

THE TIBETAN LAM-RIM GENRE:
A Comparative Study Focussing on
Five Representative Texts

A Thesis

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

Department of Far Eastern Studies

by

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December, 1987

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines and compares five major texts belonging to the lam-rim genre of Tibetan Buddhist literature. Although a few works from within this important genre have been translated into western languages, there has hitherto been no attempt to study the genre as a whole or to compare any of the diverse works found within it.

The first chapter is an introduction to the study which sets out to determine this genre by showing its connection with Indian 'path literature' and then to delineate the constitutive features common to lam-rim texts. It goes on to discuss how I have approached the corpus, first indicating the reasons for choosing the five representative texts used for study and comparison and then discussing ways of dealing with the methodological problems specific to this enterprise.

The second chapter traces the historical genesis and exfoliation of the lam-rim genre in Tibet. It begins with brief hagiographical accounts of the five authors, emphasizing their influence on the development of lam-rim literature. Next it explores how the scope and subject matter of the works have been shaped by the socio-cultural contexts in which they were composed as well as the intentions of their authors.

The third chapter proceeds with an exegetical overview of the five texts. Their internal organization and major themes are exposed using thematic abridgments and schematic diagrams.

The concluding chapter compares, on the basis of the foregoing historical and exegetical analysis, some of the major stylistic, structural and thematic features of the five representative texts. Special attention is devoted to innovative contributions in each of these regions of inquiry - distinctive ideas, motifs (stylistic and structural), and approaches to the Buddhist path.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. H.V. Guenther for his valuable time and effort spent in supervising the research and writing of this thesis. His deep appreciation of Buddhist literature coupled with uncompromising standards of scholarship set an example that is as rare as it is difficult to follow. I also wish to thank the University of Saskatchewan for their financial support and assistance. Although I no longer have department faculty members to thank, I am very thankful to Kent Johnson for his support as friend and fellow student. I am also grateful to Edith Kimbell for her most useful advice regarding organization and methodology; to Candace Schuler for her assistance with the more troublesome graphics; to Anand Thakkar for his infectious concern with form in presentation; and to Dr. Ilse Guenther for her constant encouragement.

Special thanks are due to Professors K. Haderlein (Department of Germanic Languages) and E. Dayton (Department of Philosophy) for their suggestions during the revision and correction phases of the thesis writing. Finally, I wish to express appreciation to my dear friend Naseem Janmohammed, not least of all for her help in the proofreading and preparing of the final draft.

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The ladder urges us beyond ourselves. Hence its importance. But in a void, where do we place it ?

Edmond Jabès,
The Book of Questions:
Volume II

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Determining the Lam-rim Genre

"[G]enres are to be understood not as genera (classes) in the logical senses, but rather as groups or historical families. As such, they cannot be deduced, or defined, but only historically determined, delimited and described... [A] literary genre in the nonlogical, group-specific sense is determinable in that, in contrast to the wider sphere of dependent functions, it is independently able to constitute constitutive texts, whereby this constitution must be synchronically comprehensible in a structure of non-substitutable elements, as well as diachronically in a potential for forming a continuity."

Hans Robert Jauss,
**Toward an Aesthetic
of Reception**

The term lam-rim circumscribes a large corpus of Tibetan texts which deal with the whole of the Buddhist way (lam) in its gradation (rim) from preliminary topics to the goal of awakening. The Tibetan term lam renders the Sanskrit mārga (Pali: magga) or patha, meaning 'way' or 'path' respectively. In the first discourse delivered by the Buddha after his awakening 1/, the way was taught as a means to pass beyond the misery of existence. This practical signification of the term is born out by the verbal root of mārga, mr̥g - 'to trace' or 'track' - as well as by its synonym pratipad ('practice') 2/. Like the English term 'way', mārga implies not only a route or procedure followed but the manner in which, and means by which, it is followed. A precise definition of the genre must therefore combine these substantive and verbal-instrumental connotations: lam-rim works

are those which describe the "way" how the Buddhist way is travelled through its successive stages.

The generality of this cursory definition of lam-rim literature indicates the extensive range of the corpus as well as the ambitious program undertaken by its individual works. Before attending to 'the texts themselves' it will be necessary to establish the general configuration of Indo-Tibetan 'path' literature within which the lam-rim texts are classified.

1.1.1 Delimiting the Corpus

The lam-rim corpus is as varied as it is voluminous. A listing of lam-rim texts in a bibliography compiled by A-khu rin-po-che (1803-1875) 3/ includes, in addition to those works containing 'lam-rim' in their title, many belonging to sub-genres such as bstan-rim ('stages of the teaching'), khrid-rim ('stages of guidance'), lam-khrid ('guidance on the way') and blo-sbyong ('mental training'). A-khu's bibliography (which is by no means exhaustive) also includes Tibetan exegetical and commentarial works on standard Indian Buddhist texts such as Santideva's **Bodhicaryāvatāra** and Nagarjuna's **Suhṛllekha**. The **gDams-ngag mdzod**, a collection of the most important practical instructions of all the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism compiled by Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas (1813-1899) 4/, contains a wide range of texts designated as lam-rim belonging to the Old and New traditions.

The program common to all lam-rim works is that of providing

practical, systematic guidance in the stages of the Buddhist path leading to the experience of awakening. This program was by no means unique to the Tibetan lam-rim works. In fact, this literature could flourish as it did in Tibet only because its roots were firmly planted in Indian soil. The **Bodhipathapradīpa** of Atisa, a prototype for a large number of Tibetan lam-rim texts, was originally composed in Sanskrit and later translated into Tibetan by its author and dGe-ba'i blo-gros. The text (together with its commentary) is itself a concise and orderly synthesis of basic tenets of Mahayana Buddhism as embodied in various standard summary-type works.

The attempt to summarize in a single work the essentials of the Buddhist way can be traced as far back as the Pali Canon to a work entitled the **Paṭisambhidāmagga** ("The Path to Thorough Comprehension"). This text, one of fifteen belonging to the Khuddanikaya of the Suttapitaka 5/, presents thirty discussions (kathās) on various topics of Buddhism arranged in an orderly progression. As A.K. Warder observes,

The overall form of the work...as well as the title, suggest that at least the present arrangement of the discussions is not entirely casual, and that the work sets out in systematic order the way to enlightenment. The commentary of Mahanama affirms that this is the character of the work and attempts to introduce each discussion as following on naturally from the last one, along this 'way' 6/.

As Warder observes, the **Paṭisambhidāmagga** represents the first attempt to systematize the various dialogues and discourses of the Buddha into an orderly "all-embracing account".

In the development of Buddhism, the path summaries came to play an increasingly crucial role as the need to synthesize and

organize the growing body of exegetical and commentarial literature increased. This need was practically fulfilled in the fifth century with the composition of the **Visuddhimagga** ("The Path to Complete Purity"), a standard text of Hinayana Buddhism attributed to Buddhaghosa. The all-encompassing scope of the work is indicated by the author's interpretation of its title: "**Visuddhi** means the Nirvana which is wholly and thoroughly purified, and free from dirt of every description and the path which leads to this purification is called **Visuddhimagga**" 7/. In the work, Buddhaghosa arranges the subject matter, namely the teachings of the Buddha as handed down by the elders of the Theravada tradition, according to the three themes of ethics (śīla), meditation (samādhi) and appreciative discernment (prajñā).

By the time Mahāyāna had reached its zenith in India (eighth c. A.D.), path summaries had become a standard form of presentation. Styles and forms varied. Some were simply compilations of quotations arranged in sequence and interspersed with the author's own commentary and kārikās. Examples are Śāntideva's **Śikṣāsamuccaya** ('Anthology of Training') and Nagarjuna's **Sūtrasamuccaya** ('Anthology of Sutras') 8/. Other texts were composed as a relatively lengthy series of verse stanzas, such as Santideva's **Bodhicaryāvatāra** and Atīśa's **Bodhipathapradīpa**.

To these forms of path literature must be added another, less well-known, class of short verse poems which briefly summarize the stages of the path. Three examples are the **Bodhisattvamārgakramasaṃgraha** of Śākyaśrībhadrā (A.D. 1127-1225),

the **Mahāyānapathakrama** of Subhāgavajra (date unknown), and the **Jinamārgāvatāra** of Buddhāsriñāna (10th to 11th c. A.D.) 9/. These works are remarkably similar in their content and organization to the Tibetan lam-rim works. All three begin by discussing four preliminary topics and the need to rely on a spiritual friend. They then deal with the development of a concern with awakening (bodhicittopada) and go on to discuss the aspects of the Buddhist path culminating in the goal of Buddhahood. These themes, as arranged here, were to become the hallmarks of the lam-rim texts (see p. 7 below).

The lam-rim corpus thus crowns a long lineage of path summaries dating to the earliest stage of Indian Buddhism. Like their Indian forerunners, the lam-rim works arose in response to the need for synthesis and practical guidance with regard to the major themes of Buddhist thought. This need was particularly acute for the Tibetans who were heir to a body of teachings (Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana) that had developed for over a millenium in India.

1.1.2 Delineating the Constitutive Features of the Genre

Having generally circumscribed the lam-rim genre in terms of its historical development, the next task is to identify the main features which all texts belonging to it share in common. If the usual sense of "genre" as a type of texts is expanded to include the corresponding genre of human concerns and practices which the texts are meant to solicit 10/, it is possible to

formulate the constitutive features according to (1) formal (textual) as well as (2) functional (contextual) criteria. For, the lam-rim genre is not characterized solely by the literary traits of the texts it encompasses, but also by the particular sort of handling these texts call for, the way in which they are meant to function in society.

The functional criteria should be considered first because of their historical primacy. There are three spheres, each more encompassing than the last, within which the texts may be seen to operate: that of individual, society and tradition. Within the individual sphere, lam-rim works play a formative role in guiding the aspirant through the stages for passing beyond suffering and realizing the goal of Buddhahood. The practical import of the texts predominates in this sphere. In the wider sphere of society, the texts present to a group of people sharing certain ideals and aspirations a consensually validated paradigm of concepts and practices which provide stimulus to learning and culture. Here, the communicative scope of the texts is paramount.

Within the sphere of tradition, the texts play a major part in identifying the distinctive approaches and leading ideas of a particular tradition and preserving its identity over time. This is a particularly significant aspect of the texts chosen in this study, since the early exfoliation of lam-rim literature 11/ was closely associated with the institutionalization of Tibetan Buddhism. Because the authors of these works were typically also the founders or organizers of new schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the texts tended to be taken as representative of the school in

which they were used.

The **Bodhipathapradīpa** of Atīśa (980-1052) was the textual authority of the bKa'-gdams-pa sect, founded by his disciple 'Brom-ston. The **Thar-rgyan** by sGam-po-pa (1079-1153) became the major introductory text of the six bKa'-brgyud schools founded by his immediate disciples 12/. The **Lam-rim chen-mo**, composed by Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419) three centuries after Atīśa's text as an extensive elaboration of its major themes, became the authority of the dGe-lugs-pa or New bKa'-gdams-pa tradition.

Slightly before Tsong-kha-pa's time, the **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** and **Yid-bzhin mdzod** of Klong-chen-pa (1308-1364) were composed. These had a prominent place within the rNying-ma tradition which became a distinct tradition in Tibet under Klong-chen-pa's intellectual and spiritual guidance. A number of lam-rim texts are also attributed to Padmasambhava, regarded the founder of rNying-ma, but they deal specifically with Vajrayana subject matter 13/.

The formal or textual features common to lam-rim works may be briefly schematized in terms of their general content and organization. Lam-rim texts usually include, with certain variations in sequence (see Diagram J, p. 130), the following general themes:

I. Preliminary Topics

1. The Uniqueness of Human Existence
2. Impermanence and Death
3. The Relationship Between Actions and Their Consequences
4. The General Misery of Samsara

II. Associating with Spiritual Friends

III. Love and Compassion

IV. Taking Refuge

V. Developing a Concern with Awakening

VI. The Experiential Mantrayāna Approach

VII. The Climax

The overall arrangement of these topics mirrors the gradation of a learning process which begins (I) with preliminary topics of observation aimed at instilling in us a desire to set out on the Buddhist path while also giving us the confidence to do so, proceeds (II-VI) through the successive stages of cultivating this path, and culminates (VII) in the goal of Buddhahood.

1.2 Approaching the Texts

"The text, says Novalis, is more like an onion than a fruit with a pit of meaning at its centre. The unfolding and discovery of the layers and their inexhaustible and complex interrelationships is the meaning, and the 'poetic critic' seeks rather to elucidate some of these possibilities and these symbolic interconnections in order not to bring into view determinate meanings, but to help the reader to cultivate his response and elucidate his aesthetic experience."

Kathleen Wheeler,
German Aesthetic and
Literary Criticism

1.2.1 The Choice of Representative Texts

To approach a genre of literature as large and varied as lam-rim requires considerable methodological preparation. The first problem at hand is that of choosing representative texts for exegetical and comparative study. The second concerns the actual methods of exegesis.

Two basic questions have guided the choice of representative texts: Which texts were the most influential or prominent ? and Which were the most original ? Often these questions pointed in different directions. The most influential and highly regarded lam-rim texts tended to be the least original in content, owing their prominence, instead, to the prestige of the author or his particular treatment of the subject matter. On the other hand, highly original works tended to be either neglected or supplanted by more accessible derivations. This levelling of standards is

probably due mainly to the nature of the genre itself: since the lam-rim texts were typically of an introductory nature, preference was given to those texts which could make a wide spectrum of ideas readily accessible.

Three of the representative texts have been chosen because of the prominent place they hold within their traditions. These are Atīśa's **Bodhipathapradīpa**, sGam-po-pa's **Thar-rgyan** and Tsong-kha-pa's **Lam-rim chung-ba**. Their 'representativeness' has in each case been vouchsafed by the eminent status of their authors as founders or organizers of gSar-ma traditions. Klong-chen-pa's **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** was also influential within the rNying-ma tradition but in course of time became supplanted by more accessible lam-rim works such as 'Jigs-med gling-pa's **Yon-tan mdzod** and dPal-sprul's **Kun-bzang bla-ma zhal-lung**. The **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** was chosen in preference to these subsequent and largely derivative texts because of its originality or (to paraphrase Nietzsche) the exceptional way in which it addresses otherwise commonplace themes ¹⁴/.

It may strike the reader as peculiar that a second text by Klong-chen-pa, the **Yid-bzhin mdzod**, has been included in the choice of representative texts. Yet this work, also, contains one of the most original interpretations of the lam-rim available. Reflecting a later stage in the author's intellectual and spiritual development, and his growing stature as an independent thinker, it provides especially fertile material for comparative analysis, most significantly where the problem of reconciling Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna is concerned.

The reader might further object that the **Yid-bzhin mdzod** is not lam-rim by designation and has not been regarded as an introductory 'path summary' as have the other selected texts. While it is true that this text exceeds the general scope of the lam-rim genre, and hence defies generic classification, it does contain the entire lam-rim program in the latter part of the text, after first establishing the onto-cosmological conditions which make self-alienation and the way to existential recovery possible.

1.2.2 The Question of Methodology

"Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works...The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his own language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where work, image, and tone converge. He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally recognized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed..."

Rudolf Pannwitz,
**Die Krisis der
europaischen Kultur**

Comparison thrives on textual and critical diversity. Texts which differ from one another in approach, style and subject matter call for different methodological resources and

strategies. Among the texts chosen for this study, those whose choice of subject matter and mode of presentation have been guided by socio-political factors impose a historical-contextual mode of inquiry which seeks to account for how such factors, once identified, have determined or shaped their particular message and form.

In the case of the works of art in which the author seeks to express and evoke in his reader the living experiential immediacy in which he is directly involved, the critic's attention is drawn toward specific aesthetic and communicative features. In either case - whether the text is deemed to be predominantly ideological or artistic in scope - it is the particular influence of the text upon the lives of its readers that is of decisive importance. By exposing each of the texts to these different contexts of inquiry, significant points of convergence and divergence are adduced which then become the raw material for the ensuing comparison.

Comparison differs from unitextual analysis in that it radically exposes the variability and relativity of the reader-critic's position with regard to the texts he addresses. Recent developments in literary criticism and hermeneutics 15/ have called into question the presumption, long reigning in Western intellectual history, that a textual critic has privileged access to a neutral or innocent critical position. Every position, as Roland Barthes has persuasively argued, conceals particular prejudices - historical, cultural, personal - and the cardinal sin of criticism lies not in having an ideology but in keeping

quiet about it 16/.

If the notion of a neutral critical stance is thrown into doubt, so is the corresponding assumption that the work is an object whose inner core of meaning lies waiting to be unveiled by the probing critic. On close inspection, any text turns out to be a retiform complexity of polysemic codes which resonate with one another and 'come to mean' differently from different critical positions. While this unreassuring fact need not dissuade us from finding meaning in texts, it should obviate any hope of finding a core of meaning, a 'transcendentally signified' in Derrida's idiom, which imparts meaning to the whole, and which is purged of the critic's subjectivity.

It is only at the inner boundary of textual hermeneutics, as narrowly circumscribed by Dilthey and Schleiermacher, that we pass over into a more encompassing, second order hermeneutics in which what is interpreted is itself an on-going process of interpretation - the meaning-formation process that is always already operative in the originary matrix of world-experience. In interpreting religious texts, this transtextual dimension of hermeneutics is of special significance. The success of any model which purports to contribute to an interpretive understanding of ourselves and the world "can be measured only by the degree to which the second order of interpretation remains reflexive upon the originary level of interpretive meaning-formation " 17/.

If comparison is sustained by textual divergence, it is propelled forward in its creative synthesis by the dynamic tension between its own receptive-responsive critical positions.

It is here that the customary dualism between literary creation and literary criticism breaks down. The critic who would be a scholar, armed beforehand with his theoretical tools, must first be a reader who can listen (thos) to what an author has to say. When what is communicated is in a language or idiom different from his own, this listening becomes a willingness to be open to, or even be opened to, the foreignness of what is said 18/. By then thinking about what is communicated (bsam) and imaginatively bringing out hitherto undisclosed implications through comparative juxtaposition and synthesis (sgom), the task of explication becomes one of novel creation. We do not look to the translator-interpreter for a recreation of the original but for literary creation in its own right.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1/ This discourse, called the **Dhammacakkappavattanasutta**, "the discourse in which Buddha turned the wheel of Dharma", was given at Deer Park near Banaras and consisted of teachings on the four truths and eight-fold path. It is preserved in the **Mahāvagga** of the **Saṃyuttanikāya**, LVI, 11 and in the **Vinayapiṭaka I**, 10, 10-12, 18. See R.K. Norman, **Pali Literature** (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 53.

2/ See **Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary**, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davis and W. Stede (London: Luzac and Co. Ltd., 1959), 512) and R.L. Turner, **A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages** (London: Oxford U. Press, 1966), 579.

3/ In Lokesh Chandra, **Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature**, Sataka Pitaka Series vol. 30 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1963).

4/ N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltsen eds., **Gdams-ngag mdzod** vol. 1-12 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1963).

5/ For further details, see A.K. Warder's Introduction to **The Path of Discrimination**, tr. by Bhikku Nanamoli (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1982).

6/ A.K. Warder, **Indian Buddhism** (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), 312.

7/ M. Winternitz, **History of Buddhist Literature** vol. 2 (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1922), 195.

8/ Santideva recommends the reading of the **Sūtrasamuccaya** of Nagarjuna along with his own **Śikṣāsamuccaya** in **Bodhicaryāvatāra**, V. 105 f. Taranatha wrongly ascribes this work to Santideva in his **History of Buddhism**. See Winternitz, **History...** vol. 2, 353.

9/ These are found in **Tibetan Tripiṭaka**, Peking Edition (hereafter PK) (Kyoto: Otani U., 1955-61), vol. 81, n. 4543 and vol. 103, nos. 5359 and 5372 respectively.

10/ This dual sense of 'genre' is briefly discussed by Denis Kambouchner in "The Theory of Accidents," from **Glyph 7: The Strassbourg Colloquium: Genre** (Baltimore: John Hopkins.U. Press), 157.

11/ 'Early Exfoliation' refers to the period between the writing of Atiśa's **Bodhipathapradīpa** and Tsong-kha-pa's **Lam-rim chen-mo**. The lam-rim works created after this time are for the most part modelled on the already authoritative texts.

12/ D. Snellgrove, **Indo-Tibetan Buddhism** vol. 2 (Boston: Shambala, 1987), 488-89.

13/ Various works designated 'lam-rim' are attributed to him. The **Gdams-ngag mdzod** (vol. ka) contains a collection of short lam-rim texts in his name entitled **Lam-rim rin-chen spungs-pa**. Also attributed to Padmasambhava are the **Nang-gi lam-rim**, included with a commentary by 'Gyur-med tshe-dbang mchog-grub in **Sman-rtsi Shesrig Spendzod** vol. 35 (Leh: 1972) and the **Lam-rim ye-shes snying-po**, included with a commentary by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul in **The Collected Rediscovered Teachings (gTer-ma) of gTer-chen mchog-gyur gling-pa** (1829-70), vol. 29 (A) (New Delhi: 1976). These terse Vajrayāna poems constitute an independent lam-rim genre which bears a closer relationship to the Gīti and Dohā poetry than to the works which this thesis examines.

14/ E. Nietzsche, **Use and Abuse of History**, tr. Adrian Collins (Indianapolis, 1957), 39.

15/ These are discussed by Terry Eagleton, **Literary Theory: An Introduction** (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

16/ Roland Barthes, **On Racine**, tr. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 3.

17/ The distinction between textual and a second order hermeneutics is elucidated by Calvin O. Schrag in **Radical Reflection and the Origin of the Human Sciences** (Indiana: Purdue U. Press), chapter 5. Tibetan Buddhists have devoted much attention to hermeneutical issues, basing their analyses on an old Indian distinction between interpretable meaning (S. neyyārtha, T. drang-don) and definitive meaning (S. nītārtha, T. nges-don). According to Klong-chen-pa (**Shing-rta chen-po**, 687), 'definitive meaning' pertains to Being as the enduring reality (gshis-kyi gnas-lugs), whereas 'interpretable meaning' pertains to all the sundry methods for trying to enter into this enduring reality by way of opaque and mistaken notions. One is reminded of Hans-Georg Gadamer's statement: "Concept-formation...has held throughout its long history that mastery is the fundamental experience of reality." **Truth and Method** (New York: Crossroad Pub., 1982), 494.

18/ As Walter Benjamin states it, "...all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages." From "Task of the Translator," in **Illuminations**, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 75.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY

2.1 The Representative Lam-rim Texts and Their Authors

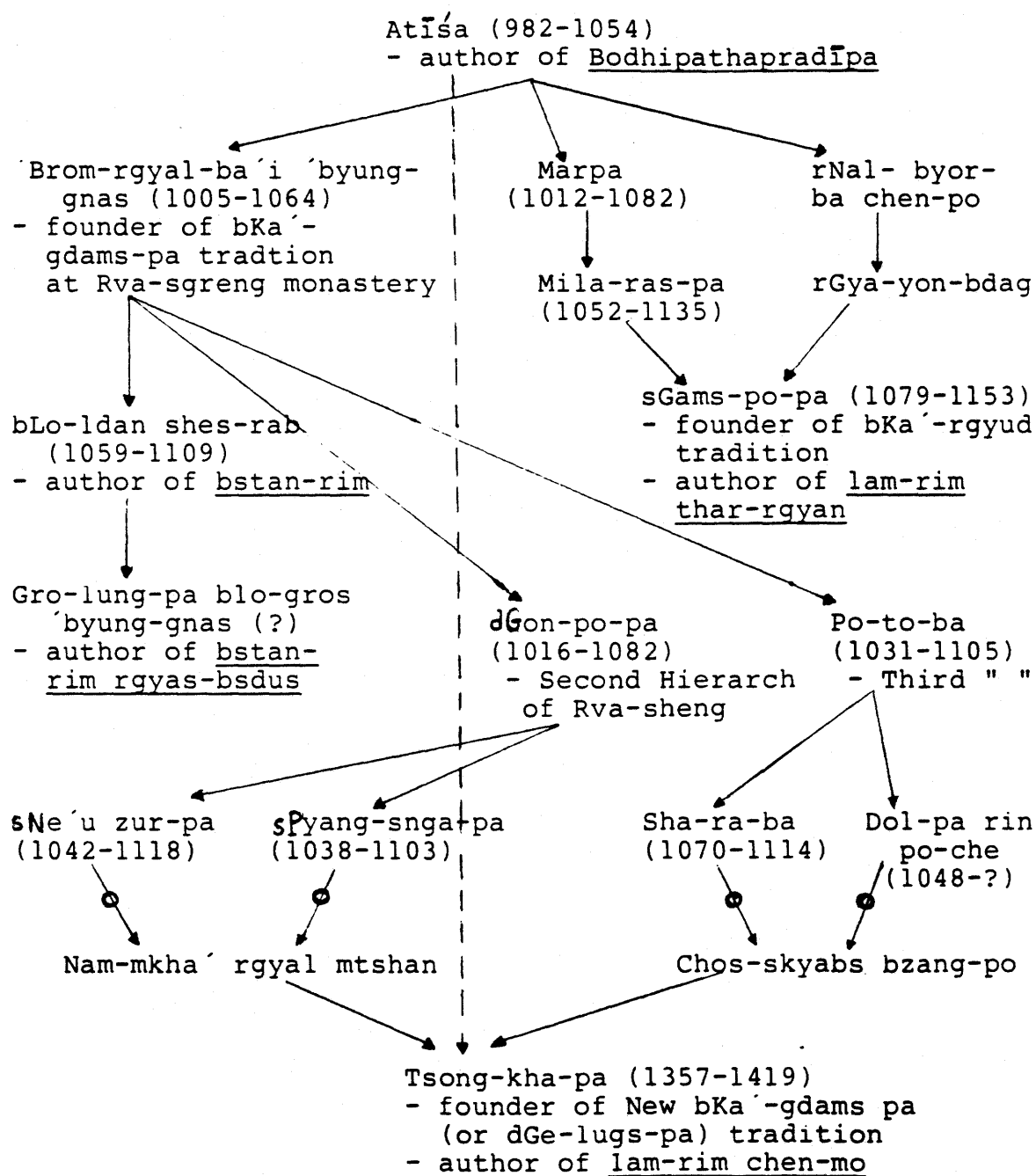
2.1.1 Atīśa and his Bodhipathapradīpa

Atīśa (980-1052), Indian born scholar-monk 1/ also known as Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna and reverentially referred to by Tibetans as Jo-bo-rje (Great Master), is regarded both as a religious reformer and as the founder of the lam-rim literature in Tibet. He is credited with clearing up misconceptions concerning the practice of Tantra in that country and instigating the renewal of monastic Buddhism. His missionary activities in Tibet owed much of their success to a relatively small work entitled the Bodhipathapradīpa which was commissioned by the monk Byang-chub-'od who invited Atīśa to Tibet on the advice of his uncle king Ye-shes-'od. In this text, which has been aptly dubbed "a manifesto of Buddhist reform" 2/, Atīśa distinguishes the appropriate candidate for monastic Buddhism and goes on to outline the correct practice of a Bodhisattva.

While the biographical details of Atīśa's early life vary from one account to the next, recent assessments seem to confirm that he was born in Bengal to a family of royalty. At an early age, he had a vision of the goddess Tara who was to remain his tutelary deity for the rest of his life. This experience led him to take ordination as a monk. Tibetan biographies (rnam-thar) and histories (chos-'byung) mention his subsequent initiation into the Vajrayana which he studied until the age of twenty-nine 3/.

Diagram A

Atīśa's Influence on gSar-ma Traditions and Their lam-rim literature



KEY

- direct teaching
- continuous with names omitted
- visionary influence

At age thirty-one, Atīśa travelled to Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra ?) where he spent twelve years studying under Dharmapāla. Upon returning to India, he became abbot of Vikramaśīla. His studies during these years ranged from Prajnaparamita and Vinaya to Tantra. Tantra had reached its zenith at this time and Atīśa studied under or met with many of its most eminent representatives such as Avadhūtipā, Rāhulagupta, and Nāropa.

He set out for Tibet in 1040 and arrived in Guge (western Tibet) in 1042. Monastic reform was already underway in this region due to the efforts of monks from Khams (central Tibet) trained in Vinaya who thenceforth became his disciples 4/. Among these was 'Brom-ston, a staunch reformist who was to become Atīśa's leading disciple and financial patron (bdag-gnyer) 5/. 'Brom-ston was responsible for founding Rva-sgreng monastery in 1057 as the seat of the bKa'-gdams-pa tradition.

In Tibet, the Indian scholar's principal objectives were (1) to restore monastic order and discipline, (2) to create a solidly based 'school' comprised of tested disciples who would be capable of transmitting the tradition to later generations, (3) to translate with this selected group of Tibetans major Indian Buddhist works, and (4) to write systematic manuals outlining the basic guidelines to be followed by the monastic candidate.

Atīśa began his missionary activities in and around western Tibet but after a few years travelled extensively. He rapidly gained fame as a scholar and teacher and is said to have humbled the pride of Tibet's famous translator and Tantric scholar, Rin-chen bzang-po. However, not everyone shared Atīśa's reformist

zeal. 'Brog-mi, founder of the Saskya tradition who introduced the Tantric lam-'bras teachings to Tibet, avoided meeting him. The great yogi Mila-ras-pa, on the other hand, pointed the finger of accusation not at Atīśa but at 'Brom-ston for suppressing his master's attempts to teach the Vajrayana. Atīśa was a prolific writer. One-hundred and twenty-two works are attributed to him in the bsTan-'gyur, of which seventy-nine were translated by him into Tibetan 6/. The titles of these works indicate his familiarity with Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism. Atīśa died at sNye-thang monastery in 1054.

Atīśa's **Bodhipathapradīpa** exerted a tremendous influence on the subsequent development of Tibetan lam-rim literature (see Diagram A). Both sGam-po-pa and Tsong-kha-pa follow Atīśa's text in their own lam-rim teachings, the latter more closely than the former. Tsong-kha-pa and those lam-rim authors who followed his teachings do not hesitate to show their indebtedness to the **Bodhipathapradīpa** and typically preface their texts with a dedicatory biography of Atīśa and an elaborate account of the greatness of his text.

