-127b	-164a	-217 a		
-17.21, song S 176	-96b	253	-140b	-4	-128a	-164b	-217b		
-17.22, song S 177	-96b	254	-140b	-4	-128a	-164b	-218a		
-17.23, song S 178	-97a	254	-141a	-5	-128b	-165a	-218b		
-17.24, song S 179	-97a	255	-141b	-6	-129a	-165b	-219 a		
-17.25, song S 180	-97b	256	-142a	-7	-129b	-166a	-220 a		
-17.26, song S 181	-98a	257	-143a	-9	-130a	-167a	-221 a		
-17.27, song S 183	-98b	259	-143b	-10	-130b	-168a	-222b		
									-166b
									-167b
									-169a
zhi ba ’od kyi bskor: the episode with Zhiwa Ö									

-17.28, song S 186	99a-100a -99a	260-63 260	144b-46b -145b	24:12-16 -13	131b-132b -131b	169a-170b -169a	223b-225b -223b	169a-170b -169a
-17.29, song S 186 (lower song)	-99b	261	-146a	-14	-132a	-169b	-224 a	-169b
-17.30, song S 187	-99b	262	-146a	-15	-132b	-170a	-225 a	170a-b missing
<i>gung thang lho sgo 'i skor</i> : story at the south-gate of Gungthang (Paldarbum)								
-21.1, song S 213 (in 2 parts)	100a-102b -100a	263-69 263	146b-50a -146b	24:16-22 -16	132b-136a -132b+133a	170b-175a -170b	225b-230b -225b	170b-174a -171a
-21.2, song S 215	-100b	264	-147a	-17	-133b	-171b	-227a	-171b
-14.2, song S 136	-101a	265	-147b	-18	-133b	-172a	-227a	-171b
-14.3+4+5, 14.6, S 137 (3songs)	-101a	265	147b+48a	-18+19	-134a	-172a-b	-227b	-172 a
-14.6+(7 <i>Phat</i> only Ms Druk +Gansu), S 138	-101a	265	48b(+Phat)	-19(+Phat)	-134a+134b	-172b	-228 a (2 songs)	-172b
-14.8+9, song S 139 (2 songs)	-101b	266	-148b	-19-20	-134b	-173a	-228b	-172b
-14.12, song S 141 (lower)	-101b	266	-148b	-20	-134b	-173a	-228b	-172b
-14.13, song S 143	-101b	267	-149a	-20	-134b	-173a	-228b	-173 a
-14.14+15, song S 143 (2 songs)	-101b	267	-149a	-21	-135a	-173b	-229a	-173 a
-14.16, song S 142	-102a	268	-149b	-21	-135b	-174a	-229b	-173b
<i>Legs se 'bum me 'i skor</i> : episode with Lekse Bummé								
song <i>rigs brgyud byon tshul</i> no Tn	102b-104b -102b	269-75 270	150a-53a -150b	24:22-28 -23	136a-139a -136a	175a-178b -175a	230b-235 a -231b	174a-177b -174b
-48.6, song S 582	-103a	271	-151a	-24	-136b	-175b	-232b	-175a
-45.15, song S 560	-103b	273	-151b	-25	-137a	-176b	pages 233a-b missing	-175b
-48.7, song S 583	-104a	274	-152a	-26	-137b	-177a		-176 a
-48.8, song S 584	-104a	274	-152b	-27	-137b	-177b		-176b
-48.9, song S 585	-104b	274	-152b	-27	-138a	-177b	-234a	-177 a
-48.10, song S 586	-103b	272	-153a	-28	-138b	-178a	-234b	-177b

<i>gsal le 'od kyi zhus lan (only in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, as in 2nd stratum compendia)</i>								
	missing	missing	153b-55a	24:28-32	episode missing	episode missing	missing	episode missi
-37.5, song S.441	—	—	-153b	-29	—	—	—	—
-37.6 song S 442	—	—	-154a	-30	—	—	—	—
<i>skyi rong rab chad rgen rgon gyi skor</i> : episode of the old man and the old lady from Kyirong								
	104b-105b	275-78	155a-56b	24:32-	139a-140b	178b-180b	235 a-237b	177b-179b
-12.1+4, S 115+117 (2 songs)	-104b	275	-155a+55b	-32	-139a+b	-178b	-235a+b	-178a
-12.2+3, song S 116 (2 songs)	-105a	276	-155b	pages	-139b+140a	-179a	-236 a	-178b
-12.5+6, S 117+118 (2 songs)	-105b	277	-156a	missing	-140a	-179b-180a	-236b+237a	-179 a
<i>gshin rdor mo'i skor</i> : episode with Shindormo [<i>gshen rdor mo</i>]								
	105b-107a	278-82	156b-58b	pages	140b-142b	178b-180b	237b-240 a	179b-181b
-48.1+2, S 577, 2 songs	-106a	278	156b+57a	missing	-140b+141a	-178b	-237b	-179b
-48.3+4, S 579, 2 songs	-106a+b	279+80	-157b		-141b	-179a+b	-238b+239a	-180a+b
-48.5, song S 580	-106b/	281	-158a		-142a	-180a	-239b	-181a
<i>mang yul gung thang gi skor</i> : episode at Mangyul Gungthang								
-song S 104, divided in parts	107a-08a	282-84	158b-59b	missing	142b-143b	183a-184b	240a-242a	181b-183a-
<i>sba mgur gyi skor</i> : the episode of the song of the bamboo staff								
	108a-110a	284-90	160a-63a	24:...-36	144a-147a	184b-189b	242a-248a	183a-187a
-18.1, song S 191	-108a	284	-160a	page	-144a	-184b	-242a	-183a
-18.2, song S 192	-108b	285	-160b	missing	-144b	-185a	-242b	-183b
-18.3, song S 195	-109a	287	-161b	-33	-145b	-186b	-244b	-184b
-52.17, song S 626 (lower song)	-(158a)	(424)	(extrasong)	—	—	-188a	-246b	-186a
-21.6, song S 219	-(120a)	(317)	—	—	—	-189a	-247a(placed after 248b)	-187a
<i>skor la thog gi bskor</i> (episode on top of the Kor[a] pass (Ms-Drukpa + Ms-Gansu; in Ms Drukpa no title, part of Lhaje Yang nge)								

45.6 Stagg 551 (upper song)	ep missing	missing	163a-67a	24:36-41	episode missing	episode missing	missing	episode missing
20.1 Stagg p.207 (2nd stratum)	—	—	-163a	-36	—	—	—	—
20.2 Stagg p. 208(2nd stratum)	—	—	-163b	-37	—	—	—	—
20.3 Stagg p. 210(2nd stratum)	—	—	-164a	-38	—	—	—	—
	—	—	-165a	-40	—	—	—	—
<i>La stod rgyal gi rtibs ri skor (the episode at the Tsibri mountain (Ms-Drukpa no title, part of Lhaje Yang nge)</i>								
44.1 Stagg 542 upper song(2nd stratum)	ep missing	missing	no title	24 :41-46	episode missing	episode missing	missing	episode missing
41.2 Stagg 542 middle song; Song broken pot Q 151; narrative S 156, meeting Drigom Repa ⁶	—	—	-165b	-42	—	—	—	—
	—	—	-166a	-43	—	—	—	—
	—	—	-166b	-44	—	—	—	—
<i>lha rje g.yang nge'i skor</i> : the story of Lhajé Yangnge								
	110a-111b	290-94	167a-69b	24:46-52	147a-149b	189b-192a	248a-251b	187a-189b
-56.3, song S 656 (lower song)	-110b	290	-167b	-47	-147b	-190a	-248b	-187b
-56.2, song S 655	-111a	292	-168a	-49	-148a	-190b	249b(misplaced)	-188b
-56.4, song S 658	-111b	293	-168b	-50	-149a	-191b	-251a	-189a
<i>gcong rong 'drin gi skor</i> : stories at Chongrong of Drin [in Ms-Lhasa <i>ljang rang dring gyis skor</i>]								

⁶ See Chapter10.

	111b-112b	294-97	169b-71a	24:52-55	149b-151a	192a-194a	251b-253b	189b-191b
-song Q 153	-112a	294	-169b	-52	-149b	-192b	-251b	-190a
-song Q 154	-112a	295	-170a	-53	-150a	-193a	-252b	-190b
-25.7, song S 280 (Rechungma)	-112b	296	-170b	-54	-150b	-193b	-253a	-191a
16) t̃ng nge'dzin [gyis] rtsal rdzogs pa'i yon tan: the quality of complete ability of samādhī								
<i>snye nam lung chung gi skor</i>								
	112b-114a	297-300	171a-72b	24: 55-59	151a-153a	194a-196a	254a-256b	191b-193b
-song about sleeping (not in TN)	-113a	297	-171a	-55	-151a	-194a	-254a	-191b
-23.1, song S 233 about <i>bde ba</i>	-113a	298	-171b	-57	-151b	-194b	-254b	-192a
-song necessity to live in retreat	-113b	299	-172a	-57	-152a	-195a	-255a	-192b
-27.4, song S 304	-113b	300	-172a	-58	-152b	-195b	-255b	-193a
<i>bzang rgyud phyag tshang gi bskor</i> : the episode in the Zangyü kitchen (Shengom repa, böñ ritual) only Ms-Oxford, RBC-Pt, Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu								
	114a-118b	300-13	172b-170a ⁷	24:59-74				
-24.1, song S 247	-114a	301	-173a	-60				
-24.2, song S 250	-115a	304	-174a	-63				
<i>a phyi rgan mo'i skor</i> : the episode of the old grandma- [only in Ms-Oxford, RBC-Pt, Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu (as in 2nd stratum)]								
-14.1, song to grandma)S 133	118b-118b	313-15	170b-72b ⁸	24:74-76				
<i>'gur phran</i> : minor songs; only in Ms-Oxford and RBC-Pt as separate chapter; songs found in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu in later chapter,								
	118b-124a	315-29	281a-93a	25:24-47				
-43.1, song S 535	-119b	315	-(287a)	(25:37)				
-21.4, song S 217	-120a	316	-(287b)	(25:38)				
-21.6, song S 219	-120a	317	-(287b)	(25:39)				

⁷ Page mistakes in Ms-Drukpa, pages repeated/

⁸ Both page numbers repeated

-21.5, song S 218	-120b	318	-(288a)	(25:39)				
-21.3, song S 216	-120b	318	-(288b)	(25:40)				
song absence examples mind's nature	-120b	319	-(288b)	(25:40)				
-56.1, song S 653	-121a	319	—	—				
-9.3, song S 97	-121a	320	-(290b)	(25:43)				
-9.2, song S 96	-121b	321	-(289b)	(25:42)				
-45.6, song S 551 (lower song)	-122a	322	-(163a)	(25:46)				
-13.3, song S 129 (only part)	-122a	322	-(283a)	(25:29)				
-45.7, song S 552	-122a	322	-(292b)	(25:24)				
-song by Rechungpa (not in TN)	-123a/	324	-(293a)	(25:47)				
-9.1, song S 95	-123a/	325	-(290a)	(25:43)				
-9.4, song S 98	-124a/	327	-(291b)	(25:45)				
-16.1, song S 155	-124a/	327	-(291b)	(25:45)				
-45.17, song S 562	-124b	328	-(281a)	(25:26)				
-45.13, song S 558 (Radzi Repa)	-121b/	320	-(286a)	(25:36)				
17) phyag rgya chen po'i ngo sprod ['phrod] pa 'i yon tan: the quality of introducing mahāmudrā								
bsnyen ngag gi glu mu tig gi phreng ba: the poetical song garland of pearls [Tseringma 1]								
	124a-129b	329-44	173a ⁹ 82a	24: 76-92	153a-163a	196a-206a	256b-269 a	193b-202b
-28.1, story S 307	-124b	329	-173a-bis	-77	-153a	-196a	-256b	-193b
-28.2, song S 308/	-125a	330	-173b-bis	-78	-154a	-197a	-257b	-194 a
-28.3, song S 311/	-126a	332	-174b-bis	-80	-155b	-198b	-259 a	-195 a
-28.4, song S 314/	f.missing	335	-176b	-83	-157b	-200a	-261b	-197 a
-28.5, song S 318	-127b	339	-179a	-87	-159b	-202b	-264b	-198 a

⁹ Double page numbers.

-28.6, song S 321 -colophon S 373	-128a -129a	342 344	-181a -182a	-89 -91	-161b -162b	-204b -205b	-266b -268 a	-201 a -202b
<i>bdud rtsi 'od kyi phreng ba:</i> garland of light of amrita [Tseringma 2]								
	129b-136b	345-65	182b-96a	24: 92-113	163a-174b	206a-219b	269a-285b	202b-214a
-29.1, song S 325	-129b	345	-182b	-92	-163a	-206a	-269a	-202b
-29.2, song S 326	-130a	346	-184a	-94	-164a	-206b	-270a	-203b
-29.3, song S 330	-131a	349	-186a	-97	-166a	-207b	-272b	-205b
-29.4, song S 334	-132a	352	-188a	-100	-167b	-209b	-275 a	-207a
-29.5, song S 339	-134a	358	-191a	-105	-170b	-215a	-279b	-209a
-29.6, song S 342	-135a	360	-193a	-110	-172a	-216b	-282a	-211b
<i>'phrang sgrol gnad kyi bar do:</i> the key points for liberation in the narrow paths of the bardos [Tseringma 3]								
	136b-144b	365-89	196b-212a	24:113-135	174b-188a	219b-235a	285b-305a	214a-227b
-30.1, song S 349	-136b	365	-196b	-113	-174b	-219b	-285b	-214a
-30.2, song S 354	-138b	371	-200a	-119	-178a	-224a	-291a	-218a
-30.3, song S 357	-139b	374	-202a	-121	-179b	-226a	-293a	-219a
-30.4, song S 362	-140b	378	-205a	-125	-182a	-228a	-296b	-221b
-30.5, song S 366	-142a	381	-207a	-128	-184a	-231a	-299a	-223b
-30.6, song S 369	-142b	384	-208b	-131	-185a	-232a	-301a	-225a
<i>bde stong ye shes sprin gyi phreng ba:</i> garland of clouds of bliss-emptiness wisdom [Tseringma 4]								
	144b-145b	389-92	212a-14a	24: 135-139	188a-190a	235a-237b	305a-308a	227b-229b
-31.1, song S 377	-144b	389	-212b	-136	-188a	-235b	-305b	-228a
-31.2, song S 378	-144b	394	212bcolophon part of S 374	-139(colophon part of S. 374 titled mu tig gi phreng ba!)	-188b	-236a	-306b	-228b

			titled mu tig gi phreng ba!) ¹⁰					
<i>jo bo bon ri'i skor</i> : the episode at the noble Bön mountain [in Ms-Drukpa first part called <i>ti tse'i skor</i> , Ms-Gansu gangs ti se'i skor - second part <i>jo bon ri'i skor</i>]								
(meeting <i>Rechungma</i>)	145b-147b	392-97	214a-19a	24:139-47	episode missing	237b-241a	303a-311b	229b-231b
-25.1, song S 267	-145b	393	-214a	-139	—	-237b	-308b	-230a
-25.2, song S 270	-146a	394	-215a	-141	—	-238b	-309b	-230b
-25.7 song S 280 (2nd stratum)	—	—	-217a	-145	—	—	—	p.232 missing
-25.8 song S 281 (in 2nd stratum)	—	—	-217b	-145	—	—	—	
(<i>jo bo bon ri</i>)	147b-150a	397-404	219a-23a	24:147-54	190a-193b	241a-245b	311b-318?-	233a-237a
-46.1, song S 567	-147b	398	-219b	-147	-190a	-241b	312a	-233a
-46.2, song S 568	-147b	399	-220a	-148	-190b	-242a	-312b-	-233b
-46.3, song S 569	-148a	399	-220a	-148	-190b	-242a	313 fols.	-234a
-46.4, song S 570	-148a	400	-220b	-149	-191a	-242b	missing	-234b
-46.5, song S 571	-148b	401	-221a	-150	fol. missing	-243b	-316a	-235a
-41.2, S 499 (to <i>Rechungpa</i> !)	-149a	402	-222a	-152	-192b	-244b	-316b	-236a
-46.6, song S 553	-149b	404	-222b	-153	-193b	-245a	317-318 missing	-236b
<i>brin gyi lha grong gis skor</i> : episode at Lhadrong in Drin [in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu 4 extra songs without separate title]								
	150a-150b	404-07	223a-26/27b	24:154-62	193b-195a	245b-247b	?-320b	237a-238b
-50.5 Stagg 596; (in BCG)	—	—	-223a	-154	—	—	—	—
-61.7; Stagg 695	—	—	-224a	-156	—	—	—	—
-episode miracles Tn chapt. 61	—	—	-225a	-158	—	—	—	—
-40.4, S 485-bde <i>sdug shen byed</i>	—	—	-225a	-158	—	—	—	—

¹⁰ See Chapter 12 for details on the Tseringma Episodes.