2.1.2 sGam-po-pa and his Thar-rgyan

sGam-po-pa (1079-1153), also known as Dvags-po lha-rje and Blo-gros grags lha-rje 7/, is renowned amongst all schools of Buddhism in Tibet for his thorough mastery of Sutras and Tantras. He has a special connection with the **Samādhirājasutra**, a text highly esteemed by his followers which he is said to have requested the Buddha to teach in a previous incarnation as Candraprabhakumāra. sGam-po-pa is also commonly regarded as the organizer of the bKa'-brgyud tradition, though it was under his immediate disciples that its various sub-sects were founded 8/.

sGam-po-pa was the second of three sons in the sNyi-ba family. He studied medical science in his youth and became a highly skilled practitioner (lha-rje) 9/. After the death of his wife and family while he was just over twenty, sGam-po-pa decided to devote his life to Buddhism. At age twenty six he took up ordination and was given the name bSod-nams rin-chen. Soon thereafter, he undertook studies in a bKa'-gdams monastery where he received Atīśa's teachings from Bya-yul-pa, sNyug-rum-pa and lCags-ri Gong-kha-pa. He also received instructions in meditation from the acarya Byang-chub sems-dpa'.

A decisive turning point in his spiritual career was his encounter with the famous yogi Mila-ras-pa who followed the Mahamudra teachings which his teacher Mar-pa had received from Naropa in India. Upon hearing of Mila-ras-pa from a beggar, sGam-po-pa abandoned his robe (much to the chagrin of fellow monks) and went to meet him. Their meeting is significant in that it

reveals the rift between scholastic and experiential Buddhism which bKa'-gdams-pa monastic reforms had tended to exacerbate rather than resolve. According to 'Gos lo-tsa-ba's **Deb-ther sngon-po**, sGam-po-pa took great pains in meeting Mila-ras-pa. When he was finally able to do so he found Mila sitting on top of a boulder. After refusing both of sGam-po-pa's gifts with sarcastic remarks, Mila offered him a skull-cap full of wine.

sGam-po-pa thought that being a monk it was improper to drink it. The Teacher having perceived (his thought), insisted that he should drink it. After he had drunk it all, the Teacher inquired about his name. sGam-po-pa said that his name was bSod-nams rin-chen (Punyaratna, "Gem of Merit"). The Teacher then repeated three times: "Merit, merit, merit", and sang: "Come out of the Accumulation of Merit..., Gem of Living Beings," and then added: "This will be your welcome !" sGam-po-pa then made his request: "Pray bestow on me the hidden precepts." (Mila) said to him: "Were you initiated ?" sGam-po-pa replied: "I have received many initiations into the Rin-chen rgyan-drug, the Cycle of Samvara, etc. from Mar-yul blo-ldan. I also listened to many expositions of the hidden precepts of the bKa'-gdams-pas in Northern dBu-ru. I have experienced for thirteen days a mystic trance characterized by the absence of sensations." (The Teacher) emitted a loud laugh "Ha, Ha" and said: "Better than this trance is the trance of the gods of the rūpa and arūpa dhātus who are able to meditate throughout an entire cosmic period (kalpa). But it is of no benefit to Enlightenment [byang-chub]. It is similar to (the saying): 'Sand when pressed, will not become liquid butter.' The bKa'-gdams possess 'basic guidance' (gdams-ngag) but they have no 'existential guidance' (man-ngag) ... Because a demon had penetrated the heart of Tibet, the Venerable Master (Atīśa) was not allowed to preach the Vajrayāna (by 'Brom-ston who objected to it, when the Master was about to begin the preaching of the Doha), but if he were allowed to do it, by now Tibet would have been filled by Saints ! 10/.

While sGam-po-pa undoubtedly learned much during his thirteen months with Mila ras-pa, tradition relates that it took him three years of arduous solitary practice, as predicted by Mila, to fully understand the nature of his teacher and the import of his teaching. These years were spent at Se-ba-lung, a

bKa'-gdams monastery in the gNyal region of central Tibet. This was probably the period during which he composed the **Thar-rgyan**, since (a) the work is written on the request of Dar-ma skyabs ('Dar-ma' being a prefix characteristic of bKa'-gdams followers) and (b) although the work is dedicated to both Atīśa and Mila ras-pa, only Atīśa's teachings are treated in any detail.

sGam-po-pa spent the next period of his life practicing the Mahāmudrā teachings in numerous solitary places. Eventually, he gained an excellent understanding of the Mahāmudrā, comparable to the Buddha's experience of awakening, and became its foremost teacher in Tibet. He was able in his own teachings to combine the two streams of the bKa'-gdams and Mahāmudrā teachings, although this is not yet evident in his **Thar-rgyan**, which is predominantly bKa'-gdams-pa in scope. He gathered a large following of eminent disciples in his final years and died in 1053.

Among sGam-po-pa's voluminous collected writings (gsung-bum), the **Thar-rgyan** holds an important place. It is an exceptionally clear and well-organized summary of the Buddhist path which evidently required little in the way of further clarification or elaboration by derivative texts 5/.

2.1.3 Tsong-kha-pa and his **Lam-rim chung-ba**

Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419), founder of the New bKa'-gdams-pa or dGe-lugs-pa (originally dGe-lDan-pa) tradition, is hailed in his biographies as an erudite scholar, a prolific writer (his Collected Writings encompass 17 volumes) and a charismatic teacher with great personal integrity 12/. He viewed his own tradition as a continuation of the earlier bKa'-gdams-pa; in addition to taking Atīśa's doctrine as the authority for his own lengthy lam-rim text, the **Lam-rim chen-mo**, he also revived his predecessor's reformist campaign, often pushing it to the point of religious intolerance 13/. Tsong-kha-pa was born at the time of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan's reassertion of Tibet's independence during the collapse of the Mongol empire, ending in 1368. He was to play a leading role in the self-definition of Tibetan civilization; his school would gradually gain political ascendancy and hold theocratic authority over the nation until the Chinese communist take-over of this century 14/.

Tsong-kha-pa is said to have begun his studies "at the age of three" (age two by western standards of dating) under bKa'-gdams scholar Don-sgrub rin-chen who later initiated Tsong-kha-pa into the Tantras at age ten. The beginning of his spiritual life was marked by visions of great predecessors in his tradition, especially Atīśa. The next period of his life was devoted to studying the monastic curriculum of Buddhism - logic, epistemology, ethics, psychology and cosmology - in central Tibet. He committed to memory a large number of important text books and

excelled in the many exams he wrote in various subjects. Most influential of his teachers were the Sa-skya teacher Red-mda'-pa (1349-1412), renowned for his mastery of the Abhidharma, and the bKa'-gdams-pa teacher dBu-ma-pa who taught Tsong-kha-pa Atīśa's doctrine.

In his early thirties, Tsong-kha-pa became dissatisfied with his theoretical Mādhyamika comprehension of sūnyatā, after which he began a more intensive study of Tantras. This was discouraged by his scholastic teachers, but tradition relates that the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī intervened to instruct Tsong-kha-pa, remaining his main teacher from that time forward. At age thirty six, Tsong-kha-pa founded his new school at dGa'-ldan monastery, and began to attract growing numbers of disciples. After abandoning the idea of journeying to India to study under the great Mahāsiddhas Maitripa and Nāgabodhi, Tsong-kha-pa was introduced to the **bsTan-rim rgyas-bdus** of Gro-lung-pa 15/, a work summarizing Atīśa's oral instructions on the three types of persons. This work gave Tsong-kha-pa the idea of writing his own **Lam-rim chen-mo**. After finally completing his work in 1402 (after long deliberation over the last chapter on vipaśyana), Tsong-kha-pa composed a more condensed, and less polemical, version entitled the **Lam-rim chung-ba**. After writing the lam-rim texts, he devoted a separate work to Tantra, the **sNgags-rim chen-mo**, in which he discusses, in his typically scholastic fashion, the distinctiveness of Tantra, its various divisions, and the correct procedures for ritual. Tsong-kha-pa suffered from illness toward the end of his life and died in 1419.

Tsong-kha-pa was succeeded by his two spiritual sons, rGyal-tshab and mKhas-grub, who became the first and second abbots of dGa'-ldan and wrote extensively on their master's teachings. Although there were many prolific dGe-lugs-pa writers after this father-sons triad, their works are mainly clarifications or elaborations of already accepted dogma. The later lam-rim works in this tradition invariably take the thematic structure of Tsong-kha-pa's **Lam-rim chen-mo** as their framework 16/.

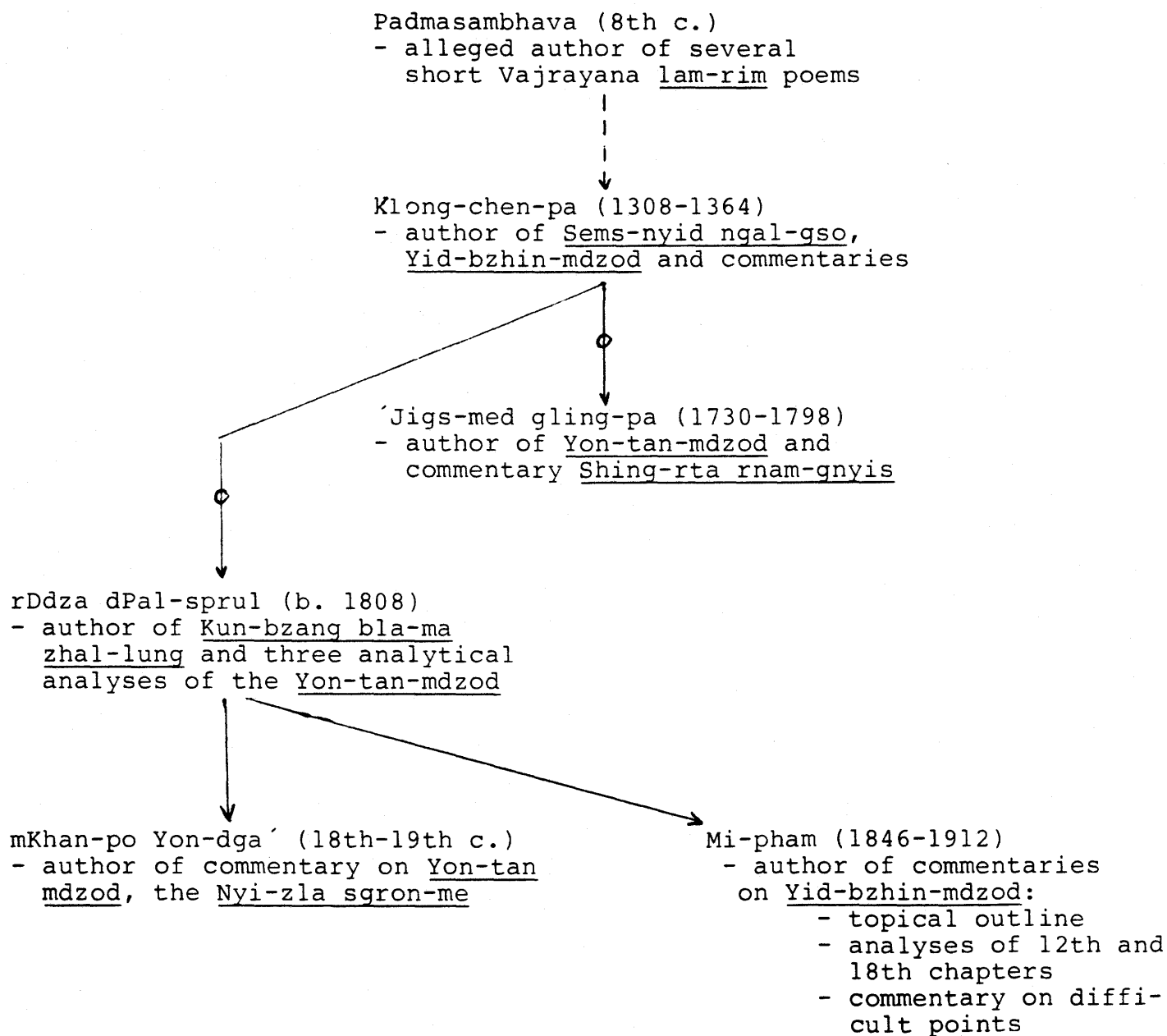
2.1.4 Klong-chen-pa and his **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** and **Yid-bzhin-mdzod**

Kun-mkhyen ("All-knowing") Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa (1308-1364) is regarded not only as the main organizer of the rNying-ma tradition but as its greatest thinker, scholar and poet 17/. He was born at Gra-phu stong-grong in gYu-ru (an incorrect name for gYon-ru), the eastern part of central Tibet 18/. This region was the site of two famous monasteries: bSam-yas, Tibet's first monastery, established by Padmasambhava (8th c.), and gSang-phu, an eminent bKa'-gdams monastery founded by a disciple of 'Brom-ston, rNgog Legs-pa'i shes-rab (11th c.). Klong-chen-pa received ordination at bSam-yas in 1319 at which time he was given the monastic name Tshul-khrims blo-gros. At gSang-phu, he studied under many well-known scholars belonging to gSar-ma traditions.

In this fertile intellectual climate, Klong-chen-pa's studies ranged from Mahayana to Vajrayāna and the specifically rNying-ma rDzogs-chen teachings 19/. Foremost among Klong-chen-pa's Mahāyāna teachers was bLa-blang-pa Chos-dpal rgyal-mtshan 20/, abbot of gSang-phu, who instructed him both in the tradition of practicing the stages of the Buddha's teaching that was passed down through Śāntideva and Atīśa, and in the tradition of experiencing the in-depth appraisals of paths and levels, which is traced back to Maitreya and Asanga. From gZhon-nu rdo-rje 21/, he received the Mahāyāna teachings regarding the vision of Being's abidingness, the meaning of the ultimate, passed down from Nāgārjuna through Atīśa. Under the Sa-skyā bla-ma Dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1284-1339) 22/, he studied both bKa'-

Diagram B

**Klong-chen-pa's Influence on
rNying-ma lam-rim Literature**



KEY

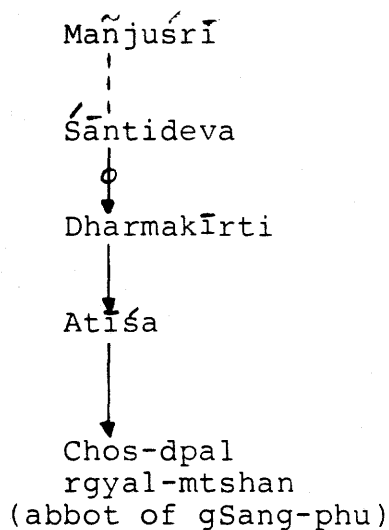
- direct teaching
—————○————→ continuous with names omitted
- - - - -→ visionary influence

Diagram C

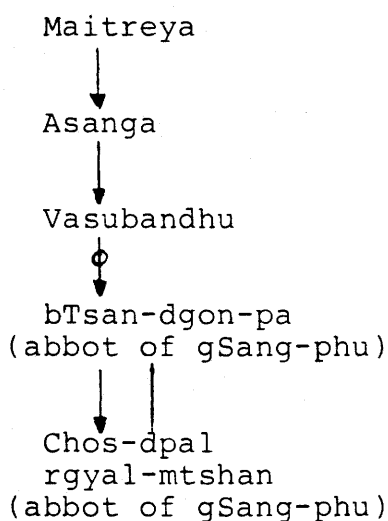
Lines of Transmission in the lam-rim Teachings of Klong-chen-pa's Sems-nyid ngal-gso

I. Mahayana (all originating with Buddha)

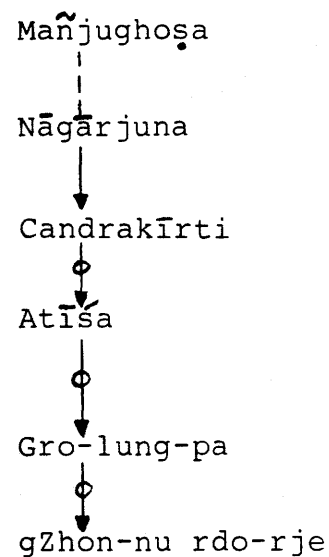
A. Practicing the Stages of the Buddha's Teaching



B. Experiencing In- depth Appraisals of Paths and Levels

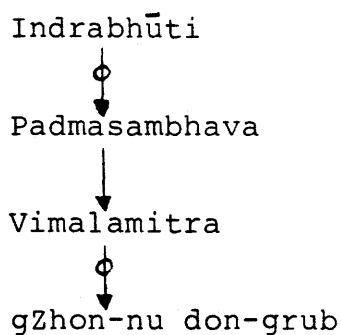


C. Vision of Being's Abidingness, the Meaning of the Ultimate

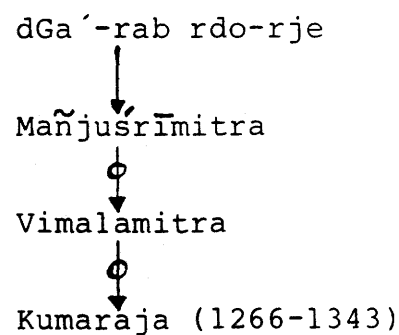


Klong-chen-pa

II. Vajrayāna



III. rDzogs-chen



Klong-chen-pa

gdams and Sa-skya doctrines. He also studied with Rang-'byung rdo-rje (1284-1339), third Karmapa of the bKa'-brgyud tradition.

During these early years of study, Klong-chen-pa not only gained a vast understanding of Buddhism but also excelled at the art of poetry. Both capacities are reflected in the two appellations bestowed on him at this time which he frequently uses as signatures to his writings - Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa and bSam-yas-pa Ngag-kyi dbang-po. In his early twenties, Klong-chen-pa became a professor of poetry at bSam-yas, but soon retired from monastic duties, dissatisfied with the religious hypocrisy surrounding monastic life, to lead a life of solitary practice 23/. In his late twenties, he experienced a vision of Padmasambhava and his consort Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal from whom he received the names Dri-med 'od-zer and rDo-rje gzi-brjid respectively. This vision instilled in him a special connection with the rNying-ma mystical teachings (**sNying-thig**).

During this period, after spending five months secluded in the dark chambers of a cave, Klong-chen-pa met the great mystic Kumaraja (1266-1344) who became his main teacher. They remained together for some time, moving from one uninhabited valley to another. It was from Kumaraja that he received the rDzogs-chen **sNying-thig** teachings handed down from Vimalamitra. Klong-chen-pa wrote thirty-five books on the subject which he entitled **Bla-ma yang-tig**. From gZhon-nu don-grub 24/, he received the Vajrayāna teachings passed down from Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra which he elaborated in his **mKha'-'gro yang-tig**. He synthesized both these teachings in his profound **Zab-mo yang-tig**.

The author moved frequently during his life, continually practicing, teaching, restoring monastic settlements and composing treatises. The most renowned of his many famous writings (numbering some two hundred and seventy titles 25/) are the 'Seven Treasures', each of which is "indispensable for an understanding of the profound and intricate teaching which is termed rDzogs-chen" 26/.

In 1359, Klong-chen-pa was forced into exile in Bhutan due to an alleged affiliation with opponents of the ascendant ruling power. While there, he founded the monasteries of Thar-pa-gling, Shar-mkho-thing Rin-chen-gling and bSam-gtan-gling, thus enabling the later spread of rNying-ma teachings from Bhutan to Nepal. He was later reconciled with the ruling Phag-mo gru-pa hierarch, Tai-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-1364) (who became his student) and was allowed to return to Tibet. At age fifty-six, while residing at O-rgyan-rdzong in Gangs-ri thod-dkar, Klong-chen-pa gave his final teachings and passed into parinirvana.

The **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** and **Yid-bzhin-mdzod** occupy a unique position in the enormous corpus of the author's writings. It is in these two texts that Klong-chen-pa synthesizes all of the various traditions to which he was heir - gSar-ma as well as rNying-ma, Mahayana as well as Vajrayana and rDzogs-chen. Dating the two texts poses difficulties. No chronological arrangement of the works is available and the information furnished by the author himself indicates a relatively mature date of authorship for both works.

The **SN** and commentary bear the signatures Dri-med 'od-zer

and yogi Dri-med 'od-zer respectively. This would place the composition of the text sometime after the author's vision of Padmasambhava and his retirement from bSam-yas 27/. It must also have been written after his meeting with Kumaraja since the latter is mentioned as his immediate source of the rDzogs-chen teachings. We are told that the SN was written at Gangs-ri thod-dkar and its commentary at Brag-mar zang-yag Nam-mkha'i rdzong in the region of Ri-bo rtse-lnga (five mountain peaks) of Tibet 28/. These are neighbouring retreats in the vicinity of bSam-yas, the former used often by Klong-chen-pa and the latter originally by Padmasambhava.

The YZ, one of the author's 'Seven Treasures', bears the signature Tshul-khrims blo-gros which would seem to point to the early monastic phase of his career. However, the commentary is signed "rgya-mtsho'i pha-rol du son-pa'i dge-slong rdo-rje 'dzin-pa Tshul-khrims blo-gros", "Tshul-khrims blo-gros, the Vajra-holding monk who has gone to the other side of the ocean" 29/. It may be conjectured that the monastic appellation is used not because the work belongs to an early period in the author's writings, but because of the importance assigned to education in the course of the text. The commentary also bears the name Dri-med 'od-zer 30/. No place of composition is given.

There is evidence to suggest that the YZ belongs to a later phase of the author's intellectual and spiritual career than the SN. In the first place, the YZ is addressed to a more mature audience than the SN, and seems to presuppose an understanding of the latter's subject matter. Secondly, there is an occurrence of

the term "sems-nyid ngal-gso" in one of Klong-chen-pa's relatively early poems, the **Nags-tshal kun-tu dga'-ba'i gtam** 32/, which may be a disguised reference to the **SN**. It should also be noted that the overall poetic style of the **SN** - its natural imagery, immediate communicative persona, and poetic diction 33/ - suggest a date of composition not far removed from the period of early poetry.

2.2 Contextualizing the Texts

Having briefly traced the historical genesis of the five lam-rim texts within the purview of their authors' lives, it will be useful to examine in closer detail the relation between text, author and society. Contemporary literary criticism has given much attention to the relation between texts and their various pertinent contexts such as author's intentions and motivations, society and culture, and author's other writings and modes of discourse 32/. The text-context relation, once taken as a presupposition in the historical investigation of texts or as a solution to discovering their meaning, has now become a problem - precisely because of its elusiveness and undecidability - which the hermeneut must return to time and again. There is always the tacit temptation to choose one context or sub-set of contexts as being of particular importance without attempting to argue why this might be so. To avoid such methodological opacity, we shall take care to clarify the context under consideration as well as the reasons for choosing it.

The message of any text is inseparable from its medium, the canonized network of ideologies, expectancies and practices from which it draws its material and on which it leaves its mark. This is particularly true of religious texts such as the ones chosen for this study which determine to a large extent the lives and thoughts of their readers. It is because of the practical import of the works that two contexts are of special significance to this study: 1) the relation between the socio-cultural climate

and the text and 2) the relation between the authors' intentions (explicit or implicit) and the text. These two areas of investigation imply one another: asking why an author has written a work leads directly to a consideration of other related questions: to what problems is the work addressed; to what audience is the work addressed; and how does he want the work to be read or otherwise used ? Close examination of the authors' intentions in relation to their socio-cultural milieux will help to answer these questions.

2.2.1 Socio-cultural Context and Authors' Intentions

Lam-rim texts are understandable only within the context of their usage in society. Invariably, they are meant to inspire in their audience a particular mode of life and thinking. Such usage moreover indicates a need to be fulfilled, a crisis situation or sickness in social and personal affairs which demands attention. The dramatic impact of these texts is a function of this, their value as 'responses'. In response to what socio-cultural needs were these texts composed ?

The texts were written during a formative period in the development of Tibetan Buddhism known as the second diffusion (phyi-dar). Tradition relates that the first diffusion (snga-dar), initiated in the latter part of the eighth century by Santaraksita and later Padmasambhava, was followed by a period of political chaos and religious persecution 33/ as a result of which Buddhism became increasingly misrepresented.

Under the monarchy of Ye-shes-'od, who became famous for his

patronage of fine arts and learning, steps were taken to rectify the situation. As Bu-ston describes it:

He (Ye-shes-'od) acknowledged the philosophical pursuit (mtshan-nyid theg-pa) to be the word of the Buddha but, as concerns the Tantras, he was in doubt as to their being the true teaching, since the tantric exorcists indulged in perverse acts, as that of deliverance through sexual ecstasy and so on. Accordingly, he selected twenty-one young men, Rin-chen bzang-po and others and sent them to India [Kashmir] in order to study the doctrine 34/

All but two died and king Ye-shes-'od subsequently encouraged his nephew Byang-chub-'od to invite Atīśa to Tibet. It was also Byang-chub-'od who requested Atīśa to write the **Bodhipathapradīpa**. Atīśa specifies the nature of his new disciples request in his auto-commentary to this text:

"At the request of..." refers to his saying to me:

"In this country of Tibet there are persons who have wrong notions about the Buddha's teaching. Gurus and Spiritual Friends are arguing with one another about things that they do not fully comprehend. Each has his own line of reasoning on the matter and his own preconceptions as to the meaning of what is profound and vast. With so much disagreement on all sides, I implore you to clear up these uncertainties for us" 35/.

Atīśa considered the main source behind all this confusion and uncertainty to lie in the inability to reconcile the scholastic approach to Buddhism outlined in the Sutras with the experiential approach detailed in the Tantras. This problem had long preoccupied Indian Buddhists 36/, but now reached an unprecedented magnitude in Tibet with the great influx of diverse, often seemingly contradictory, ideas and practices. The Mahāyāna advocated a celibate monastic life and the gradual advancement toward awakening, whereas the Tantras followed a less regimented lifestyle and placed primary emphasis on the immediacy of

experience.

Atīśa deserves credit for clearly recognizing the drawback of pursuing either of these approaches in exclusion to the other. He devotes two sections of his auto-commentary on the BP to refuting misconceptions concerning Tantra 37/. These analyses provide valuable insight into the divided socio-cultural milieu of the time.

In the concluding verses of the auto-commentary, the author observes that the destruction of Buddhist teachings was due not only to ordinary people or non-Buddhists but to Buddhists as well, and particularly the ordained members of the community. He criticizes false practitioners and teachers of Tantra. Some, he says, not knowing the authentic meaning of the transcending function of appreciative discernment (shes-rab), completely disregard the conventional reality (kun-rdzob) of actions and their consequences and proclaim that they are utterly pure by nature (rang-bzhin rnam-par dag-pa). Others, having given up all the training that goes with the Prātimokṣa of the Vinaya, mingle with laymen of field and commerce and carry on with the crowd, even in the lecture hall 38/.

Atīśa's refutation of those who profess to being 'utterly pure' by nature brings up a particular point of controversy between the reformist and the earlier traditions of Buddhism which had widened the separation between the scholastic and experiential Buddhism. The decisive difference lay in their views on the process of awakening (byang-chub). The reformist traditions, under the influence of Indian scholars such as

Kamalaśīla, Śāntirakṣita and Atīśa viewed awakening as "the end result of a long drawn-out process, which necessarily went through different stages before the conclusion was reached" 39/. However, the earlier traditions (retrospectively designated as rNying-ma 40/), having been influenced not only by mainstream Indian Buddhism (especially the works of Maitreya) but also by the less orthodox Mahāśiddha teachings and those of the Chinese Ch'an and Hva-shang Mahāyāna, viewed awakening as a process of unconcealment of man's originally diaphanous condition which has only become temporarily obscured by adventitious polluting factors 41/.

The main problem that this view of natural purity presented to followers of the reformist traditions, and which in all probability led them to invent the so-called bSam-yas debate (dated some time around 792) as a means to validate their own viewpoint and purge it of any non-Indian elements 42/, was that it called into question the necessity of meritorious acts, such as donations, ethics and the like 43/, which formed the very foundation of monastic life. Hva-shang's line of reasoning was that if awakening was bound up more with an existential process of re-discovery than with external deeds, then why put so much emphasis on extraneous matters ? Such an approach could have been highly subversive to Atīśa's program of monastic reform, particularly if it rendered doubtful the purpose of making donations, without which no monastery could survive.

Be that as it may, Atīśa never denounces Tantra per se in his BP, but only condemns those who misconceive it and use it as

a license for reprehensible behaviour. The solution, in his eyes, lies in promoting strict monastic training as a prerequisite to properly understanding Tantra.

Atīśa's chapter on Tantra more clearly specifies the misrepresentation of Tantra that he encountered in Tibet and his response to the misconceptions. Atīśa begins by emphasizing the superiority of Mantrayāna over the Pāramitāyāna, qualifying his statement with the cautionary remark that the Bodhisattva who engages in the Mantrayāna must first have developed an unfalsified concern with awakening (byang-chub sems) 44/. He goes on to refute the two misconceptions concerning Tantra: 1) making illegitimate imputations about it (sgro-'dogs-pa) and 2) unjustifiably rejecting it (skur-'debs-pa). The former must be eradicated but in the latter case, it is necessary to support Tantra.

The first misconception characterizes the self-styled Mantrins who, having failed to understand the intended meaning (dgongs-pa) of the Tantras, place their trust in 'eminent friends' who have not themselves grasped it or in 'friends of evil'. They consequently rely only upon their own (mistaken) interpretations without knowing how mantra works:

"We shamelessly behave in any way (we please)," they loudly proclaim, "and will quickly attain the realization of Mahāmudrā." Those who carry on with such braggery will fall into evil ways because they heap abuse on the word of the Tathagata and by utterly fouling up their celibate lifestyle, they make the Buddha's teaching decline. By indulging in destructive practices and cavorting with women, they commit expulsion offences 45/.

The second misconception prevails among those who denounce Mantrayāna, claiming that it should not be entered at all since no one knows how the great mantra works and since it only leads

to the very abuses and offenses just mentioned. Rather, they reason, it is the pure Pāramitāyāna and the pursuits of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekkabuddhas that should be entered into. Atīśa adamantly disapproves of and rejects this argument:

These persons are only stigmatizing Tantra without knowing its intent. Since it is profound and vast, the way of life for those of acute faculties, being the very quintessence of the Buddha's teaching, and since it is the way of life for those with capability (skal), propensity (bag-chags), and readiness for action (las-phro), those who stigmatize it will undoubtedly go to hell because they thereby vilify the very message of the Tathagata and reject the profound teaching 46/.

This passage highlights the importance Atīśa attaches to Tantra along with his fear of its wholesale rejection by those who fail to understand its significance. His critique would certainly have applied to 'Brom-ston who is known to have suppressed Atīśa's dissemination of Vajrayāna, and who also avoided teaching it himself for fear of de-moralizing the Tibetan monks 47/

The problem of reconciling scholastic and experiential approaches remained of central importance in the centuries to follow. sGam-po-pa mastered both the traditional Buddhist teachings (of the bKa'-gdams-pa) and Mahāmudrā instructions but is known to have taught the Upāyamārga (the way of meritorious activities, namely the first five pāramitā) and Mahāmudrā as two distinct disciplines 48/.

Two centuries later, Tsong-kha-pa begins his **Lrcm** with the statement:

Nowadays, since those who practice yoga have studied very
little,
While those who study much have not learned the basics of
making an experience of it,
For the most part, they have but a partial view of the
Buddhist canonical literature

And lack the aptitude to discern the meaning of the texts through reasoning 49/.

He further states in his colophon that after Atīśa's time the basics of the teaching preserved by learned scholars had gradually faded away so that the good path was for a long time lost 50/. Tsong-kha-pa is motivated by the misrepresentation and decline of Buddhism to compose a treatise which "summarizes the main points contained in all of the canonical literature of the Victorious One". Like Atīśa, Tsong-kha-pa deems it necessary to have a mastery of Indian Buddhist classics of the Paramitāyāna before setting out on the Mantrayāna. For this reason, he discusses Mantrayāna only briefly at the end of his *Lrcm*, reserving detailed treatment for the *sNgags-rim chen-mo*.

Klong-chen-pa, who died not long after Tsong-kha-pa's birth, is the only of our lam-rim authors to have successfully combined the teachings of the Sūtras and Tantras in a single work. In fact, both his lam-rim texts set out to achieve this much-needed synthesis. In the colophon to the *SN*, he sharply criticizes the intellectually myopic scholars of his day who "hold the paths followed by the Tantras and Sūtras to contradict one another, not knowing how to combine them" 51/. In his commentary to this verse, entitled "Reasons why it is necessary to compose (this work)," he observes that the many treatises left by the great scholars of former times had long since become misinterpreted on account of people holding their own particular opinions about what the texts were supposed to mean, resulting in a general lack of clarity. He goes on to say:

There are various intended meanings of the paths detailed in

the Sūtras and Tantras but since they have not been studied much or have been misinterpreted through the warped notions of rationalists, these foolish, pride-filled scholars hold them to contradict one another, not knowing how to combine their profound intended meanings. Busying themselves merely with the words within their own narrow fields of specialization, they have but a partial perspective 52/.

Klong-chen-pa goes on to indicate the unifying character of his own work:

(This text) combines the excellent and profound meanings of both the cause-dominated Pāramitāyāna and the goal-sustained Mantrayāna in their aspects of ground, path and goal, as contained in the Sūtras and Tantras, the teachings and their interpretation, as well as what has been expressed in the teachings based on existential guidance (man-ngag) and the meaning of Being-as-such in all its profundity that comes from the real bLa-ma 53/.

Similar sources are mentioned in the YZ commentary:

(This treatise) combines the quintessential meaning of the Sūtra corpus (containing) words of the Tathagata, the highly esteemed Tantra corpus, the flawless commentaries on these works, and the existential guidance from the real bLa-ma in one's tradition 54/.

The author aims in both works at revealing the implicit complementarity between the Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna. Understanding their functional reciprocity is the only way of resolving the apparent contradictions between them. It does not suffice to treat the path followed by the Tantras as entirely distinct from the path defined in traditional sources - as a separate field of study that must be relegated to a separate chapter of a work (Atīśa, sGam-po-pa) or a separate work (Tsong-kha-pa). This only reinforces the imputed contradiction.

A final and brief consideration of how the authors' intended audiences were supposed to deal with works will further reveal the distinctiveness of Klong-chen-pa's integrative approach. Atīśa, sGam-po-pa and Tsong-kha-pa each address their works to

novices who are setting out on the Mahāyāna path, whether they say so explicitly or not. These works are meant as introductory manuals for the study and practice of traditional Buddhism as defined in the Sūtras. Klong-chen-pa introduces his SN as a text that has been composed

...in order to unerringly show the graded process by which a single individual can make a living experience of the vast procedures of the Mantrayāna and Pāramitāyāna, from the moment a beginner sets out until the climax of Buddhahood has come to the fore, so that Mind-as-such which has become so weary of samsara may find comfort and ease on the island of peace (nirvana) 55/.

The YZ is intended for a more mature audience who are already well-aquainted with the Sūtras and Tantras:

(This text) has been composed for the sake of those individuals of future generations who, having recognized the infallible meaning of the Sūtras and Tantras, would like to make an experience of them, and for those most fortunate followers of mine at present who long for liberation 56/.

The decisive point made in both passages is the need to integrate the Sūtra and Tantra approaches, whether the reader has just set out on the path or is already well on his way.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- 1/ The primary sources for information on Atīśa's life and teachings are A. Chattopadhyaya, **Atīśa and Tibet** (Calcutta, 1967); Tsong-kha-pa's biography of Atisa in his **Lam-rim chen-mo**, PK vol. 152, 3.2-6.5 as found in **Atīśa and Buddhism in Tibet**. tr. and compiled by D. Tulku and G. Mullin (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1983), 1-14; 'Gos lo-tsa-ba, **Blue Annals**, tr. G. Roerich (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 261; and L. Kawamura, "Atīśa" in **Encyclopedia of Religions** vol. 1, gen. ed. M. Eliade (Chicago, 1987), 492-3. Diagram A is based on G. Tucci, **Tibetan Painted Scrolls** (Rome, 1949), 2 vols., and A. Wayman, "Introduction to Tsong-kha-pa's **Lam-rim chen-mo**", in Phi Theta Papers vol. 3 (Berkeley, 1952), 61 ff.
- 2/ Chattpadhya, **Atīśa....**, 347.
- 3/ **Atīśa and Buddhism in Tibet**, 4.
- 4/ See R.A. Stein, **Tibetan Civilization**, tr. by J.S. Driver (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1972), 72.
- 5/ **Blue Annals**, 261. bdag-gnyer literally means "one who provides for."
- 6/ Chattopadhyaya, **Atīśa....**, Appendix B, section 2-7, 445-98. The author provides a long list of works in the bsTan-'gyur and bKa'-'gyur attributed to, translated by or otherwise associated with Atīśa.
- 7/ Details of sGam-po-pa's life are based mainly on the account given in the **Blue Annals**, 451 f.
- 8/ Snellgrove, **Indo-Tibetan Buddhism** vol. 2, 488-9.
- 9/ S. Chandra Das notes that the title lha-rje was first conferred on the court physician of king Khri-srong lde-brtsan (A.D. 8th c.). See **Tibetan-English Dictionary** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), 1333.
- 10/ **Blue Annals**, p. 453. I have altered Roerich's renderings of gdams-ngag and man-ngag to clarify the distinction between them.
- 11/ An exception is Mkhan-po blos-gros don-yod's **Gab-pa mgnon-du phyung-ba Baidurya-yi phran-tshom** which consists of stories illustrating allusions and difficult points found in the **Thar-rgyan**.
- 12/ Primary sources for information about Tsong-kha-pa's life and teachings are **Life and Teachings of Tsong-kha-pa**, ed. by R.A.F. Thurman (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982) which includes a partial translation of mKhas-grub's biography, the **rJe-btsun bla-ma Tsong-kha-pa chen-po'i rnam-par**

thar-pa, 4-39; A. Wayman, **Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real** (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1978), 15-25; and R.A.F. Thurman, "Tsong-kha-pa," **Encyclopedia of Religions** vol. 7, 72-74.

13/ Tsong-kha-pa's reformist campaign brought the dGe-lugs-pa into conflict with other traditions, especially the Jo-nang-pa sect which was proscribed and their monasteries plundered under the reign of the fifth Dalai bLa-ma (1617-82). See D.S. Ruegg, "The Jo-nang-pas: A School of Buddhist Ontologists," **JOAS** vol. 83, no. 1, 1963, 72 f.

14/ For account of sectarian disputes during this period, see R.A. Stein, **Tibetan Civilization**, 70-91.

15/ See Diagram A.

16/ A relatively recent example is the **rNam-grol lag-bcangs** by sKyabs-rje Pha-bong-kha (1878-43).

17/ Information regarding Klong-chen-pa's life is based on Roerich, **Blue Annals**, 200 f., H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent to Ease Us** vol. 1 (Emeryville: Dharma Pub., 1975), Intro., and Klong-chen-pa's **Sems-nyid ngal-gso'i gnas-gsum dge-ba gsum-gyi don-khrid Byang-chub lam-bzang** (see Ch. 3, n. 19). This latter text has furnished the information for Diagram B.

18/ This was the easternmost of the two parts into which dBus was traditionally divided, the other being dBu-ru. The bSam-yas region is located in the northern part of gYu-ru. See A. Ferrari, **Mkhyen-brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Tibet** (Rome: Serie Orientalia Roma, 1958), 46 and 117 n. 160.

19/ According to the **Byang-chub lam-bzang** (see n. 17 above), these are distinguished as the 'Outer ground and cause-determined Lakṣaṇayāna pertaining to the ordinary'; the 'Inner goal-sustained Guhyamantravajrayāna pertaining to the extraordinary'; and the 'Arcane quintessential goal-sustained unsurpassable rDzogs-chen pursuit pertaining to what is of definitive meaning (nges-don)'.

20/ **Blue Annals**, 201 and 330.

21/ Presumably a teacher at gSang-phu. His teacher, referred to as 'Byang-chub grub' in the **Byang-chub lam-bzang**, may be the same as 'Byang-chub dngos-grub', a disciple of sGam-po-pa who studied the Prajñāpāramita teachings passed down from Atiśa through Gro-lung-pa. **Blue Annals**, 470 f. See Diagrams A and B.

22/ **Blue Annals**, 214.

23/ Several of the author's poems reflect this dissatisfaction and his decision to leave monastic life. See, for example, his **Snying-gtam sum-cu-pa**, **Po-to-la kun-tu dga'-ba'i gtam**, **Nags-tshal kun-tu dga'-ba'i gtam**, and **Ngang-pa'i dris-lan sprin-gyi snying-po** in **Miscellaneous Writings** (gSung thor-bu), vol. 1.

24/ A teacher at Dan-bag monastery from whom Klong-chen-pa received teachings in the sutras, the Mental class (sems-phyogs) of Vajrayāna teachings and the **Guhyagarbhatantra** - a major tantra of the rNying-ma tradition on which Klong-chen-pa wrote two commentaries.

25/ The rNying-rgyud **dkar-chag** (fol. 108a) gives an incomplete listing of two hundred and sixty three works (**Blue Annals**, 200). Klong-chen-pa's biographer, Chos-grags bzang-po, lists two hundred and seventy works (H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent to Ease Us**, vol. 1, xvi).

26/ **Kindly Bent to Ease Us** vol. 1, xvi.

27/ The appellation 'yogi' implies a non-monastic way of life.

28/ A. Ferrari, **Mkyen-brtse's Guide...**, 73.

29/ **Padma dkar-po**, p. 893.

30/ **Padma dkar-po**, p. 891.

31/ **Miscellaneous Writings** (see n. 23 above), p. 149. The passage in question occurs in the colophon:

On the mountain's highest peak where Mind finds comfort and
ease (sems-nyid ngal-gso),
This man from bSam-yas, whose thoughts are set on
liberation,
Has said from his heart to go to the forest.

32/ See D. LaCapra, "Re-thinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts," in **Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives**, ed. D. LaCapra and S. Kaplan (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1982), especially 57 f. where he examines these six interrelated contexts.

33/ Recently discovered Tun-Huang manuscripts, written during the late ninth and early tenth centuries, call into question the authenticity of the accepted historical accounts of a later date. One Tun-Huang passage explicitly states that Buddhism was in 'full swing' under the 'Divine Son (lha-sras) Dar-ma' and his successors:

From the time of the Divine Son, Dar-ma,
Down to the time of 'Od-srung and his descendents,
Generally the true teaching flourished and spread...

See S.G. Karmay, "King Tsa/Dza and Vajrayāna," in **Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein**, vol. 1, ed. Michael Strickmann (Bruxelles: Institut Belge Des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1981), 191-211.

34/ Bu-ston, **History of Buddhism in India and Tibet**, Part II, tr. E. Obermiller (Heidelberg: University, 1932), 212-13.

35/ **Bodhimārgadīpapañjikā**, tr. by author as **Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma'i dka'-grel**, PK vol. 103 no. 5344, 22.2. The BP and commentary (hereafter **Pañjikā**) have been translated by R. Sherburne in **A Lamp for the Path and Commentary** (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1983).

36/ Indian scholastic Buddhist had to reckon not only with the highly influential Mahāmudrā teachings, but also Ch'an teachings which had seeped back into India from China. Vimalamitra, Indian Tantric scholar who visited Tibet and China in the eighth century, composed a text entitled "Meaning of the Immediate Entrance through Non-conceptual Meditation" (**Cig-char 'jug-pa rnam-par rtog-pa'i bsgom-don**) based on Kamalaśīla's gradualist text "Steps of Meditation" (**Bhāvanākrama**) but written from the immediate entrance (Tibetan **cig-char 'jug-pa**, Chinese **ston-mun**) perspective. An account of this work is found in G. Tucci, **Minor Buddhist Texts Part II** (Rome: Is. M.E.O., 1958), 115-21.

37/ **Pañjikā**, 43.3 f. and 46.1 f. D.S. Ruegg gives a comprehensive treatment of these in "Deux Problemes D'Exegesis et de Pratique Tantriques selon Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna et le Paiṇḍapatika de Yavadvīpa/Suvarṇadvīpa," in **Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein**, ed. Michael Strickmann (Bruxelles: Institute Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoise, 1981), 212-26.

38/ **Pañjikā**, 46.1.

39/ G. Tucci, **The Religions of Tibet** (Berkeley: U. of Cal. Press, 1980), 13.

40/ See D. Snellgrove, **Indo-Tibetan Buddhism** vol. 2, 396 f.

41/ This is the main theme of the **Uttaratantra** attributed to Maitreyaṇātha. In particular, see chapters I, verse 96 f. and II, verse 3 f.

42/ Y. Imaeda has shown, on the basis of the early Tun-Huang manuscripts, that this debate, in which the Indian Kamalaśīla representing the 'gradual' approach is said to have defeated the Chinese Hva-shang representing the 'immediate' approach, was probably only a series of discussions (at least three are reported). See his "Documents tibetains de Touen-huang concernant le concil de Tibet" in **Journal Asiatique**, tome 263, Paris, 1975, 125-46.

43/ Atīśa devotes several verses of the BP (42 f.) to showing that meritorious activities (**thabs**), the first five **pāramitās**, are pointless if **prajñā**, the sixth **pāramitā**, is not cultivated as well.

44/ **Pañjikā**, 44.4 f.

45/ **Pañjikā**, 44.4-44.5.

- 46/ Pañjikā, 44.5.
- 47/ Blue Annals, 843 f., 261 and 265.
- 48/ Blue Annals, 459.
- 49/ PK, vol. 152, 3.2.
- 50/ PK, vol. 152, 192.1 f.
- 51/ SN, 110.
- 52/ Shing-rta chen-po, 1102.
- 53/ Shing-rta chen-po, 1103.
- 54/ Padma-dkar-po, 886.
- 55/ Shing-rta chen-po, 117.
- 56/ Padma dkar-po, 886.

CHAPTER THREE: EXEGESIS

3.1 Thematic Abridgement of the **Bodhipathapradīpa**

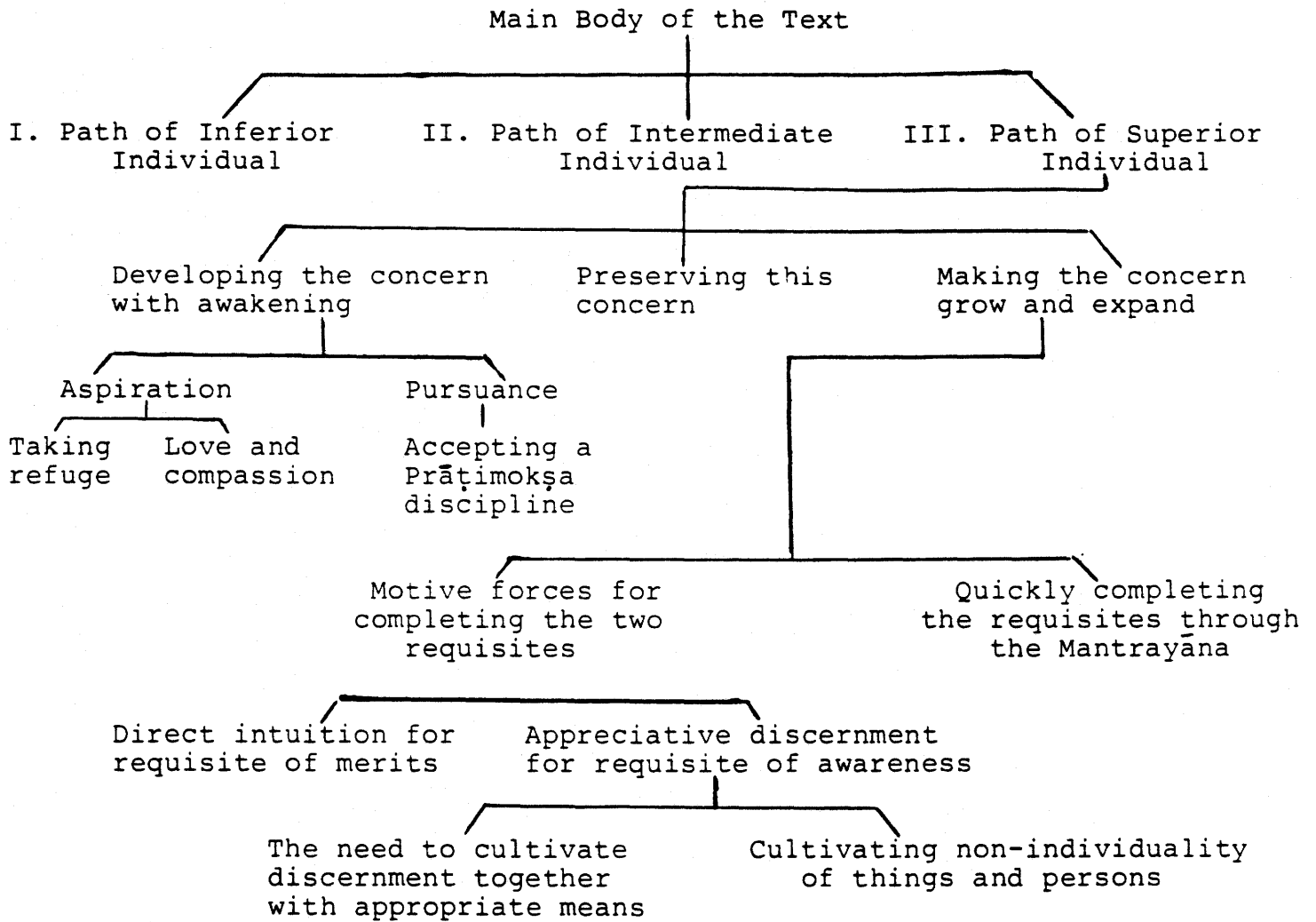
The **Bodhipathapradīpa** is best known in its Tibetan version (translated by the author himself), the **Byang-chub lam-kyi sgron-ma**. It is a verse poem written in two-hundred and seventy-eight lines of seven syllables each (sixteen syllables per line in the original Sanskrit) 1/ and arranged in sixty-eight kārikās. The abridgement follows the headings given in a commentary on the **BP** entitled **gZhung-don gsal-ba'i nyi-ma** by Blo-bzang dpal-ldan 2/.

The main body of the text is organized into two general sections: 1) First there is a brief introductory section which distinguishes the suitable candidate for the Mahāyāna from those who are unsuitable according to a classification of three types of individual 3/ (l. 1-20): the inferior non-religious person; the intermediate self-seeking Śrāvaka or Pratyekkabuddha and the superior altruistic Bodhisattva. 2) The remainder of the poem elaborates the path of training to be followed by the superior candidate (l. 21-272).

The Bodhisattva is distinguished from individuals of inferior or intermediate acumen by the concern with awakening which he cultivates out of compassion for the suffering of living beings (l. 21-24). The development of this concern involves two phases: The first phase is aspiration, wherein the Bodhisattva worships the three jewels and accepts an unflinching commitment to aid living beings through love, compassion and higher

Diagram D

Branching Diagram of Atīśa's
Bodhipathapradīpa



intention (l. 25-71). The second phase is pursuance, wherein he accepts one of the Prāṭimokṣa disciplines with or without a qualified teacher present (l. 72-108). Steps are then taken to ensure that the concern with awakening is not lost once it has been accepted (l. 109-114).

Atīśa goes on to establish the guidelines for making the concern grow through accumulating the two requisites of merits and awareness (l. 133-192). The motive force which brings these requisite of merits to completion is the direct intuitions (mgnon-shes) 4/ without which one is not able to work for the welfare of others (l. 149-152). The realization of these direct intuitions depends upon the attainment of inner calm (zhi-gnas) (l. 153-172). The motive force which brings the requisite of awareness to completion is the transcending function of appreciative discernment (shes-rab) by which all emotional and intellectual obscurations are destroyed. This, the sixth of the transcending functions, must be cultivated together with appropriate means (thabs), that is, the first five transcending functions (l. 173-188). Appreciative discernment is that knowledge which understands 'no-thingness' or openness (stong-pa) 5/, the absence of any individuating principle in all personal and non-personal phenomena. Thus one passes from divisive conceptualization to a non-divided samādhi (l. 189-236) and scales the spiritual levels leading to the experience of awakening.

Finally, it is through the special means of the Mantrayāna that the two requisites may be brought quickly to completion. Provided that the suitable candidate has a qualified spiritual

teacher and has not taken a vow of celibacy, he may receive the necessary initiations and practice and teach Tantra without offense. (l. 237-272).

3.2 Thematic Abridgement of the **Thar-rgyan**

sGam-po-pa's **Thar-rgyan** is a lengthy prose text (182 two-sided folios) interspersed with numerous quotations 6/. The abridgment discusses major themes in a general way based on the author's arrangement of subject matter. There is an implicit structure in the **Thar-rgyan** which may easily be overlooked on a preliminary reading. This is shown in Diagram E and further explicated in the abridgement.

The **Thar-rgyan** proceeds from the premise that all living beings are endowed with the potential for self-transcendence known as spiritual affinity (rigs) or optimization thrust (bde-bar gshegs-pa'i snying-po) 7/. This premise is adduced by the observable fact that all experience, however self-limiting (samsara) or un-encumbered (nirvana) it may be, is non-predicable or open-dimensional (stong-pa) in character. Opening into the new dynamic regime termed Buddha, understood as a gestalt experience of meaning (chos-sku) which itself is open-dimensional, requires only a strong sense of self-determination and a commitment to other beings based on the recognition of their potential. The Buddha-experience is thus both the 'cause' or impetus and goal of the self-unfoldment of one's potential (Ch. 1).

The most suitable working basis for this unfoldment is human existence wherein suffering may actually serve as a catalyst to spiritual development. 'Man' is distinguished from other creatures, real or mythological, by his power or capacity to take a stand against the forces which threaten to impede him. This, however, requires a clear recognition of the uniqueness of human

Diagram E

Internal Organization of the Thar-rgyan

Ch.#	Chapter Headings and Descriptions
------	-----------------------------------

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | A. The <u>Impetus</u> which is | = | The intrinsic thrust toward |
| | supreme awakening | | optimization |
| 2 | B. The Individual who is | = | The most precious embodied |
| | the <u>Basis</u> for its | | existence of a human being |
| | attainment | | |
| 3 | C. The <u>Determinant</u> which | = | The spiritual friend |
| | urges you to attain it | | |
| 4 | D. The <u>Means</u> by which | = | The instructions of the |
| | it is attained | | spiritual friends: |

Instructions in: [as antidote to] four obstacles
to awakening:

- ```

" a. The Impermanence of the Composite —————> Attachment to the sensu-
 suous experiences in
 this life

5 b. The Misery of Samsara }
 }
6 c. The Universal Relationship Between } —————> Attachment to the pleasures
 Actions and their Consequences } of this world

7 d. Love and Compassion —————> Attachment to self-complacency

```

Factors in Developing the  
the Concern with Awakening  
(comprises e through p)

→ Ignorance regarding  
Means for attaining  
Buddhahood

- 8 e. Taking Refuge and Accepting One's Commitment
- 9 f. Taking Hold of the Concern with Awakening (which involves the following two aspects):
  - I. Settled Determination (g):
  - 10 g. The Training in Cultivating a Concern with Awakening
  - II. Steady Pursuance (h through n):

- 11 h. Instruction in the Six Transcending Functions
- 12 i. The Transcending Function of Generosity
- 13 j. The Transcending Function of Ethical Self-discipline
- 14 k. The Transcending Function of Patient Endurance
- 15 l. The Transcending Function of Sustained Effort
- 16 m. The Transcending Function of Concentration
- 17 n. The Transcending Function of Appreciative  
Discernment
- 18 o. Instruction in the Five Paths
- 19 p. Instruction in the Ten Levels
- 20 E. The Climax of such attainment = The gestalt experience of  
Perfect Buddhahood
- 21 F. The Spontaneous Activity that follows = Working for the welfare of  
from such attainment living beings without pre-  
conceived notions

existence as well as a strong measure of confidence in pursuing the path. (Ch. 2)

Setting out on the path is facilitated by spiritual friends who urge us on in spite of life's many adversities and vicissitudes. Though spiritual friends may appear to us in various forms, depending on our level of attunement, the spiritual friend in the form of an ordinary being is considered the most beneficial for the beginner who is still entangled in emotional turmoil and aimless actions. (Ch. 3)

Next follows a long set of instructions of spiritual friends which fall into two sub-sets: those which counter-act attachments which are obstacles to awakening (Chs. 4-7) and those which develop the concern with awakening (Chs. 8-19). The first instruction on impermanence aims at countering the attachment to sensuous experiences in this life which continually yield frustration and misery since they are based on what will not last (Ch. 4). Next come instructions on the character of misery in samsara (Ch. 5) and the relationship between actions and their consequences (Ch. 6) which together aim at countering attachment to pleasures of the world. While an awareness of the misery experienced in all imaginable life scenarios - in the heavens, hells or on earth - weakens the longing for what yields such misery, awareness of the actions and their consequences exposes the mechanism behind misery so that it can be squarely dealt with.

Last in this set are instructions on developing love and compassion to counter our attachment to self-complacency (Ch. 7).

The only alternative to the aimless activity of an ordinary person or the passive escapism of a Hinayānist is to become engaged in the world in a meaningful way (karma and karuna share the root kr signifying action).

The stage is thus set for the remaining instructions which deal with how the path is actually lived. These instructions for developing the concern with awakening are meant to counteract ignorance concerning the appropriate means (thabs) for attaining Buddhahood. The first of these means is taking refuge in the three jewels - Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These admit of different levels of interpretation reflecting different capacities of understanding. Outwardly, the Buddha is symbolized by an artistic image, the Dharma by Mahāyāna texts and the Sangha by Bodhisattvas. Experientially, Buddha is the gestalt experience of meaning (chos-sku), Dharma is the experience of tranquility and Nirvana, and Sangha, the Bodhisattvas who live on the highest spiritual level. Ultimately, Buddha (as experience) is the only refuge. Taking refuge is accompanied by a commitment to strive for awakening (Ch. 8).

The commitment to realize awakening for the sake of others requires considerable preparation to ensure its continuance and efficacy. This process involves two reciprocally interacting phases: From the conventional standpoint of individual striving, the existential concern is developed through altruistic aspirations, while from the more encompassing higher order standpoint, the existential concern is Being's pre-thematic openness suffused with radiance and compassion. In reaching toward ever-greater

degrees of wholeness, the whole reaches into the individual, opening the horizon of his narrow world. (Ch. 9)

This reciprocity of the man-universe configuration finds expression in the various forms of ritual which are dealt with at length in the **Thar-rgyan**. Ritual stems from a sense that there is something more to human existence than customarily acknowledged and strives actively to bring this sense of openness to bear on everyday life. Ritual acts such as confession, worship and delighting in the good done by others, and transferring one's own good to others, enable the individual to rise above his own personal preoccupations and thus make his world more liveable.

Once the existential concern is aroused, the training in 1) aspiration and 2) pursuance begins. Aspiration involves a resolve to work for sentient beings as well as various measures for safeguarding, fortifying and refining it so that it will not be lost. (Ch. 10) Pursuance involves the enactment of six transcending functions 8/ which are so named because they "enable us to cross over samsara." (Ch. 11) The first five - generosity, ethical self-discipline, patient endurance, strenuousness, and concentration (Chs. 12-16) - lead up to the sixth, appreciative discernment (Ch. 17) which encompasses and sustains the others. Again two reciprocal phases are involved: a worldly mode of appreciative discernment which deals with ordinary fields of study such as medicine, logic, linguistics and art, and a transworldly mode which is the awareness of Being's openness in which no principle of individuation is found to exist in the constituents that make up a person or in reality 9/.

The higher order appreciative discernment enables us to pass beyond the limitations of conceptualization such as the belief in existence and non-existence, origination and cessation or any other form of foundationalism. It is here that sGam-po-pa combines the Sutric conception of Nirvana as that which is beyond the horizon of the intellect with the Tantric idea of Mahāmudrā. While openness underlies and encompasses all striving, beings are habitually oblivious to it and must make efforts to attune themselves to it through appreciative discernment.