-58.1, song S 673	-150a	405	-226/227a	-160	-194a	-246a	fol.missing	-237a
-58.2, song S 674	-150a	406	-226/227b	-161	—	-246b	-319b	-238a
-58.3, song S 675	-150b	406	-226/227b	-161	-194b	-247a	-320a	-238a
<i>ras chung dbus bzhud kyi bskor</i> : the episode of Rechungpa's departure to Central Tibet								
	150b-155a	407-16	227b-32a	24:162-73	195a-200a	247b-253a	320b-329a	238b-244a
-52.2, song S 609 (upper song)	-151a	408	-227b	-162	-195b	-248a	-321a+b	-239a
-52.5, song S 611(lower)	-152b	408	-227b	-163	-195b+196a	-248b	-322 missing	-239b
52.3 song S 610(in prose upper part 611)	-152b	409	-228a	-164	-196b	-249a	-324a	-240b
-52.4 song S 610	-152b	409	-228a	-164	-197b	-250a	-325a	-241a
-52.7, song S 614	-153a	410	-228b	-165	-198a (similar)	-250b	-326a	-241b
-52.1, song S 608	-153b	411	-229b	-168	-198b	-251a	-326b	-242a
-song 'gyod med drug (no Tn)	-153b	412	-230a	-169	-199a	-252b	-328a	-243a
-song not in Tn	-154a	413	-230b	-169	—	—	—	—
-52.8, song S 615	-154b	415	-231b	-171	—	—	—	—
<i>dbus gtad bar ma'i skor</i> : the central part of [Rechungpa's] departure to Central Tibet, entrusting advice								
	155a-156b	416-19	232a-233b	24:173-75	200a-201b	253a-255a	329a-31b	244a-246a
-52.10, song S 618	-155b	416	-232b	-173	-200b	-253a	-329b	-244b
-52.11, song S 619	-155b	417	-232b	-174	-200b	-254a	-330a	-246b
-52.9, song S 617	-156a	418	-233a	-174	-201a	-254b	-330b	-245a
<i>dbus 'og ma ste nya ma'i skor</i> : last part of his departure to Central Tibet, the episode with the female followers								
	156b-158b	419-24	233b-238a	24:175-183	201b-204b	255a-258b	331b-336a	246a-249a
-52.14, song S 621 (upper part)	-156b	419	-234a	-176	-201b	-255b	-332a	-246a
-song not in TN	-156b	419	-234a	-177	-202a	-255b	-332b	-246b
-song not in TN	-156b	420	-234b	-177	-202b	-256a	-332b	-246b
-song not in TN	-157a	421	-234b	-178	-202b	-256b	-333a	-247a
-52.15, song S 622	-157a	422	-235a	-180	-203a	-257a	-334a	-247b

-52.17, song S 625	-157b	423	-236a	-181	-203b	-257b	-335a	-248a
-52.19, song S 626	-158a	424	-237a	-181	-204a	-258a	-335b	-248b
lha lcam ldem bu'i skor dang rang so rtse gong gi skor: episode with Lhacham Dembu and at Rangso Tsegong								
(9 songs by Rechungpa no TN)	158b-162b	424-36	238a-244a	24:183-93	204b-210a	258b-266a	-336a-346a	249a (fols. missing until 258)
-Rechungpa meeting Lhacig	-158b	425	-238a	-184(meat ep	-204b	-259a	-336a	
-song Rechungpa 's departure	-159a	426	-239a	-185	-205b	-259b	-337b	
-2 songs Rechung x attendant	-159a	427	-239a+b	-185-186	-205b-206a	-259b-260a	-338a	
-song shor ba brgyad	-159b	428	-240a	-187	-206b	-260b	-438b	
-song bla ma dran drug	-160a	430	-241a	-188	-207a	-261b	-339b	
-1 song by Rechungpa	-160b	431	-241b	-189	-208a	-262a	-341a	
-1 song Rechungpa x Lhacig	-161a	433	-242a	-191	-209a	-263a	-342a	
-1 song by Rechungpa x Lhacig	-161b	433	-243a	-192	-209a	-264b	-344a	
-1 song by Lhacig	-162a	434	-243a	-192	-209b	-265a	-344b	
-57.14, song S 671	-162a	435	-243b	-193	-209b	-265b	-345a	
mchod khang zhal 'jal gyi skor: meeting at the temple								
	162b-164a	436-39	244a-246b	24:193-97	210a-212a	266a-268b	346A-349a	fols missing
-57.2, song S 662	-163a	436	-244b	-194	-210b	-266b	-346b	
-57.3, song S 663	-163a	437	-245a	-195	-211a	-267a	-347a	
-57.4, song S 664	-163b	438	-245b	-195	-211b	-267b	-348a	
-40.3, song S 483	-163b	439	-246a	-196	-211b	-268a	-348b	
dags po lha rje 'byon pa'i ma 'ongs lung bstan gyi skor: prophecy of Dakpo Lhajé's future arrival								
-43.2, song S 537	164a-b	439-42	246b-248a	24:197-99	212a-213a	268b-270a	349a-351a	258a-259b
dags po zhal mjal gyi skor: meeting Dakpo(in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu this and next 2 cycles merged as dags po zhus lan gyi skor)								
	164b-173a	442-67	248b-66a	24:199-36	213a-219a	270a-286b	351a-372b	259b-274b
-41.1, song S 492	-167a	448	-251a	-207	-213b*	-274a	-356b	-263a

-41.3, S 502-view, med, conduct	-168b	454	-254b	-211	—	-277b	-361a	-266b
-41.4, S 506-Gampopa's dream	-170b	458	-257a	-215	-214b**	-280b	-365b	-269b
-41.5, song S 509-Mila explains	-171a	461	-259a	-218	-216a	-282b	-367b	-271a
-song another dream Gampopa+reply	-172b	466	—	—	-218b-19a missing	-285b	-371b	-274a
* Between this and the next son, the narrative about the differences between Kadampa and Secret Mantra is missing; **between this and the next song meditation experiences and song Staggy 502 missing								
rje ras pa chen po mi la ras pa dang mnyam med dwags po rin po che yab sras gnyis kyi zhu dang len gyi skor: episode of q&a between the great repa milarepa and the incomparable rinpoche from Dakpo								
-7.5, song S 79-repeated	173a-175b	467-74	(no ≠ cycle)	(no≠cycle)	219a-221a***	286b-293b	372b-381b	274b-281a
-41.6, S 515 (bardo song)(2nd stratum)	—	—	—	—	fols. missing	-286b (58b)	-373a (75a)	-275a (56a)
	—	—	265a+geese dream	228+geese dream	—	-287b	-374a	-275b
-41.7, song S 518	173b	469	262b	-224	-219b	-289a	-376a	-277b
- episode Tārā/torma/ Gampopa's greater influence	—	—	—	—	—	-290a	-377b	-278b
-41.8, song S 521	-175a	473	264b	-227	-220b	-292b	-380b	-280b
***This section is again much shorter in Ms-Newark								
dbus gtad zhal ta dang dwags po dbus bzhud kyi skor: the episode of advice to go to Central Tibet and departure of Dakpo								
-song of Gampopa after hearing Mila died, not in TN	175b-176a	475-77	(no≠cycle)	(no≠cycle)	episode missing	293b-295a	381b-384a	281a-283a
	-175b	477	—	-229-231	—	-294a	-382b	-281b
-4 different songs by Gampopa	—	—	—	-231-236	—	—	—	—
extra chapter without title in Ms Drukpa + Ms-Gansu (miracles shown to Rechungpa better than Indian marvels)[similar to rkyang episode]+ miscellaneous stories and songs								
some songs repeated from rkyang mgur	episode missing	266a-74b	24:236-39	25:15	episode missing	episode missing	ep missing	ep missing
-57.5/6/7/8 Song S.665-666	—	—	—	-237-238	—	—	—	—

-39.1 song S 467, in≠ pieces	—	266a/b+267a	-239	—	—	—	—	
-39.2 song S 468(repeated)	—	267b+268a	-Vol.25:1	—	—	—	—	
-39.3 song S 470(repeated r)	—	-268a-	-3	—	—	—	—	
-4 small miracles not in Tn-	—	-269a	-4	—	—	—	—	
-similar 39.7 S 475 (repeated)	—	-269a	-5	—	—	—	—	
-miracles + 40.1, S. 481	—	-269b	-6	—	—	—	—	
-34.11 song S.415	—	-269b	-6	—	—	—	—	
-36.2 song S 427	—	-270a	-7	—	—	—	—	
-song 40.2 S.482 + 2 unknown	—	-270b	-8	—	—	—	—	
-11.3 S.113+1 (in'gur phran)	—	-271a	-9	—	—	—	—	
-song about <i>bde ba</i>	—	-271b	-10	—	—	—	—	
-36.3 Song S. 428 (in BCG)	—	-272a	-11	—	—	—	—	
-44.4 song S. 543 (BCG-D&Si)	—	-272b	-12	—	—	—	—	
-38.9 song S 459 (repeated)	—	-273a	-13	—	—	—	—	
-38.10 song S 460 (repeated)	—	-273b	-14	—	—	—	—	
		-274a						
<i>lha cig lcam me'i bsngo ba'i skor</i> : dedication prayer for Lhacig Chammé								
	176a-177a	477-79	274b-76a	25:15-17	221a-222a	295a-296b	384a-386a	283a-284b
-11.1, song S 111	-176b	477	-274b	-15	-221a	-295a	-384a	-283a
-11.2, song S 112(in 2 pieces)	-176b	478	-275a	-16	-221b	-295b	-384b	-283b
-55.2, song S 648 (sung by Tārā from the sky, in TN sung by Mila)	-177a	479	-275a	-17	-222a	-296a	-385a	-284a
<i>snye nam rtsar ma'i skor</i> : episode at Nyenam Tsarma [in Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu <i>snyen chung tsar ma'i skor</i>]								

-55.1, song S 647	177a-178a	479-82	276a-77b	25:17-20	122a-223b	296b-298b	386a-388b	284b-286a
-55.5, song S 650	-177a	479	-276a	-18	-222b	-296b	-386a	-284b
song not in TN, animals as example	-177b	480	-276b	-18	-222b	-297a	-387a	-285a
	-177b	481	-277a	-19	-223a	-297b	-387b	-285b
<i>dbus gtad zhal ta'i skor</i> : episode of advice before [Rechungpa's] departure to Central Tibet								
(<i>gur phran</i> songs + 2nd stratum songs)	—	482-87	277b-297b	25:20-54	223b-226b	298b-301b	388b-?-	286a-288b
-42.3 song S. 527(in TN?)	—	—	-277b	-20	—	—	—	—
-42.4 song S 529(in TN?)	—	—	-278b	-22	—	—	—	—
-42.5 song S 530(in BCG)	—	—	-279a	-23	—	—	—	—
<i>lta ba sgom pa spyod pa</i> (DNM-Rd)	—	—	-279b	-24	—	—	—	—
44.5/6 song S 545-546(DNM-RD)	—	—	-280b(2songs)	-25+26	—	—	—	—
-45.17 song S.562 (in ' <i>gur phran</i>)	—	—	-281a	-26	—	—	—	—
unknown song+ 42.1 S.525(2nd str	—	—	-281b	-28	—	—	—	—
-42.6 song S.532(in TN?)	—	—	-282a(2songs)	-28	—	—	—	—
-50.4 song 596 (in BCG)	—	—	-282b	-29	—	—	—	—
-13.3 song S.129 (in ' <i>gur phran</i>)	—	—	-283a	-29	—	—	—	—
13.1 song S 127+13.2 S 128(BCG)	—	—	-284a	-32	—	—	—	—
-60.2 song S 684 (in BCG-A)	—	—	-284b(2songs)	-32+33	—	—	—	—
60.3/4song S 684/685-(in BCG-A)	—	—	285ab(2songs)	-34+35	—	—	—	—
60.5/6 S 686+45.13, S 558(radzi r.	—	—	-286a(3songs)	-35+36	—	—	—	—
-43.1 song S 535 (in ' <i>gur phran</i>)	—	—	-287a (4parts)	-37	—	—	—	—
21.4+6 song S 217-19('gur phran)	—	—	-287b(2songs)	-38+39	—	—	—	—
-21.5 song S 218(in ' <i>gur phran</i>)	—	—	-288a	-39+40	—	—	—	—
21.3 song S 216+song no example of mind	—	—	-288b	-40	—	—	—	—
-45.19 song S 566 (only last part)	—	—	-289a	-41	—	—	—	—

-unknownsong+9.2 S 96	—	—	-289b(2songs)	-42	—	—	—	—
-9.1 song S 95(in 'gur phran)	178a	483	-290a	-43	—	—	—	—
-9.3 song S 98(in 'gur phran)	—	—	-290b	-43	—	—	—	—
-16.1 song S 155(in 'gur phran)	—	—	-291b	-45	—	—	—	—
-unidentified song	—	—	-292a	-46	—	—	—	—
-45.7 song S.551(in 'gur phran)	—	—	-292b	-46	—	—	—	—
-45.8 S 552+ song by Rechung	—	—	-293a	-47	—	—	—	—
-45.1/2/3/4 songs S.549	—	—	294b (4songs)	-49-50	—	—	—	—
-45.5 song S 550+conferring nyengyu	—	—	-295a	-51	—	—	—	—
- song about not seeing bardo	-178b/	483	-295b	-52+53	-224a	-298b	-389a	-286a
-57.10- S 668+song similar 57.11	179b-180a	484	-296a+b	-54	-225a+225b	-300a	-390a-392b	-287a
-57.13, song S 670Mila shows calluses	missing!	486	-297b	-54	-226a	-301a	pages missing	-287b
<i>brin gyi smon lam gyi skor</i> : episode of prayers in Drin [in Ms-Drukpa bring]								
	180a-182b	487-95	297b-302a	25:54-61	226b-231b	301b-306b	?-398b	287b-293b
Jetsun invites people from Nyenam for a ritual feast and tells them not to kill animals; 5 songs to fisherman, not in TN	1-2 missing/ -3-180b -4-181a -5-181b -182a	1-487 2-488 3-490 4-491 5-492 493	-297b -298b -299b -300a -300b -301a	-54 -55 -57 -58 -59 -60	-1-226b -2-227a -3-228a -4-229a -5-229b -230a	-1-301b -2-302a -3-303b -4-304a -5-304b -305b	-1-missing -2-393a -3-394a -4-395b -5-396b -397b	-289a -289b -290b -291b -292a -292b
18) <i>tshe gcig gi zung 'jug rdo rje'i sku 'grub cing 'ja' lus su yal ba'i tshul bstan pa'i yon tan</i> : the quality of showing how to disappear as a rainbow a realising the unified vajra-body in a single life (18th quality only mentioned in RBC-Pt and Ms-Bordier; not mentioned in Ms-Oxford, Ms-Drukpa, Ms-Gansu, Ms-Newark, Ms-Bdrc and Ms-Lhasa, but the same songs are included)								
	182b-191b	495-516	302a-14b	25:61-81.2	-231b-244a	306b-321b	-399a-?	293b-308a
-62.4, song Q 192-part	-182b	495	-302a	-61	-231b	-306b	-399a	-293b
-62.7, song Q 199	-184a	496	-302b	-62	-232a	-307a	-399b	-294a