Through striving sustained by this vision of wholeness, the Buddhist path with its five phases (Ch. 18) and ten levels (Ch. 19) is travelled up to the goal of perfect Buddha-experience. Buddha-experience involves the two most excellent qualities of renunciation (spangs) and awareness (ye-shes); both are implied in the Tibetan translation of 'Buddha', sangs-rgyas which sGam-po-pa defines as "having awakened (sangs) from the sleep of unknowing (ie. renunciation) and gained expansive (rgyas) understanding of the two types of originary awareness (ie. awareness)" 10/. This process overflows any attempts to convey it using concepts and can only be understood by experiencing it individually. It is here once again understood to be the gestalt experience of meaning, and was already operative as the cause or impetus to re-discovery at the beginning of the path. (Ch. 20)

The Buddha-experience is only misleadingly termed a 'goal' since what is implied is recovery of autonomy and health. These enable the individual to act spontaneously (without premeditation) and effectively for the welfare of others. (Ch. 21)



### 3.3 Thematic Abridgement of the **Lam-rim chung-ba**

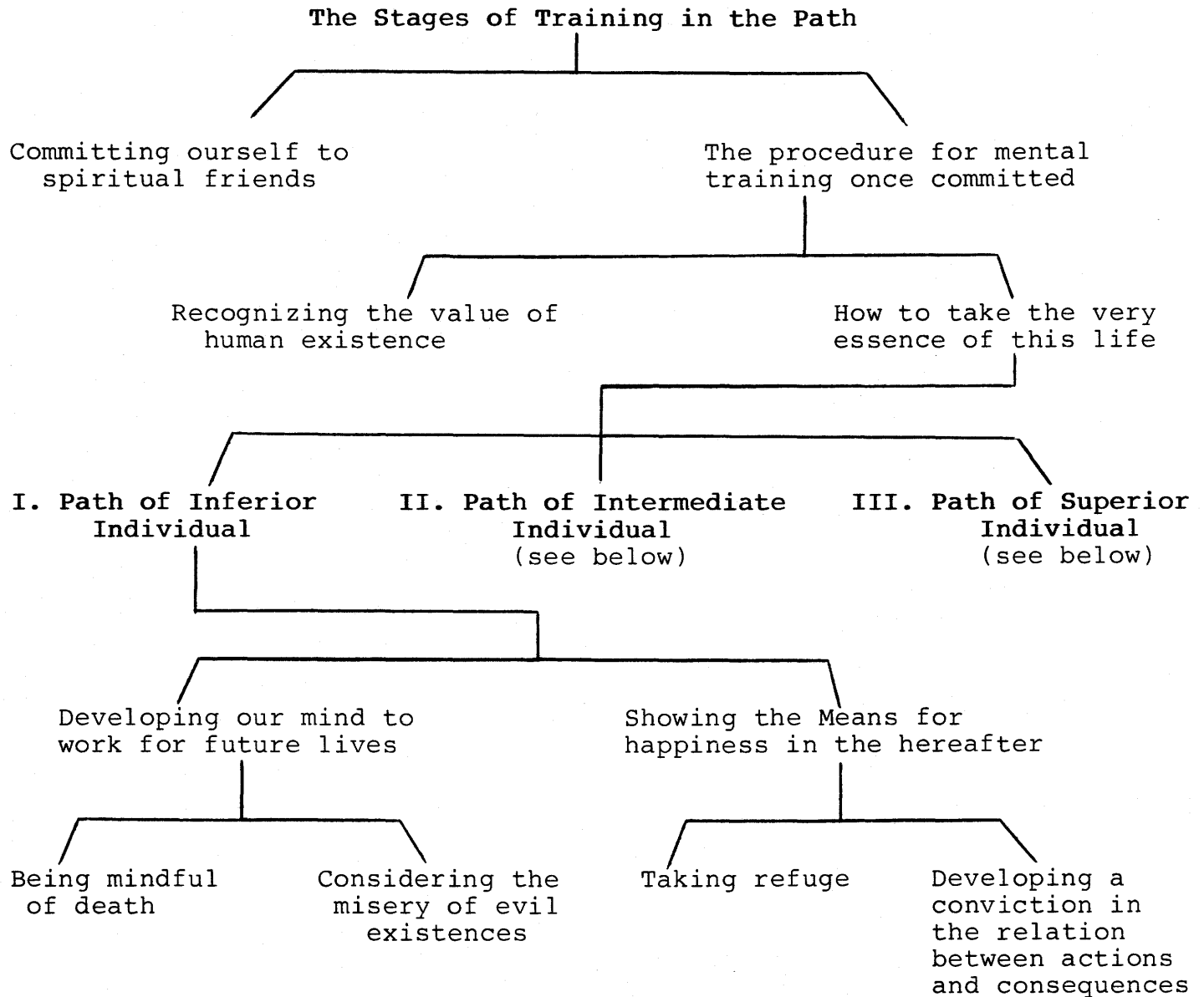
The **Lam-rim chung-ba**, like the **Thar-rgyan**, is a long prose text (185 two-sided folios) interspersed with many quotations. It is a condensed version of the author's considerably longer **Lam-rim chen-mo** (457 two-sided folios) 11/, presenting the main ideas contained in the latter work but with less elaboration and fewer quotations 12/. The **Lrcb** follows the thematic organization of the **Lrcm** quite closely until the final chapter on Vipāśyana. Here, the **Lrcm** goes into a long polemic analysis of opposing views of reality aimed at defending Tsong-kha-pa's own Prāsangika-Mādhyamika approach against opponents. The **Lrcb**, however, gives a precise analysis of the subject matter in condensed form and only occasionally dwells on points of controversy between schools 13/.

The following abridgement of main themes follows the general branching diagram (see Diagram F) based on the detailed topical outline which the author incorporates in his text. In many cases, I have simply paraphrased portions of Tsong-kha-pa's own "summary of the path" given in the concluding section of the **Lrcm** 14/ and portions of the earlier section on "guiding individuals through the stages of the path by means of three types of individual" 15/. The preliminary sections discussing Atīśa's life and the greatness of his doctrine have not been included in these summaries or my own.

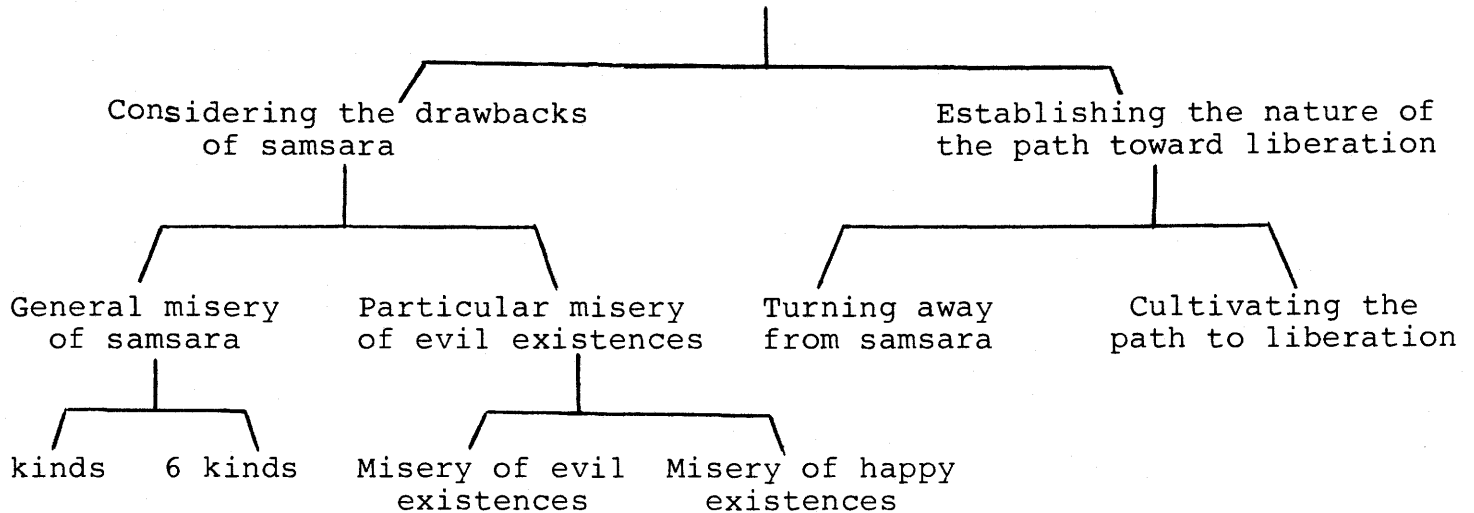
To set out on the path, says the author, we must first learn how to commit        ourself to a spiritual friend who is the foundation of the path and then carry through by way of careful

Diagram F

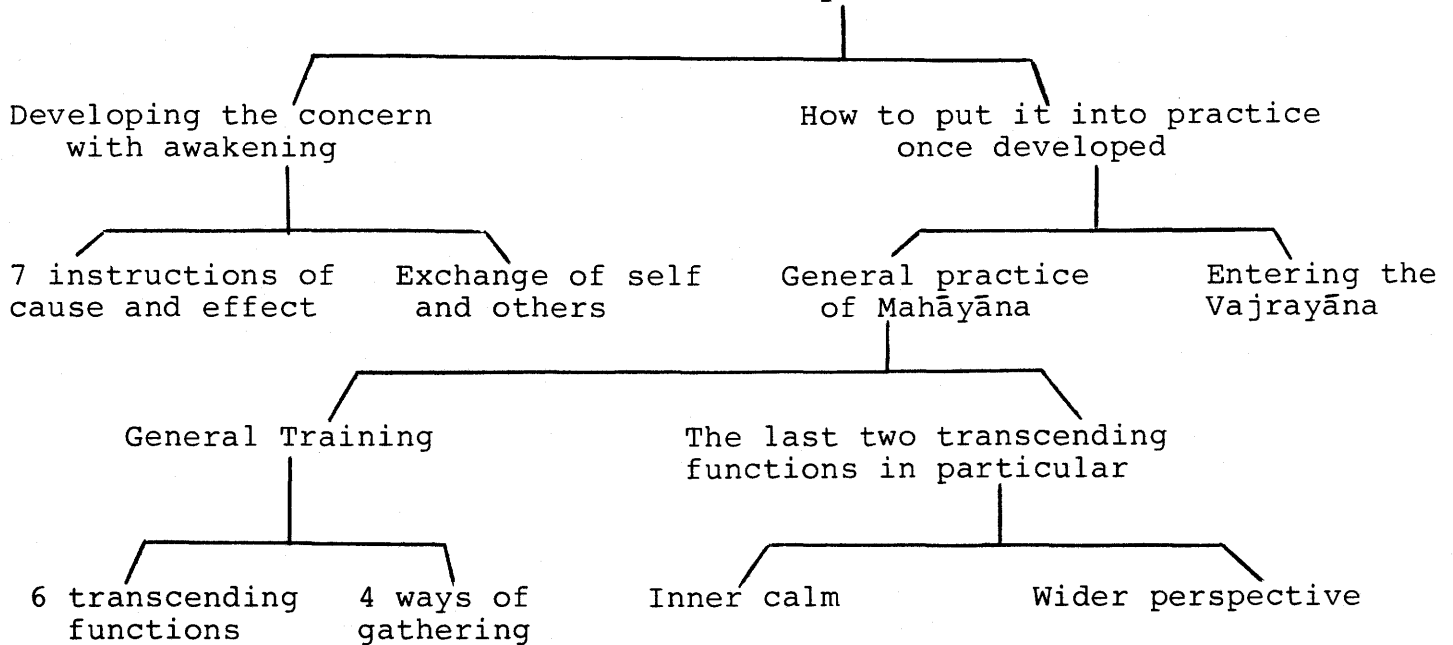
Branching Diagram of Tsong-kha-pa's  
Lam-rim chung-ba



## II. Path of Intermediate Individual



## III. Path of Superior Individual



analysis. Once we have developed a genuine desire to take the very essence of this unique occasion (of human existence), we must urge ourselves to realize it on a continuous basis. In order to develop and enhance this desire, it is necessary to contemplate the related aspects of this unique occasion (dal) and right juncture ('byor).

Thereafter, when our minds have been turned away from merely seeking our own aims in this life, but there is not yet a strong inclination to seek the aims of future lives, we must strive to contemplate how this body we have acquired will not last for long because of its impermanence, and how we will soon die and roam around in evil existences. At this time, when we have become clearly aware and ever-mindful of how terrifying these evil existences are, we turn longingly to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha for refuge. We develop a conviction in these three jewels by remaining strongly committed to them and by undertaking the stages of training in them.

Next, it is necessary to develop by various means and to fortify a trusting conviction in the relationship between actions and their consequences which serves as the great foundation for all bright qualities. By striving to engage in the ten wholesome acts while turning away from the ten negative ones, we must persevere continually on the path by way of the four counteragents of the negative. By proceeding in this way, we store up the precepts for an individual of inferior acumen.

Thereafter, we go on to consider in various ways the general and particular drawbacks of samsara in order to turn our mind

away from worldly existence. Then, having determined the cause from which samsara arises to be the aimless acts and emotive pollutants, we develop a genuine desire to do away with them. With a strong conviction in the three general disciplines of ethical self-discipline (tshul-khrims), attitude (sems) and appreciative discernment (shes-rab) 16/ for the path of becoming free from samsara, it is necessary to make efforts in the particular prāṭimokṣa discipline which we have taken on ourselves. Proceeding in this way, we store up the precepts for an individual of intermediate acumen.

The author goes on to discuss the Bodhisattva path. By considering deeply that we are not the only ones to have fallen into the ocean of samsara, but that others just like us are in the same boat, we must strive to train in the concern with awakening having love and compassion as its foundation. If this concern is lacking, then such practices as the six transcending functions and the developing and fulfilment phases of the Mantrayāna will be of no avail, like building a superstructure without a foundation. Once a little taste of the existential concern has been experienced in our being, we should accept it ritually, and fortify our aspiration by exerting ourselves to train in it.

Then we must attend to putting the existential concern into practice, and clearly recognize the distinctions between what to avert and what to pursue, all this with a strong desire to train ourselves in them. Once these attitudes are engendered, we ritually accept the commitment of pursuance and train ourselves

in the six transcending functions which mature our own existence and the four ways of gathering sentient being which mature the existence of others, namely, being generous, speaking pleasantly, acting meaningfully and living accordingly. It is especially important that we make a strong effort to avoid the basic transgression of forgetting about the welfare of living beings, even at the risk of our own life. We must endeavour not to be stained by lesser or medium-strength defilements or evil acts and if we do become stained, must endeavour to make the necessary amends.

Thereafter we should train in the last two transcending functions in particular so that by properly learning the way of maintaining concentration, we can develop samādhi. We thus engender in our existence the clear vision, free from extremes of eternalism or nihilism, of the two kinds of non-individuality (ie. of persons and reality). Having discovered and familiarized ourselves with this vision, we go about cultivating the capacity to discern how to preserve this vision. Inner calm and wider perspective are the names ascribed to these functions of concentration and appreciative discernment and are not something different from these last two transcending functions. That being so, once we have taken our commitment in the existential concern, we proceed (toward goal-realization) through harmonizing these two in our training. Later, after sufficient preparation in the previous procedures, we may embark on the most precious Mantra-yāna which quickly brings the two requisites of merits and awareness to completion.

### 3.4 Thematic Abridgement of the **Sems-nyid ngal-gso**

The **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** is the first of three verse texts in a trilogy known as the **Ngal-gso skor-gsum** (The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease). Each is accompanied by a detailed auto-commentary, a topical outline and a systematic guide to practice 17/. The collection also includes a general summary of the trilogy which exposes the scope of each basic text and their sequential arrangement, after first tracing the historical development of the Buddhist traditions they embody 18/. The **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** is the longest of the three, comprising thirteen chapters and a total of six hundred and three verses 19/. It covers 56 two-sided folios, while the auto-commentary, the **Shing-rta chen-po**, covers 499.

The abridgement of main themes bases itself mainly on the root text but also incorporates a number of supplementary sources. The general summary of the trilogy provides essential information for locating the **SN** within the configuration of texts to which it belongs, while the topical outline (in a revised version by dPal-sprul rin-po-che 20/) and the systematic guide to practice 21/ have furnished valuable details concerning the thematic structure of the text. The **Shing-rta chen-po** has been consulted for clarification of certain important themes that do not receive detailed treatment in the root text.

The supplementary texts reveal a unique sequential arrangement of subject matter in the **SN** having intra-textual and inter-textual dimensions. As the systematic guide to practice shows, the text itself constitutes an orderly synthesis of Mahāyāna,

Diagram G

Internal Organization of the Sems-nyid ngal-gso

|               | <u>Chapter Headings</u>                                                                    | <u>Sources</u> |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|               | 1. The Difficulty of Finding a Human Existence                                             | Mahāyāna       |
|               | 2. Life's Impermanence                                                                     |                |
|               | 3. The Misery of Samsara                                                                   |                |
|               | 4. The Relationship Between Actions and Consequences                                       |                |
|               | 5. Relying on Spiritual Friends                                                            |                |
|               | 6. Taking Refuge                                                                           |                |
|               | 7. The Four Immeasurables                                                                  |                |
|               | 8. Developing a Concern with Supreme Awakening                                             |                |
|               | 9. Unifying the Developing and Fulfilment Phases                                           | Vajrayāna      |
| Vision →      | 10. An Appreciative Discernment for Understanding the Ground, Staying with neither Extreme | rDzogs-chen    |
| Cultivation { | 11. A Stainless Concentration on the Path, Unifying Inner Calm and Wider Perspective       |                |
|               | 12. Learning How to Realize the Facets of In-depth Appraisals                              |                |
| Goal →        | 13. The Great Goal as it is Spontaneously Present                                          |                |



Vajrayāna and rDzogs-chen thought, shifting emphasis from one to the next in the course of its unfoldment (See Diagram G).

The general summary of the trilogy discloses an inter-textual gradation linking the **SN** to the other two texts of the trilogy; here the author combines the two well-known classifications of ground/vision (gzhi/lta-ba), path/cultivation (lam/sgom-pa) and goal/enactment ('bras-bu/spyod-pa) 22/. The **SN** describes how the individual who sets out on the path must have a vision grounded in life's meaning which is free from extremes. Once this ground is deeply understood it may be imaginatively cultivated as the path. This is the theme of the **bSam-gtan ngal-gso** 23/ which discusses in four chapters the environments most conducive to realization, the individual concerned with realization, the method whereby he attains realization, and the resulting in-depth appraisals. While cultivating the path, care must be taken not to objectify the ensuing experiences and become stuck along the way. Thus the **sGyu-ma ngal-gso** 24/ deals in eight chapters with the eight similes of Nāgārjuna which counter-act tendencies toward attachment and fixation.

The scope and unifying theme of the **SN** is revealed in the author's interpretation of its title 'Relaxation of Mind-as-such in Absolute Completeness' (**rDzogs-pa chen-po Sems-nyid ngal-gso**) 25/. Here **rDzogs-pa chen-po** points to the primordial absoluteness (**chen-po**) of a self-originate originary awareness (rang-byung ye-shes) which encompasses within its scope the totality (**rDzogs-pa**) of experiences that make up samsara and nirvana. The term **Sems-nyid ngal-gso** describes this holistic process in terms of

its two interrelated phases of operation: Mind-as-such and mind 26/. In an exact sense (nges-par gzhung-gyi don), Mind-as-such designates mind and its mental operations (sems dang sems-'byung) and relaxation (ngal-gso) is what occurs when thematic proliferations no longer intrude on self-originative originary awareness. In a more fundamental sense (gzhi sdu-ba kyi don), Mind-as-such is itself sheer lucency ('od-gsal) and relaxation means that the proliferation of thematizing thoughts have come to rest in its expanse.

Klong-chen-pa's interpretation of Mind-as-such juxtaposes two phases of experience in order to show their necessary unity. The question and challenge repeatedly posed is how experience in its alienated and fragmented condition (sems) can find its way back to its original wholeness and autonomy (sems-nyid). Thus throughout his discussion of the recovery process (lam) the author moves freely between the microscopic (individual) and macroscopic (holistic) vantage points. This creates a dynamic tension in the text whose attempted resolution is the way itself.

The path to awakening is the process of familiarizing oneself with Mind-as-such, originary awareness in its sheer lucency, which arises from within once the turbulence of mind and its mental operations have come to rest 27/.

The statement of intent, as it is elaborated in the commentary 28/, describes how Mind-as-such or originary awareness which is ever present in us as the Buddha-potential (khams) 29/ fails to recognize itself for what it is and goes astray into the dim realms of samsara. The movement stems from a loss of cognitive excitation (ma-rig-pa) and the ensuing belief in an 'I' which in turn give rise to emotions that perpetuate our enworldment

(srid). The author exhorts Mind, which has become worn out by emotions and aimless actions to find relaxation and ease. Each chapter concludes with a similar refrain.

The stage is thus set for the discussion of four preliminary topics which the author uses as interpretive schemata for disclosing the ontological and psychological patterning of human experience and our predisposition toward freedom. In discussing the uniqueness of human existence, special attention is given to the reciprocity (rten-'brel) between human existence and thinking. Our quest for life's meaning depends on mind while mind depends upon human existence as unique occasion and right juncture. Mind acts as the causal impetus (rgyu) to all that is wholesome in our life, while existence serves as the determinant (rkyen) or catalyst (grogs) of this impetus 31/. Because of their reciprocity, the most important thing to do is to cultivate our mind. (CH 1)

To urge ourselves onward in the search for life's meaning, we must erradicate our uncritical belief that our lives and possessions will somehow last. An awareness of impermanence and death relativizes all our actions, feelings and relations in this life. These are no longer viewed as ends in themselves but as means to finding release from samsara. (CH 2)

The author uses the next chapter to probe the conditions of human finitude. He traces all the misery of samsara to the three gates (sgo) of body, speech and mind, here interpreted as three strongholds (grong-khyer) 33/ that hold us captive in the three realms of desires, aesthetic forms and formlessness. Misery is

the off-shoot of a process of closure, engendered by concurrent phases of ego-identification and enworldment, whereby the original fluidity of world-experience congeals into the increasingly rigid and determinate patterns of constitutive consciousness 34/. Samsara materializes out of the inchoate forces of nature operating in and around us due to the three potentialities for experiencing an object domain (yul), a base of operations (don), and a mind (sems) 35/.

Klong-chen-pa goes on to show that misery is neither a fortuitous nor final state of affairs but a reversible process of going astray which always remains prepredicatively linked to its holistic source. Although closure may be felt as a situation of confinement, closer investigation reveals it to be one of containment. Stated otherwise, being aware of self-limitation as self-limitation implies a more encompassing vantage point within the holarchy (Koestler's term for any self-organizing, hierarchically stratified open system) human being from which such an observation can be made 36/. It is this higher order vantage point always already operative within us that makes the path of recovering our autonomy in and through Mind-as-such possible.

As a result of this recovery process, what were previously impervious strongholds of enworldment - body, speech and mind, are resolved into the open system (symbolically termed "inexhaustable ornament circle") of embodying gestalt (sku), authentic communication (gsung), and cognitive resonance (thugs), allowing for a free energy exchange with the environment (known as 'Buddha realms') 37/. The conditions for the various forms of

misery experienced in samsara are thus shown by the author to be the same conditions which, when properly recognized, enable us to regain our natural freedom. (CH 3)

Klong-chen-pa now extends his discussion of human finitude into the sphere of actions and their consequences. Again the bidirectional movement (going astray - recovering freedom) is emphasized, this time with regard to actions which regulate upward and downward movement within the holarchy of our psychic life. The foundation of all activity, the indeterminate "ground of all" (kun-gzhi) differentiations which engender world-experience, is itself seen as a holonomic process, a Janus-faced 'whole' which is concurrently a 'part' depending on whether it is viewed in relation to its subordinate holonomic phases (constitutive consciousness  $\leftrightarrow$  action patterns), or in relation to the wider horizon (ngang) of unconditioned Mind-as-such out of which it arises 38/.

Action is the steering factor in this holarchy, leading the individual toward increasing degrees of entrapment or freedom. Klong-chen-pa shows in his commentary, however, that if all actions, including those summed up by the truth of the path, are by definition conditioned and incidental, the causal impetus (rgyu) to those actions conducive to liberation must in some sense prefigure and issue from the potential goal ('bras-bu) toward which they are directed 39/. It is thus possible to ascertain that the goal is not separate from its cause but a higher order of process already operative within the total holarchy. This is illustrated by the image of the sun which

causes the formation of clouds that obscure it and also dispels these clouds. The all-ground with its self-obscuring and self-clearing phases points beyond itself to Mind-as-such which is like the open expanse of the sky.

Viewed from the perspective of individual striving, the self-renewal process is felt as a lack of fulfilment in our lives and a concomitant pressure to respond. The path defines itself within but simultaneously 'at odds with' the automatized flow of world-experience. Since nothing that the worlds (of our making) have to offer is found to provide any lasting fulfilment, the criteria for fulfilment must issue from a higher order in the holarchy. This solicitation by the whole is known as our affinity with Being (rigs) which Klong-chen-pa views both from the perspective of individual striving and from the climax toward which such striving moves and is drawn 40/.

Just as the 'need' to respond to Being's solicitation is felt within the psychic infrastructure of the 'all-ground', so the means for response - the wholesome actions summed up by the path which is deceptive and transitory - must also be 'en-acted' within this infrastructure. In the course of this enactment, the holarchy outstrips the very medium that was necessary for its self-renewal, like a butterfly shedding its cocoon 41/.

Actions which build-up ('du-byed) the interpretations of Being, termed samsara or nirvana, depend on our mind (sems) but Mind-as-such (sems-nyid) is open like the sky. Unpremeditated response may thus bring about a transition from the cause-effect circuit that initiates samsara to the cause-effect helix of the

path that ensures deliverance 42/. (CH 4)

Setting out on the path begins with a commitment to worthy persons who urge us toward awakening. Klong-chen-pa distinguishes between the spiritual friend who sets an example for others to follow and the Mantra-guru who is able to set us on the path of maturation and freedom. Whatever form the teacher-student relationship may assume, its efficacy will depend upon careful mutual examination. Although the relationship begins on the interpersonal level, it leads more and more into the intrapsychic forum where the external teacher finds its analogue in the chosen guiding figure (yi-dam) who orchestrates the imaginative deconstruction of our ego-centred hindrances. The chosen yi-dam is our own mind (rang-sems) in the process of regaining its autonomy in Mind-as-such (sems-nyid). In the course of this process, the belief in a self is destroyed and the whole phenomenal world (snang-srid) arises as our teacher. (CH 5)

The teaching process is not an information transfer so much as a catalytic triggering of processes inherent to the learning system itself. These auto-telic processes - the so-called stages of the path (lam-rim) - are safe-guarded by taking refuge. The author here distinguishes between the cause-determined philosophical pursuits which posit the goal as a distant telos, and the goal-sustained Vajrayāna which emphasizes the goal as being already present here and now as our reflexive mind. There are accordingly two areas of refuge: an ordinary cause-determined one - the three jewels in their concreteness - and a special goal-sustained one - the gestalt experience of meaning which is our

reflexive mind (rang-sems), the quintessential value and significance (snying-po'i don) of the three jewels 43/. As the commentary states, the former acts as an escort on the path until we are 'in touch with the goal', while the latter is the actualization of the jewels in our own lived existence 44/. (CH 6)

Next follows a discussion of the four immeasurable feelings - equanimity, love, compassion, and joyfulness - by which we forge meaningful ties with the world in order to pass beyond the ego-centredness of enworldment. Klong-chen-pa observes that these same four feelings remain 'divine states' (S. brahmavihāra) as long as they are not linked to the path of deliverance. Because feelings gravitate naturally toward preoccupation, various means of de-objectification are suggested: moving from referential to increasingly non-referential feelings, varying the order of their practice, and practicing them in their interrelatedness to counter localized fixation tendencies 45/. When practiced as an interactive ensemble, the immeasurables not only compensate for fixation trends but open the system into the originary awareness modes from which emotions have become estranged 46/. (CH 7)

The movement from ordinary mind and emotions to originary awareness (synonymous with Mind-as-such) is further stimulated by developing the concern with awakening. Having both an outer reference, sentient beings (sems-can), as well as an inner reference, Mind-as-such (sems-nyid), this existential concern pertains both to the commonly accepted and higher order realities 47/. Developing the concern involves the two mutually inclusive phases of aspiration - the four immeasurables, and pursuance - the six



transcending functions 48/.

Of the transcending functions, whose order reflects the growing autonomy of mind as organizing agent 49/, the last two are given especially detailed treatment in the commentary. Concentration provides a basis (rten) for developing happiness (bde-ba) and accomplishments (rdzu-'phrul) that enable us to work for others 50,/ and leads, in its higher orders of operation, to the recovery of the thrust toward Being 51/. While concentration is identified with inner calm (zhi-gnas), appreciative discernment is identified with wider perspective (lhag-mthong) since it "far surpasses (lhag-pa) the other transcending functions" 52/. This discernment comprises three phases of studying (thos), whereby we enter into an understanding of how reality as a whole or Being's abidingness is present; thinking (bsam), whereby we gain certitude about what has been studied; and cultivation (sgom), whereby we cross over the ocean of samsara 53/. (CH 8)

Developing the existential concern prepares us for a movement from the cause-determined philosophical pursuit of the Mahāyāna into the goal-sustained existential pursuit of the Vajrayāna with its developing and fulfilment phases. The two pursuits are distinguished by the mode of activity (thabs) they impose: those who renounce desired things, having little longing for them, follow the Bodhisattva path while those who are unable to give up the desired things follow the Mantrayāna 54/. Moving to the heart of the issue, Klong-chen-pa says that because philosophical pursuits only advocate methods of renouncing or countering emotions, based on a duality of acceptance and

rejection, they are inefficient. Since the Mantrayāna, however, employs various means of dealing with emotions, such as transforming them into originary awareness by way of the development and fulfilment phases, it is much more expedient.

The practice of Mantrayāna involves a gradation from the outer Tantras concerned with ritual duties (Kriya), exemplary behaviour (Carya) and contemplative integration (Yoga), to the inner Tantras dealing with the developing phase, fulfilment phase, and their non-duality (Maha, Anu and Ati). In cultivating the developing phase as appropriate activity (thabs), we imaginatively transfigure ourselves and the world around us in order to do away with the belief in the concrete reality of things and persons. In cultivating the fulfilment phase as appreciative discernment (shes-rab), the images of the developing phase fade into the realm that is free from objectification such that even the slightest preoccupation with the meditation and its dream-like images has gone 55/. The non-duality of these phases (Ati) comes when there is presence-openness without any desire to take it as something real. (CH 9)

This phase of non-duality marks the summit of Vajrayāna and the starting point of 'rDzogs-chen' (synonymous with Ati), the experience of Being's wholeness 56/. Klong-chen-pa elaborates this experience in terms of vision (CH 10), cultivation (CH 11-12) and climax (CH 13). Vision is the felt understanding of Being's openness. It stems from the recognition that all that presences and is interpreted as samsara or nirvana (snang-srid 'khor-'das) is open-dimensional. We habitually experience our

world in terms of apprehended object and apprehending subject (gzung-'dzin) due to sedimented tendencies. By critically investigating presence and our own mind, both turn out to be non-objectifiable, not existing in the past, present or future. Such investigation leads to a revelation that what is sought is the seeker himself, a revelation that can only be individually felt and lived, but not arrived at by philosophical propositions. Mind which has operated within its subject-object duality of acceptance and rejection here renews its identity with the whole in Mind-as-such. (CH 10)

The vision of Being's wholeness must then be cultivated imaginatively. This involves practices which vary according to three grades of intellectual capacity. Those of highest capacity are beyond the duality of subject and object and need only preserve the flow of cognitive intensity (rig-pa). Those of mediocre and lower capacity, however, must cultivate various means of overcoming the ego-centricity of dualistic thought.