-62.4, song Q 192-second part	-184b	497	-303a	-63	-232b	-307b	-400b	-294b
-62.5, song Q 194	-185a	499	-304b	-65	-234a	-309a	-402b-403a-	-296a
-song no Tn (death of bönpo)	-185b	500	-305a	-65	-234b	-309b	406a	-296a
-episode Rechungpa in Loro	—	—	—	—	—	-310b	missing	-297a
-57.13, song S 670	—	—	—	—	—	-311b		-298a
-62.11, song Q 219	—	—	—	—	—	-312a		-298b
child singing from the sky(not in TN)	-186a	502	-306a	-67	-236a	-313a	-407b	-299b
-62.9, song dākinīs Q 204	-186b	503	-306b	-68	-236b	-313b	-408a	-300a
-45.8, song S 554	-187b	506	-308a	-72	-238a	-315b	-410b	-301b
-62.12, song Q 212 (by dākinīs)	-188a	507	-309a	-74	-238b	-316b	-411b	-302b
-62.13, song Q 214	-188b	508	-309b	-74	-239a	-317a	-412a	-303a
-62.14, song Q 216	-189a	509	-310a	-75	-239b	-317b	412b part	-303b
-62.15, start of song Q 218	-189b	510	-311/312a	-76	-240b	-318b	missing	-304b
-62.16, song Q 221 (by dākinīs)	-190a	512	-313a	-78	-241b	-319b	-413a	-305b
-62.17, song Q 226	-190b	515	-314b	-80.4	-243a	-321a	413a incomplete	-307a
							pages missing	

SONG CHART 8

Life and Songs of the Glorious Laughing Vajra Outline and Song Index in the Second Stratum Zhepé Dorje Compendia

A River of Blessings (*byin rlabs kyi chu rgyun*, BCG)

- Ms-Smith: *rje rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dpal bzhad pa rdo rje'i 'gur 'bum tshogs tshad phyogs cig tu bsgrigs pa lo rgyus kyis spras pa*; version in Gene Smith's Collection
- Ms-India: *rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdo rje'i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma zhes pa karma pa rang byung rdo rjes phyogs gcig tu bkod pa*; Dalhousie version
- Ms-Drepung: [No cover title] “rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rdo rje'i glu dang mgur nams phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa zhes bya ba.” *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*
- BCG-D: *rje mi la'i rnam thar mdzod nag ma*, in '*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*¹¹
- BCG-Si: *rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdo rje'i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma*; Sikhron version

The Dark/Black Treasury (*mdzod nag ma*, DNM-RD:)

¹¹ Both BCG-D and BCG-Si are copies of Ms-Drepung. The content is the same, except for the lineage images in Ms-Drepung, which are absent in the copies.

rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug mi la bzhad pa rdo rje'i gsung mgur mdzod nag ma zhes pa karma pa rang byung rdo rjes phyogs gcig tu bkod pa; in Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's *Collected Works*

- DNM-RD 1: Ziling version 2006
- DNM-RD 3¹²: Paltsek version 2013

Ms- BL: British Library manuscript, *Mi la'i rnam mgur bris ma*.

Q=Quintman's translation of Tsangnyön's *Life of Milarepa*

S=Stagg's translation of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*

TN-Dha: Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life and Songs*; song numbers: 1.1=chapter 1, first song

Legend: red mentions in first column = added to first stratum; 1-10= cycle placed in another location; episode missing=not classified under the same cycle-title; (1-10)=same songs in another location

DNM-RD: extra song cycle not in the other compendia

	Ms-Smith	Ms-India	Ms-Drepung	BCG-D	BCG-Si	DNM-RD 1	DNM-RD 3	MS-BL
introductory prayer of praise	1	1	2-4	2	1-3	2	2	1b-2a
<i>rigs dang 'brel ba dka' ba spyad pa'i yon tan/snga ma gong ma'i skor</i> - The quality of enduring difficulties linked to his family: the first of the early episodes								
-family background	2a-33b	1: 5-114	1:4-98	7: 4-114	1:4-127	3-43	3-46	2a-21b
-learning black magic	-2a	-5	4	-4	-4	-3	3	2b
	-4a	-15	10	-10	-11	-5	5	3b

¹² There are 3 versions of the same text; the second version, in book form, is not included here; it corresponds to the third version, DNM-RD 3 (2013).

-learning hail storms	-6a	-23	18	-18	-22	-6	6	4b
-learning dzogchen	-9a	-29	23	-23	-30	-8	8	7a
-searching for Marpa	-10a meeting	-32-meet 35	28	29meet30	-36meet37	-9-meeting	10	7bmeet8a
-Marpa's verses about mahamudra	-11b	-35	28	-30	-37	-10	10	8a
-asking teachings+ working	-11b	-36	30	-32	-38	-12	12	8b
-departure to Ngok	-12b	-58	46	-50	-55	-16	16	9a
-Tārā in the sky x dedication, return to Marpa, teachings	-17b	-63	52	-58	-62	-19	19	11b
-song <i>tashi shok</i> , Q 75	-21a	-67	56	-62	-66	-21	22	12b
-return to Ngok's place	-21b	-68	57	-63	-69	-22	23	14a
-return +retreat with Marpa	-21b	-69	58	-64	-70	-23	24	15b
-vision mandala in the sky + name Zhepé Dorje+cig rgyud	-21a	-70	58	-65	-70	-24	24/25	16a/b
-list transmitted teachings+song Q107	-23a	-75	64	-71	-76	-24	25/27	16a
-vision dākinī, Marpa goes to India, Dode dies, Marpa makes them check dreams, Mila dreams 4 pillars + song	-23b-24a (shorter)	-76-77 (shorter)	65-68	-73-77	-77-80	29 no dākinī Marpa no India Mila's dream	31	—
-interpretation dream by Marpa	-24a	-79	69	-77	-80	-30	32	(later)
-request to go home song Q104	-24b	-83	73	-81	-85	-34+36	37	17a
-5 formless dakini teachings to take	-25b	-85	74	-83	-86	-35	37	17b
-song by Dagmema Q 114	-26b	-87	76	-85	-91	-35	38	18b
-song by Marpa Q 111 (lower)	-27a	-88	77	-86	-92	-37	40	19a
-song by Mila 111 (upper)	—	—	—	—	—	-40	43	19b
-lam khyer drug gi mgur	—	—	80	-90	-94	-41	44	—
	-28a-33b	-93-114	81-98	-92-112	-95-122	—	—	—
								21a back x Rongtön

-in another namthar:going to his village, starting practice, some songs as below, back to Marpa&Ngok and back)								
ting nge 'dzin dang 'brel ba'i yon tan 18: eighteen qualities linked to his samādhi								
1)'khor ba la snying po med pa'i yon tan - bar ma'i gnyen 'dun gyi skor (<i>snga la bar ma gnyen 'dun gyi skor</i>): the quality of essencelessness of saṃsāra, the central episode with his siblings								
	33b-37a	1:115-26	1: 99-107	7:112-124	1: 127-34	43-49	46-53	21b-24a
-reaching village song Q122	-34a	-116	99	-114	-128	-44	47	22a
-song Q 119 (2 songs, 1 not in TN)	-34a + 34b	-118+119	101+102	-116+117	-129+130	-46	49	23a
-song to aunt Q 126	-35b	-121	103	-119	-131	-48	51	23b
-song aunt=witch (not in TN)	-35b	-122	104	-120	-132	-48	52	24a
-song to uncle	-36a	-124	105	-122	-133	—	(70)	—
-song to maternal aunt	-36b	-125	106	-123	-134	—	—	—
2) rmi lam brdar shar ba'i yon tan-snga-ma snga ba skor: the quality of dreams arising as symbols-the last of the past episodes(<i>snga ma skor gsum mo</i> , last of the three early episodes								
	37a-47a	1: 126-61	1:107-137	7:124-162	1: 139-79	49-63	53-68	24b-32a
-song about cultivation Q130	-37a	-127	108	-124	-139	-49	53	25a
song negative aspects of saṃsara Q 132	—	—	—	—	—	-51	54	25b
-at Drakar Taso, vow to practise	-37b	-128	109	-126	-140	-52	55	26a
-song Q 135	-37b	-129	109	-127	-140	-52	56	26b
-song Q 134	-38a	-130	110	-127	-143	-53	57	27a
-Spo ri spo thon Q 147	-38b	-132	111	-129	-144	-55	59	27b
-story+song to Peta Q 143	-39a	-134	113-114	-131-132	-145-146	-56-57	60-61	28a-29b
-51.3, song S 602 - absence of shame	-39a-b	-135-136	115	-134	-151	-59	63	30a-b
song to Peta Q 157, umbrella Bari Lotsā	-40a	-138	116	-136	-152	-60	65	3b-31b
-song to Peta Q 145	-40b	-140	118	-138	-156	-62	67	31b-32a

-44.6, extra songs:-song S 546	-41b	-142	119	-139	-157	—	—	(90b)
-15.3, S 150	-42a	-144	121	-142	-158	(344)	(71)	(85b)
-song on being green	-42b	-146	124	-145	-160	—	(72)	—
-song Q 141	-43b	-149	124	-146	-163	—	—	—
-34.7, song S 404 (part)	-43b	-150	125	-147	-163	—	(74)	(109b)
-song not in TN (<i>stong nyid kyi lung pa</i>)	-44a	-151	130	-153	-169	—	—	—
-small song about bliss	-45b	-157	132	-155	-173	—	—	—
-32.1, song S.384 (small part)	-46b	-159	133	-157	-174	(118)	(145)	(72b)
-song to Peta	-46b	-161	134	-158	-174	—	—	—
3) bde drod ngo 'phrod pa'i yon tan: the quality of recognising blissful heat								
<i>spo ri spo mthon gyi skor:</i> the episode at Pori Pothon								
53.4, song about craziness S.634 x Peta!	47a-49b	1:161-70	1:138-144	7:162-172	1:179-189	63 -69 ¹³	68-93	32a-43b
-song about shame Q.161	-47b	-163	139	-164	-180	(313)	(76)	—
-6.1+3, Poripothon S 67+69 (2 songs)	-48a	-165	140	-165	-185	-64	(69)	32b
-6.4, song 12 points of mind S 70	-48a+48b	-166+167	141+142	-166+167	-186+187	-65	(73+79)	33a-b
-6.2, S 68 (view, meditation, conduct)	-49a	-168	143	-169	-188	-68	(91)	34a
-extra episode Ms-BL: return to Marpa then x Ngok; back to Marpa; song <i>lam khyer drug</i> , 21.3, Stag 216. Mila's song about dream of 4 pillars, Marpa's explanation; Marpa advises to go x	-49a	-169	144	-170	-188	-68	(92)	34b
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	35a-43a; 38b Mila 40a Marpa

¹³ In DNM-RD 1: 65 it is mentioned that 11 pages are missing. The content of these pages has later been added in DNM-RD 2 and 3, part in the 2nd quality and part in the 3rd.

India; return to Tsang; song 4 <i>angs</i> x shepherd and 6 <i>angs</i> ;song to boy with horse and weapons								42a-b; 42b-43a
brag dmar chong gling gi skor: the episode at Chongling Red Rock								
	49b-53a-	1: 170-82	1: 144-54	7:172-182	1:189-205	69-77	93-101	43b-47a
-1.1,song remembering guru S 6	-50a	-171	145	-172	-190	-70	94	44b
-1.2, song after vision Marpa S 8	-50b	-174	148	-175	-196	-73	97	45b
-1.3, x atsaras:praise of place S 9	-51a	-175	149	-176	-197	-74	98	46a-b
-1.4, S 11, song about fearlessness	-51b	-177	150	-177+178	-199+200	-75	99	46a
-7.7, S.83 (small part)	-52a	—	151	-179	-201	-76	100	47a
-7.6, S 81(part)	-52b	-179	152	-180	-201	part of 1.4 (122)		—
-rabbit riding a fox, 1.4, S 11 (short)	-53a	-181	153	-182	-205		(149)	—
-1 extra song about his realizations	—	—	—	—	—		—	47a
la stod rgyal gyi rtsib ri skor (only Ms-BL, similar to Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu, but only 1 song) ¹⁴								
-song to robbers who ask why he doesn't have a horse and weapons ('khor gsum) (Q.151); the head bandit becomes Drigom Ling Khawa	episode missing	episode missing	episode missing	episode missing	episode missing	episode missing	episode missing	47a-48b song 47b
la phyi chu bzang gi skor-the episode at Lachi Chuzang								
	53a-55b-	1:182-89	1:154-160	7:183-188	1: 205-212	77-83	101-108	48b-52a
-2.1, song S 17	-53b	-182	155	-183	-205	-77	101	48b
-2.3, song S 20	-54a	-184	156	-185	-206	-78	103	49b

¹⁴ See Chapter 10, *The Episode at the Tsibri Mountain in the Gyal Region of Latö*.

-2.2, song S 18	-54a	-185	157	-186	-209	-79	104	59a
-2.4, song S 21	-54b	-187	158	-187	-210	-81	105	50b
-2.5, song S 22	-55a	-188	159	-188	-211	-81	106	51a
<i>gshen dor mo 'i skor</i> : the episode with Shendormo								
	55b-56b	1: 190-93	1:160-163	7:190-194	1:212-217	83-86	108-111	52a-54a
-song Q 178	-55b	-190	160	-190	-32a	-83	108	52a
-3.4, song S 39	-55b	-191	161	-191	-32b	-84	109	53a
-3.5, song S 40	-56a	-192	162	-192	-33a	-85	110	53b
4) <i>Zas gos kyi 'dun pa dang bral ba'i yon tan</i> : the quality of being free of desire for food and clothing								
<i>gangs 'gur gyi bskor</i> : the episode of the song of the snow								
	56b-61a-	1:93-11	1:163-176	7:194-211	1: 217-34-	86-96	111-121	54a-60a
-3.2, song S 34	-57a	-196	165	-196	-221	-88	113	56a (2x)
-3.1, song S 31 (song of the snow)	-58a	-199	167	-200	-223	-90	115	57b
-3.3, song S 36 (<i>gnad kyi mdo drug</i>)	-59a	-203	170	-203	-227	-93	118	55a-b
-13.4, song S 130, oral instructions	-60a	-206	173	-206	-229	—	—	59a
-34.11, song S 415 (to lCam lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron ma)	-60a	-207	174	-207	-230	(242)	(276)	—
-51.3, song S 602	-60b	-209	175	-209	-233	(120)	(148)	(361b) (74a)
5) <i>nyams myong bde bar shar ba'i yon tan</i> : the quality of experience becoming blissful								
<i>ras chung zhal mjal gyi skor</i> : episode meeting Rechungpa								

<i>-blo bde mdun gyi mgur</i> (similar S 80) <i>-Rechungpa's story, illness, trip India and return</i> Rechung's arrival, teaching, meditation 7.3, song S 76, to Rechung (TN to 5 nuns) <i>-zhen pa bzlog pa'i mgur</i> (not in TN) -49.3, song S 590, at meat market -49.4, song S 591	61a-63b -61b story missing -61b -61b -62a -62b -63a	1:211-19 -211 story missing -211 -213 -215 -217 -218	1:176-185 177 178 180 180 181 182 183	7:211-222 -211 -213 -215 -216 -217 -219 -220	1:234-245 -234 -237 -239 -239 -240 -241 -242	96-101 (457) story missing -96 -96 -97 -99 -100	121-127 (504) missing 121 123 123 124 125	60a-64a — 60a-b(≠ story) 60b 61a 62a 62b 63a
<i>mon gyi shing ri'i skor</i> -episode at Shing mountain in Mon								
-49.2, song S 588 -51.7, song S 605 -51.6, song S 604 -song Q 210 -song not in TN to Rechungpa	63b-65a -63b -64a -64a -64b -65a	1:219-226 -220 -221 -222 -223 -225	1:185-189 185 186 187 188 189	7: 222-28 -222 -224 -225 -226 -228	1: 245-49 -245 -246 -247 -248 -249	100-106 -102 -103 -104 -105 -106	127-133 128 129 130 131 132	64a-69a 64a 64b 65a 66a 66b
<i>ras chung pa la gdams pa'i skor</i> : episode of instructions to Rechungpa								
-32.2, song S 385 -song not in TN -song not in TN <i>snyan rgyud + gtad rgya to Rechungpa</i>	65a-66b -65a -66a -66a (148b-149a)	1:226-29 -226 -228 -229 (1:501-502)	1:189-195 190 192 192 193-195	7:228-236 -229 -231 -232 -233-236	1:249-256 -250 -251 -251 -252-256	ep. missing — (321) (321) (322-325)	ep.missing — (360) (361) (362-65)	missing — — — (178a-79a)
6)rtogs pa lam du shar ba'i yon tan : the quality of realisation arising on the path								
<i>sing ga la'i nags gseb kyi</i> bskor: episode at the Singala forest								
-7.1, song S 73	66b-68a -66b	1: 230-35 -230	1: 195-200 196	7:236-242 -237	1: 256-59 -256	106-111 -107	133-138 133	67a-69a 67a