The individual of mediocre acumen concerns himself with the clear and luminous experience of Mind-as-such which shines forth once the turbulence of conceptual thinking has come to rest. In this experience, inner calm and wider perspective are already united. The person of lower acumen, whose mind is particularly turbid, must first cultivate inner calm and wider perspective separately and then go on to cultivate their unity. By gradually surmounting the obstacles of representational thought by means of concentration exercises, he travels the paths and levels and eventually realizes the calm of nirvana. (CH 11)

Klong-chen-pa goes on to deal with the particular concrete aspects of realizing wholeness: the individual who is concerned with realization, the means of realization, and the underlying dynamics (ngo-bo) of the realization. The individual must be one whose mind is turned away from worldly trivialities and directed toward what is valuable for himself and others. The method involves the application of inner calm and wider perspective as means of dealing with concrete problems 57/. Inner calm, in its referential and non-referential aspects, stills the objectifying tendency of mind, while wider perspective, in its thematic and pre-thematic aspects, brings about an experience of Being's apparitional and open-dimensional character. Their unity is realized when the cognitive capacity neither strays nor stays but gives way to non-dichotomic originary awareness. The dynamics of the realization is the realization of non-duality in which the varieties of acceptance and rejection, objectification and subjectivization are resolved in the unity of Being. (CH 12)

The path reaches its climax in the realization of originary awareness and its gestalt qualities (ye-shes, sku). Mind and its infrastructure (kun-gzhi) have come to rest as originary awareness in their preconstitutive source, Being's meaning-rich continuum (chos-kyi dbyings) which now becomes the centring point of our existence. From this invariant source, vectorial permutations spread out in response to the needs of beings, but each permutation retains its connectedness with the source 58/. Thus, when there are no longer any beings to be trained, the gestalts of engagement in world-horizons (longs-sku) - the imaginative

configurations of deities, and of guiding norms (sprul-sku) in semi-concrete and concrete manifestations, submerge into the expanse of Being's meaning-rich gestalt (chos-sku) from which they have arisen.

### 3.5 Thematic Abridgement of the **Yid-bzhin-mdzod**

Klong-chen-pa's **Yid-bzhin-mdzod** is a verse text (43 double-sided folios) accompanied by a lengthy auto-commentary, the **Yid-bzhin rin-po-che'i mdzod-kyi 'grel-pa Padma-dkar-po** (446 double-sided folios). Both have been used in the following abridgement. Two works by Mi-pham rnam-rgyal have also been consulted: his "Topical Outline" and "Commentary on Difficult Points" 59/. In a relatively short number of verses, the **YZ** "covers the whole of the Buddhist world-view with man as an integral part" 60/. While the **SN** is ontological in its orientation, setting out to articulate the perduring patterns of world-experience, the **YZ** is cosmological, probing further to disclose the set of conditions or underlying scheme of things that make these patterns, viewed as a given whole, possible 61/. The individual is here viewed in terms of the dynamic totality out of which he has crystallized as a relatively stable pattern, and with which he remains inalienably connected.

This dynamic totality or ground of Being (gzhi) is both the starting point and climax of a bidirectional movement which the text traces both ways: concentrically, into the finite situation termed samsara (CH 1-7) and excentrically, back to the more spacious experiences summed up by 'nirvana' (CH 8-22). Nested within this overall division of the text's subject matter are specific textures of organization relating to the process of existential recovery (See Diagram H): the ground of clearing process, its unfoldment, the grime which is to be cleared up, the stages of implementing this process - studying, thinking and

## Diagram H

### Internal Organization of the Yid-bzhin mdzod

#### Part I. WHAT HAS TO BE GIVEN UP - SAMBARA

| <u>Chapter Headings</u>                                                                | <u>Organizing Themes</u>                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. How Samsara Materializes out of the Ground                                          | A. The Ground of the Clearing Process    |
| 2. The Multi-faceted Organization of Buddha-fields for the Enrichment of Living Beings | How this Ground Unfolds                  |
| 3. How the Environing World Evolves                                                    | B. The Grime that has to be Cleared Away |
| 4. The Nature of the Evolution of Sentient Beings as its Individual Inhabitants        |                                          |
| 5. The Epoch of Stability                                                              |                                          |
| 6. The Epochs of Destruction and Emptiness                                             |                                          |
| 7. Happiness and Misery of the Environing World and its Individual Inhabitants         |                                          |

#### Part II. WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED - NIRVANA

|                                                                       |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 8. Associating with Spiritual Friends                                 | a. Studying |
| 9. Shunning Friends of Evil                                           |             |
| 10. The Teacher Who Instructs                                         |             |
| 11. The Character of the Student Who Listens                          |             |
| 12. The Vast Range of Topics in the Teaching That are to be Explained |             |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. Thinking About How Difficult it is to Find a Human Existence       | } | b. Thinking About What One Studies   | C. The Stages of Implementing the Clearing Process          |
| 14. Thinking About Life's Impermanence                                 |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 15. Thinking About the Nature of Confidence                            |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 16. Thinking About the Relation-Between Actions and Their Consequences |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 17. Thinking About the Misery of Samsara                               |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 18. Firmly Establishing Being's Abidingness                            | } | c. Cultivating What One Thinks About | D. The Climax Which Goes to the End of the Clearing Process |
| 19. The Preparatory Phase of Concentration                             |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 20. Creative Imagination as Supreme Sheer Lucency                      |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 21. The Transitional Phase of Travelling the Paths                     |   |                                      |                                                             |
| 22. The Climax as the Culmination of Creative Imagination              |   |                                      |                                                             |



cultivation - and its goal or climax.

The author takes as his point of departure the ground of the clearing process which serves both as the ground of our whole existential situation (don-gyi kun-gzhi), interpreted either as samsara or nirvana, and as the optimization thrust for recovering the expanse (dbyings) of freedom 62/. Out of this ground, through the stirring of tendencies for going astray, there arise the potentialities for experiencing what seem to be an objective domain, a consciousness and a body. If the presences stemming from these potentialities are closely inspected, however, they turn out to be nothing as such, persisting only as long as the dualistic situation of samsara continues. It is by investigating that from which samsara has originally arisen that one understands what nirvana is all about. The ground then becomes the optimization thrust for passing beyond samsara (CH 1).

Having shown that from which the world arises, the author goes on to describe how it appears. First he describes the genesis of Buddha-realms which fulfil the aims of living beings, basing his analysis on the macrocosmology, or cosmology of innumerable (asamkhyeya) Buddhas and Buddha-fields of the *Avatamsakasūtra*, but giving it a specifically Mantrayāna interpretation 63/. He then describes how our particular world system originates on the basis of the microcosmology, or single world system (cakravāla) cosmology, outlined in the third chapter of the *Abhidharmakośa*. While the specific details of the cosmologies need not be dealt with here, it is important to recognize the heuristic role these play within the author's vision of the path.

From the cosmologies, we learn the entire spectrum of limitations and possibilities which our world provides, so that we can take the necessary steps for letting go of samsara and taking up nirvana 64/.

The man-world configuration reflects in each successive phase of unfoldment a bipolar organization, an intermeshing of ordering and disordering tendencies. Thus the presencing of samsara with its three realms occurs within and in tandem with the multifaceted display of Buddha-fields for the sake of educating and fulfilling the aims of living beings. This macro-cosmology is based on the view of an intelligent, holarchic, and hologramatic universe in which each microcosmic instantiation recapitulates the organization of the whole.

The whole is the meaning-rich gestalt, envisaged as Samantabhadra who, as Lord of the thrust toward consummate clarity and as the principle of non-dual originary awareness, is active through his/its gestalts of engagement in a world-horizon and guiding norms in each of the holonomic constituents - the innumerable Buddha-fields that make up the universe. Each Buddha-field contains within itself an incalculable number of Buddha-fields which in turn comprise countless world-systems, each hierarchically stratified into twenty-five levels of three thousand each. Each twenty-five level world-system stems from the vectorial permutations of Samantabhadra's gestalt presence (sku), communication (gsung), cognitive resonance (thugs), spontaneous activity ('phrin-las) and creative capabilities (yon-tan) beginning with the embodiment aspect of embodiment (sku-kyi

sku) and so on.

Our world, named 'Unbearable' (mi-mjed) because its inhabitants cannot endure the emotional turmoil and aimless actions in which they are embroiled, is the thirteenth in a world-system, presenting the cognitive resonance aspect of cognitive resonance (thugs-kyi-thugs). As the median point between ordering and disordering tendencies, it is adorned with the Guhyamantrayāna which provides the impetus for attaining the certitude of deliverance in this one lifetime (CH 2).

Moving from the macrosocosmos to the microcosmos, Klong-chen-pa goes on to discuss our particular world-system in terms of its four epochs of origination, stability, destruction, and emptiness. He diverges from the account of four kalpas given in the **Abhidharmakośa** (III, 89-93) and follows this text's analysis of the four defining characteristics of reality: origination, stability, decay and impermanence (II, 45). The origination of our world-system is described in three phases - the foundational site, the foundation, and the founded, that is, the five fundamental forces as they gradually materialize and are built up; the cosmic islands, oceans and mountains based on these; and the various environments inhabited by beings of our cosmos (CH 3).

The author next focusses on the origin of these beings in the three realms of formlessness, aesthetic forms, and desires. Of particular significance is the evolution of humans and human society 65/ through precipitant traits of coarseness, greed, proprietorship and the need for elected leadership (CH 4).

Next follows a discussion of the epoch of stability during

which the life-spans of living beings gradually diminish, over a period of eighteen re-births, from eighty thousand to ten years as unwholesome deeds, emotions and divisive notions escalate and the conditions for life deteriorate. This period is followed by a period during which life-spans increase back to eighty thousand years as conditions improve 66/. The particular manner in which the beings-in-the-world evolve is determined by three developmental parameters (mtha') of form (gzugs), temporality (dus) and language (ming): the atoms that form the basis of our universe of matter and energy; the continuity of moments making up our days, months, years and so on; and the combination of morphemes (yi-ge) and phonemes (sil-bu) that become organized into the words that make up spoken and written languages (CH 5).

The text then describes the epochs of destruction and emptiness in the course of which the living beings and their environing worlds are destroyed, the latter by cosmic fire, water and wind, until everything has dissipated into space (CH 6). In this ever-changing cosmos, beings experience various forms of happiness and misery specific to their milieux. Yet, as Klong-chen-pa shows, even their happiness is underlined by misery because of its inherent changeability and unreliability (CH 7).

When we have thus understood the character of what must be given up - samsara, we should strive solely for the certain meaning (nges-par don) that lies in what is to be accepted - nirvana. The commentary 67/ specifies this transition and the scope of the second part. When it comes to taking our psycho-physical patterning (khams) as the working basis for the

optimization thrust leading beyond samsara, two phases are involved. First we clear away the grime of our psycho-physical patterning through studying, thinking about what has been studied and imaginatively cultivating it. We can then embrace the level of the Being thrust as the goal which is free from all grime. Thus the ground of the clearing process triggers the stages of the clearing process leading to its recovery in and as the goal of the clearing process.

To make the transition between giving up samsara and taking up nirvana, we must rely on a teacher. He is the catalytic agent (phan-pa'i rkyen) of the clearing process in the sense that his explanations help us to rediscover the ground of Being. Implementing the stages of the clearing process must start with study, since without studying we will not be able to think about or cultivate anything. Studying may be understood by way of: (a) identifying the person with whom we should or should not study (CH 8-9), (b) showing the manner in which we should go about studying (CH 10-11), and (c) firmly establishing the subject matter to be studied (CH 12).

The person with whom we should study is the spiritual friend who enables us to pass beyond samsara. Klong-chen-pa lists seven sets of seven characteristics which define the teacher, adding that since one who possesses all of them is exceedingly rare, one who possesses most of them may be considered as equal to a Buddha, and one who possesses six of the seven sets may be relied upon. Next he presents six specific reasons for relying on a teacher: only a teacher can (a) give the advice that is essential

for finding deliverance, (b) open our eyes to what to accept and reject, (c) enable us to accumulate the requisites (of merits and knowledge), (d) provide refuge from worldly existences with their terrifying hindrances, (e) make our capabilities expand, and (f) be so kind as to help us in this degenerate age. In particular, the teacher is able to bring out our potential, the optimization thrust, that lies temporarily concealed within us, and make us find deliverance. The highest form of respect we can show such a teacher is to realize the quintessential meaning of what has been communicated and thus become heir to the tradition (CH 8).

Having become acquainted with spiritual friends, it is necessary to give up involvement with negative acquaintances who have no inclination to extricate their minds from worldliness or to search for life's intrinsic value. Such people weaken whatever positive potential we have developed and lead us down wrong paths. We should therefore examine a prospective teacher as we would a trail guide who is going to escort us into bandit-infested regions, and make certain that he can lead us safely to our destination (CH 9).

Having found a reliable teacher and rid ourselves of negative acquaintances, the actual process of studying begins. This involves a reciprocal relationship between explaining, on the part of the teacher (CH 10), and listening on the part of the student (CH 11). The teacher's explanation must be suited to all different levels of intellectual acumen and make clear to the student the gradation of the teaching. The student, in turn, must listen with a mind dedicated to dispelling his shortcomings.

Within this learning environment, we commence studies in the subject matter of the philosophical systems, non-Buddhist then Buddhist. The gradation leads from early speculative systems which remain confined to the extremes of eternal existence and non-existence to the realistic and mentalistic Buddhist systems. Of the cause-determined Mahāyāna systems, the Prāsangika Mādhyamika is said to be the quintessential meaning of the Buddha's message since it dispenses with all propositions of existence and non-existence and resolves the relation between openness and functional interdependence in its view of the indivisibility of the two realities. Klong-chen-pa goes on to show, however, that the goal-sustained Mantrayāna is eminently superior to any of the cause-determined philosophical systems insofar as it dispenses with all interpretations of the path based on linear causality and views the goal as the ever-present ground of our being which the path discloses. His statement recapitulates the general scope of the **Yid-bzhin mdzod**, showing its Mantrayāna inception 68/:

The 'thrust' of the Mantrayāna, replete with capabilities, is spontaneously inherent in all sentient beings as the ground of the clearing process, like the sun itself. What has to be cleared up is the all-ground with its eight perceptual patterns which constitute samsara, like clouds covering (the sun). When the obscurations are gradually cleared away in the clearing process, like clouds dissipating, by way of cultivating empowerments and the Developing and Fulfilment phases, the capabilities are actualized in our present situation. Then the goal of the clearing process, the ground of our whole existential situation, shines forth once again, like the radiant sun. At this time, since the grime that was there previously is no more, and the "all-ground" with its tendencies has returned (to its source), our intrinsic value (don) shines forth without any separation between a 'before' and an 'after'. As the **Hevajratāntra** (II,iv,69) states,

Sentient beings are 'Buddha',  
 Though it has become obscured by incidental fog.  
 When this (fog) clears, they are Buddhas. (CH 12)

Klong-chen-pa next discusses how to develop our thinking in order to gain certitude about what we have studied. What must be thought about in particular are the four traditional preliminary topics, to which he adds another topic, confidence (faith). As the commentary demonstrates 69/, these five work as a interactive ensemble to rectify localized deviation trends. At the outset, we must develop a feeling of joy in having attained a human existence which is the best working basis for realizing awakening (CH 13). Failure to do so results in the drawback of letting it go to waste owing to a lack of firm resolve. This is rectified by thinking about life's impermanence which prods us into making an effort so that we set out to realize what is positive (CH 14). Failure to do so results in the drawback of not setting out on the path of liberation because of laziness and indifference. In this case, we must develop the great companion of confidence (CH 15). Failure to do so results in the drawback of having no foundation for discovering life's meaning. This is rectified by thinking about the subtle relationship between the causes and effects of good and evil actions (CH 16). Failure to do so results in the drawback of not becoming free from the perpetual misery of samsara. In this case, we must think about the disadvantages of the higher and lower existences of samsara (CH 17). Failure to think about these results in the drawback of not going to the end of the path of liberation leading to awakening on account of not knowing what to reject or accept, samsara or nirvana. Thus, these five topics ensure that one does not take a wrong path when setting out on the journey to liberation.



Once studying and thinking have instilled in us the desire to become free of samsara and to realize nirvana, we must cultivate creative imagination. The point of departure is an awareness of Being's abidingness, the indivisibility of the two realities as the thrust toward certainty. The author now stands at the summit of his work from which he can look back on its major themes - the optimization thrust, the relation between samsara and nirvana, and between the commonly accepted and higher order realities - to show their underlying unity. All the deceptive and errant experiences that constitute samsara are known as 'the commonly accepted reality', while the quiescent and profound experiences that constitute nirvana are known as 'the higher order reality'. But apart from making this provisional distinction, we can find nothing in all the presences of samsara that has any existence of its own. Thus the presencing aspect of reality, the commonly accepted, is inseparable from its openness aspect; samsara and nirvana are non-dual in being the indivisibility of reality.

The higher order reality ingresses into the commonly accepted reality as the optimization thrust, the impulse drawing us toward consummate clarity. The task of imagination is to bring out this potential for total fulfilment (Buddha) which is ever-present in us, having only temporarily gone under cover (CH 18).

Once we have become aware of Being's abidingness, it is necessary to make a felt experience of it through imaginative cultivation. The preliminary phase (sngon-'gro) first of all involves the two stages of taking refuge, whereby the cause-

related refuge is made to serve as an impetus to the goal-sustained aspect, and developing a concern with awakening, whereby ordinary mentation (sems) is transformed into originary awareness (ye-shes). This leads to the developing and fulfilment phases of the Mantrayāna. By cultivating the former, self and world are transfigured into an imaginative scenario, breaking our preoccupation with the vulgar. The latter gives rise to an understanding that Mind-as-such is non-objectifiable, thus preventing us from concretizing the images of the developing phase. (CH 19).

On the basis of these preliminaries, we go on to cultivate the main procedure of cultivating inner calm and wider perspective. Various calming techniques are employed to bring about a non-referential concentration in which the originary awareness of Being's meaningfulness may shine forth. This originary awareness which comes with the wider perspective is the meaning-rich gestalt experience, the goal of the various Buddhist approaches to the meaning of Being 70/. Details are then given for preserving the vitality of this experience once it has arisen (CH 20).

Klong-chen-pa briefly describes how to travel the five paths and ten levels leading to the realization of Buddhahood on the basis of Vajrayāna teachings passed down from Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. The first four of the traditional paths are correlated with four dynamic control centres ('khor-lo) in the live body. When the mentation-motility in each of these centres operates smoothly, the capabilities of each of the four paths arise one after the other. When the subtle 'knots' in the energy

channels (rtsa-ba) branching out from the central channel become unravelled, the capabilities of the ten levels come forth. With the unravelling of these knots, the mind-motility of emotionality that makes up samsara subsides and the originary awareness-motility of the calm of nirvana expands. Klong-chen-pa emphasizes that the capabilities brought out by the paths and levels are not to be construed as something separate from understanding; rather, the two arise together like the sun and its rays (CH 21).

With the realization of the gestalt experiences and their originary awareness modes, the path has reached its climax. By becoming free from all the grime inherent in our psycho-physical patterning, the capabilities of awakening (byang-chub) can now shine forth spontaneously. In the course of this process, what were previously potentialities for experiencing the finiteness of a body, a consciousness and an objective domain (lus, don, yul) have become resolved (grol) into the openness of gestalt presence, originary awareness, and realms of the imagination (sku, ye-shes, zhing-khams) 71/.

The climax is not so much the end of the path as the starting point for meaningful activity. We now stand at a vantage point from which we can explicate the basis of the path, the path itself and the climax in order to help living beings find their freedom.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1/ The **Bodhipathapradīpa** and its auto-commentary, the **Bodhi-mārgadīpapañjikā** are extant only in their Tibetan translations (the editions used are PK vol. 103, nos. 5344 and 5355). A Sanskrit restoration of the BP by Professor Mrinalkanti Gangopadhyaya is included in A. Chattopadhyaya, **Atīśa and Tibet**, Appendix B, section 9, 545-9. The Tibetan version occasionally varies the seven syllable meter: in lines 1-4 and 51-54, which are eleven syllables per line, and in lines 71-78 and 129-132 which are nine syllables per line. See H. Eimer, **Bodhipathapradīpa-Ein Lehrgedicht des Atīśa (Dīpankaraśrījñāna) in der Tibetischen Überlieferung** (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978), 17.

2/ Transliterated in Eimer, **Bodhipathapradīpa**, 229-53.

3/ This classification of three types of individuals has a long history in Buddhist literature. The **Mahāpadāna-sutta** (III, 6) of the Pali Canon (**Dīghanikāya** no. 14) compares people of varying intellectual capacity to three types of lotus plants: those which remain submerged in the pond; those which grow only up to its surface; and those which rise above the water, undrenched by it. Only the latter of the three types, "those whose eyes are nearly free from dust", are considered ripe for the Buddha's teaching. See **Dialogues of the Buddha** Part II, tr. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davis (London: Luzac and Co. Ltd., 1971), 31 f. The **Vimuttimagga** of Arahant Upatissa, a text similar in many respects to the **Visuddhimagga** of Buddhaghosa but extant only in its Chinese translation, associates three types of individual with the three trainings: "The Blessed One expounded the training of higher virtue (śīla) to a man of the lower type, the training of higher thought (citta) to a man of the middle type and the training of higher wisdom (prajñā) to a man of the higher type." **The Path of Freedom** tr. by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1977), 3.

In Mahāyāna literature, the three-fold typology is found in the **Uttaratantra** (I, 47) attributed to Maitreya-nātha to distinguish different states of the Buddha-potential in different beings:

Pure, (partly) pure and (partly) impure,  
And thoroughly pure  
Are known respectively as  
Sentient beings, Bodhisattvas and Tathagatas.

See Asaṅga's commentary to this verse, in **The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation**, tr. E. Obermiller, **Acta Orientalia** 9 (1931), 183 f. Asaṅga details various ways of classifying individuals into inferior, intermediate and superior in his **Yogācārabhūmi**, PK vol. 111, 7.5 f. He begins his analysis with the statement that "The three persons, inferior, intermediate, and superior have their inception in realization-method (sgrub)."

The first does not follow the teaching so as to benefit himself or others; the second does follow it but only to benefit himself and not others; the third enters into the teaching to benefit both himself and others. Asaṅga later distinguishes between the inferior individual who is attached to the evil he commits; the intermediate one who either commits evil without being attached to it or is attached to evil although he does not commit it; and the superior individual who neither commits evil nor is attached to it (8.2 f.).

Finally, Atīśa claims to derive his typology from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (PK vol. 115, 189.1) which distinguishes between the inferior person who works (thabs) only for his own happiness, the intermediate one who turns away from suffering only out of his own lack of happiness but therefore continues to suffer, and the worthy individual (dam-pa) who works for the welfare of all others by turning away the foundation of their suffering, and thereby suffers on account of their suffering.

4/ Atīśa devotes the fifth chapter of his *Pañjikā* to the six abhiññās (T. mngon-shes). See *A Lamp for the Path*, tr. Sherburne, 114 f. These six direct intuitions, of which the first five may be possessed by saints as well as ordinary beings, the last belonging only to saints (ārya) are: divine vision (of others dying and being reborn), divine hearing (of human and divine voices), knowing other people's minds, recollection of former births, miraculous powers and the intuition that all impurities have been destroyed. See *Abhidharmakośa* VII, v. 37-56. On their historical development in Buddhist literature, see H. Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), 106-34.

5/ Both renderings of stong-pa are introduced by H. Guenther, as is the verbal form 'open-dimensional' which is used below.

6/ The full title is *Dam-chos yid-bzhin nor-bu thar-pa rin-po-che'i rgyan*, "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation - A Wish-fulfilling Gem of the True Dharma". The edition used is a Bhutanese block-print (Sikkim, 1972).

7/ For further details, see below, section 3.4.

8/ The puḍgala-nairātmya and dharma-nairātmya.

9/ I adopt H. Guenther's translation 'transcending functions' for paramita instead of the usual 'perfections' and his rendering of prajña by 'appreciative discernment' instead of the usual 'wisdom'.

10/ The two types of originary awareness are that which sees things as they are (ji-lta-ba mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes) and that which sees things in their interrelatedness (ji-snyed-pa mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes).

11/ The full titles are **Skye-bu gsum-gyi nyams-su blang-ba'i rim-pa thams-cad tshang-bar ston-pa'i byang-chub lam-gyi rim-pa**, "The Stages on the Path to Awakening - Fully Revealing All the Stages Taken to Heart by the Three Kinds of Person" (**Lam-rim chen-mo**, "The Extended Stages on the Path") and **Skye-bu gsum-gyi nyams-su blang-ba'i byang-chub lam-gyi rim-pa**, "The Stages on the Path to Awakening Taken to Heart by the Three Types of Individual" (**Lam-rim chung-ba**, "The Condensed Stages on the Path"). The editions used are PK vol. 152-3, nos. 6001 and 6002.

12/ About one-third of the **Lrcm** is taken up by some 1500 quotations drawn from no less than 160 works (almost all from the **bKa'-gyur** and **bsTan-gyur**). See A. Wayman, "Introduction to Tsongkha-pa's **Lam-rim chen-mo**," in *Phi Theta papers*, vol. 3 (Berkeley, 1952), 73.

13/ Compare **Lrcm**, PK vol. 152, 103.4 f. (tr. A. Wayman, **Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real**, 81 ff.) and **Lrcb** vol. 153, 1.1 f. (tr. R. Thurman, **Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa**, 108-185).

14/ 180.5.6 f.

15/ 20.2.4 f.

16/ The **Lrcb** only discusses the first of these in the context of the person of intermediate acumen since the other two are taken up in the chapter on zhi-gnas and lhag-mthong for the person of superior acumen (see PK vol. 153, 211.5 f.). Compare with **Vimuttimagga**, note 3 above.

17/ The full title of the root text is **rDzogs-pa chen-po Sems-nyid ngal-gso**, "How Mind-as-such Finds Relaxation in Absolute Completeness". On the supplementary texts, see H.V. Guenther, **Kindly Bent to Ease Us Part One: Mind**, an annotated translation of the first root text of the trilogy, (Emeryville: Dharma Pub., 1975), xix f. The trilogy is the second of three trilogies composed by **Klong-chen-pa**, the first being the **Mun-sel skor-gsum**, a trilogy on the **Guhyagarbha-tantra**, an important text of the **rNying-ma** tradition, and the third, the **Rang-grol skor-gsum**, a trilogy on the guidance (man-ngag) in the sems-sde teachings. The edition of the **Ngal-gso skor-gsum** used in this study is published in Gangtok, ed. Dodrup Chen, 1973.

18/ The basic arrangement of this work (the **Ngal-gso skor-gsum-gyi spyi-don legs-bshad rgya-mtsho**, 1-114) is as follows:

Pt 1. General Introduction to Explaining the Texts:

- A. Cause-determined spiritual pursuits (general history), 3 f.
- B. Goal-sustained spiritual pursuits (general history of gSar-ma and rNying-ma traditions), p. 46 f.
- C. The way how these have been studied and explained, 77 f.

Pt. 2. Explanation of the Specific Meaning and Content (of the trilogy):

- A. The sequential arrangement of the texts, 92 f.
- B. Establishing the reasons for composition  
(The meaning of the titles, invocations, statements of intent, main subject matter and conclusions of the texts and their commentaries), 100 f.

19/ The number of verses in each chapter are: I: 24; II: 20; III: 60, IV: 52, V: 51, VI: 33, VII: 58, VIII: 89, IX: 33, X: 37, XI: 62, XII: 31, XIII: 49, and Colophon: 4.

20/ This is the **Sems-nyid ngal-gso'i bsdus-don Padma dkar-po'i zil-mgar** by rDza dPal-sprul O-rgyan Jigs-med chos-kyi dbang-po (See Diagram C) which modifies the topical outline by including the beginnings of each successive verse.

21/ This text, the **Sems-nyid ngal-gso'i gnas-gsum dge-ba gsum-gyi don-khrid Byang-chub lam-bzang**, analyzes the subject matter of the text into one hundred and forty-one contemplative topics, ninety-two belonging to the Mahayana (6 f.), twenty-two to Vajrayana (69 f.) and twenty-seven to rDzogs-chen (91 f.):

### Contemplative Topics

|                            |         |                                                                                |         |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 92<br>Mahayana<br>Topics   | 1-10    | The Difficulty of Finding a Human Existence (CH 1)                             |         |
|                            | 11-22   | Life's Impermanence (CH 2)                                                     |         |
|                            | 23-38   | The Misery of Samsara (CH 3)                                                   |         |
|                            | 39-46   | The Relationship Between Actions and Results (CH 4)                            |         |
|                            | 47-55   | Instruction for Relying on Spiritual Friends (CH 5)                            |         |
|                            | 56-58   | Taking Refuge (CH 6)                                                           |         |
|                            | 59-64   | The Four Immeasurables (CH 7)                                                  |         |
|                            | 65-92   | Training in Developing the Supreme Concern with Awakening (CH 8)               |         |
| 22<br>Vajrayana<br>Topics  | 93-98   | The Four Tantras                                                               |         |
|                            | 99-101  | Cultivating the Developing and Fulfilment Phases in General                    | (CH 9)  |
|                            | 102-114 | Cultivation of the Specific Aspects of the Profound Path                       |         |
| 27<br>Dzogs-chen<br>Topics | 115-118 | (A) The Decisive Vision                                                        | (CH 10) |
|                            |         | (B) Preserving the Dynamic Expanse of Meditation                               |         |
|                            | 119-129 | (a) General Indication of How to Meditate According to Three Grades of Acumen  | (CH 11) |
|                            | 130-138 | (b) Specific Explanation of Special Aspects in Mastering the Appropriate Means | (CH 12) |
|                            | 139-141 | (C) Removing Fear and Expectation Through the Goal                             | (CH 13) |

- 22/ **Spyi-don legs-bshad**, 93 f.
- 23/ tr. by H. Guenther as **Kindly Bent to Ease Us Part Two: Meditation** (Berkeley: Dharma Pub., 1976).
- 24/ tr. by H. Guenther as **Kindly Bent to Ease Us Part Three: Wonderment** (Berkeley: Dharma Pub., 1977).
- 25/ **Spyi-don legs-bshad**, 93 f. and 104 f. For further details see H. Guenther **Kindly Bent to Ease Us I**, xxi f.
- 26/ The distinction between Mind-as-such or Experience-as-such (sems-nyid) and mind or experience (sems) is basic to rNying-ma rDzogs-chen thought and nowhere elaborated in greater detail than the SN and auto-commentary.
- 27/ **Shing-rta chen-po** (hereafter SC), 130.
- 28/ SC, 120.
- 29/ Synonymous with rigs as it is discussed below.
- 30/ As for example in the **Thar-rgyan** and **Lam-rim chung-ba**.
- 30/ SC, 130.
- 31/ SC, 127 f.
- 32/ SC, 191.
- 33/ SC, 205 f. 'Stronghold' is the rendering given by H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent I**, p. 22. The term grong-khyer literally refers to a fortified city, a place surrounded by a wall. See S.C. Das, **Tibetan-English Dictionary**, p. 251.
- 34/ SC, 208 f. That is the all-ground (kun-gzhi) with its eight perceptual patterns.
- 35/ don refers to the tendency to concretize the fundamental forces which develop into our 'body' through a failure to recognize them for what they are (dynamic processes). It serves as the basis for the errant subjectivization. See SC, 211.
- 36/ Klong-chen-pa shows this through his analysis of the Yogācāra trīśvabhāva theory, SC, 212-23. This insight concurs with the basic premises of negative theology in western mysticism. See Geza von Molnar, "Aspects of Western Metaphysical Tradition and the Concept of Education (Bildung) in German Literature," **Studia Mystica** 1, no. 3 (Fall: 1978): 3-22.
- 37/ SC, 222.
- 38/ This analysis is based on SC, 271 ff. See Diagram L, p. 145.