-song about happiness (not in TN)	-67a	-232	197	-238	-257	-108	134	67b
-7.6, song S 80	-67b	-233	198	-239	-258	-109	136	68a
<i>dpal gro stag tshang gyi bskor</i> : episode at Paro Taktsang								
	68a-74b	1:235-56	1:200-221	7:242-261	1:259-85	111-117	138-144	69a-72a
-7.2, song S 75	-68a	-235	200	-242	-260	-111	138	69b
-7.4, song S 78	-68b	-237	201	-243	-260	-112	139	70a
-7.5, song S 79	-69a	-238	202	-245	-261	-114	140	70b
-7.7, song S 82	-69a-	-239	203	-246	-262	-115	142	71a
-6.4, song S 70	-70a	-241	205	-248	-263	(68)	(91)	(34a)
-61.7, song S 696	-70b	-242	205	-249	-264	(453)	(500)	—
-song not in TN	-71a	-244	207	-252	-268	(454)	(502)	—
-song not in TN	-71a	-245	208	-252	-268	—	—	—
-6.1+6.3, song S 67+69 together	-71b	-246	210+211	-255+256	-270	(65)	(73+79)	(33a+b)
-14 songs not in TN (ang 4, ang 6, conversation old lady)	-72a-74b	-247-256	212-220	-257-261	-270-285	—	—	—
7) snang ba mthun rkyen du shar ba'i yon tan : the quality of appearances arising as skillful means								
<i>skyid phug nyi ma rdzong gi bskor</i> : episode at Kyiphug Nyima Dzong								
	74b-76b	1:256-62	1:221-225	7:269-275	1:285-291	117-122	144-149	72a-74b
-song of praise to place (not in Tn)	-75a	-256	221	-269	-286	-117	144	72a
-32.1, song S 384 few lines,	-75a	-258	222	-271	-289	-118	145	72b
-51.3, song S 602 (few lines)	-76a	-260	224	-274	-290	-120	148	74a
<i>ling pa'i skor che ba'o</i> : the main episode of Lingp, at Drakya Dorje Dzong; in DNM-RD split in 2, the first part is called <i>brag kya rdo rje'i skor</i> and second one <i>mi la ras pa brag srin mo gnyis kyi zhus lan gyi skor</i>								
	76b-82b	1:262-281	1:225-242	7:275-295	1:291-306	122-140	149-168	74b-83b
	(53a)	(1:181)	(1:153)	(7:182)	(1:202)	-122	149	—
	—	—	(2:83)	(8:186)	(2:738)	-123	150	—

rabbit riding a fox, 1.4, S.11(short)+song (similar 6.3,S69)+explanation <i>phyag</i> <i>rgya chen po</i> (=Ms-Lhasa)	-77a	-263	226	-276	-292	-124	151	75a
-4.1, song S 43	-77b	-265	228	-279	-295	-126	153	76a ¹⁵
-short reply Mila-not in TN	-78a	-266	229	-280	-296	-127	154	76b
-4.2, song S 45	-78b	-269	231	-283	-298	-129	156	77b
-4.3, song S 48	-78b	-271	233	-285	-299	-131	159	79a
-4.4, song S 50	-79b	-272	234	-286	-300	-132	160	79b
-4.5, song S 51	-79b	-273	235	-288	-301	-133	161	80a
-4.6, song S 52	-81a	-275	236	-289	-302	-134	162	80b
-4.7, song S 53	-81a	-277	238	-291	-303	-136	164	81b
-4.8, song S 55	-82a	-278	239	-293	-304	-137	166	82a
-4.9, song S 56	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	83b
short story of Ngendzong Tönpa (MsBL)								
brin gyi sring ste phugs su bzugs pa'i skor (only in Ms-BL with this title, 87a-89a; see below in nus pa che ba'i mgur tshogs)								
snye nam tsar ma (no title, only in Ms-BL in this position)								
38.9, song S 459	ep. missing (149b)	ep.missing (1:506)	ep.missing (1:423)	ep.missing (7:482)	ep.missing (1:503)	—	—	89a
38.10, song S 460	(150b)	(1:507)	(1:413)	(7:483)	(1:504)	—	—	89b
44.6, song S 546	(41b)	(1:142)	(1:119)	(7:139)	(1:157)	—	—	90b
19.1, song S 203	(179b)	(2:83)	(1:502)	(8:40)	(2:590)	(471)	(519)	91a
bde sdug gi 'gur	—	—	—	—	—	(720)	(804)	91b
8) chos brgyad rang grol gyi yon tan: the quality of self-liberation of the eight dharmas								

¹⁵ Pages 76a & 76b inverted.

1) <i>gnyen bdun rang sar grol ba'i skor</i> : the episode of self-liberation from relatives								
-song <i>zhen pa rang log</i> to Peta, no Tn	82b-85a	1:281-88	1:242-247	7:295-301	1:306-11	140-145	168-173	100a-102b
-song not wanting things, few lines	-83a	-282	242	-296	-307	-141	169	100b
-song to aunt, not in Tn	-83b (complete)	-284 (1 line)	244	-298(4 lines)	-308(4 lines)	—	—	—
-song not in TN, to aunt (in sertreng)	-84a	-285	245	-298	-309	-142	170	101a
	-84b	-286	246	-300	-310	-144	172	102a
2) <i>chos brgyad rang grol ba snye nam drod phug sogs kyi skor</i> : episode of self liberation of the 8 dharma at Nyenam Dröphug and the like								
song about solitary life in retreat not in TN	85a-90a	1:288-301	1:247-256	7:301-311	1: 311-318	145-153	173-182	102b-105a
-song not wanting monastery-not in TN	-85a	-289	248	-301	-311	-145	174	103a
-song not in Tn about begging	-85b	-290	249	-302	-312	-146	175	103b
-song not wanting things, complete	-86a	-291	249	-303	-313	-147	176	104a
-part of yak-horn story S 454, 38.6	-86b	-293	251	-306	-314	—	—	—
-40.4, S 485(<i>bde sdug</i> dividing line)	(108b)	(1:367)	(1:313)	(7:370)	(1:378)	-149	178	—
-song not in TN-about yogins' <i>bde ba</i>	-87a	-296	253	-308	-316	-150	179	(294a)
-song <i>lta sgom spyod pa</i>	-88a	-298	254	-309	-317	—	—	—
-extra song about human nature(not in TN)	—	—	—	—	—	-152	181	—
	-89b	-300	—	—	—	—	—	—
9) <i>rtsod pas mi rdzi ba'i yon tan</i> : the quality of not being hindered by debate								
<i>ston pa dar lo'i bskor</i> : the episode of Tönpa Darlo (also called <i>rtsod pa las rgyal te dar lo rjes su bzung ba'i skor</i>)								
long narrative	90a-97a	1:301-31	1:256-281	7:311-336	1:318-43	153-168	182-198	105a-111b
-34.1, song S 396	-92a	-314	266	-321	-330	-155	184	105b
-34.2, song S 397	-92a	-315	267	-322	-331	-155	185	106a
-34.3, -song S 398(on tsa lung)	-92b	-316	268	-323	-331	-156	185	106a
-34.4, song S 398(on mahamudra)	-92b	-317	269	-323	-332	-157	186	106b
-34.5, song S 399	-93a	-317	269	-324	-332	-158	187	107a
-34.6, song S 401	-93b	-320	271	-326	-334	-160	189	108a

-34.8, song S 408 (part)	-94a	-322	273	-328	-335	-161	191	109a
-34.7, song S 404	-95a	-324	275	-330	-336	-163	192	109b
-34.10, song S 414	-95a	-325	276	-331	-340	-163	193	110a
-34.8, song S 408	-95b	-326	277	-332	-340	-165	195	111a
-34.9, song S 410	-96a	-328	278	-333	-341	-165	195	111a
song <i>lta sgom spyod pa</i> to Darlo(no inTN)	-96a	-329	279	-334	-342	-166	196	—
<i>Ti pu pa'i skor</i> - the episode of Tipupa (<i>ras chung ti pu pa dang mjal ba'i skor</i>)								
-song Rechung present happiness	97a-104a	1: 331-354	1:281-302	7:336-358	1:343-67	168-186	198-217	111b-122a
-35.1, song S 420	-97a	-332	282	-337	-344	-168	198	112a
-35.2, song S 421	-97b	-333	283	-338	-344	-169	199	112a
-35.3, song S 422	-98a	-334	284	-339	-345	-170	200	113a
-52.9, song S 617	-98a	-335	285	-340	-346	-171	201	113b
-song to the king, not in TN	-98b	-336	286	-341	-347	(618)	(695)	—
-song to Tipupa, not in TN	-99b	-339	289	-344	-349	-173	203	114b
-song to Tipu about lineage,not in TN	-99b	-340	290	-345	-350	-174	204	115a
-song reply Tipu, not in TN	-100b	-342	291	-347	-355	-175	206	116a
-song to Ma and Go Lotsa, not in TN	-100b	-342	292	-347	-355	-176	206	116a
-extra song to Tipupa	-101a+b	-343+344	293+294	-348	-356	-177	207	116b
-song by paṇḍita, not in TN	—	—	—	—	—	-177	208	117a
-song about hardships to Tipupa,no TN	-102a	-346	295	-351	-358	-179	210	118b
-song well wishing by Tipu,not in TN	-102a	-348	296	-352	-363	-180	211	119a
-song well wishing Rechung,not in TN	-103a	-350	298	-354	-364	-182	213	120a
-song to Barima, not in TN	-103a	-350	299	-355	-365	-183	214	120b
song to Barima, requesting explanations	-103b	-351	299	-356	-365	-184	215	121a
	-103b	-352	300	-356	-366	-185	216	121b
<i>zhal ta yo bde'i skor</i> : the episode of a happy encounter								

-38.1, song S 445, <i>bde ba</i> 25	104-107b	1: 354-65	1:302-311	7:358-369	1: 367-77	186-195	217-226	122a-127a
-38.2, part of song S 447	-104b	-355	303	-359	-368	-187	218	122b
-song Mila about happiness, not in TN	-105a	-356	304	-360	-371	-188	219	123a
-38.2, S 447, list of teachings he got	-105a	-357	305	-361	-372	-189	220	123b
-38.3, song S 448	-105b	-358	306	-363	-373	-190	221	124a
-38.4, song S 450, in 2 parts	-106a	-359	306	-363	-373	-190	222	124b
-38.5, song S 451	-106b	-361+362	308	-365	-374+375	-192(part)	224	125b
	-107b	-364	310	-367	-376	-193	225	126a
<i>g.yag ru'i skor</i> : the episode of the yak hom								
-38.6, song S 453	107b-113a	1: 365-82	1:311-325	7: 369-83	1:377-96	195-204	226-237	127a-133a
-38.7, song S 455	-108b	-367	313	-370	-378	-196	228	127b
-Jetsün leaning against flower, short version- 38.11+38.12, song S 461-462	-109a	-369	314	-372	-382	-197	229	129b
-38.8, song S 457 (<i>mi rtag pa</i>)	-109b	-371	315-316	-373-374	-383	—	—	—
-extra song about impermanence	-110b	-374	319 ¹⁶	-377	-387	-200	232	131a
-38.11, song S 461(<i>chog pa brgyad</i>)	-111a	-376	321	-379	-391	—	—	—
-38.12, song S 462(<i>mi chog pa brgyad</i>)	-112a	-379	323	-381	-392	-202	235	132a
	-112b	-380	324	-382	-395	-203	235	132b
<i>rkyang mgur gyi skor</i> : episode of the song of the <i>kyang</i>								
-39.1, song S 467 crown of his head	113a-119b	1:382a-404	1:325-343	7:383-403	1:396-425	204-218	237-251	133a-139a
-39.1, song -eyebrows-, tongue S 468	-114a	-386	329	-387	-405	-206	238	134a
-39.2, heart S 469	-114b	-387	330	-389	-406	207eyetongue	239/240	134b
	-115a	-389	331	-391	-407	-208 heart	241	135a

¹⁶ In Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si, the same mistake is copied: instead of *blo ma bde* we find *blo re bde* throughout the song.

-39.2, song S 469, navel -extra song, under his clothes	-115b -116a	-390 -392	332 333	-392 -393	-408 -411	209lowerbody —	242 —	— —
-39.4, song S 471 -extra song <i>lta ba sgom pa</i> etc	-116a -116b	-393 -395	334 334	-394 -395	-412 -413	-210 —	242 —	135b —
-39.5, song S 472(upper song) -extra song: multiple emanations	-117a -117b	-396 -398	337 339	-396 -399	-414 -418	-211 —	243 —	136a —
-39.6, song S 473(only part)	-118a	-399	338	-398	-417	-212	244	136b
-39.7, song S 475 -extra song by <i>Rechungpa</i>	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —	-213 -214	246 247	137b —
-39.9, song S 476 (lower song, part)	-118b	-401	341	401	-421	-215	248	—
<i>mchong lung gi skor</i> : episode at Chonglung								
	119b-120b	1: 404-07	1:343-346	7:403-407	1: 425-29	218-222	251-255	139a-140a
-39.10, song S 478	-119b	-404	343	-404	-425	-219	252	139a
-39.11, song S 478 (lower song)	-120a	-405	344	-404	-426	-220	253	139b
-57.9, song S 667	-120a	-406	345	-405	-426	-221	254	140a
10) (<i>pha ma'i</i>) <i>drin lan bsab pa'i yon tan</i> : the quality of repaying (the parents') kindness								
	120b-123b-	1:407-17	1:346-354	7:407-416	1: 429-38	222-229	255-263	140b-145a
-54.2, song S 640	-121a	-409	347	-408	-430	-223	256	141a
-54.1, song S 639	-121b	-410	348	-409	-431	-224	257	142a
-54.3, song S 641	-121b	-411	349	-410	-432	-225	258	142b
-54.4, song S 642	-122a	-412	350	-411	-432	-226	259	143a
2 songsxPeta(Shamar +Ngendzong song) ¹⁷	-122a+b	-413+414	350+351	-412+413	-433+434	226Ngendzong	260	—
54.5, song S 643	-123a	-415	352	-413	-434	-227	261	143b

¹⁷ See Chapter 9, *The Dying Bönpo episode in the Golden Rosaries, the Zhepé Dorje Compendia and Tsangnyön Heruka's Chapter 54.*

-54.6, song S 644	-123b	-416	353	-415	-437	-228	262	144b
11) <i>spyod pa che ba'i yon tan</i>: the quality of great conduct								
<i>sgyu 'phrul rig pa'i skor</i> : the story of knowing how to display magic								
-extra song 5 kinds of activities	123b-128a	1:417-31	1:354-363	7:416-424	1:438-47	229-239	263-273	145a-150b
-61.9, song S 699	-124a	-419	—	—	—	—	—	—
-61.1, song S 689	-124b	-421	355	-417	-439	-231	264	145b
-61.2, song S 691	-125a	-422	356	-418	-440	-232	266	146b
-61.3, song S 691(lower song)	-125b	-424	358	-420	-443	-233	267	147a
-61.4, song S 692	-126a	-425	358	-420	-444	-234	268	147b
-61.5, song S 693	-126b	-426	359	-421	-444	-235	269	148a
-61.6, song S 694	-127a	-427	360	-421	-445	-236	270	149a
-song not in TN, examples for songs	-127a	-428	361	-423	-446	-237	271	149b
	-127b	-430	362	-424	-447	-238	272	150a
<i>thog la'i skor</i> : the episode at Thog la, meeting Dampa Sangye (some versions written <i>Thong la</i>)								
-53.4, song craziness S 633, 3 parts	128a-131b	1:431-44	1:363-373	7:424-438	1: 447-59	308-315	346-354	168b-171a
-53.1+53.2, song S 630+631	-128a	-431	363	-426	-448	-313	352	169a
-53.3, song S 632 on <i>zhi byed</i>	-129a	-437	367-371	-431	-448	-308+310	347+49	169b
	-131a	-441	371	-435	-457	-311	350	170a
<i>lcam me'i skor</i> : the episode with Chammé								
-61.8, song S 698	131b-132b	1: 444-47	1:374-376	7:438-441	1: 459-63	239-245	273-280	150b-152a
-55.2, song S 648 (prophecy dakini sun-moon disciples)	-132a	-444	374	-438	-459	-239	274	150b
-song not in Tn (in 3 parts)	-132a	-445	374	-439	-460	-240	274	151a
-34.11, song about mahamudra S 415	-132b	-446	375	-439	-460	-241	275	151b
-36.2, part of song S 427	(60a)	(1:207)	(1:74)	(7:207)	(1:230)	-242	276	(361b)
	(224b)	(2:242)	(2:105)	(8:212)	(2:758)	-243	277	—

-40.3, part of song S 483	(276b)	(2:420)	(2:255)	(8:375)	(2:902)	-243	278	—
-extra song about yogins (not in TN)	—	—	-376	-440	-463	-244	279	—
-short song about sleeping (not in TN)	—	—	—	—	—	-245	279	—
12) <i>Lha'i lhar gyur ba'i yontan</i>: the quality of becoming a god amongst gods								
<i>'om chung nags 'dabs ma'i skor</i> : the episode at the outskirts of Omchung forest								
	132b-134a	1: 447-52	1:376-380	7:442-445	1: 463-67	245-249	280-284	152a-154a
-45.8, song S 553	-133a	-448	377	-442	-464	-246	280	152a
-27.5, song S 306	-133b	-449	378	-443	-465	-247	282	153a
-song not in TN	-133b	-450	379	-444	-465	-248	282	153b
-extra song to Rechungpa	-134a	-451	379	-444	-466	-248	283	—
<i>bal yul nags ma'i skor</i> : the episode in the Nepali forest (Dharmabodhi)								
	134a-137b	1: 452-64	1:380-389	7:445-457	1:467-476	249-256	284-291	154a-159a
-song by Dharmabodhi (not in TN)	-134a	-452	381	-446	-467	—	—	154a
-33.1, song S 387	-134b	-453	381	-447	-468	-250	285	154b
-33.2, song S 388	-135a	-454	382	-447	-468	-251	286	155a
-33.3, song S 388 (lower song)	-135a	-455	383	-448	-469	-251	287	155b
-extra song	-135b	-456	383	-449	-469	-252	288	156a
-33.4+5, song S 390 (2 songs)	-135b	-457	384	-450	-470	-253	288	156b
-33.6, song S 391	-136a	-458	384	-450	-470	-254	289	157a
-33.7, song S 391 (lower song)	-136a	-458	385	-452	-473	-254	289	157b
-2 miracle episodes	-136b	-460	385	-452	-473	—	—	157b+58a
-33.8, song S 392	-136b	-461	387	-454	-475	-255	190	158b
-extra small song, miracle narrative	-137b	-464	387	-454	-476	—	—	—
<i>dpal mo dpal thang la sogs pa'i skor</i> : the episode at Palmo Palthang etc. (in DNM-RD)								
	ep.missing (188b)	ep.missing (1:115)	ep.missing (1:65)	ep.missing (7:73)	ep.missing (2:625)	256-264 -256	291-299 291	ep missing —
-59.2, song S 679 (much longer)								

-song absence examples of mind -3 small songs -6.2 S 68+39.11 song S 478 -1 small song	(229a) — (49a)(2:227a) —	(2:258) (2:258) (1:169) (2:2) —	(2:97) — (1:144) —	(8:202) — (7:170)(8:99) —	(2:750) — 1:188;2:748 —	-260 -261 -262 -263	295 296 297 298	(355b) (34b) (139b) —
<i>phug ron sngon mo 'i skor</i> : the episode of the blue pigeon								
-8.1, song S 87 -8.2, song S 88 -8.3, song S 90 -8.4, song S 91 (slightly different)	137b-139a -137b -138a -138b -138b	1: 464-69 -464 -466 -467 -468	1:389-394 390 391 392 393	7:457-461 -457 -458 -459 -460	1: 476-482 -477 -478 -481 -481	264-268 -264 -265 -266 -267	299-304 299 300 302 303	159a-161b 159a 160a 160b 161a
<i>Bu mo yid 'phrog ma 'i skor</i> : the episode with a beautiful girl, not in TN								
questions and answers between the Jetsün and a beautiful lady	139a-144a	1: 469-86	1:394-407	7:461-477	1:482-96	268-282	304-320	91b-100a
13) <i>Ye shes sgron me bltams pa 'i yon tan</i> : the quality of upholding the torch of wisdom								
<i>brag steng rta sga 'i skor</i> : the episode on top of the Taga Rock								
-23.2, song S 234 -23.3, song S 235 -23.4 + 5, song S 236+237 -23.6, song S 238 -23.7, song S 240 -38.9, song S 459 -38.10, song S 460 small songs S 665-67 dreams Rechungpa	144a-150a -144a -144b -144b .145a -145a -149b(later) -150a(later) -145b-146a -146a	1: 486-508 -486 -488 -488 -489 -490 -506(later) -507 (later) -492-493 -493-494	1:407-422 408 408 409+410 410 411 412 413 414-415 415	7:477-493 -477 -478 -479 -479 -480 -482 -483 -484-485 -485	2:497- 512 -497 -498 -498 -501 -501 -503 -504 -505 -505	282-294 -283 -283 -284 -285 -285 287-30 advice 288 'phangs dgos 3 -288 bde ba 289 11.3,	320-332 320 321 322 323 324 324 324 326 327	161b-164b 161b 162a 162b 163a 163b (89a) (89b) (298a+b) (292a)

-song of realization by Rechungpa+ request teachings (not in TN)	-146a+b	-495	415	-486	-506	S113 -290	328	(292b)
-Rechungpa's questions 45.1,2,3,4,5 , Stagg 549-550	-146b+147a	-495-496	416+417	-487	-507	291,36.2, S427	330	(292b)
-45.5, song S 550+nyengyud transmission to Rechungpa	—	—	417	487	-507	292 <i>tashitshan</i>	330	—
-song about <i>lta ba sgom pa spyod pa</i>	-147b	-497	419	-488	-509	—	—	(163b)
-23.7, song S 240	-147b	-498	420	-490	-510	—	—	—
-song about dying	-148a	-499	421	-491	-510	—	—	—
-song about stupidity	-148a	-500+-501	421+422	-492+493	-511-512	—	—	—
-42.2 song S 526+42.1 (to tönpas)	<i>in khujug ' -</i>	<i>in khujug -</i>	<i>ras chung pa</i>	<i>ras chung</i>	<i>ras chung</i>	<i>in khujug</i>	<i>khujug</i>	<i>khujug</i>
-teaching nyengyud to 30 repas	148b-149a	501-502	<i>gdams pa</i>	<i>gdams pa</i>	<i>gdams pa</i>	322-25	360-65	178a-79a
-cig rgyud entrustment to Rechungpa			(1:193-195)	(7:233-36)	(1:252-256)			
<i>dom lung brag gseb kyi skor</i> : the episode at Domlung Rock								
instructions received from Marpa, 49.1, S 499 to Rechungpa (TnxGampopa)	150a-151b (259b)	1: 508-13 (2:364)	1:422-429 (2:207)	7:493-498 (8:321)	2:512-19 (2:854)	294-302 -294	332-340 333	164b-166b —
-49.1, song S 587	-150b	-508	423	-494	-512	-296	335	164b
-51.2, song S 600	-150b	-510	424	-495	-515	-298	336	165a
-23.7, S 240+song about dying	—	—	425-426(2x)	—	—	—	—	—
-51.1, song S 599	-151a	-511	427	-496	-516	-299	337	165b
-song view,med,conduct not in TN	-151b	-512	428	-497	-519	-300	339	166a
-rang sems gros 'debs kyi mgur	—	—	—	—	—	-301	339	—
<i>Brag dkar rta so 'i skor</i> : the episode at Drakar Taso								

-51.5, song S 603 (lower song)	151b-153a -151b	1:513-518 -514	1:429-433 429	7: 498-502 -498	2: 520-22 -520	302-308 -302	341-346 341	166b-168b 166b
-32.1+2, song S 383+385 together	-152a	-515	430	-499	-520	-303/5/7	342/3/5	167a+b
thog la'i kor (see above DNM-RD, 308-315/346-354 and Ms-BL 168b-171a)								
ko ra la thog gi skor: episode at the top of the Korala pass (in DNM-RD; in Ms-BL this part also comes under the episode at Khujug Enpa Dzong)								
-20.1, song Stagg 207	ep. missing (-178a)	ep. missing (2:78)	ep.missing (1:498)	ep.missing (-8:35)	ep.missing (2:587)	315-321 -316	354-360 355	175a-77a* 175a
-20.2, song Stagg 208	(-178b)	(2:79)	(1:499)	(-8:36)	(2:588)	-317	356	175b
-20.3, song Stagg 210	(-179a)	(2:81)	(1:501)	(-8:38)	(2:589)	-318	358	176b
-27.1, song Stagg 300	(-164a)	(2:31)	(1:464)	(-7:537)	(2:549)	-320	359	—
khu byug dben pa rdzong gi skor: the episode at Khujug Enpa Dzong (in DNM-RD + Ms-BL)								
-songs not in Tn, in Ms-Lhasa (2 songs)	ep.missing (66a)	ep.missing (1:229)	ep.missing (1:192)	ep.missing (7:232)	ep.missing (1:251)	321-325 -321	360-365 360	177a-181a 177b
-transmission snyan brgyud and entrustment to Rechung	(148b-149a)	(1: 501-502)	(1:193-195)	(7:233-236)	(1:252-256)	-322/325	361/365	178a-179a
-60.3, song S 684 (lower song)	(169a)	(2:48)	—	—	—	—	—	179b
-60.4, song S 685	(169a)	(2:49)	—	—	—	—	—	179b
-1 song fear of tigers + 44.1, S 541	(169b)	(2:50)	(1:534-536)	(8:78-80)	(2:629-631)	—	—	180a-b
-1 non identified song	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	181a
khyi ra ras pa la gsung tshul mi 'dra gnyis kyi'i skor: the episode with Khyirarepa according to two different stories								
-short song of praise to Tsibri	153a-162b -153a	1:518- 2:26 -518	1:433-452 433	7:503-533 -503	2:523-44 -523	325-338 (375)	365-379 (418)	171-175a —
-26.1, song Stagg 286-in 2 parts	-153b	-520	434	-504	-524	—	—	—
-26.2, song Stagg 287-in 2 parts	-154a+b	-522	436	-506	-527+528	—	—	—

-26.3, song Stagg 288-in 2 parts	-155a	-525+526	439	-508-509	-531+532	—	—	—
-short song hunter not in TN	-155b	Vol2-1	440	-510	-533	—	—	—
-song about lineage, different from TN	-155b	-1	440	-511	-533	—	—	—
-song of 'srequest about his dwelling places (not in TN)	-156a	-2	441	-512	-534	—	—	—
-song 26.4 about Mila's dwelling places	-156b	-3	442	-512	-534	—	—	—
-26.5, hunter offering his belongings	-157a	-6	444	-515	-536	—	—	—
-2 songs to hunter's wife (2nd very long)	-158 a+b	-9+11-15	447-448	-518+519	-541-544	(334-38)	(374-79)	—
in another story-26.1song 286,complete	-159b	-16	452	-523-524	(not repeated)	-325	365	171a
-26.2 song Stagg 287, complete	-160a	-17	453	-525	—	-326	366	171b
-26.3, song Stagg 288 as in TN	-160a	-18	454	-525	—	-327	367	172a
-26.7, song Stagg 295	-160b	-19	454	-526	—	-328	368	172b
-26.5, song Stagg 293 (part)	-161a	-20	455	-527	—	-329	369	173a
-extra song about Mila	-161b	-21	456	-528	—	-330	370	—
-26.4, song Stagg 290-similar	-161b	-22	457	-529	—	-331	371	173b
-26.6, song S 294	-162a	-24	459	-531	—	-332	372	174a
-26.8, song S 296	-162b	-25	459	-532	—	-333	373	174b
<i>ra dzi ras pa dang lug rdzi ras pa'i skor</i> : the episode of Radzirepa (goat herder) and Lugzirepa (sheep herder) [in DNM-RD split into 2 separate cycles]								
	162b-164a	2:26-30	1:460-464	7:533-536	2: 544-49	338-342	379-383	201b-203a
-song to <i>ra rdzi - mi re nyung</i> (not in TN)	-163a	-27	461	-533	-544	-339	379	202a
-song to <i>lug rdzi</i>	-163b	-29	463	-536	-548	-341	381	—
<i>gtsang g.yag ru'gron khang gi skor</i> : the episode at the yakhorn-inn in Tsang								
	164a-166b	2:30-39	1:464-471	7: 536-544	2: 549-57	342-347	383-388	84a-87a
-27.1, song Stagg 300	-164a	-31	464	-537	-549	(320)	(359)	84a
-15.3, song Stagg 150	-164b	-32	466	-538	-550	—	—	—

-15.4, song Stagg 151	-165a	-34	467	-539	-551	-343	383	84b
-15.3, song Stagg 150 (repeated)	-165b	-36	469	-541	-552	-344	385	85b
-15.2, song Stagg 148	-166a	-37	469	-542	-555	-345	386	86a
-15.1, song Stagg 147	-166a	-38	470	-543	-556	-346	387	86b
14) Nus pa che ba'i yon tan: the quality of great power								
<i>Brin gyi la so'i skor:</i> the episode at Laso in Drin								
	166b-169b	2:39-51	1:471-477	8: 1-10	2: 557-64	347-351	388-392	181a-183b
-50.1, song S 593	-166b	-40	472	-4	-557	-348	389	181b
-45.11, song S 556	-167a	-41	473	-5	-558	-349	390	182a
-50.2, song S 594 (lower song)	-167a	-42	473	-6	-561	-350	391	182b
-45.12, song S 557	-167b (2x)	-44	474	-7	-561	-351	392	183a
-60.2, song S.684 (central song)	-168a	-44	—	—	—	—	—	—
-47.1+2, song S 575-76+44.5, S 545	-168a (3 songs)	-45 (3 songs)	475	7+8 (3 songs)	562/63-3 songs	713-14 2 songs	(797)	—
-47.2, song 576, longer+50.3, S 595	-168b (3 songs)	-47 (3 songs)	475+476	9+10(3 songs)	564 (3 songs)	(714)	(797)	—
-60.3, song S 684 (lower song)	-169a	-48	—	—	—	—	—	(179b)
-60.4, song S 685	-169a	-49	—	—	—	—	—	(179b)
-1 song fear of tigers + 44.1, S 541	-169b (2 songs)	-50(2 songs)	(1:534-536)	(8:78-80)	(2:629)	—	—	(180a-b)
brin gyi lo stong dgon pa'i skor: the episode at Lotong Gompa in Drin (in DNM-RD)								
	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	351-356	392-397	ep.missing
-45.12. song S 557	(-167b)	(2:44)	(1:475+2:197)	(8:7+ 8: 311)	(2:561)	-351	393	(183a)
-long song not in TN	—	—	(2:199)	(8:312)	(2:845)	-353	394	—
<i>a phyi snang ma'i skor:</i> the episode of a grandma								
(first song 2 parts)	169b-172b	2:51-61	1: 477-486	8:10-20	2:564-74	356-365	397-407	183b-186a
-53.4, song S 633 about craziness	-170a (2 parts)	-51+52	477+478	-11(2 parts)	-565+566	-356+57	398	183b
-23.9, song S 244	-170b	-54	478	-13	-566	-358	399	185a