39/ SC, 272-3.

40/ These are the 'naturally present affinity with Being' and 'affinity with Being stemming from its realization', on which see H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent to Ease Us I**, 269 n. 19 and 20.

41/ SC, 276.

42/ As stated in verse 51 which makes the transition to the next chapters dealing with the path.

43/ SC, 465-6.

44/ SC, 427.

45/ As schematized in **Kindly Bent...** I, 108 f.

46/ The correspondences between the immeasurables, the emotions and the originary awareness modes are explicated in verses 50-3.

47/ SC, 532-3.

48/ Aspiration and pursuance are not discrete entities (dn̄gos-po tha-dad-pa) but two phases of a single cognitive process (blo-rdzas-gcig). SC, 576-77.

49/ This is clearly shown in the commentary which discusses the essence, cause, result, function, special quality and classification of each transcending function (SC, 664 f., 650 f., 653 f., 666 f., 683 f., and 725 f., respectively).

50/ SC, 683. In the **Abhidharmakośa** (VII, 48), rdzu-'phrul (S. rddhi) refers to certain 'miraculous powers' produced in meditation which are included among the six direct intuitions (see above n. 4). According to Vasubandhu, the term is akin in meaning to samādhi. See Sukomal Chaudhuri, **Analytical Study of the Abhidharmakosa** (Calcutta: Sanskrit College Pub., 1976), 200 f. The term also refers to the 'four bases of success' (rdzu-'phrul rkang-pa) on the higher Path of Accumulation, the four samādhis of willingness, perseverance, intentiveness and analysis.

51/ SC, 683 f. For further details, see Guenther **Kindly Bent to Ease Us I**, 227, n. 2.

52/ SC, 685.

53/ SC, 684 f. Klong-chen-pa notes (SC, 725) that studying, thinking and cultivating, as three phases of a single process, correspond to the three phases of samādhi: preliminary engagement (sbyor), main phase (dn̄gos) and outcome (rjes).

54/ SC, 733 f.

55/ SC, 771 f.

56/ In the **Byang-chub lam-bzang** (85 f.), Klong-chen-pa says that rDzogs-chen is superior to both the cause-determined Laksanayāna and goal-sustained Vajrayāna which busy themselves with acceptance and rejection. "Since it is endogenous originary awareness as it has always been spontaneously there, it pertains to Being's meaningfulness (chos-nyid) which goes beyond all affected efforts of body, speech, and mind, and is thus the definitive meaning, the quintessential sense, and peak (rtse-mo Ati) of Vajrayāna."

57/ Five are mentioned: drowsiness, sluggishness, elation, depression and doubt which the author sums up as depression and elation. See verses 8-9.

58/ The relation of the gestalts are schematized in **Kindly Bent...I**, 223-4.

59/ These are the **Yid-bzhin mdzod-kyi Sa-bcad bsdus-sdom Ku-mu-da'i phreng-ba** and **Yid-bzhin mdzod-kyi dKa'-gnad ci-rigs gsal-bar byed-pa**. They are included in the **Yid-bzhin mdzod** collection ed. by Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, Gangtok, 1000-75 and 1776-1801 respectively.

60/ H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent...I**, xvii.

61/ Anna Teresa Tymieniecka makes a clear distinction between the scope of ontology and cosmology in **Why is There Something Rather than Nothing ? - Proglomena to the Phenomenology of Cosmic Creation** (Assen: Van Grocum & Co., 1966), 22:

Cosmological inquiry...must reconcile the recurrent features of the progressing universes with the essential dynamic spontaneity of the world process of which things and beings essentially partake. While the ontological investigation of beings may restrict itself to their permanent structures viewed as mere possibles, our cosmological inquiry has to approach them within the complete set-up and ramifications of their spontaneous unfolding and dynamic role in the world total.

62/ As the commentary explains (**Padma dkar-po**, 9), "...since [the ground] is present as the expanse in which gestalt and originary awareness can neither be added to nor subtracted from one another, it is called an "optimization thrust"; and since it is abidingly present (gnas-lugs) as the foundation of samsara and nirvana, it is called the "ground of our whole existential situation".

63/ As noted by Mi-pham in his **dKa'-gnad ci-rigs gsal-bar-byed**, 1001. On the asamkhyeya and cakravāla cosmologies, see Randy Kloetzli, **Buddhist Cosmology** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) and Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Cosmogony and Cosmology (Buddhist)," **Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics**, 2-129-38.

64/ Cosmology as an incentive to find release from samsara is the theme of a text by encyclopedist 'Ba'-ra-ba rGyal-mtshan (1310-1391 ?) entitled **Nges-'byung-gi dad-pa 'jig-rten-gyi khams bstan-pa'i bskor**, in **A Tibetan Encyclopedia of Buddhist Scholasticism** vol. 7. (Dehradun: Ngawang Gyaltsen and Ngawang Lungtok, 1970). This scholar also combines the **Abhidharmakośa** and **Avatamsaka** cosmologies in his presentation.

65/ Based on Yasomitra's commentary to the **AK**, 339. See S. Chaudhuri, **Analytical Study of the Abhidharmakośa**, 146-7.

66/ Compare with **Abhidharmakośa**, III, v. 89-93.

67/ **Padma dkar-po**, 204 f.

68/ **Padma dkar-po**, 660 f.

69/ **Padma dkar-po**, 685 f.

70/ The goal is in many cases contained in the name of the teachings; Klong-chen-pa mentions Mahāmudrā, rDzogs-chen, Mādhyamika, the essence of Nāropa's six topics, the nature of Lam-'bras teachings, the Zhi-byed teachings which calm all disturbance among others. **Padma dkar-po**, 839-40.

71/ **Padma dkar-po**, 870.

## CHAPTER FOUR: COMPARISON

### 4.1 Stylistic Comparison

"[A]fter we have enumerated all the possible features of poetic beauty there still remains a "something"- "un encore" - to which it owes its unique power of incantation...By virtue of its presence, its unifying and transforming action and communicability, a work of poetry is poetic..."

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka,  
"Poetica Nova"

#### 4.1.1 Evaluating the Artistic Status of the Texts

The chapter on exegesis has succeeded in revealing major themes and innovations only at the cost of concealing their 'worklike' character 1/, their special status as works of art. This would be of little significance if the texts were in all cases composed primarily with a view to what was being communicated rather than how it was being communicated. If style or the artistic quality of the texts, was in each case considered only as an embellishment to already decided-upon content, then an analysis of different stylistic modes and motifs would be no more than an interesting diversion at this point in the study. However, even a preliminary reading of the works reveals a striking contrast between what might be called 'content-based' and 'artistic' types of work. The content-based work is one which shows an overriding concern with the documentation of existing ideas 2/. The artistic work is one which shows a major concern with the living creative process of idea formation and

communication, and hence also with the reinterpretation and transformation of the given.

In every text there is a tension between the documentary and worklike traits, and any evaluation of a work as one or the other can only rest on a distinction of degree rather than kind. In the religious texts chosen for this study, the distinction is especially tenuous because of the importance which tradition and the functional impact of ideas have played in the process of their literary creation 3/. Even the most content-based lam-rim texts propose to bring about a change in the situational contexts (individual, socio-cultural) in which they are used, while even the most worklike texts remain inextricably linked with the on-going tradition out of which they emerge.

In evaluating the artistic status of these texts, it has therefore been necessary to develop an aesthetic of literary creation which could adequately account for the complex inter-relations between experience (description), text (composition) and tradition (dissemination) underlying their composition. Such an aesthetic would also attempt to account for the patent ambiguity and transiency of their 'representitiveness', as art works or as documents, within the context of literary history. The Russian formalists have suggested that literary history be viewed as a dynamic self-sustaining process, influenced by events of a non-literary character - historical, sociological, and cultural - but propelled in its autonomous development by the progressive wearing out or 'de-formation' (as Roman Jakobson terms it) of canonized forms 4/. In this process, new forms of

artistic creation assimilate and supplant the old.

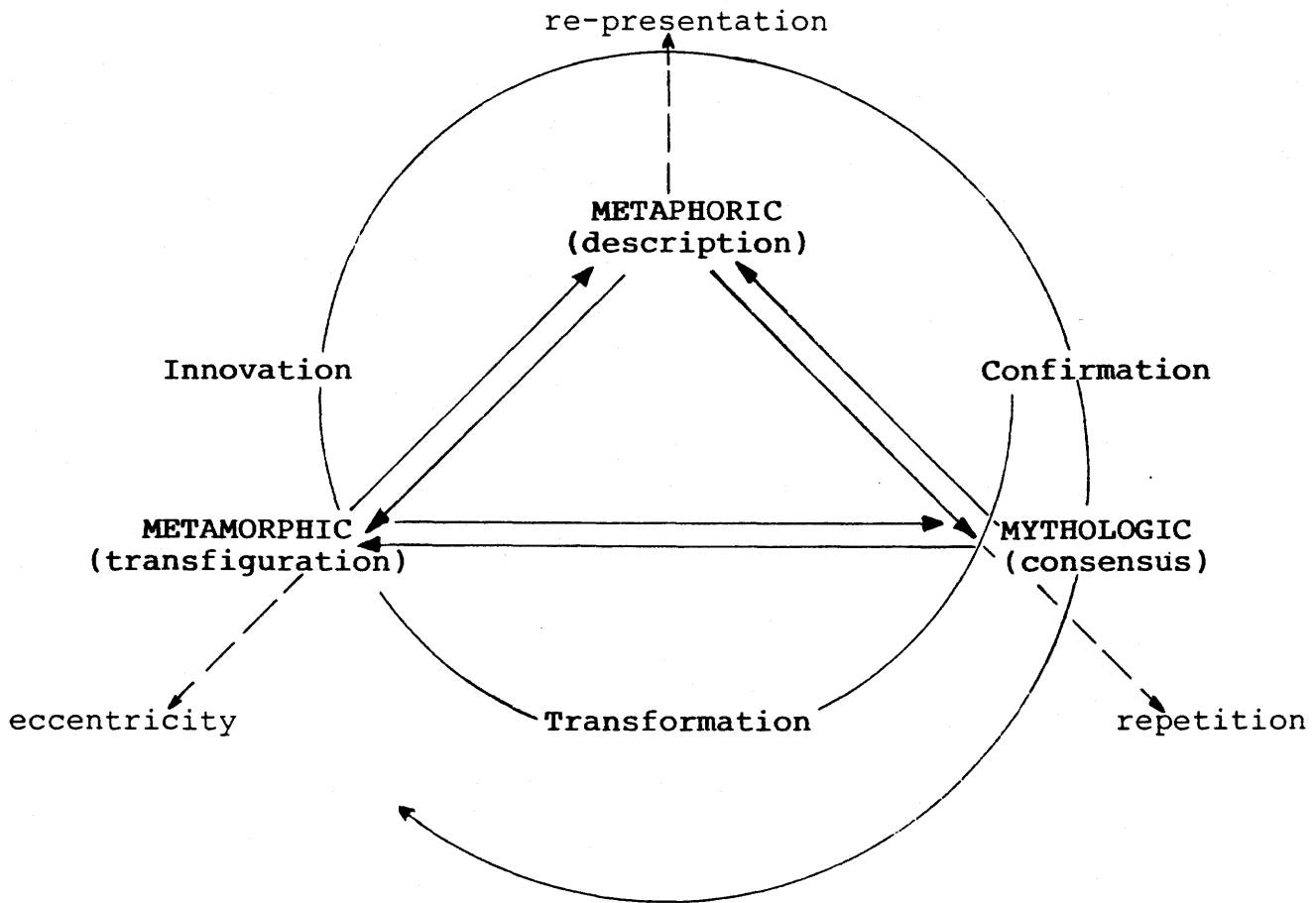
If literary history is viewed as an extension of individual literary creation, the main problem is to define the primary phases of creative process that are operative in both these areas of inquiry. Three phases are paramount: metaphoric (description), mythologic (consensus) and metamorphic (transfiguration). Taken as a whole, these phases form an interactive, self-propelling, system whose specific mode of operation and development - harmonious or dissonant - depends upon variable localized and systemic parameters of optimization or degeneration (see Diagram I).

**Metaphoric** (description): this pertains to the relation between experience and language. Since all experience is 'experience as', metaphor prefigures concept as our most fundamental engagement with reality 5/. Languaging brings about a world. Note here the close proximity between immediate experiencing and metaphoric description: if we feel happy, we think in bright images and concepts. How we feel tends to find expression in analogous forms. But to the extent that words fail to describe how we feel, the possibility of transformation of the existing order of metaphors increases. If, on the other hand, there is an excessive preoccupation with making experience 'fit' the words (or vice versa), metaphoric description degenerates into the plight of mimetic re-presentation.

**Mythologic** (consensus): governing metaphors become organized into mythologies (in Roland Barthes' sense of the term 6/) which provide an overall frame of reference for self and world interpretation. If metaphoric description constitutes our primary

# Diagram I

## Model of Artistic Creation in Three Phases



### Terminology

|                                   |   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Three phases of artistic creation | - | <b>BOLD CAPITALIZED</b>         |
| Phase functions                   | - | <b>(bold small)</b>             |
| Transactional parameters          | - | <b>Capitalized first letter</b> |
| Stagnation trends                 | - | small plain                     |

| Key | Relations             | Systemic Functions                                                                      |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | - interaction between | - self-balancing                                                                        |
|     | - regression into     | - de-balancing, damping                                                                 |
|     | - development into    | - self-propelling                                                                       |
|     |                       | (Helix symbolizing creative movement with changing initial conditions and phase states) |

attunement with reality, mythologic consensus is a second order operation concerned with the lateral (metonymic) binding of metaphors into consensually validated networks. Mythologies become elevated to the status of ideologies when they usurp the authority of metaphoric description as the arbitrator in making sense of the world. This is most patent in the establishment of 'truths' (which Nietzsche has defined as "mobile armies of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms" 7/) or 'water-tight' paradigms. At this stage, one is no longer concerned with how experience can be expressed in words so much as how it can be made to conform to the pre-established frame. The consequence, in terms of literary history, is the mere repetition of canonized and automatized forms. Yet mythologies will remain open-ended and elastic to the degree that the 'image fields' with which they operate 8/ are in immediate dialogue with the living sensuous reality of metaphoric description. Needless to say, the possibility of transformation increases in direct proportion to the permeability of the image fields.

**Metamorphic** (transfiguration): this pertains to the relation between art and tradition. As traditional forms become inadequate to decipher the metaphoric ciphering of experience, the old forms are incorporated into and transfigured by the creation of new forms. In the case of a mythology that is resistant to change, the transfiguration occurs as a climactic paradigm shift (in the Kuhnian sense) leading to the establishment of a new change-resistant paradigm. Otherwise, the transfiguration is a fluid process whereby artistic creation develops out of the on-going



tradition of the past while reinterpreting it in the light of immediately experienced existence. If these ties with the living sources of tradition are broken, metamorphic transfiguration tends toward eccentricity and unintelligibility.

Tangential to these phases are such endogenous constraints as the capacity for experiential stimulus, for giving expression to experience and for the learning of the tradition's leading metaphors and mythologies. These, however, are not fixed constants but are better seen as 'initial conditions' latent in any creative process which may change in the course of its unfolding. Harmonious interplay between the three phases stimulates a helical development in the creative process such that each phase is changed by the others and passes through successive phase states.

To illustrate this dynamic interplay, we may introduce into the basic scheme three transactional parameters which show the intrinsic 'learning capability' of the creative process, the degree of its capacity for autonomous development. Interplay between the metaphoric and mythologic involves a parameter of confirmation which describes the adaptation of the living sources of the past for understanding contemporary experience. Confirmation is essential for the continuity and identity of tradition. Interplay between the mythologic and metamorphic involves a parameter of transformation describing the mutation of old mythologies through their assimilation into new ones. This parameter is essential for the autonomous development of tradition. Finally, interplay between the metamorphic and

metaphoric involves a parameter of innovation describing the changing order of metaphoric description as the new transformative forms inspire new ways of interpreting present experience. Innovation is essential to individual aesthetic experience which is the life-blood of a living tradition.

Although in a harmonious, dynamically balanced system, the movement from confirmation to transformation to innovation traces a helix of autonomous expansion such that each phase is pushed to successively higher (more complex, integrated) phase states, to the extent that the system is unbalanced, the movement will form a closed loop of repetition or cease altogether (as, for example, in the stagnation of a tradition).

This model of literary creation may be used to briefly evaluate the artistic status of the five lam-rim texts. Those of Atisa and Tsong-kha-pa show a primary concern with the confirmation of pre-existing codes. Metaphoric description here finds expression in pre-established mythologies of traditional Buddhism such as the classification into three types of individual. The interplay between metaphoric and metamorphic phases is minimized, as is the interplay between the mythologic and metamorphic. Neither Atīśa nor Tsong-kha-pa inspired literary innovations after their time, only repetition.

sGam-po-pa's text also strongly emphasizes confirmation and he frequently appeals to textual authority as a criterion for authenticating his statements 9/. There is some indication of metaphoric-metamorphic innovation in his interpretation of traditional themes from a Mahāmudrā standpoint 10/, but little

evidence of trans-formation. The **Thar-rgyan** stimulated no literary innovations after its time.

Klong-chen-pa's two lam-rim texts reflect a dynamic balance between the three phases and their inter-actional parameters. Confirmation is shown by his indebtedness to traditional exegesis which he quotes throughout the commentaries. Examples of innovation abound in his works: he frequently reinterprets and gives new form to old themes in order to convey the immediacy of lived experience 11/. These texts are the only ones which show a strong degree of mythologic-metamorphic trans-formation. In revealing the complementarity of the Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna approaches, both are seen in a new light and incorporated into the author's new vision 12/. Confirmation here serves as a catalyst to innovation and trans-formation, whereas in the other works it is taken as an end in itself. Klong-chen-pa's lam-rim writings stimulated original innovations in the field, as indicated previously 13/.

#### 4.1.2 Stylistic Modes, Moods and Motifs

The stylistic features of the five texts show a strong indebtedness to Indian stylistic traditions which are frequently incorporated, and often modified to suit indigenous linguistic and aesthetic criteria. As in India, two standard modes of discourse are employed: prose, in the **Thar-rgyan** and **Lam-rim chen-mo** (and **Lam-rim chung-ba**), and verse accompanied by prose commentaries, in the **Bodhipathapradīpa** and the two texts of

Klong-chen-pa.

Both prose texts have not only followed the Indian penchant for classification and analysis but carried it to an unprecedented degree of logical clarity 14/. The **Thar-rgyan** is styled as an alamkāra (rgyan) which indicates the influence of the many Indian Buddhist works containing this term in their titles. These works, of which the most often quoted are the **Mahāyānasūtrāṅkāra** and **Abhisamayāṅkāra** (both attributed to Maitreya), present concise summaries composed in verse which highlight the most important points of Buddhism 15/. Although sGam-po-pa's text, being a prose exposition, is not an alamkāra in the traditional sense, it does meet the alamkāra standards of conciseness, clarity, and synthesis of salient themes.

Tsong-kha-pa's lam-rim works adopt a mode of discourse that came into vogue in the great Indian monastic universities during the first millenium of the common era. As the author explains in his **Lrcm** 16/, the masters of Nālanda university would begin their lectures by discussing three purities: those of the teacher's speech, the disciple's stream-of-being, and the teachings to be explained. At a later time, when the Buddhist doctrine had spread to Vikramaśīla university, the masters there began by discussing three greatnesses: those of the disseminators of the teaching, the teaching, and the way in which it should be studied and taught. Tsong-kha-pa claims to follow the later of the two modes of discourse in the organization of his own presentation 17/.

Turning to the verse texts, a distinction must be made between poetic and non-poetic works. Indian treatises on

aesthetics have outlined various criteria for making such a distinction and these treatises, especially Daṇḍin's **Kāvyādarśa**, strongly influenced Tibetan poetry and poetics 18/. The various theories of poetics (alamkāraśāstra, "the science of figures of speech") proposed by Daṇḍin (seventh c. A.D.) and his followers are epitomized in the statement of Mammata (eleventh c. A.D.) that a poetic work (kāvya, literally 'ornate', 'well-fashioned') constitutes a combination of sound (śabdha) and sense (artha), free from blemishes (doṣa) and beautified by appropriate figures of speech (alamkāra) and qualities of style (guṇa) 19/. Any work or portion thereof, be it prose or verse, could be identified as poetry on the basis of careful analysis of the poetic elements incorporated in its composition.

Other aestheticians, particularly those belonging to the Dhvani ('suggestion') school of literary criticism (ninth c. A.D.), looked beyond these external criteria to the animating principle (ātman) of poetry - that without which no arrangement of elements could suffice to make a work poetic. This principle they identified with the 'order of the unexpressed' (Hans Lipps' expression) which is implicit in all usage of language 20/. Poetry differs from other language-usages insofar as it has as its major aim the conveyance of implicit meanings through suggestive association 21/. What is 'suggested' primarily in dhvani is the abiding sentiment (rasa, literally 'sap' or 'flavour') of aesthetic experience that is evoked and embellished through use of poetic language 22/. The analysis of figures of speech and qualities of style continue to play an important role

in literary criticism, but are now viewed in relation to more intrinsic criteria of evaluation.

These extrinsic and intrinsic criteria may be considered equally valid for evaluating the poeticity of the lam-rim works written in verse. Daṇḍin's **Kāvyaḍarsa** delineates numerous figures of speech classified into figures of sense (arthālaṃkāra) and figures of sound (śabdālaṃkāra). To the former category belong such figures as similes (upamā), metaphors (rūpaka), illustrative similes (nidarśana) and natural descriptions (svabhāvokti). To the latter belong verbal repetition or rhyme (yamaka) and phonemic alliteration (anuprāsa). While these figures are notably lacking in the **Bodhipathapradīpa**, apart from an occasional use of simile 23/, they abound in Klong-chen-pa's two lam-rim works, as presented in Charts 1 and 2 at the end of this chapter (p. 118 f).

The numerous and varied figures of sense employed by Klong-chen-pa are drawn mostly from the vast stock of Buddhist imagery. What is striking about his presentation is the manner in which he has organized the figures into interacting image fields 24/ that impart to his text a web structure of associated meanings. A network of space/sky imagery runs through the Vajrayāna and rDzogs-chen chapter of the **SN**. This distinguishes the subject matter from the Mahāyāna chapters which mainly employ referential metaphors. In moving from allo-referring to auto-referring, symbolic language, both the tenor and vehicle of the metaphoric language lose their fixity. The image fields are contiguous with the non-objectifiable field of experience. Thus, for example, "sky/space" has three overlapping connotative potentials: outer

(sky as analogue), inner and mysterious (experiential skies) (12-22). The counter-part of sky/space metaphors are cloud metaphors of obscuration and opacity.

In the **Yid-bzhin-mdzod**, metaphors of sky, sun, clouds and rain interact to form an image field portraying the dynamics of experience in its obscuring and clearing phases. Each element in the image field implies and reverberates in the others.

Klong-chen-pa frequently uses figures of sound both to heighten the effect of his poetry and to facilitate learning and memorization. In the **SN**, verbal repetition and phonemic alliteration are employed mostly in the rDzogs-chen chapters (especially 10-12) to heighten the impact of the lyrical mood the author evokes in these chapters. In the **Yid-bzhin-mdzod**, these phonic devices are used mainly in the chapters on the learning process (especially 10,11,15, and 16) not only to heighten poetic effect but also to stimulate memorization through repetition. Both works are at once practical and poetic, but because the **YZ** is more sweeping in scope than the **SN** - covering Buddhist fields of cosmology, ontology, philosophy, anthropology, and education - and because it is written for a more mature audience 25/, it employs a less immediate mode of discourse.

The extrinsic criteria for evaluating poetry reflect intrinsic criteria such as communicative persona and mood. Albert Hofstadter has pointed to 'generic' differences between types of communicative persona employed in literature, ranging from the existentially distant narrative persona to the immediate lyrical persona "which is directly engaged in an experience it is

expressing" 26/. While the texts of Atīśa, sGam-po-pa and Tsong-kha-pa employ a detached persona that interposes a distance between author and subject matter, Klong-chen-pa's **SN** employs the lyrical communicative persona. He frequently discloses his existential involvement with the subject matter and repeatedly strives to evoke such involvement in his reader. Here it is the flavour of aesthetic experience, the unexpressed content, that prevails, and this is made possible by the persuasive power of the poet's language. His lyrical persona reaches its highest pitch in the tenth chapter where the imperative mood, a device championed by Bengali Doha poets such as Saraha 27/, is used as a vehicle for immediate communication.

To conclude this chapter, a passage from each of Klong-chen-pa's lam-rim texts will be given in order to illustrate his use of figures of speech and communicative persona. These passages show his mastery of Indian forms of poetry. The first is a passage from the tenth chapter of the **SN** which employs a simile, verbal and phonemic alliteration (underlined), as well as a play on words (śleṣa) in which the author's name (in bold face) refers also to the rising and setting sun. The passage shows the strong influence of the immediate communicative persona used by Saraha:

mkha' bzhin dri med gdod ma'i ngang du phyin 22  
ldogs pa'i gnas med da ni gang du gro  
zad par thug ste 'ong ba 'ga' yang med  
sus kyang mi mthong kho bo gang na 'dug

de nyid shes na gzhan zhig dgos mi 'gyur 23  
grol ba rnam ni nga bzhin 'khrul pa chad  
da ni mi 'dri sems kyi gzhi rtsa stor  
gtad med 'dzin med nges med 'di yin med  
phyal ba lhug pa yengs pa phyam gcig pa  
'di ltar rtogs nas da ni glu len te  
**dri med** 'od zer shar bas bstan nas song



The passage is translated by Guenther 28/ as follows:

Having come to this primordial sphere, spotless like  
the sky,  
There is no place for you to go back to, and where will  
you go to now ?  
You have reached a point at which everything is over;  
there is no further arriving.  
Where am I that I am not seen by anyone ?

If you know this, you are no longer in need of anything  
else,  
And those who have become free have, like me, cut  
through deceptiveness.  
I have no questions now; the ground and root of mind is  
gone.  
There is no prop, no grasping, no certitude, no 'this  
is it'.  
There is continuousness, uninterruptedness, overarch-  
ingness.  
Having understood it thus, now I sing:  
I, Dri-med 'od-zer ('the sun's spotless rays'), have  
pointed out (this) with my coming (rising) and  
have gone.

The second passage is a devotional hymn (stotra) from the  
colophon of the **Yid-bzhin-mdzod** which is dedicated, in five  
successive stanzas, to each of the lords or governing principles  
(mgon-po) of the five Buddha-families: Vairocana, Akṣobhya,  
Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi. These verses  
demonstrate Klong-chen-pa's mastery of metaphor, simile, natural  
imagery, and alliteration (underlined). A śleṣa on the text's  
title occurs in the last verse (shown in bold face):

bsod nams ston kha'i zla rgyas dang 'dra bas      3  
'gro kun chos dbyings dag pa'i nam mkha' la  
shin tu mi g.yo zag med thugs rje lha  
mgon po gangs chen mtshor gyur thob par shog

rab dge dri med gang des skye dgu'i tshogs      4  
nyon mongs rnyog bral ye shes klu dbang gnas  
zab yangs brtse sprin snying po dang ldan pa  
mgon po mi 'khrugs mtsho chen thob par shog

yon tan tshogs mnga' mchog dge dri med kyis 5  
tshogs gnyis las grub yon tan rdzogs pa'i gtso  
srid pa'i bde 'byung phan bde'i char 'bab pa  
mgon po rin chen 'byor pa mtha' yas shog

dge ba 'di yis bdag dang 'gro ba kun 6  
'chi bdag la sogs bdud bzhi rnam bcom ste  
skye rga na 'chi'i mtsho chen las sgrol ba  
mgon po tshe mtha' yas pa thob par shog

**yid bzhin** dge mchog rgya cher lhun mtho bas 7  
'gro kun 'dod dgu'i re ba rdzogs pa'i dpal  
'phrin las mthar phyin dngos grub char 'bab pa'i  
mgon po don kun grub pa thob par shog

I have translated this passage into iambic pentameter in an attempt to capture the author's lyrical cadence.

May we, O lord, attain an ocean full  
Of merits bright like autumn's waxing moon  
In sky so clear, for beings, a meaning-field,  
Unparting god of sympathy, unspoiled.

May we, O lord, attain unruffled seas  
Replete with purest joy for hosts of beings,  
Unstirred by moods where sea snake knowledge lies,  
Both deep and vast, clouds' kindness nectar filled.

May you, O lord with boundless wealth of jewels  
Whose stainless joy holds sway o'er talents gained,  
Fulfilling these through good and knowledge won,  
Send showers of help and bliss to cheer the world.

May we, O lord, attain unending life  
When through this joy, myself and every being,  
Have slayed lord death and demons four, and thus  
From sea of birth, age, sickness, death been freed.

May we, O lord, attain all aims pursued,  
Through this high mount of wish-fulfilling joy  
Which best provides what each being most desires.  
Fruition's downpour, action's farthest reach.