-byin pa gtong drug gi mgur (not in TN)	—	—	479	-15	-570	(478)	(527)	—
-45.17, S 562 dal brel shen 'byed	-171b	-56	482	-17	-572	—	—	—
-53.2, song Stagg 631	-172a	-58	483	-19	-573	(310)	(349)	(169b)
-song to patroness + reply	-172a+b	-59+60	—	—	—	—	—	(296a)
-14.1, song S 133	(175b)	(2:68)	(1:515)	(8:55)	(2:612)	-360	402	(354b)
-song not in Tn	—	—	—	—	—	-362	404	—
-6.4, song S 71	—	—	—	—	—	-364	406	(34a)
sba mgur gyi skor (in DNM-RD here; 365-375/407-418) see below								
jo mo gsal le sgron gyi skor episode of the noble Salé Dron (in Ms-BL no title)								
	172b-174b	2: 61-65	nus pa che ba'i mgur	nus pa che ba i mgur	nus pa che ba i mgur	brin gyi lha sgrong	brin lha sgrong	234b-237b
-dka 'ba nyi shu(only Ms-BL)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	234b
-song to old lady(only Ms-BL)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	235b
-37.2, song S 433(piece only Ms-Smith)	-173a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
-37.5, song S 441(similar)	-173b	-62	(1:525)	(8:67)	(2:619)	(594)	(669)	236a
-37.6, song S 442(similar)	-174a	-63	(1:526)	(8:69)	(2:620)	(595)	(671)	236b
a phyi snang ma dang mgon mo lcam la sogs kyī skor: the episode of a grandma and Gonmo Cham (in Ms-India and Ms-Smith)								
	174b-178a	2:65-77	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep. missing	ep.missing	ep.missing
-song not in Tn	-174b	-66	—	—	—	—	—	—
-14.1, song S.133	-175b+176b(2x)	-68+73 (2x)	(1:515-520)	(8: 55,2x, 60)	2:612-16+761	(360)	(402)	(354b)
-2 songs not in TN to a patroness	-176a	-70+71	(1:518)	(8:59+60)	(613-614)	—	—	(296a)
bzang rgyud phyag tshang gi skor: episode in a kitchen in Zangyü (Shengom Repa)¹⁸ (in Ms-Drepung, BCG-D and BCG-Si+ DNM-RD 2 and 3)								
	ep.missing	ep.missing	1: 486-498	8: 20-35	2: 574-587	ep.missing	546-563	ep.missing

¹⁸ For translation see Chapter 10, *Episode at the Zangyü Kitchen*.

-24.1, song S 247	—	—	486	-21	-574	—	547	—
-24.2, song S 250	—	—	489	-24	-579	—	551	—
gangs ti tse'i skor (in DNM-RD exclusive gangs ti se na ro bon chung btul ba'i skor (440-449/485-498)+ti se la sogs pa'i skor (450-463/498-511))								
-20.1, song S 207	178a-182a	2:77-92	1:498-509	8:35-48	2:587-603	450-463	498-511	224a-228a
-20.2, song S 208	-178a	-78	498	-35	-587	(316)	(355)	(175a)
-20.3, song S 210	-178b	-79	499	-36	-588	(317)	(356)	(175b)
-19.1, song S 203	-179a	-81	501	-38	-589	(318)	(358)	(176b)
-2 songs mythical animals not in Tn	-179b	-83	502	-40	-590+593	(471)	(519)	(91a)
-song not in TN(<i>bde ba drug gi mgur</i>)	-180a	-84+85	503+504	-41+42	-594	(472-473)	(520-22)	224b+225a
-story meeting Naro Bonchung	-180b	-87	505	-44	-595	(474)	(523)	226a
-23.1, song S 233(<i>bde ba bcu gnyis</i>)	-181a(mention)	-88 (mention)	506(mention)	-45(mention)	596(mention)	(440-49)	(485-91)	—
-song not in TN, <i>ma dga' 8</i>	-181a	-89	506	-45	-599	(450) 2x	(492)	226b
-7.5, song S 79, about guides	-181b	-90	507	-46	-599	(451)	(499)	227a
	-182a	-92	508	-48	-600	(114)	(140)	228a
rgyu ston sogs kyi skor: the episode with Gyutön and others (title only in Ms-India, songs repeated from before)								
	182a-184a	2:92-100	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing
-42.1, song S 526	-182b	-93	(1:422)	(7:493)	(2:512)	(469)	(517)	—
-34.1, song S 396	-183b	-97	(1:542)	(8:87)	(2:639)	(155)	(184)	—
-episode in a temple in Yarlung	-184a	-99	—	—	—	—	—	—
-episode being closed in temple	—	-99	(1:541)	(8:86)	(2: 638)	—	—	—
nus pa che ba'i mgur tshogs: collected songs of his great power [not as a separate chapter in DNM-RD; in Ms-BL first part separate title, <i>brin gyi sring ste phugs su bzhugs pa'i skor</i>, see above]								
	184a-189b	2:100-19	1:509-545	8: 48-92	2:603-642	ep.missing	ep.missing	(87a-89a)
-50.4, song S 596	-184b	-100	509	-48	-603	—	—	87a
-song not in TN- <i>bzod gsol gsum po</i>	-184b	-101	510	-49	-604	(591)	(666)	87b
-60.5-6-7, song S 686	-185a	-102	511	-50+51	-604+607	(592)	(667)	88a

-song not in TN about cultivation	-185a	-103	512	-51	-608	(593)	(668)	88b
-50.5 song about beer-Stagg 596 lower	-185b	-104	512	-52	-608	(485+87)	(535+36)	(228a+231)
-song to a lady+her reply	—	—	514 +519	-54+ 59	-610-611	—	—	—
-14.1, song S 133	(175b+176b 2x)	(68)	515+ 520	-55 + 60	-612+615	(360)	(402)	(354b)
-2 songs not in TN(about <i>mkha' spyod</i>)	(176a)	(70+71)	518	-59+60	(+761)	—	—	—
-another song about <i>chang</i>	-186b	-107	523	-65	-613+614	—	—	—
-37.5, Salle sgron-song S 441(similar)	(173b)	(earlier:62)	525	-67	-618	(594)	(669)	(236a)
-37.6, song S 442 (similar-443)	(174a)	(earlier:63)	526	-69	-619	(595)	(671)	(236b)
-song about impermanence to girl	—	—	527	-71	-620	—	—	—
-59.2,-song S 679-21 excellent friends	188b,	-115	529	-73	-622	(256)	(291)	—
-60.2+3, S 684(lower)-685	(earlier:169a)	(earlier:48-49)	532+533	-76+77	-625	—	—	—
-episode with tiger from sertreng	(169b)	(2:50)	533	-78 (rep 220)	-629 (rep 763)	—	—	(180a)
-44.1, song S 542 (upper)	—	—	534-36(2versio	-78-80	-629-631	—	—	(180b)
-2 songs about horse + small songs to robber and young boy	-188a	-112+113	537-540	-82-85	-632-637	—	—	—
story closed in temple+60.2 S 684	—	(99-earlier)	541	-86	-638	—	—	—
-34.1,song S 396	(183b, earlier)	(97-earlier)	542	-87	-639	(155)	(185)	(230b)
-song about difficulties in practice	-187b	-110	542	-89	-640	—	—	—
-song not in TN	—	—	543	-90	-641	—	—	—
-dphang 3 bcas 3 dgos 3	—	—	544	-91	-641	(288)	(326)	(180a)
-54. dying bönpo, no songs(S 637)	—	—	545	-92	-642	—	—	—
15) <i>byin rlabs che ba'i yon tan</i> : the quality of greatest blessing power								
<i>chu mig dngul 'bum gyi skor</i> : the episode at Silver Spring								
	189b-198b	2:118-149	2:1-25	8:92-118	2: 644-65	-376-403	419-448	186a-199b
-16.1, S. 155, song of praise to Tsibri	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	186a
-17.1, song S 160	-190a	-120	3	-94	-644	-378	421	187a

-17.2, song S 162	-190b	-122	4	-95	-647	-380	422	187b
-17.3, song S 163	-191a	-123	5	-96	-648	-381	423	188a
-17.4+5, song S 164 (2 songs)	-191a+191b	-124+125	6	-97+98	-648-649	-381+82	425	188b
-17.6, song S 165 (lower song)	-191b	-126	7	-98	-649	-383	426	189a
-17.7, song S 166	-192a	-126	7	-99	-650	-383	427	189b
-17.8, song S 167	-192a	-127	8	-100	-651	-384	428	190a
-17.9, song S 167 (lower song)	-192b	-128	9	-100	-651	-385	428	190b
-17.10, song S 168	-193a	-129	9	-101	-652	-385	429	191a
-17.11, song S 169	-193a	-130	10	-102	-652	-386	430	191a
-17.12, song S 170	-193b	-131	11	-102	-653	-387	431	191b
-17.13, song S 170 (lower song)	-193b	-131	11	-103	-653	-388	431	192a
-17.14, song S 171	-194a	-132	12	-104	-654	-388	432	192b
-17.15, song S 172	-194a	-133	13	-104	-654	-389	433	192b
-17.16, song S 173	-194b	-134	13	-105	-655	-390	434	193a
-17.17, song S 173 (lower song)	-195a	-135	14	-106	-656	-391	435	193a
-17.18, song S 174	-195a	-136	15	-107	-656	-392	436	193b
-17.19, song S 175	-195b	-137	16	-108	-657	-392	436	194a
-17.20, song S 175 (lower song)	-195b	-138	17	-108	-657	-393	437	194b
-17.21, song S 176	-196a	-139	17	-109	-658	-394	438	195a
-17.22, song S 177	-196a	-140	18	-110	-659	-395	439	195a
-17.23, song S 178	-196b	-141	19	-111	-660	-396	440	195b
-17.24, song S 179	-197a	-142	20	-112	-660	-397	441	196a
-17.25, song S 180	-197b	-143	21	-113	-661	-398	443	196b
-17.26, song S 181	-198a	-145	22	-115	-662	-400	444	197b
-17.27, song S 183	-198b	-147	24	-117	-664	-402	446	198b
<i>ras pa zhi ba 'od kyi skor</i> : the episode with Repa Zhiwa Ö								

	198b-200a	2:149-153	2:25-28	8:118-122	2:665-70	403-406	448-451	199b-201b
-17.28, song S 186	-199a	-151	26	-120	-666	-404	449	200a
-17.29, song S 186 (lower song)	-199b	-151	27	-121	-669	-405	449	200b
-17.30, song S 187	-199b	-153	28	-122	-669	-406	450	201a
<i>gung thang lho sgo 'i skor</i> : the episode at the south-gate of Gungthang (other title: <i>nya ma dpal dar 'bum gyi zhu ba zhu lan gung thang gi skor</i> - questions and answers with nyama Paldarbum in Gungthang) ¹⁹								
	200a-205a	2:153-171	2:28-42	8: 122-140	2, 670-84	407-415	451-460	203a-207a
-14.1, song S 133	-200a	-154	29	-123	-670	(360)	(402)	(354b)
-21.1, song S 213 (in 2 parts)	-201a	-157	31	-127	-673	-407	451	203a
-21.2, song S 215	-201b	-159	32	-128	-674	-408	453	204a
-14.2, song S 136	-201b	-160	33	-129	-675	-409	454	204b
-14.3 ²⁰ -4-5 song S 137 (3songs)	-202a	-160+161	34	-129+130	-675	-410	455-56	204b
-14.6, song S 138 (middle song) ²¹	-202a	-161	34	-130	-676	-411	456	205a
-14. 8-9, song S 139 (2 songs)	-202a	-162	35	-130	-676	-411+412	456-57	205a
-14.12, S 141, female condition, lower song, 1	-202b	-163	35	-132	-677	412short as Tn	457	205b
-14.14, song S 143	-203a	-165	37	-134	-678	-412	457	205b

¹⁹ See Chapter 10, *Meeting Paldarbum*.

²⁰ In DNM-RD this song is different: The outer Lama is the one who explains the Dharma based on texts; the inner Lama is the understanding based on the meaning of what one has learned; the ultimate Lama is to rest, based on this understanding. This "new" interpretation is present only in DNM-RD. All the other compendia, including Ms-Lhasa, follow *The Twelve Great Repa Disciples*.

²¹ Song 14.7 about Phat (except in first-stratum Ms-Drukpa and Ms-Gansu) and songs 14.10 and 14.11 about female condition are missing in all versions. Song 14.8 is significantly reworked in BCG versions, whereas, in DNM-RD and Ms-BL, it is identical to Tn. In BCG song 14.12 is longer than in DNM-RD and in TN, including some aspects on female condition. In DNM-RD the order of song 8 and 9 has changed: first comes the confidence, after that, the experience; in BCG the order is the same as TN.

-14.15-16, song S 144 (2 songs)	-203b	-166	38	-134+135	-681	-413	458	206a
-14.13, song S 142	-204a	-167	39	-136	-682	-414	459	206b
-4 extra songs not in TN	204a-204b	-169-170	40-42	-137-139	-683-684	—	—	—
<i>gung thang gi skor</i> (in DNM-RD, 415-417/460-463) - corresponding to <i>mang yul gung thang gi skor</i> below)								
<i>Leks se 'bum me'i skor</i> : the episode with Lekse Bummé								
	205a-207a	2:171-179	2:42-47	8:140-146	2:684-91	417-424	460-470	207a-211a
-song not in TN-rigs <i>brgyud byon tshul</i>	-205a	-171	42	-140	-685	-418	463	207a
-48.6, song S 582	-205b	-173	43	-141	-686	-419	465	208a
-45.15, song S 560	-206a	-174	44	-142	-689	-420	466	208b
-48.7, song S 583	-206a	-175	45	-143	-689	-421	467	209a
-48.8, song S 584	-206b	-177	46	-144	-690	-422	468	209b
-48.9, song S 585	-206b	-177	46	-145	-690	-423	468	210a
-48.10, song S 586	-207a	-178	47	-145	-691	-423	469	210b
<i>bumme'i skor</i> : separate episode with Leksebum, with Q&A, 6 small songs in DNM-RD, 424-428/470-474								
<i>mang yul gyi skor</i>: episode Q&A with one lady, 6 songs in DNM-RD, 428-431/474-480								
<i>skyi rong rab chad rgen rgon[rgog] gyi skor</i>: episode of the old man and the old lady from Kyirong (in DNM-RD no separate title, part of <i>mang yul gyi skor</i>)								
	207a-208a	2:179-183	2:47-50	8:146-149	2:691-96	431-434	470-474	211a-212b
-12.1+4, song S 115+117 (2 songs)	-207a+207b	-179+180	47+48	-146+147	-692	-431	470-71	211a
-12.2+3, song S 116 (2 songs)	-207b	-180-181	48+49	-147+148	-692+695	-432	471-72	211b
-12.5+6, song S 117+118 (2 songs)	-208a	-182	49	-148	-695	-433	472-74	212a
<i>gshin rdor mo'i skor</i>: episode with Shindormo								
	208a-209b	2:183-189	2:50-54	8:149-154	2:696-701	434-439	480-485	212b-215b
-48.1+2, 2 songs S 577	-208b	-184	51	-150	-696	-434+35	481	212b+13a
-48.3+4, 2 songs S 579	-208b+209a	-185+186	52	-151+152	-696+699	-436	482-83	213b+14a
-48.5, song S 580	-209a	-187	53	-152	-700	-437	485	214b