# CHART 1

## Figures of Speech in the Sems-nyid Ngäl-gso

### 1. Figures of Sense (arthālakāra) in the Mahāyāna Chapters (1-8) of the Sems-nyid ngäl-gso

#### A. Metaphors (rūpaka) and Similes (upamā)

asterix \* indicates simile  
numbers in ( ) indicate occurrences per verse

| <u>Subject</u>                                                                            | <u>Analogue</u>                                                                                                                                                 | <u>Chapter and Verse #</u>                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oppression<br>(by emotions,<br>actions, divisive<br>notions, misery,<br>samsara, enemies) | water (ocean, river, rain,<br>storm, turbulence), fire,<br>dream, imprisonment, desert,<br>wildlife, savages, watermill,<br>pain, poison, claws, clouds         | 1-1,6,7,19,24; 2-4,14,16,<br>17*,17; 3-2*(2),3*(5),4*,<br>8*,12*,15*,35*,41*(2),42,<br>42*(2),54,55*,57(3); 4-26*<br>(2); 5-21,29,51*; 7-27; 8-<br>66,74(2),85 |
| Impermanence                                                                              | bubble, water reed, house,<br>city, flame, wheel, water-<br>fall, setting sun, poison                                                                           | 2-1*,6*(2),8*,9*,12*,13*<br>(2),14*                                                                                                                            |
| Actions ( <u>karma</u> )                                                                  | artist, shadow, waterfall,<br>ruler, sky, lotus, dream,<br>disease                                                                                              | 4-44,44*(5),45*; 8-87                                                                                                                                          |
| Teacher<br>- activities                                                                   | Traditional: from <b>Avataṃsaka</b> ,<br>mainly the <b>Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra</b><br>sky, earth                                                                        | 5-7(12),8*(10),12*(5),13<br>(15),14(5)<br>5-5*,9*                                                                                                              |
| Rectification                                                                             | fire (burning), water (clean-<br>sing), sound and echo, casting<br>spell on poison                                                                              | 7-57,8-2,40*,67*,87*                                                                                                                                           |
| Conveyance                                                                                | boat, ferry (across river),<br>road, highway, shortcut                                                                                                          | 1-7,16; 2-15(4),18; 3-39;<br>4-42; 7-55; 8-2,42; 9-18                                                                                                          |
| Growth (of human<br>being, feelings<br>wholesomeness, and<br>gestalt experience)          | clouds-rain-soil-crops (4),<br>sproutings, fruits, plant life                                                                                                   | 1-1,10(4); 4-10,52; 5-3;<br>6-27(4), 7-1(4),33,56*,<br>57; 8-4,5(2),14,46(2);<br>colophon-1(4)                                                                 |
| Life's Meaning<br>( <u>dharma</u> )                                                       | nectar, sun, thunder, rain,<br>feast, wheel                                                                                                                     | 1-9; 2-6*,20; 4-52; 5-49;<br>6-11, 8-37                                                                                                                        |
| The Concern with<br>Awakening<br>- Bodhisattvas<br>- Compassion                           | wish-granting gem, auspicious<br>jar, medicine, sun, moon, sky,<br>desire to walk and walking<br>king, helmsman, shepherd<br>river, tree, seed, root,<br>fruits | 8-6(5),6*,8*<br>8-55*(3)<br>8-3,5,14                                                                                                                           |

Pure Experience

|                          |                                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Mind (as-such)         | sky (space), clear water,<br>sun, clean cloth, deity | 4-43; 5-45,50*; 7-18,58;<br>8-40 |
| - originary<br>awareness | sun                                                  | 6-28; 8-6                        |
| - gestalt<br>experiences | sun                                                  | 3-33                             |

B. Illustrative Similes (nidarśana)

| <u>Subject</u>                               | <u>Illustrative Simile</u>                                                                                         | <u>Chapter and Verse #</u> |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| preciousness of<br>human existence           | - blind man stumbling onto a<br>precious hoard                                                                     | 1-3                        |
| - difficulty of<br>finding it                | - tortoise putting neck through<br>yoke in middle of ocean                                                         | 1-11                       |
| - stupidity of<br>wasting it                 | - man returning empty handed<br>from island of jewels                                                              | 1-17                       |
| - difficulty of<br>keeping it                | - poor man finding a jewel in<br>a dream                                                                           | 1-23                       |
| disgust with samsara<br>and its frustrations | - being in a blaze or attacked<br>by wild beasts, or in prison                                                     | 3-2(3)                     |
| the need for a<br>teacher                    | - patient needs physician, people<br>a ruler, traveller an escort,<br>merchant a guild master, boat-<br>man a boat | 5-12(5)                    |
| attachment to wealth                         | - bodily wounds                                                                                                    | 8-76                       |

C. Prominent Examples of Other Figures of Sense

|                                             |                                             |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Contrast ( <u>vyatireka</u> )               | 3-6(4),12 f.,33; 5-13/14,4-5/28; 6-30; 7-55 |
| Natural Description ( <u>svabhāvokti</u> )  | 2-6*; 8-26 f.,80 f.                         |
| Word play ( <u>śleṣa</u> or <u>śliṣṭa</u> ) | 10-23                                       |

2. Figures of Sense in the Vajrayāna and rDzogs-chen Chapters  
(9 and 10-13) of the **Sems-nyid ngal-gso**

A. Metaphors and Similes

----- = explicit contrast

M. = usage of metaphor

Metaphors of Clearness,  
Brightness and Vastness

Metaphors of Opacity  
and Obscuration

Sky (Space)

Clouds

|                                 |               |                              |        |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------|
| higher order reality            |               |                              |        |
| M. pure like the sky            | 10-16*        |                              |        |
| dynamic range of Being          |               |                              |        |
| M. stainless like the sky       | 10-8,22*      |                              |        |
| Mind (-as-such)                 | 10-25,29*;    |                              |        |
| M. vast; open and lucent;       | 11-9*,13,36*, | ----- (divisive) mind        | 10-25  |
| pure; non-objectifiable         | 42*; 12-25*   | ----- mental operations      | 11-13* |
| Buddha-experience               |               | ----- affirming and negating | 12-25* |
| M. vast and encompassing        | 11-3*         |                              |        |
| unity of Being - M. expansive   | 11-7*         |                              |        |
| letting be - M. open and bright | 11-15*        | ----- concepts               | 11-15  |
| expanding sky-like infinitude   |               |                              |        |
| state - M. clear and bright     | 11-50         |                              |        |
| in-depth appraisal              |               |                              |        |
| M. unshrouded                   | 11-52*        |                              |        |
| creativity of Being's openness  | 12-16*        |                              |        |
| sheer lucency                   | 12-17*        | ----- two obscurations       | 12-17  |
| awareness M. open and lucent,   |               |                              |        |
| free from thematizations        | 12-21*        |                              |        |
| three skies of experiencing     |               |                              |        |
| Being's sense-bestowal:         |               |                              |        |
| Outer - sky as analogue         |               |                              |        |
| Inner - real sky of Being's     |               |                              |        |
| meaning-rich potential          | 12-22         |                              |        |
| Mysterious - sky of energy      |               |                              |        |
| in sheer lucency                |               |                              |        |
| absence of bondage and freedom  |               |                              |        |
| M. no objectification           | 12-23*        |                              |        |
| sky in ten regions and spaci-   |               |                              |        |
| ousness without any ground      | 12-28*        |                              |        |

Water - calm, clear, flowing

Water - murky, turbulent,  
deceptive

|                                   |        |                        |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------------|
| yoga - M. water poured into water | 9-7*   |                        |              |
| presencing and presentation in    |        |                        |              |
| cognitive excitation              |        |                        |              |
| M. water and waves                | 10-20* |                        |              |
| what presents itself and what     |        |                        |              |
| is free in itself                 |        |                        |              |
| M. dance of waves in expanse      | 10-34  |                        |              |
| of water                          |        |                        |              |
|                                   |        | phenomena of dualistic |              |
|                                   |        | thinking - M. moon's   |              |
|                                   |        | reflection in water,   |              |
|                                   |        | mirage                 | 9-28*; 10-6* |
|                                   |        |                        | (2); 11-33*  |

|                                                             |        |                                    |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mind-as-such as cognitive<br>excitation                     |        |                                    |                          |
| M. flow of river current                                    | 11-2*  |                                    |                          |
| pure perception of objects                                  | -----  | subjective restless mind -         |                          |
| M. well reflecting sparkling<br>stars                       | 11-9*  | M. wavering, unclear<br>reflection | 11-8*                    |
| letting be - M. ocean                                       | 11-14* | turbid waves of subject-           |                          |
| unity of presence and mind                                  |        | object duality                     | 11-14                    |
| M. water and moon's reflection                              | 11-39* |                                    |                          |
| originary awareness                                         | 11-31* | murky turbulence of<br>emotions    | 11-41*                   |
| absence of apprehended object                               |        |                                    |                          |
| M. moon's reflection in water                               | 11-43* |                                    |                          |
| Mind (-as-such)                                             | 11-62  | -----                              | murky turbulence of mind |
| sheer lucency - M. ocean                                    | 12-17* |                                    | 11-62                    |
| felt understanding and creative<br>imagination              |        |                                    |                          |
| M. rivers and vastness of ocean                             | 12-26* |                                    |                          |
| mind and Mind-as-such                                       |        |                                    |                          |
| M. water poured into water                                  | 12-28* |                                    |                          |
| range in which concepts and<br>conceptlessness are the same |        |                                    |                          |
| M. ocean and waves                                          | 12-29* |                                    |                          |
| omniscience - M. ocean                                      | 13-5   |                                    |                          |

Mirror - clear, veridical

|                                                 |        |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|
| non-duality of apparent subject-                |        |
| object dichotomy                                | 10-3*, |
| M. mirror and reflected image                   | 4*,24  |
| letting be - M. mirror unceasingly              |        |
| reflecting objects                              | 11-17* |
| things and openness                             |        |
| M. various images and mirror's<br>surface       | 12-24* |
| mirror-like originary awareness                 |        |
| - source of all awarenesses                     | 13-27* |
| manifestations working for<br>welfare of beings |        |
| M. beautiful figure in mirror                   | 13-31* |

Creative Imagery - imaginative

|               |               |      |
|---------------|---------------|------|
| mind -        | M. deity      |      |
| body -        | M. mandala    | 9-27 |
| speech -      | M. echo       |      |
| actions -     | M. apparition |      |
| appearances - | M. deities    | 9-29 |
| sounds -      | M. mantra     |      |

Mirror - deceptive

|                                                          |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| objects of sensory<br>cognition - M. images<br>in mirror | 10-32* |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------|

Delusive Imagery - hallucinatory

|                                                                 |        |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| samsara and nirvana and Being's<br>meaning-rich potential       |        | presence and its interpretation<br>as samsara or nirvana    |
| M. apparitions and the range of<br>magic                        | 10-27* | M. dream, apparition, cloud<br>castle 10-2*(2), 11-24*, 33* |
| range of actions without duality<br>of acceptance and rejection |        | impure presence of beings                                   |
| M. dream and the span of sleep                                  | 10-29* | M. distorted vision, cataract<br>10-7*                      |
| realms of samsara                                               |        |                                                             |
| M. magnificent palace                                           | 13-36  |                                                             |

Natural Phenomena - sun, moon, stars, rainbow etc.

|                                            |                                    |           |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| higher visions and supernatural cognitions | stars                              | 11-8      |
| sheer lucency                              | sun's energy                       | 11-10     |
| letting be                                 | mountain                           | 11-16*    |
| letting be                                 | rainbow                            | 11-18*    |
| understanding, in-depth appraisal          | sun rising                         | 11-26     |
| clouds of spiritual sustenance             |                                    | 11-27, 48 |
| in-depth appraisals                        | moon                               | 11-52*    |
| range of energy of sheer lucency           | moon having set<br>at end of month | 13-3*     |
| supreme subtle originary awareness         | moon having set<br>in sky          | 13-6      |
| Jaṇavyūha realm, sheer lucency             | rainbow filling<br>the sky         | 13-11*    |

## B. Illustrative Similes

| <u>Topic Illustrated</u>                                                          | <u>Illustrative Simile</u>                                                                    | <u>Chapter and Verse #</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| removing loss of cognitive<br>excitation to clear<br>away the deceptive presence  | - removing cataracts<br>which distort vision                                                  | 10-7                       |
| going astray by taking<br>observable qualities as<br>something (real)             | - images appearing in a<br>mirror (as something)                                              | 10-32                      |
| proliferation of notions<br>in restless ego-based mind                            | - turbulent river with<br>shaky, unclear reflections                                          | 11-8                       |
| open, lucent awareness<br>free from thematization                                 | - like looking at clear sky<br>with back to the sun                                           | 12-21                      |
| Victorious ones have a<br>single excentric range<br>of sense-bestowal             | - space remains one and the<br>same before and after it<br>occupies a jar                     | 13-8                       |
| trainers disappear if none<br>is left to be trained (and<br>reappear when needed) | - moon's reflections disappear<br>if there are no vessels to<br>reflect it, and the moon sets | 13-48                      |

## CHART 2

### Figures of Speech in the Path Chapters (1-2,7-23) of the Yid-bzhin mdzod

#### 1. Figures of Sense in the Yid-bzhin-mdzod

##### A. Metaphors and Similes

———— = connection between  
 —————→ = bringing about  
 - - - - - → = obscuring  
 ..... → = dispelling

##### Metaphors of Clearness, Brightness and Vastness

##### Metaphors of Opacity Obscuration, and Proliferation

##### Sky (Space)

compassionate response

M. sky's expanse

1-1

Buddha-fields - M. vast as sky

2-2\*

confidence - M. like sky, with-  
out centre or periphery

15-13\*

presencing - M. like sky, with-  
out defining characteristics

18-6\*

expanding intelligence

colophon-1

meaning-rich continuum - M. pure

colophon-3

##### Sun in Sky, Light

##### Clouds, Rain

optimization thrust as ground of Being

M. ever pure like sun in sky

1-3\*

capabilities - M. sun in  
sky's expanse

1-5\*

prosperity and happiness

M. sun's thousand rays

1-1

displays of thousands of  
Buddhas - M. light facets  
of a single lamp

2-17

teacher - M. lamp shining in  
the dark

8-19

confidence - M. like sun, neith-  
er increasing or decreasing

15-13\*

originary awareness as sheer

lucency - M. sun in sky

18-3

clouds of incidental  
obscurations - prolif-  
erating postulations  
(form 3 potentialities)

1-4

clouds of happiness and  
misery due to errant mode  
of appearing

1-5\*

rain clouds of mind

1-6\*

rain of good and evil  
deeds

1-6\*

crops of three realms  
of samsara

1-6\*



|                                                                                              |            |                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| presence of originary awareness<br>in beings - M. lamp in jar                                | 18-14*     |                                                                                                       |
| self-excitatory cognitiveness<br>M. orbs of sun and moon, steady in pellucidity and radiance | 20-8*      |                                                                                                       |
| originary awareness - M. sun emerging from clouds of spirituality                            | 20-11*     |                                                                                                       |
| understanding (via paths and levels) and capabilities<br>M. sun and its rays                 | 20-14*     |                                                                                                       |
| goal of gestalt experiences and originary awareness modes<br>M. sun and moon                 | 22-1*      | .....> clouds of obscurations (of 3 potentialities) in three realms 22-1*                             |
| spontaneous presence of capabilities - M. lamp shining when jar breaks                       | 22-1,2*    |                                                                                                       |
| three gestalt experiences<br>M. like sun in sky and its reflection in lustrous ocean         | 22-4*      |                                                                                                       |
| <br><u>Water</u> - clear, calm, flowing                                                      |            |                                                                                                       |
| capabilities - M. reflections in water that has become calm and clear                        | 8-19*      | <u>Water</u> - turbulent, murky, bottomless                                                           |
| confidence - M. ocean, middle of flowing river                                               | 15-13*(2)  | murky water - concealment of capabilities when thrust toward consummate clarity remains obscured 8-19 |
| Mahāyāna - M. tidal wave of wholesomeness                                                    | 16-16      | lack of confidence<br>M. boundless bottomless sea 15-5                                                |
| self-excitatory cognitiveness<br>M. ocean                                                    | 20-8*      | samsara - M. buckets on a waterwheel 7-19*; 17-16*                                                    |
| reach and range of Being's abidingness - M. river                                            | 20-9*      | misery - M. boundless ocean 17-15                                                                     |
| appreciative discernment in originary awareness<br>M. an unceasing stream                    | 20-10*     | turbid mire of divisive concepts 20-8*                                                                |
| studying, thinking, cultivating<br>M. gathering rain clouds                                  | colophon-2 | waves of concepts 20-9*                                                                               |
| life's meaning - M. rain                                                                     | colophon-2 |                                                                                                       |
| prosperity and bliss - M. rain                                                               | colophon-5 |                                                                                                       |
| attainments - M. rain                                                                        | colophon-7 | birth, aging, illness, death colophon-6                                                               |

## Metaphors of Creative Imagination

outer world - Buddha fields  
 sentient beings - deities  
 body - magnificent palace 19-16(5)  
 speech - mantra  
 mind - deiform light intensity

## Metaphors of Illusoriness

| <u>Subject</u>                                                                       | <u>Analogue</u>                                                  | <u>Chapter and Verse #</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| dualistic fictions of<br>experiencing objective<br>domain, consciousness<br>and body | apparition                                                       | 1-13*                      |
| errant mode of presencing<br>in mistaken mind                                        | drug-induced hallucination                                       | 1-15*, 16*                 |
| presence yet nothing                                                                 | reflection                                                       | 1-16                       |
| samsara                                                                              | reflection                                                       | 1-17*                      |
| impermanent things                                                                   | apparition                                                       | 14-1*                      |
| environment and inhabitants                                                          | apparition                                                       | 14-9                       |
| phenomena of commonly accepted<br>reality                                            | apparition, reflection of<br>moon in water, image in<br>a mirror | 18-6*(3)                   |
| delights experienced as long<br>as they are not investigated                         | apparition, drug-induced<br>hallucination                        | 18-6*(2)                   |

## Metaphors of Learning Process

|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Buddha fields                                                            | wish-granting gem                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2-1*                                     |
| hierarchical organization<br>of world-systems (where<br>teaching occurs) | pattern in silk brocade                                                                                                                                                                               | 2-10*                                    |
| teacher                                                                  | helmsman, wish-granting gem,<br>ornament to the world, king<br>of physicians, bountiful field<br>(of merits), jewel found;<br>Tapasvin, army, hero, king,<br>captain, physician, helpful<br>companion | 8-1, 5, 3, 7, 8,<br>12, 18<br>} 8-20(20) |
| rarity of teacher                                                        | Udumbara lotus (blooms once in<br>one thousand years)                                                                                                                                                 | 8-9                                      |
| teacher's activity<br>- makes capabilities<br>shine in us                | like jewel that clears murky<br>water allowing reflections<br>to arise and subside, uper-<br>turbed                                                                                                   | 8-19*                                    |
| - makes us travel to<br>the source of treasures                          | ship's captain leading us to<br>the island of deliverance                                                                                                                                             | 8-19*                                    |
| teacher's explanation                                                    | melody, treasury, downpour,<br>light rays, resounding drum                                                                                                                                            | 8-12, 15(2);<br>11-5(2)                  |

|                                             |                                                          |          |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| student                                     |                                                          |          |
| - intellectual capacity                     | vessel                                                   | 10-2     |
| - different grades of teaching for students | different kinds of food for different age groups         | 10-3*    |
| - mimicry of others                         | parrot                                                   | 9-12*    |
| examination of teacher                      | as you examine a trail guide to see if he is good or bad | 9-16*    |
|                                             | as you evaluate goods when shopping                      | 9-17*    |
| negative acquaintances                      | like bandits on mountain path                            | 9-14,15* |

### Metaphors of Topics for Thought and Cultivation

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                     |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| continuous striving                           | blazing fire                                                                                                                                                                        | 13-17                       |
| impermanence                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                     |                             |
| - body                                        | a bubble about to burst                                                                                                                                                             | 14-2*                       |
| - momentariness of atoms and time             | a flash of lightning in the atmosphere                                                                                                                                              | 14-8*                       |
| - environing world and its inhabitants        | plantain                                                                                                                                                                            | 14-9*                       |
| - aging of embodied beings                    | crumbling city                                                                                                                                                                      | 14-10*                      |
| confidence                                    | fertile soil, boat, escort, vehicle, king of jewels, hero, most precious jewel;                                                                                                     | 15-3*(7)                    |
| - neither increasing nor fading               | sun, great lake, sky, string on hunting bow, ferry, middle of river, silk thread, space; ground of qualities, leader on path, vessel of what is profound, thousand-petalled flower; | 15-13*(8)                   |
| - lack of confidence                          | boundless bottomless sea, captainless ship, man with crippled hands (arriving in land of gold), burnt seed, blind man, person in dungeon of samsara                                 | 15-14(4)                    |
| actions - wholesome                           | carriage transporting us to higher existences                                                                                                                                       | 16-8                        |
| - unwholesome                                 | poison                                                                                                                                                                              | 16-13*                      |
| samsara                                       | fire-pit, water wheel                                                                                                                                                               | 7-19*(2),<br>17-17*(2)      |
| nirvana                                       | refuge, helpful friend, nectar                                                                                                                                                      | 17-17(3)                    |
| presence of potential within us               | sun behind clouds, gold in rocks, treasure under earth, and Buddha-pattern in a lotus                                                                                               | 1-3;<br>8-19(3)<br>18-14(3) |
| Being's abidingness                           | treasure of life's meaning                                                                                                                                                          | 18-22                       |
| capabilities gathered by cultivating the path | flourish like flowers during the rainy season                                                                                                                                       | 21-16*                      |
| gestalt experience and originary awareness    | jewel                                                                                                                                                                               | 21-16*                      |
| prosperity and bliss                          | thunder and lightning                                                                                                                                                               | colophon-2                  |
| merits                                        | waxing autumn moon                                                                                                                                                                  | colophon-3                  |
| originary awareness                           | sea serpent gods                                                                                                                                                                    | colophon-4                  |

|                                |                          |             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| highest good                   | high mountain            | colophon-7  |
| life's meaning                 | thunder                  | colophon-8  |
| measures for a meaningful life | the orbs of sun and moon | colophon-9* |
| intelligence                   | blooming lotus flower    | colophon-9* |

## B. Illustrative Similes

} = comparison

| <u>Subject Illustrated</u>                                  | <u>Illustrative Simile</u>                                                                                | <u>Chapter and Verse #</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| teacher                                                     | jewel that clears murky water (see above)                                                                 | 8-19                       |
| preciousness of human existence                             |                                                                                                           |                            |
| - finding a human body                                      | as rare as finding one who turns the wheel of life's meaning                                              | } 13-7(2)                  |
| - living by life's meaning                                  | as rare as attaining Buddhahood                                                                           |                            |
| - finding human existence                                   | as likely as a tortoise putting its neck through a yoke in the middle of the ocean                        | } 13-11(2)                 |
| - being born in central country                             | as likely as making peas stick to a wall by throwing them at its surface                                  |                            |
| - encountering genuine path and pursuing life's meaning     | more rare than (the blooming of) an Udumbara lotus                                                        | } 13-12(3)                 |
| - realizing the measures that the path involves             | more difficult than passing a piece of cloth through the eye of a needle                                  |                            |
| - finding a genuine teacher                                 | more difficult than finding jewels amongst the many islands of the oceans                                 |                            |
| - strive day and night for the positive                     | like hungry man (who devours) whatever food he sees                                                       |                            |
|                                                             |                                                                                                           | 13-13                      |
| impermanence                                                |                                                                                                           |                            |
| - proverb: "whatever comes together must part"              | people gathering and parting in the marketplace, at street corners, at parties                            | 14-4                       |
| - proverb: "whatever has been hoarded will be spent"        | city life with its enjoyments, wealth and wonderful things will become empty                              | 14-5                       |
| - do not be puffed up with pride about your life and wealth | even those in higher existences will fall to lower ones                                                   | 14-6                       |
| - certainty of death                                        | movement of strangers in market-place, tree on river bank, thunderclouds, or the orbiting of sun and moon | 14-13(4)                   |

## 4.2 Structural Comparison

In the Introduction, a set of salient themes which lam-rim works generally share in common was delineated. These are shown in Diagram J (p. 130) which provides a comparative structural analysis exposing the order of these themes where and as they occur in each of the representative texts. This analysis supplements the more detailed thematic outlines presented in the Exegesis chapter, highlighting significant points of convergence and divergence in structure. Some of these points will be briefly discussed in this chapter.

A similarity in thematic arrangement is found between the **Thar-rgyan** and **Sems-nyid ngal-gso**. Both texts summarize the major themes of Buddhism beginning with its basic premises. The **Lam-rim chung-ba** is structurally similar to the later 'path' chapters of the **Yid-bzhin mdzod** (8-22). These two works not only summarize the path but also describe in considerable detail the education and learning process that the path involves 29/. In contrast to the **Thar-rgyan** and **Sems-nyid ngal-gso**, these latter works discuss the topic of Associating with Spiritual Friends (II) prior to the first of the preliminary topics (I.1). General points of structural convergence are found in the overall path structure explicated in the texts.

But one also finds specific differences in the arrangement the works. Note, for example, that Atīśa's text does not contain the four preliminary topics while Tsong-kha-pa incorporates them into different sections of the early part of his text 30/: I.1

occurs in the introductory discussion (section 1) on the stages of training our mind; I.2 and I.3 occur in the discussion on the path of the individual of inferior acumen (2 I); and I.4 occurs in the discussion on the path of the individual of intermediate acumen (2 II). The remainder of the texts deal with the Preliminaries as a set of topics (the **Yid-bzhin mdzod** adding Confidence (Ch. 15) to the traditional four topics). Another notable difference concerns the treatment of Mantrayāna in the texts. Atīśa, sGam-po-pa and Tsong-kha-pa give little attention to the topic, whereas Klong-chen-pa devotes five successive chapters of each work to an elaboration of the subject matter involved.

## Diagram J

### Comparison of Thematic Structures of the Five Lam-rim Texts

#### Major Themes

- I. Preliminary Topics of Investigation
  - I.1 The Uniqueness of Human Existence
  - I.2 Impermanence and Death
  - I.3 The Relationship Between Actions and Consequences
  - I.4 The Misery of Samsara
- II. Associating with Spiritual Friends
- III. Love and Compassion
- IV. Taking Refuge
- V. Developing the Concern with Awakening
- VI. The Experiential Mantrayāna Approach
- VII. The Climax

#### Structural Order of Major Themes

| <u>Bodhipathapradīpa</u> |             | <u>Thar-rgyan</u> |              | <u>Lam-rim chung-ngu</u> |                  |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|                          | <u>Line</u> |                   | <u>Chpt.</u> |                          | <u>Outline #</u> |
| V                        | - 21-132    | I.1               | - 2          | II                       | - 1 IV.A         |
| IV                       | - 33-36     | II                | - 3          | I.1                      | - IV.B.1         |
| III                      | - 37-43     | I.2               | - 4          | I.2                      | - 2 I.A.1.a      |
| II                       | - 51        | I.4               | - 5          | IV                       | - I.A.2.a        |
| VII                      | - 237-240   | I.3               | - 6          | I.3                      | - I.A.2.b        |
| VI                       | - 241-272   | III               | - 7          | I.4                      | - II.A.2.b       |
|                          |             | IV                | - 8          | V                        | - III.A          |
|                          |             | V                 | - 9-17       | III                      | - III.A.2.b.1)   |
|                          |             | VI                | - 17         | VI                       | - III.C.3.b      |
|                          |             | VII               | - 21         |                          |                  |

#### Sems-nyid ngal-gso

|     | <u>Chpt.</u> |
|-----|--------------|
| I.1 | - 1          |
| I.2 | - 2          |
| I.4 | - 3          |
| I.3 | - 4          |
| II  | - 5          |
| IV  | - 6          |
| III | - 7          |
| V   | - 8          |
| VI  | - 9-12       |
| VII | - 13         |

#### Yid-bzhin mdzod

|     | <u>Chpt.</u> |
|-----|--------------|
| II  | - 8          |
| I.1 | - 13         |
| I.2 | - 14         |
| I.3 | - 16         |
| I.4 | - 17         |
| VI  | - 18-22      |
| IV  | - 19         |
| V   | - 19         |
| VII | - 22         |

#### 4.3 Comparison of Approaches to Learning

The essence of the path is appropriate activity in its moving to the level of the climax.  
Its definition is the going itself.  
Its classification is a cause-determined philosophical path and a goal-sustained existential path.  
Its analogies are a worldly path which is like the path beings plod along or an effortless path which is like the path of a bird soaring into the sky.

Klong-chen-pa,  
Zab-mo yang-tig

The major exegetical and hermeneutical problem facing the early lam-rim authors centred around reconciling the spiritual pursuits layed out in the Sutras and Tantras. The exegetical aspect of the problem, as dealt with previously, was imposing enough: how to combine two obviously distinct, and seemingly disparate, idioms of learning - the one advocating a model of linear progression toward a pre-established goal or telos, the other emphasizing the immediacy of preconstitutive experience and the endotelic (goal-implicit) character of the way of learning; further, how to show the transition, if any, between these two.

But it was the hermeneutical, transtextual aspect that posed the greatest challenge: how was an individual to understand the way in its different aspects through his own concrete endeavour and experience. Since the texts were concerned as much with practice as with knowledge, offering a 'cure' for the misery of samsara, the way in which they were appropriated by the individual was of decisive importance. The onus was thus on each author to provide a viable and comprehensive model of learning.



#### 4.3.1 Reconciling the Lakṣaṇayāna and Mantrayāna

Atīśa acknowledges the superiority of the Mantrayāna (existential approach) over the Lakṣaṇayāna (philosophical approach) but leaves unclear how the two are related. His brief discussion of the Mantrayāna in the **Pañjikā** lists various rites, powers, classes of Tantra and Tantric texts 31/. Little is said, however, about the meaning of Tantra or the different learning procedures it comprises. The reader is left only with the impression that Tantra involves a mode of learning distinct from that of the Lakṣaṇayāna which is reserved only for the most advanced candidates.

It was left to Tsong-kha-pa to indicate how Atīśa's doctrine actually implies the unity of the yānas. In the introductory biographical section of the **Lrcb**, Atīśa is shown to be well-versed in both the Sūtrayāna and Tantrayāna lineages and is credited with "eliminating the wrong understanding of Tantras and spreading the true teaching" 32/. Tsong-kha-pa goes on in the next section on "The Greatness of Atīśa's Doctrine" to show how the **BP** points to the compatibility of all the Buddha's teachings, the three yānas inclusive: "All Buddhist texts, Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna alike, lead an individual to dispel his defects and realize his innermost potential" 33/. There is no contradiction between the rigorous ethical discipline prescribed in the Hinayāna and the less regimented lifestyle advocated in the Mantrayāna: it is only a matter of gradation in one's

intellectual development:

While it may be acknowledged that it is necessary, when setting out on the Mahāyāna which practices the pāramitās, to follow the path explained in the Tripitaka of the Hinayāna, one might think that pursuing the Vajrayāna does not require following the ordinary paths of the Pāramitāyāna because these paths are incompatible. This does not stand to reason. The very essence of the Pāramitāyāna is to develop in one's thinking the bodhicitta and its enactment is subsumed under the training in the six pāramitās. That it is necessary to rely on all these (procedures)...is also maintained in the many texts of the Mantrayāna 34/.

Tsong-kha-pa goes on to argue that if one has a superficial comprehension of the Buddha's teaching and, on this basis, introduces distinctions between those that are good and bad, reasonable and unreasonable, or superior and inferior, one will discard the teaching which presents a graded and integrated whole. If, on the other hand, one is to clearly understand the implicit gradation of the Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, one must not only read the many texts of these traditions but to take them to heart as personal instructions (gdams-ngag).