<i>mang yul gung thang gi skor</i> - episode at Mangyul Gungthang								
-10.2-song S 104, divided in 6parts	-210a-210b	2:189-192	2:54-56	8:154-156	2: 701-705	415-417	460-463	215b-216b
<i>sba mgur gyi skor</i> -episode of the bamboo staff (<i>ngan rdzong phyug 'bar la sogs pa'i sba 'gur gyi skor</i>)								
	-210b-214a	2:192-204	2:56-65	8:156-166	2:705-15	365-75	407-418	216b-221b
-18.1, song S 191	-210b	-193	57	-157	-706	-365	407	216b
-18.2, song S 192	-211a	-194	58	-157	-706	-366	408	217a
-18.3, song S 195	-212a	-197	59	-160	-710	-369	412	218b
-21.6, song S 219- <i>ga la long 16</i>	-213a	-201	63	-164	-713	-374	415	221a
-52.17, song S 626 (lower song)	-213b	-203	64	-165	-714	-372	416	—
-16.1, S. 155, song of praise to Tsibri	(153a)	(1:518)	(1:433)	(7:503)	(2:523)	-375	417	(186a)
<i>gangs ti se na ro bon chung btul ba'i skor</i> (only in DNM-RD, 440-44/485-498, exactly as in TN)								
<i>ti se la sogs pa'i skor</i> (DNM-RD 450-463/498-511)[in Ms-BL title <i>brag dmar spo thon lcam lhan cig skyes pa sgron me skor</i> , together with the next cycle]								
	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	450-463	498-511	354b-362b
-23.1, Stagg 233	(218b)	(2:220)	(2:77)	(8:179)	(2:726)	-450+92	498	(238a)
-song ' <i>khore ba'i nyes dmigs</i> (not in TN)	(181b)	(2: 90)	(1:507)	(8: 46)	(2:599)	-451	499	—
-61.7, song S 696 (similar)	(70b)	(1:242)	(1:205)	(7:249)	(1:264)	-453	500	—
-song <i>ci la phen</i> (short)	—	—	—	—	—	-454	502	—
-14.1, Stagg 133	(175b)	(2:68)	(1:515)	(8:55)	(2:612)	(360)	(402)	354a
-song no examples of mind's nature	(229a)	(2:258)	(2:97)	(8:202)	(2:750)	(460)	(508)	355b
-9.2, song S 96 (<i>rmal 'byor 4</i>)	(224a)	(2:240)	(2:96)	(8:201)	(2:749)	-455	503	356a
-song ' <i>phyo sa 6</i>	(223b)	(2:237)	(2:104)	(8:210)	(2:756)	-456	504	356b
-song <i>blo bde</i>	(61b)	(1:211)	(1:177)	(7:211)	(1:234)	-456	504	—
-49.4, song S 591	(63a)	(1:218)	(1:183)	(7:220)	(1:242)	-458	506	(63a)
-song about <i>bde ba</i>	—	—	—	—	—	-459	507	357a
-9.4, song S 98, <i>gding tshad 6</i>	(225b)	(2:238)	(2:98)	(8:203)	(2:751)	-460	508	357b

-44.3, song S 542, <i>brjed nas thal</i> (similar style but not same)	—	—	—	—	—	-462	511	359a
<i>brag dmar spo tho'i skor</i>: the episode at Potho Red Rock (in DNM-RD; in Ms-BL 354b-362b, title <i>brag dmar spo thon lcam lhan cig skyes pa sgron me skor</i>, some songs included above;]								
-song 'dzom pa 15 -different small songs -2 songs, 1 to a novice and 1 to <i>lcam lhan cig skyes pa sgron me</i> (34.11,Stagg 415, to Lcam lhan cig skyes pa'i sgron ma instead of to Lotön)	ep.missing (228a)	ep.missing (2:255)	ep.missing (2:100)	ep.missing (8:206)	ep.missing (2:753)	463-470 -463 -467-70	511-519 512 515-19	episode above 359b — 361b
<i>ston pa shakya gu la sogs pa'i skor</i>: the episode with Tönpa Shakyagu (in DNM-RD)								
-35.3, song S 422 -2 songs to the rich Ngendzongpa -song <i>bde ba drug</i> -3 songs not in TN	ep.missing (98a)	ep.missing (1:335)	ep.missing (1:285)	ep.missing (7:340)	ep. missing (1:346)	470-477 -471 -472 -474 -475	519-527 519 520 522 523	ep.missing (113b) — (226a) —
<i>lha rje yang nge'i skor</i>: the episode with Lhajé Yangnge (other title: <i>shyin gtong drug ma dang Lha rje yang nge la sogs pa'i skor</i>)								
- <i>byin stong drug gi mgur</i> -56.3, song S 656 (lower song) -56.2, song S 655 -56.4, song S 658 -song not in TN	214a-217a	2:204-214	2: 65-73	8:166-174	2:715-23	477-485 -478 -481 -482 -484 —	527-534 527 530 531 533 —	221b-224a — 221b 222b 223b —
<i>lcong rong 'drin gyi skor</i>: the episode at Chongrong in Drin								
	217a-218a	2:214-218	2:73-76	8:174-178	2:723-27	485-490	534-540	228a-234b

-50.5 about chang S 596 (2 parts) -song about impermanence to girls	(185b) —	(2:104) —	(1:512) (1:527)	(8:52) (8:71)	(2:608) (2:620)	-485+87 —	535-36 —	228a+231 230b
-song Q 153	-217a	-215	73	-175	-723	-487	537	232b
-song Q 154	-217b	-216	74	-176	-724	-488	538	233a
-25.7, song S 280 (Rechungma)	-217b	-217	75	-1766	-724	-489	539	233b
16)Ting nge'dzin gyi rtsal rdzogs pa'i yon tan: the quality of bringing to perfection the ability of samādhi								
<i>snye nam lung chung gi skor</i> : the episode at Nyenam Lungchung								
	218a-219a	2:218-22	2:76-79	8:178-182	2:727-32	491-496	540-546	237b-240b
-song about sleeping (not in Tn)	-218a	-219	76	-178	-727	-491	541	237b
-23.1, song S 233 about <i>bde ba</i>	-218b	-220	77	-179	-728	-492	542	238a
-song not in Tn, necessity of retreat	-218b	-220	78	-180	-731	-493	543	238b
-27.4, song S 304	-218b	-221	79	-180	-731	-493	543	239a
-extra song <i>lung pa bzung</i> (not in TN)	—	—	(2:106)	(8:213) 1	(2:758)	-495	545	—
<i>Thor bu'i skor</i> : episode with various song fragments								
	219a-230a	2:222-260	2:79-114	8:182-222	2:732-65	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing
-42.5, song S 530	-220a	-226	79	-182	-732	—	—	—
-18.4, song S 199	-219a+226b	-223+250(2x)	81+87(2x)	184+190(2x)	734+741(2x)	(709)	(793)	—
-43.3, S 539 (<i>lta sgom spyod 'bras bu</i>)	-219b	-224	82	-185	-737	—	—	—
- <i>phyag rgya chen po</i> as in Ms-Lhasa	—	—	83	-186	-738	(123)	(150)	—
-song oral instructions not in TN	-220b	-228	84	-186	-738	—	—	—
-13.4, song Stagg 130	—	—	86	-189	-740	—	—	—
-song <i>dka' ba 10</i>	-222b	-235	88	-192	-742	—	—	—
-song <i>dogs ma mchis</i>	-223a	-236	89	-193	-743	—	—	—
-song with examples	-221b	-232	90	-194	-744	—	—	—
-song about present bliss Rechungpa	-225b	-246	91	-195	-745	—	—	—
-2 songs with instructions	-226a+b	-247-249	92+93	-196+197	-746	—	—	—

-song about <i>snying po</i>	-226b	-249	93	-198	-747	—	—	—
-short song about <i>lta sgom spyod pa</i>	-222a	-233	94	-199	-747	(220)	(253)	(139b)
-39.11, song S 478 (lower song)	-227a	-252	94	-199	-748	(263)	(298)	—
-40.4, song similar division <i>bde-dug</i>	-227b	-253	95	-200	-748	(150)	(179)	(194a)
-9.2, song S 96	-224a	-240	96	-201	-749	(455)	(503)	(356a)
-13.1, song S 127	-224b	-242	96	-201	-749	—	—	—
-song absence examples for mind	-229a	-258	97	-202	-750	(260)	(295)	—
-9.4, song S 98	-225b	-238	98	-203	-751	(460)	(508)	(355b)
-21.5, song S 218	-222a	-234	100	-206	-753	—	—	—
-song ' <i>dzoms pa</i> 15	-228a	-255	100	-206	-753	(463)	(512)	(359b)
-song <i>shor sa</i> 4	-222b	-234	103	-210	-756	—	—	—
-2 small songs	-225a	-245	104	-210	-756	—	—	—
-' <i>phyo sa drug gi mgur</i>	-223b	-237	104	-210	-756	(456)	(504)	(356b)
- <i>bla ma</i> 'i ' <i>dro lugs</i> 5	-228a	-254	105	-211	-757	(707)	(791)	—
-36.2, <i>zung 'jug rnam</i> s 3 - song S 427	-224b	-242	105	-212	-758	243	277	—
-1 song to Lekse	-229b	-260	106	-213	-759	—	—	—
-song to Lekse samsaric suffering	-225b	-245	108	-214	-760	—	—	—
-14.1, repeated, S 133 repeated	—	—	110	-217	-761	(360)	(402)	(354b)
-song about tiger (in sertreng)	—	—	112	-220 (78)	-762 (629)	—	—	(180a)
-miracle tiger as in Gampopa strand	(169b)	(2:50)	113-114	-220-221	-763-764	—	—	—
17) <i>phyag rgya chen po ngo sprod pa'i yon tan</i> : the quality of recognising mahāmudrā								

<i>zhus lan snyan ngag mu tig gi phreng ba</i> : poetical questions and answers, garland of pearls (title not mentioned in Ms-Smith and Ms-India, not considered as 4 different episodes)/(in later editions of DNM-RD the 4 stories with Tashi Tseringma are part of <i>bkra shis tshe ring ma'i skor</i>) ²²								
	230a-235b	2:260-81	2:114-131	8:222-240	2:765-80	496- 515	563-582	240a-248b
-28.1, story S 307	-230a	-260	114	-222	-765	-496	563	240a
-28.2, song S 308	-230a	-262	115	-223	-766	-497	564	240b ²³⁾
-28.3, song S 311	-231a	-265	118	-226	-770	-500	567	241b
-28.4, song S 314	-232b	-269	121	-229	-772	-503	570	243b
-28.5, song S 318	-234a	-274	125	-234	-776	-508	575	245b
-28.6, song S 321	-235a	-279	129	-237	-778	-511	579	247a
-colophon Stagg 373	—	—	—	—	—	-514	582	248b
<i>[sems bskyed] dris lan bdud rtsi 'od kyi phreng ba</i> : questions and answers, garland of nectar of light								
	235b-243a	2:281-06	2:131-154	8:240-264	2:780-800	515-539	582-609	249a-261a
-29.1, song S 325	—	—	131	-240	-780	-515	582	249a
-29.2, song S 326	-236a	-282	133	-242	-782	-517	585	250a
-29.3, song S 330	-237a	-286	137	-246	-786	-520	588	252a
-29.4, song S 334	-238b	-290	140	-249	-789	-524	592	254a
-29.5, song S 339	-240b	-297	146	-256	-794	-530	599	257a
-29.6, song S 342	-241b	-301	149	-258	-796	-534	603	258b
<i>(in BCG wrongly titled ?) mu tig gi rgyan phreng</i> : the garland of pearl-ornaments (in RD 'phrang sgrol ngad kyi bar do la dris pa lan pa-q&a about the keypoints for liberation in the narrow passages of the intermediate states) ²⁴								
	243a-251b	2:307-337	2:154-180	8:264-293	2:800-25	539-567	609-639	261b-275b

²² See Chapter 12. *The Tseringma Chapters and their Colophons*.

²³ In Ms-BL 240 a & b are inverted.

²⁴ See Chapter 13, *Mila's Instructions on the Intermediate States*.

-30.1, song S 349	—	—	154	-264	-800	-539	609	261b
-30.2, song S 354	-245a	-314	162	-272	-810	-547	616	264b
-30.3, song S 357	-246a	-317	165	-275	-812	-550	620	266a
-30.4, song S 362	-247b	-323	169	-280	-816	-555	625	268b
-30.5, song S 366	-249a	-327	173	-284	-819	-559	629	271a
-30.6, song S 369	-250a	-330	175	-287	-821	-562	632	272b
<i>[phyag rgya dris len] bde stong ye shes sprin gyi phreng ba: the garland of bliss-emptiness wisdom</i>								
	251b-253a	2:337-42	2:180-185	8:293-298	2:825-30	567-571	639-643	275b-277b
-31.1, song S 377	-252a	-338	181	-294	-826	-568	639	275b
-31.2, song S 378	-252a	-339	182	-295	-826	-569	640	276a
<i>gcog ro 'bri 'tshams kyi mtsho rngar de(del) chung gi skor : the episode at the 5 small lakes on the border of Dri of Cogro (in Ms-Smith, Ms-Drepung, BCG-D + BCG-Si jo bo bon ri'i skor starts here)</i>								
	253a-257b	2:342-357	2:185-197	8:298-311	2:830-44	572-584	643-657	277b-282a
-song <i>dal brel lnga'i mgur</i> (not in TN)	-253a	-343	185	-298	-833	-572	643	—
-song not in TN	-253b	-344	187	-300	-834	-574	645	—
-25.1, song S 267	-254b	-347	189	-302	-835	-576	647	277b
-25.2, song S 270	-255a	-349	191	-304	-837	-577	649	281a
-25.7, song S 279	-256b	-354	195	-308	-842	-582	654	—
-25.8, song S 281	-257a	-355	196	-309	-843	-583	655	281a
<i>jo bo bon ri'i skor- the episode at noble bön mountain (first part bong ring brin dang mchong gling brag gi skor only in Ms-BL))</i>								
	257b-260a	2:357-367	2:197-209	8:311-324	2:844-56	584-591	657-666	286a-290b
-45.12, song S 557 (part)	(167b)	(2:44)	197	-311	-844	(351)	(393)	282a
-song about paramitas to <i>ston sgom</i>	—	—	199	-312	-845	(353)	(394)	283a
song exchange w.lady <i>bkra shis kyi bkra shisp</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	284b-85b
-46.1, song S 567(gangs dkar po'i che brjod)	-257b	-357	202	-315	-848	-585	657	286a

-46.2, song S 568	-258a	-359	203	-317	-848	-586	658	286b
-46.3, song S 569	-258a	-359	203	-317	-851	-586	659	287a
46.4, song S 570 ('gyod med gsum gyi mgur)	-258b	-360	204	-318	-851	-587	660	287b
46.5, song S 571(ang drug nyams kyi mgur)	-259a	-362	205	-319	-853	-589	661	288a
-41.2, song S 499 (to Rechungpa!)	-259b	-364	207	-321	-854	(294)	663	289b
-46.6, song S 553	-260a	-366	209	-323	-855	—	665	290b
<i>brin gyi lha grong gi skor</i> : the episode at Lhadrong in Drin								
	260a-261b	2:367-70	2:209-212	8:324-327	2: 856-58	591-602	666-678	296a-299a
-song to patroness with reply	(162a+b)	(2:59+60)	—	—	—	—	—	296a
-request to patroness about characteristics of a lama+reply	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	297a
-1 song not in TN	(184b)	(2:101)	(1:510)	(8:49)	(2:604)	-591	666	—
-60.5-6-7 S 686	(185a)	(2:102)	(1:511)	(8:50+51)	(2:604+607)	-592	667	—
-song about cultivation	(185a)	(2:103)	(1:512)	(8:51)	(2:608)	-593	668	—
-37.5, S 441(gsal le sgron)	(173b)	(2:62)	(1:525)	(8:67)	(2:619)	-594	669	(236a)
-37.6, S 442	(174a)	(2:63)	(1:526)	(8:69)	(2:620)	-595	671	(236b)
-58.1, song S 673	-260b	-367	210	-324	-856	-598	673	297b
-58.2., song S 674	-260b	-369	211	-325	-857	-600	675	298a
-58.3, song S 675	-261a	-370	211	-326	-858	-600	676	298b
-11.2, part of S 112-dgos rgyu chung	(296b)	(2:482)	(2:306)	(8:437)	(2:962)	-602	677	—
<i>ras chung pa'i rmi lam lung bstan gyi skor</i> : Rechungpa's prophetic dreams (only in DNM-RD and Ms-BL as separate chapter, in BCG the chapter is part of <i>brag steng rta sga'i skor</i>)								
	(145b-147a)	1: 492-496)	1: 414-417	7: 484-487	2: 505-07)	602-606	678-682	291a-296a
-57.5-6-7, song S 665-666 (3 songs)	-145b	-492-493	414-415	-484-485	-505	-602-603	678-79	291a+b
-song of realization by Rechungpa+ request teachings (noTN)	-146a	-494	415	-485	-505	-603-605	679-80	292a

-exchange Mila-Rechung similar Stagg 549,- 45.1,2,3,4,5 , -45.5, S 550+ nyengyü to Rechungpa -song not identified -small part 38.10, Stagg 360 -40.4 Stagg 485(<i>bde sdug shen byed</i> ,written down by Rechungpa!) - <i>mi la 'i dpe bzhi ma</i> (only in Ms-BL)	-146a+b -147a — (-150a) (-87a) —	-495 -495-496 — (-507) (296) —	415 416+417 — (413) (253) —	-486 -487 — (483) (308) —	-506 -507 — (504) (316) —	-605 — — — (150) —	681 — — — (179) —	292b 292b 293a 293b 294a 295a
<i>ras chung dbus bzhud kyi bskor</i> : the episode of Rechungpa's departure to Central Tibet								
-52.2, song S 609 (upper song) -52.5, S 611 (lower)-610 (last part upper) -52.4, song S 610 lower song -song not in TN -52.7, song S 614 -52.1, song S 608 -song 'gyod med drug (not in TN) -52.3, song S 609 (lower song) -52.8, song S 615 -62.11, song Q 210	261b-266a -262a -262a -262a -262b -263a -263b -264a -264a -265a -265b	2:371-86 -372 -372 -374 -375 -376 -378 -379 -380 -382 -384	2:212-225 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 222 223	8:327-340 -328 -329 -330 -331 -332 -333 -335 -335 -338 -339	2: 858-72 -859 -859 -860 -865 -866 -867 -868 -868 -870 -871	606-616 -607 -607 -608 — -609 -611 -612 -613 -615 —	682-693 683 684 684 — 685 687 688 689 691 —	299a-305a 299b 300a 300a — 301a 302a 302b 303a 304a —
<i>dbus gtad bar ma 'i skor</i> : the central episode of [Rechungpa's] departure to Central Tibet (in Ms-BL <i>bka' gtad bar ma 'i skor</i>: entrusting advice)								
-52.10, song S 618 -52.11, song S 619 -52.9, song S 617	266a-267a -266a -266b -266b	2:386-90 -387 -388 -389	2:225-229 226 226 227	8:340-345 -342 -343 -344	2: 872-77 -873 -873 -874	616-620 -617 -617 -618	693-697 694 694 695	305a-307a 305b 306a 306b

<i>dbus gtad 'og ma dang nya ma'i skor</i> - last part of Central Tibet episode, the episode with female followers [in Ms-BL first part separate episode called <i>chu bar gyi skor</i>]								
52.13,-song S 621 (upper, similar 2 parts)	267a-271a	2: 390-403	2:229-239	8:345-357	2:877-86	620-629	697-707	307a-311a
-52.12, song S 620 (upper, similar)	-267b	-391	229+230	-346	-878	-623	700	307b
-52.14 Song S 621 (lower)	-268a	-393	231	-347	-879	-621	698	307b
song not in TN	-268a	-393	231	-348	-879	-624	698	307b
-52.15. song S 622 (lower)	-268b	-395	232	-349-52	-880+82	-624+25	701-702	308a+b
-52.17, song S 626 (upper song)	268b+270a(2x)	-395+99(2x)	233+36	350+53(2x)	-881+83	-626	703	309a
-52.16, song S 625	-269b+271a	-397+402	234+238	-352+56	882+85(2x)	-626	704	310a
	-270b	-401	237	-355	-884	-628	705	310b
<i>chu bar gi skor</i> : the episode at Chuwar (only in Ms-BL)								
-52.12, song Stagg 620 (upper song)								311a-312b
-52.14, song Stagg 621 (similar)								311a
-4 small songs in Chuwar not found in other collections(to patron Dewa Kyong)								311b
								312a-
								312b
<i>lha lcam dem bu'i skor</i> : the episode with Lhacham Dembu								
(songs by Rechungpa not in TN)	271a-275a	2:403-16	2:239-251	8:357-371	2: 886-98	-629-651	707-730	312b-321b
-song about lineage by Rechungpa	—	—	240	-357	-886	-630	707	—
-Rechungpa meeting Lhacig	-271b	-405	242	-358	-887	-630	707	312b
-2 songs by Rechungpa	—	—	—	—	—	-634-635	712-713	—
-song by Rechung about his departure	-272a	-406	243	-361	-889	-636	714	315a
-songs Rechung x attendant	-272a	-407	244	-362	-889	-642	720	316b
-song <i>shor sa brgyad</i>	-272b	-408	244	-363	-890	-648	727	317a
-song <i>bla ma dran drug</i>	-273a	-410	246	-365	-891	-637	715	318a

-1 song Rechungpa	-273b	-412	248	-367	-893	-644	722	319a
-Rechungpa to Lhacig <i>snying tshim 6</i>	-274a	-414	250	-369	-894	-647	726	319b
-1 request by Lhacig	-275a	-415	251	-371	-897	-646	725	320b
-2 extra songs by Rechungpa	—	—	—	—	—	-649	728	—
<i>mchod khang zhal mjal gyi skor</i> : the episode of meeting at a temple								
	275b-276b	2:416-21	2:251-255	8:371-376	2:898-903	651-655	730-734	321b-323b
-57.2, song S 662	-275b	-417	252	-372	-898	-651	730	321b
-57.3, song S 663	-276a	-418	253	-373	-901	-652	732	322a
-57.4, song S 664	-276a	-419	254	-374	-902	-653	733	322b
-40.3, song S 483	-276b	-420	255	-375	-902	-654	733	323a
<i>dags po lha rje 'byon pa'i ma 'ongs lung bstan gyi skor</i> : the episode of the prophecy of Dagpo Lhajé's future arrival								
	276b-278b	2: 421-27	2:255-259	8:376-381	2:903-09	655-658	734-737	323b-325a
-request Rechungpa about lineage future	-277a	-421	255	-376	-903	-655	734	—
-43.2, song S 537	-277b	-422	256	-377	-904	-656	735	324a
-41.1, song S 492 (part)	-278a	-425	258	-379	-907	—	—	—
-story in another biography	-278b	-426	259	-380	-908	—	—	—
<i>dags po zhal mjal gyi skor</i> : the episode of meeting Dagpo								
	278b-288b	2: 426-58	2:259-285	8:381-412	2:909-38	658-687	737-769	325a-341a
-41.1, song S 492 (full)	-281a	-434	266	-389	-916	-665	745	327b
-song Gampopa not in TN,+ reply	-281b+282a	-437	268+269	-391+392	-920	-686+687	768	329a
-41.3, S 502 - view, meditation,conduct	-283b	-442	273	-397	-926	-672	752	332b
-41.4, song S 506 - Gampopa dream	-285b	-448	278	-402	-930	-678	758	335a
-41.5, song S 509 - Mila explains	-286b	-452	281	-406	-934	-684	762	337a
<i>rje ras pa chen po mi la ras pa dang mnyam med dwags po rin po che yab sras gnyis kyi zhu ba dang len gyi skor</i> : the episode of q&a between lord Milarepa and the incomparable rinpoche from Dakpo								
	288b-295a	2: 458-478	2:285-304	8:412-432	2: 938-56	687-703	769-786	341a-348a

-song not in TN about view, med,action	-289a	-460	287	-414	-940	-692	774	—
-song not in TN, about inseparability	-289b	-461	288	-415	-940	-693	775	—
-7.5 ,song S 79-about guides, only part;	-289b	-461	288	-415	-940	-688	770	341b
-41.6, song S 515 (bardo song)	-290a	-462	289	-416	-943	-693	775	342a
-rgyal srid sna bdun gyi mgur	-290a	-463	290	-417	-944	-689	771	—
-41.7, song S 518	-291b	-468	294	-422	-947	-696	779	344a
extra episode about Tārā +Jetsun's	-292b	-470	296	-425	-949	—	—	344a
dream of losing contest against Gampopa								
-41.8, song S 521	-293b	-475	299	-429	-954	-701	784	347a
-song not in Tn	-294a	-476	300	-430	-955	—	—	—
-calluses on behind + dream of the	-294b	-477	303	-431	-956	-703 (dream,	785	—
storm of geese						no calluses)		
<i>dbus gtad zhal ta dang dwags po dbus bzhud kyi skor</i> : the episode of advice to go to Central Tibet and Gampopa's departure								
-song of Gampopa after hearing Mila	295a-296a	2: 478-81	2:304-305	8:432-436	2:956-61	703-706	786-790	348a-349b
died, not in TN	-295b	-479	304	-434	-957	-704	787	348b
<i>chu bar gyi skor</i> : the episode at Chuwar, in DNM-RD, including part of <i>snye nam tsar ma'i skor</i> -								
	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	ep.missing	706-716	790-800	ep.missing
-one song <i>bla ma mtshan nyid</i>	(228a)	(2:254)	(2:105)	(8:211)	(2:757)	-707	790	—
-1 extra song	—	—	—	—	—	-707	791	—
-18.4, song S 199	(219a)	(1:223)	(2:81)	(8: 184)	(2:734)	-709	793	—
-lta ba gian la 'bebs pa' glu	—	—	—	—	—	-710	794	—
-ltos med drug gi mgur	—	—	—	—	—	-712	795	—
-47.1-2, consecration, S 575-576	(168a)	(2:45)	(1:475)	(8:7+8)	(2:562)	-713-14	796-98	below
-11.1+11.2+ song <i>dgos rgyu chung</i>	(296b)	(2:482)	(2:306)	(8:437)	(2:962)	-714-15	798-99	below
<i>lcam me'i shol bgos pa'i skor</i> - <i>lcam me'i sngo ba zhus pa'i skor</i> : the episode of Chammé asking for dedication (in DNM-RD 716-717/800-801+Ms-BL 349b-352b first part=separate cycle)								

<i>snye nam tsar ma'i skor</i> - episode at Nyenam Tsarma								
-11.1, song S 111	296a-299b	2:481-91	2:305-314	8:436-447	2:961-69	716-724	800-808	349b-352b
-11.2, song S 112 (in 2 pieces)	-296a	-482	305	-436	-961	(714)	(798)	351a
-Chammé asking for dedication, Tārā appears in the sky+song	-296b	-482+483+	306	-437	-962	(715)	(799)	351b
58.3, song S 675	—	—	—	—	—	716	800	352a
-song <i>dgos rgyu chung</i> (not in TN)	-297b	-486	308	-440	-964	(600)	(675)	—
-song about human condition, not in TN	-298a	-487	309	-442	965 (2 songs)	(715)	(799)	—
-38.9/10-song S 459-460 (<i>Ras chung pa'i mnyams shar</i> 8)	—	—	310	-443	-966	—	—	—
-song about <i>bde ba</i> +40.1, song S 481	(110b)	(1:374)	(1:319)	(7:377)	(1:387)	-717-19	802-803	(89a+b)
-55.1, song S 647	—	—	—	—	—	-720	804	(91b)
-55.5, song S 650	-298a	-488	310	-444	-967	-721	805	353a
-song not in TN, animals as examples	-298b	-489	311	-445	-967	-722	806	353b
	-299a	-490	312	-446	-968	-723	807	354a
<i>dbus bzhud zhal ta'i skor</i> : the episode of advice before [Rechungpa's final] departure to Central Tibet								
-song to Rechungpa(not in TN)	299b-301a	2:491-97	2:314-319	8:447-453	2:969-75	724-730	808-815	362b-365a
-57.10, song S 668	-299b	-492	314	-448	-969	-724	809	362b
-57.13, song S 670(similar)	-300a(2 songs)	-494(2 songs)	315	-449	-970	-726	811	363b
-57.12, song S 669(lower), Mila shows calluses on his behind	-300b	-495	316	-451	-974	-728	813	364a
	-301a	-496	318	-452	-975	-729	814	364b
<i>rong sogs rtse gong gi skor</i> -episode at Rong sog Tse gong								
-song whether Lhacham would come	301a-303a	2: 497-502	2:319-323	8:453-459	2:975-81	730-733	815-818	365a-367a
-song with confession of Lhacham	-301b	-498	319	-454	-976	—	—	—
	-301b	-498	320	-455	-976	-730	815	—

-song <i>sdig sbyangs</i> Rechungpa	-302a	-499	320	-455	-979	-731	816	365b
-song by Lhacham	-302a	-500	321	-456	-979	-731	816	366a
-57.14, song S 671	-302b	-501	322	-457	-980	-732	817	366b
<i>lcam me'i sngo ba'i skor</i> : the episode of the dedication prayer for Chammé								
-55.2, dedication by Tārā similar S 648 (in TN by Mila!)	303a-303b	2:502-04	2:323-324	8:459-460	981-982	716-717	800-801	352a
<i>brin gyi smon lam dang bkra shis kyi skor</i> : the episode of prayers and well-wishing in Drin								
Jetsun invites people from Nyenam for ritual feast-tells them not to kill animals; 5 songs to fishermen, not in TN	303b-307a	2: 504-16	2:324-335	8:460-472	2:981-94	733-743	818-829	370a-375a
	-1-303b	-1-504	1-324	-1-460	-1-982	-1-734	819	370a
	-2-304a	-2-505	2-326	-2-461	-2-985	-2-735	820	371a
	-3-304b	-3-508	3-328	-3-464	-3-989	-3-737	822	372a
	-4-305a	-4-510	4-329	-4-465	-4-990	-4-738	824	372b
	-5-305b	-5-511	5-330	-5-466	-5-990	-5-740	825	373a
-62.3, song Q 186	-306a	-512	331	-468	-991	-741	826	374a
<i>-bkra shis kyi mgur 2 songs</i>	-306b+307a	-515	333	-470+471	-993	(292)	(330)	—
18) <i>Tshe gcig gis zung 'jug rdo rje'i sku 'grub cing 'ja' lus su yal ba'i tshul bstan pa'i yon tan</i> : the quality of showing how Mila disappeared as a rainbow by realising a unified vajra-body in 1 life time [18th quality not mentioned in Ms-BL]								
	307a-317b	2:516-51	2:335-364	8:472-505	2:994-1029	743-767	829-855	375a-389a
-1 song not in TN	-307b	-518	336	-473	-995	-743	829	—
-62.4, song Q 192	-308a	-519	337	-474	-996	-744	830	375b
-62.7, song Q 199	-308b	-520	338	-476	-997	-745	831	376a
-62.5, song Q 194	-309b	-524	341	-479	-999	-748	834	377b
-song not in TN, about bönpo's death	-309b	-524	341	479(1st song)	-1000	-749	835	377b
-episode Rechungpa in Loro	-310a	-527	343	-481	-1005	—	—	378b
-57.13, song S 670	-310b	-528	344	-483	-1006	(728)	(813)	379a
-62.11, song Q 210	-311a	-529	345	-484	-1011	—	—	380a

-62.14, song Q 216	-312a	-533	348	486(2nd song)	-1014	-751	838	380a
-62.9, song Dakinis Q 204	-312b	-534	349	-489	-1014	-752	839	381a
-45.8, song S 554	-313b	-538	353	-492	-1019	-755	842	383a
-62.12, song Q 212 (by Dakinis)	-314a	-540	355	-494	-1020	-757	844	384a
-62.13, song Q 214	-314b	-541	355	-495	-1021	-758	845	384b
-song not in TN(a child singing in sky)	-315a	-542	357	-496	-1022	-759	846	385a
-62.15, start of song Q 218	-315b	-544	358	-498	-1025	-761	848	386a
-62.16, song Q 221(by Dakini)	-316a	-546	360	-500	-1026	-763	850	387a
-62.17, song Q 226	-317a	-550	363	-504	-1029	-766	854	389a