Thus for Tsong-kha-pa, the great significance of the BP and its derivative lam-rim texts is that they make the whole corpus of Buddhist teachings available to the student as personal instructions. Be this as it may, neither Atīśa nor Tsong-kha-pa give any detailed treatment to the Mantrayāna. It is postponed for future consideration, along with the goal itself.

Although sGam-po-pa's text is also predominantly Mahāyāna, the influence of the Mahāmudrā teachings is revealed in his basic premise that the goal or climax is always already operative as the starting point of the path. He sets out to show that in whatever errant situation of samsara we may find ourselves, the

goal of Buddhahood is latently present as the 'cause' of or impetus toward its own realization (sangs-rgyas-kyi rgyu). It is because of the openness of our interpreted reality that we have the potential to eventually actualize this goal. When it comes to the procedures involved, sGam-po-pa draws on Mahāmūdra instructions as well as the Sūtras. Because openness appears in various concrete guises (dnagos-po'i snang), it can only be experienced through various frustrations 35/. The direct and effective measures of Mahāmūdra are thus needed to bring all dualistic conceptions to rest. Thereby one reaches the goal of an ineffable, non-discursive, experience of openness - a meaning-rich gestalt, Buddhahood - not as something new but only newly 'uncovered' from its latency.

While this implicit complementarity of the Sūtra and Tantra approaches is dealt with only briefly by sGam-po-pa, it is a unifying theme running through both of Klong-chen-pa's texts. The SN makes a self-conscious attempt to reveal this complementarity by juxtaposing the teleological Mahāyāna and endotelic Mantrayāna approaches - the one corresponding to ordinary mind (sems), the other to Mind-as-such (sems-nyid) - and shifting emphasis from the former to the latter in the course of the text. Thus the transition is viewed within the context of individual striving. The YZ, on the other hand, takes the holistic approach of Mantrayāna as its cosmological point of departure and frame of reference, taking up the details for following Mahāyāna path only in the latter part of the text, where the stages of the clearing process come into play.

Both texts centre around the distinction between the Lakṣaṇayāna and Mantrayāna as 'cause-determined' and 'goal-sustained' pursuits, but diverge in how they employ this distinction. The SN observes that although the Lakṣaṇayāna and Mantrayāna each talk about 'cause' and 'effect' (ie. goal), they use the terms in quite different senses. According to the Lakṣaṇayāna, the potential for self-transcendence is germinally present as a cause which makes us develop toward a distant goal. The Vajrayāna, however, views the goal as already present as our own Mind which is revealed once the incidental obscurations are cleared away 36/. This distinction is elaborated in various contexts, most notably in the chapters on Taking Refuge (6), the Four Immeasurables (7), and the Vajrayāna (9), where in each case the reciprocity between purposive striving and the omni-present autonomy of Mind which prefigures such striving is shown.

In the YZ, the two approaches are only formally distinguished as spiritual pursuits in the chapter on philosophical systems (12), following the author's detailed account of Buddhist cosmology (1-7) and education (8-11). Klong-chen-pa indicates, as in the SN, that the cause-determined pursuit is based on a model of rectilinear causality:

In the cause-determined philosophical pursuit it is claimed that the optimization thrust, our psycho-physical potential, is present only as a seed and that Buddhahood is attained by making it grow through the accumulation (of merits and knowledge) as modifiers. It is thus termed a "cause-determined pursuit" because cause and effect follow one after the other 37/.

He goes on, in a passage cited earlier 38/, to show the limitations of the causal hypothesis with its planted axiom of a

(temporally and existentially) distant telos, and the superiority of Mantrayāna with its helical conception of ground, path and goal. The goal is fully present for all time as the ground or dynamic totality of Being, which gradually discloses itself to the individual by way of an acausal process of clearing. While the **SN** traces the movement from the microperspective of ordinary mind to the macroperspective of Mind-as-such, the **YZ** first traces the cosmological occlusion of Being into the finitude of human being, and then retraces the way to wholeness. In this latter work, the Lakṣaṇayāna is discussed within a specifically Mantrayāna context.

The difference between Klong-chen-pa's two approaches is further shown by a distinction both texts make between the idiom of a 'clearing process', specific to Mantrayāna, and that of an 'emancipation process' which is characteristic of Mahāyāna. It is not surprising that the **SN** commentary adopts the idiom of emancipation for its detailed discussion of the optimization thrust; the path when viewed from the perspective of individual action appears as a via negativa, a progressive stripping away of all that is found not to provide fulfilment:

In our account, one should know the four phases of (a) the ground for emancipation (bral-gzhi), (b) the cause of emancipation (bral-rgyu), (c) the goal of emancipation (bral-'bras), and (d) that from which one must be emancipated (bral-bya).

(a) The ground for emancipation is our psycho-physical patterning, the (optimization) thrust; (b) its cause are the healthy actions conducive to liberation, the facets of the path; (c) its goal is the shining forth of capabilities once one has become emancipated from all the grime of the optimization thrust; (d) that from which one must become emancipated are the inveterate potentialities inherent in the eight perceptual patterns founded on the all-ground for a variety of inveterate potentialities.

In the Mantrayāna, these (phases) are referred to as (a) the ground for the clearing process, (b) the clearing process itself, (c) the goal of the clearing process and (d) what has to be cleared up. Although the names used are different, their meaning is similar 39/.

In contradistinction to this analysis, the YZ commentary correlates its four phases of the clearing process (ordered differently: a,d,b,c) with only three phases of emancipation: (a) the ground of emancipation, (b) the successive stages of the factors aiding emancipation, and (c) the goal reached at the end of emancipation 40/. Here the aspect of the 'cause' of emancipation is significantly omitted; the holistic scope of the YZ leaves no room for the causal hypothesis. The choice of the Mantrayana over the Laksanayana idiom is central to the text's foremost premise: that the path is not an extrication from... so much as a return to... Emancipation presupposes an originary clearing.

To summarize, as long as the Lakṣaṇayāna and Mantrayāna are taken as 'objective' schemes of learning into which the individual must somehow fit himself, their different idioms will not be reconciled. This is the case with the interpretations given by Atīśa and Tsong-kha-pa which do not go beyond the causal hypothesis of Pāramitāyāna. Understood as distinguishable phases within a unitary experience, however, the complementarity of these approaches becomes clear.

#### 4.3.2 The Meaning of the Path

It could be expected that the different ways of attempting to reconcile the Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna would give rise to

quite distinct interpretations of the Buddhist path or way. At the outset of this thesis, a distinction was drawn between a more and less objective sense of the term lam: on the one hand it refers to the route or program followed (here the translation as 'path' is appropriate) - a model which the individual uses to make sense of his world experience. On the other hand, it refers to the going itself, how one goes about finding his or her 'way'. The distinction points to an important difference between the so-called 'outer' Lakṣaṇayāna and 'inner' Mantrayāna - the latter prescribing an objective framework, the latter describing the living reality of existential discovery. The different lam-rim models of the path may be plotted along these coordinates.

Atīśa bases his elucidation of the path on a three-fold typology of individuals, of which only the superior one is suited for the Mahāyāna path. The two lesser types, the inferior worldly non-Buddhist and the intermediate self-seeking Śrāvaka or Pratyekabuddha, are introduced to the text only as counter-examples to the superior individual who follows the Mahāyāna path, which unifies appropriate activity and appreciative discernment 41/.

Tsong-kha-pa must be credited with reinterpreting the three types of individuals as three phases in the life of a single individual. The two lower types, rather than being counter-examples to the superior individual, are now seen as stages in his spiritual maturation. Tsong-kha-pa's argument 42/ runs as follows: The Buddha initially developed his mind, went on to accumulate the prerequisites and finally became fully realized. And since all Buddhas are just the value or aim (don) inherent in

sentient beings, everything communicated in the Buddhist teachings is intended to make beings realize this aim. The aim is either temporary, concerned with the pursuit of a higher existence in the hereafter, or ultimate, concerned either with deliverance from samsara or omniscience.

The temporary aim characterizes the inferior individual who cares little for this life but seeks to secure the causes for a pleasant future life. (The author here reinterprets Atīśa's doctrine which viewed the inferior individual as a non-religious person). The ultimate aim of deliverance characterizes the intermediate individual who has grown weary of worldliness and seeks to attain for his own benefit deliverance from samsara by means of the three trainings in ethics, attitude, and appreciative discernment. The ultimate aim of omniscience applies to the superior individual who, having come under the power of compassion, seeks to attain Buddhahood in order to extinguish all the suffering of sentient beings. The appropriate means for realizing omniscience are two-fold: the Mantrayānamahāyāna and the Pāramitāmahāyāna. The trainings thus include the six pāramitā, as well as the developing and fulfilment phases and mantras of the Mantrayāna.

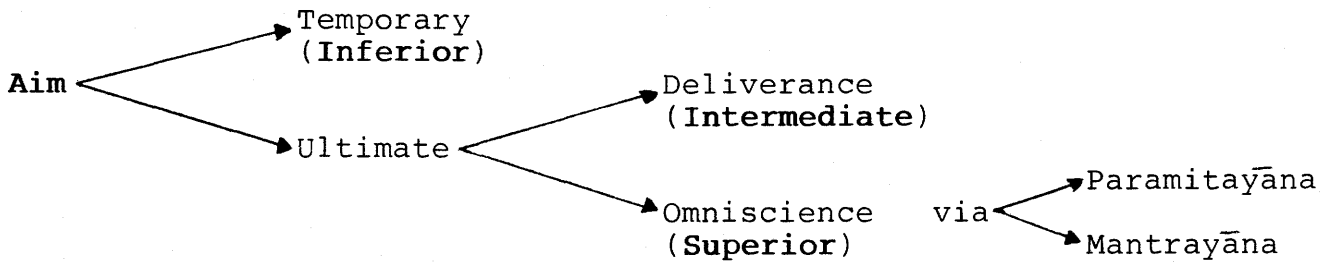
The path of a superior individual thus contains within its scope the lesser paths and, accordingly, the Mahāyāna encompasses all yānas. Tsong-kha-pa sums up his argument:

Thus, since the paths taken in common with both the inferior individual who seeks to attain only worldly happiness and the intermediate individual who seeks liberation from samsara merely for his own sake are not really intended as separate instructions for pursuing (separate) paths, but rather as preliminary instructions in



preparation for the path of the superior individual, they are taken as adjunctive aspects of linking up with the path of the superior individual 43/.

In Tsong-kha-pa's analysis, Atīśa's three-fold typology is reformulated as a three-phase teleology:



Tsong-kha-pa's reinterpretation of Atīśa's typology constitutes a shift from a class-theoretical approach - which deals with types or categories and presupposes a certain atomistic independence of the classes involved - toward a field-theoretical approach, which deals with phases and their interactions within a unified field of experience. Implicit in the analyses of both authors is the view of a teleological path, the only difference being that Atīśa excludes the lesser 'aims' as being unsuitable while Tsong-kha-pa incorporates them into the gradation of the superior path as successive norms of training.

In the **Thar-rgyan**, there is evidence of the author's attempt to reconcile the teleological Pāramitāyāna path with the holistic way of the Mantrayāna. In discussing appreciative discernment, sGam-po-pa redefines the 'middle path':

Although not to entertain any notions regarding either extreme (of eternal existence and eternal non-existence) is to engage in the Middle Path, this Path is not something to be investigated. In an ultimate sense, it has nothing to do

with a consciousness which grasps it as 'this' or 'that' but remains beyond the intellect 44/.

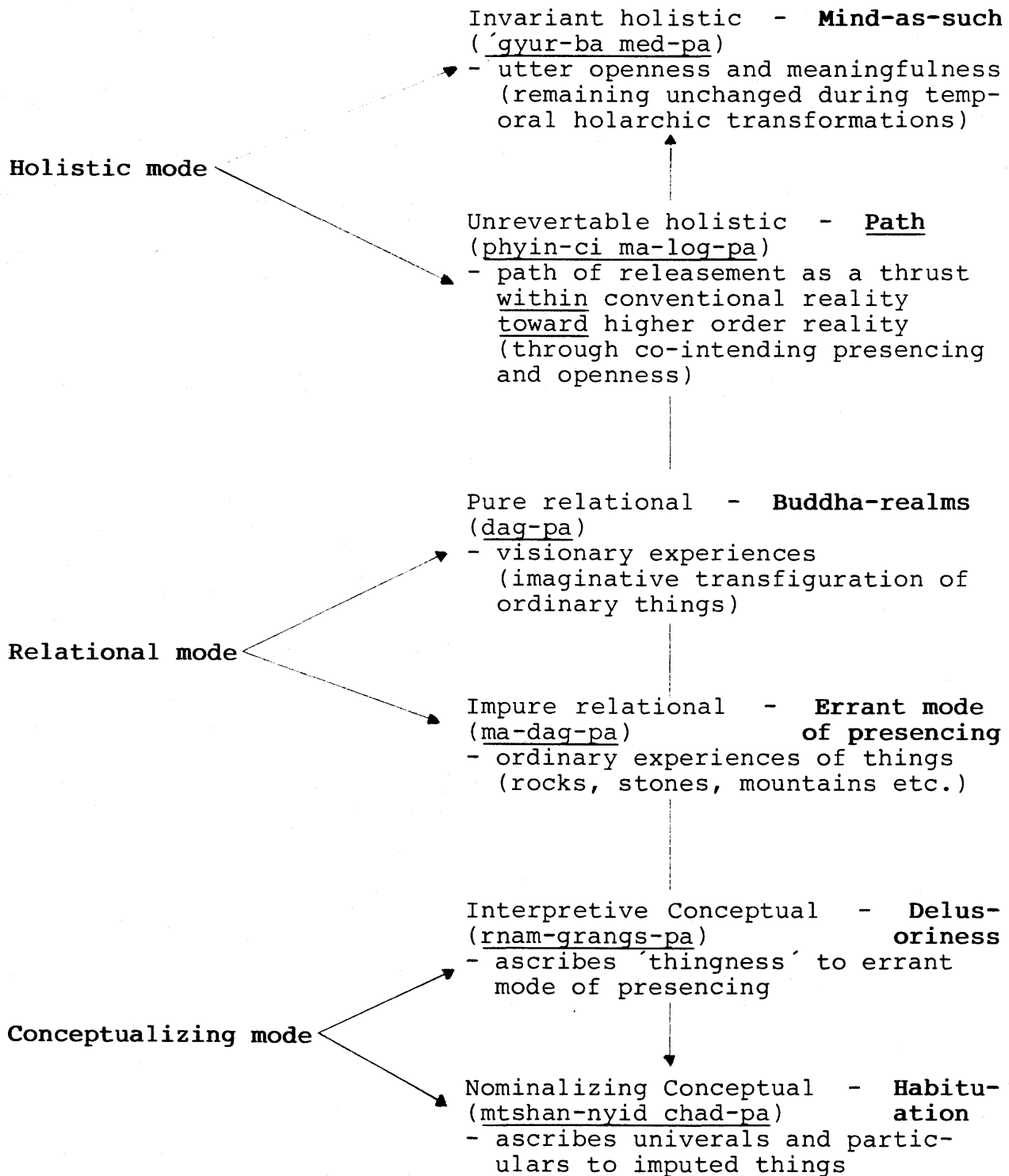
What this passage implies is that the models employed to facilitate learning are not to be conflated with the learning process itself; the path overflows any of the teleological strategies imposed on it. Later in the chapter sGam-po-pa states that the gradation of the path is taught only in order to guide those who are blind to Being's abidingness. In Mind itself, there are no paths or levels 45/.

The dynamic interplay between the holistic way of learning and the linear schemes used to map this process is a keynote in Klong-chen-pa's interpretation of the path and its unfoldment. The SN views the path from the individual standpoint as a progressive familiarization with Mind-as-such which shines forth once ordinary mentation and its operations subside 46/. The familiarization turns out to be a refamiliarization since the autonomy encountered has been there all along, having only been lost sight of in the course of going astray from pure autonomy into the determinate realms of finite being.

The author views the going astray/closure - recovery/disclosure process from various angles. From an ontological viewpoint, which articulates the perduring patterns of world-experience, it is viewed in terms of the Yogācāra theory of three modes (trisva-bhāva) of experiencing - the conceptualizing mode (kun-brtags), relational mode (gzhan-dbang) and holistic mode (yongs-grub). Together, these modes constitute a holarchy in which each mode 'acts' as a Janus-faced holon, linked upward and downward in the holarchy by way of homologous dynamics (Diagram K):

Diagram K

Holonomic Phases in Ontological Holarchy



This schematization helps to clarify the author's richly encoded verse from the root text:

Even Mind-as-such, the invariant holistic mode as a meaning-rich gestalt experience,  
Through habituation to the conceptual modes brought on by subjectivizing tendencies stemming from a loss of cognitive excitation,  
Takes on the errancy of presencing in the manner of the impure relational mode so that  
We take the dualistic presencing of an objective domain and consciousness, 'self' and 'other', as two different things.  
But once we have understood the meaning of the invariant holistic mode, Mind-as-such,  
We cultivate the path of the unrevertable holistic mode  
And move into the (imaginative) realms of the pure relational mode  
Which relieve us from the weariness of the 'strongholds' of enworldment 48/.

Further light is shed on this abstruse passage in the commentary:

Once we have entered into this very invariance that is Mind-as-such, and have deeply understood the openness of the whole of reality which is our conceptualizing tendency, then as we cultivate the path, the involvement in intellectually conceptualizing the errant mode of presencing in its impure aspect becomes transformed (gnas-gyur) or pure. Then, arriving in this primordial reach and range of Being, we bring into full play the capacity to hold sway over pure Buddha-realms through the inexhaustable ornament-wheel of gestalt (sku), communication (gsung) and cognitive resonance (thugs) 49/.

Through the transformation described here, the impervious strongholds of body speech and mind give way to the open system of gestalt, authentic communication and cognitive resonance. Within the trimodal scheme, the pivotal holonomic phase is the unrevertable holistic mode, the path of recovery:

The unrevertable holistic mode is the reliable path of releasement because once we deeply understand Being's abidingness just as is, we accumulate merits in the commonly accepted reality by not disregarding its presencing aspect and accumulate knowledge as the higher order reality by thinking about its open-dimensionality 50/.

Having articulated the ontological preconditions for the path, Klong-chen-pa goes on in the subsequent chapter to show how this recovery process is actually 'enacted'. The path of wholesome activity reverses the going astray trend leading from unconditioned Mind-as-such into the infrastructure of constitutive consciousness with its bounded domains of aimless activities so that the source may be recovered (see Diagram L). This path is set in motion by our affinity with Being or optimization thrust which reaches into constitutive conscious, drawing it toward its preconstitutive source. Since the path summed up by wholesome activities, however, is intrinsically deceptive and transitory, being only a heuristic construct, it is eventually consumed by the optimization thrust, just as fire consumes the wood on which it has depended 51/. It is here that the path as a linear model breaks down, giving way to the 'way' of existential discovery.

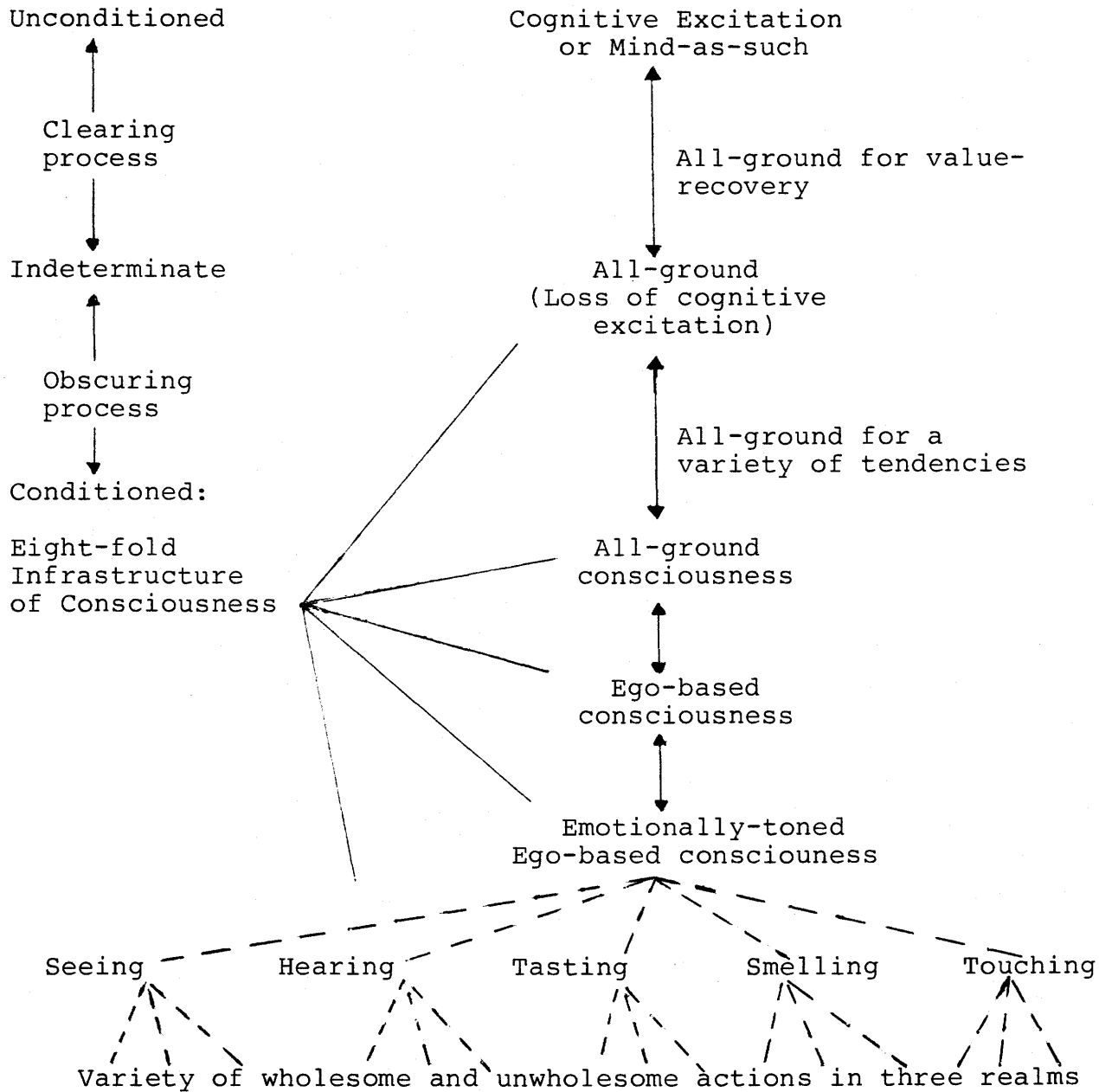
This breaking point and the ensuing existential disclosure are what set Klong-chen-pa's rDzogs-chen approach apart from the 'action'-oriented Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. Without discounting the explicative schemes used to arrive at an understanding of Being, rDzogs-chen nonetheless gives primacy to Being itself which exceeds all schemes imposed on it, peeling them away one by one like the leaves of an artichoke. This holistic premise enables Klong-chen-pa to clearly reconcile the different paths: although the individual must initially rely on 'stages of learning' (lam-rim) and aspire intellectually and feelingly toward autonomy, gradually this autonomy takes over and all support systems fall away. Thus at the outset of his discussion of the stages of

## Diagram L

### Holonomic Phases in Holarchy of World-experience

#### Holonomic Properties

#### Holonomic Phases



Holarchy - A hierarchically organized self-sustaining open system in which each constituent (holon) is a Janus-faced whole which is also a part depending on whether it is viewed in relation to the parts of which it is a whole or the whole of which it is a part.

↔ = holonomic phase transitions  
 --- = reciprocal transactions

following the path (CH 6), Klong-chen-pa states that

It makes little sense to set out (on the path) by leaps and bounds. If you haven't yet brought about the lower capabilities of the path, you certainly won't be able to reach the higher ones; and you will never be able to arrive at the higher (stages) if you don't proceed step-by-step. As the **Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra** states:

My profound teaching  
May be likened to the steps on a ladder.  
We must strive and learn step-by-step,  
But will never get to the top by leaps and bounds ! 52/

But later in the text, where the rDzogs-chen experience of Being's abidingness is introduced (CH 10), Klong-chen-pa describes the 'break-down' of lam-rim and the dawn of autonomy:

Previously, you relied upon the stages of the path leading from lower to higher, like the rungs on a ladder, (following) the successive steps of vision, cultivation and enactment in their proper order, and you asked questions to intellectually familiarize yourself with the methods for rising from the lower to the higher tuning-in procedures. But now that the ground and root of mind is gone and has given way to sameness, there is no longer any prop or support (on which to depend). Like a drunkard soused on beer, you don't grasp for whatever arises. And like a young child, you don't identify with what appears. Since there is no longer a linear succession of stages of 'doing something', there is continuity, immediacy and vastness 53/.

This breaking point, finding oneself lost - 'nowhere' with 'no one' and 'nothing' to turn to -, marks not the end of the path but the reentry into an immediacy prior to its interpretation.

The YZ might be said to begin with this 'nowhere' as a cosmological virtuality from which it traces the process of individualization into a specifically human life-route and toward which it retraces the path to wholeness. The path thus proceeds from within the boundedness of human existence as a clearing process involving studying, thinking and cultivation. These phases have been dealt with in the foregoing abridgement of the

text and need not be detailed further. What is important to note is that the **YZ** widens the ontological scope of the **SN** to investigate, from a more conjectural and open-ended standpoint, the groundless ground which makes the going astray process and the path of existential rediscovery possible.

To clarify, the **SN** deals initially with the inspectable patterns of phenomenological inquiry, and seeks in the course of the text to find the route leading beyond them. The **YZ** inquires at the very outset into the reasons and sufficient conditions for these patterns, taking them as a total phenomenon - the 'world total', and seeks its directives for the ensuing investigation into the alientation-recovery reflex from this conjectural cosmological vantage point. In the cosmological inquiry, the path is simultaneously a transpiercing of the limiting structures of our life-world which keep us closed upon ourselves and a return to the open groundlessness of its source.



#### NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1/ The notion of 'worklike' is indebted to Heidegger's discussion in "The Origin of the Work of Art" in **Poetry, Language and Thought**, tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), pp. 15-87.

2/ The contrast concurs with Hayden White's distinction between the documentary and dialogical approaches to intellectual history. The former is concerned with the re-construction of the past, the latter with establishing an on-going dialogue with the past. See **Tropics of Discourse** (Baltimore: U. of Maryland Pr., 1978).

3/ See above, chapter one, on the functional import of lam-rim texts.

4/ Victor Erlich, **Russian Formalism** (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965). The term trans-formation seems preferable to Jakobson's deformation (deformirovanie) or deviation (othlonenie) since what is involved is not a replacement of the old by the new but a transfiguration in the new. The present discussion is also indebted to Jakobson's conceptions of metaphor and metonymy as elaborated in Anthony Wilden, **System and Structure - Essays in Communication and Exchange** (London: Tavistock Pub., 1972).

5/ Recent intellectual history has witnessed a return to the metaphor (à la Heraclitus) after centuries of relegating it to the status of a 'window-dressing' to language beginning with Aristotle's **Poetics**. See Sarah Kofman, "Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis," in **The New Nietzsche Reader** ed. David B. Allison (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 201-14.

6/ See Roland Barthes, **Mythologies**, tr. Annette Lavers (Toronto: Paladin Grafton Books, 1973).

7/ Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-moral Sense", I, quoted in **The New Nietzsche Reader**, p. xvi.

8/ The conception of interacting "image fields", that is, "the associations called forth by words which have an adequate connotative potential" and which may "evoke in the reader a self-contained sphere of ideas which are often recognized when just one single element of such a system is presented", derives from Harald Weinrich. It is elaborated by Hans Robert Jauss in his **Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics**, tr. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 264 f.

9/ See, for example, **Thar-rgyan**, Ch. 3, folio 15a.

10/ See chapter 17 on appreciative discernment and chapter 20 on the goal of Buddhahood.

11/ As indicated below in the discussion of communicative persona (section 4.2).

12/ See sections 2.2, 3.4 and 3.5 above.

13/ As indicated in Diagram C above.

14/ In both works, the content is subordinate to a highly complex thematic structure. Tsong-kha-pa's structure is the most detailed, having up to seventeen levels of sub-headings.

15/ As Th. Stscherbatsky says of the **Abhisamayālaṅkāra**, "**Alaṅkāra** is the name for a literary form popular with the Buddhists. It means that the work in question contains no full and detailed exposition of the doctrine, it is not a mahasastra, like the **Abhidharmakośa**, but it is only a short summary of the salient points contained in the *prajñāpāramitāsūtra*." Quoted in M. Winternitz, **History of Indian Literature** vol. 1, 594.

16/ PK, vol. 152. 3.2.

17/ This discourse style was subsequently followed by Tsong-kha-pa's successors in the dGe-lugs lam-rim tradition.

18/ The long list of Tibetan authors who have composed commentaries on Dandin's **Kāvyādarśa** includes Klong-chen-pa, Mi-pham rnam-rgyal, U-rgyan Kun-bzang bstan-'dzin, the fifth Dalai Lama, Padma dkar-po, Sa-skya mKhan-po sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, Rin-spungs-pa, Kham-pa Chos-kyi nyi-ma, dBang-phyug nor-bu, dPang-lo, Jam-dbyangs kha-che, Bod mkhas-pa, sMin-gling lo-chen, and dPa'bo. Our analyses of poetic figures of speech are based on D.K. Gupta, **A Critical Study of Dandin and his Works** (Delhi: Meharchand Lachhmandas, 1970), 200-42.

19/ See R. Mukherji, **Literary Criticism in Ancient India** (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966), 32.

20/ As discussed by D.E. Linge in his introduction to Hans Georg Gadamer's **Philosophical Hermeneutics** (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1976), xxxii.

21/ As Edwin Gerow notes, in his overview of Indian poetics, "Toward the end of [the classical] period, in the ninth century of perhaps somewhat earlier, a new way of thinking about literature appeared. The school, called dhvani, "tone" or "suggestion," was better suited to explain, and therefore perhaps rose in response to, the then nascent forms of medieval literature, the devotional and dramatic song." In **The Literatures of India**, Ch. 3 "Indian Poetics," (Chicago: U. Press, 1974), 136. A much more detailed account of this school is given in Mukherji, 344-484.

22/ Gerow (**The Literatures of India**, 137) observes that "the dhvani is the translation of rasa into the purely expressionistic terms of written poetry: at the same time, the dhvani is rasa,

for rasa...is the thing to be suggested."

23/ BP verse 35 provides the only notable example of simile.

24/ See above, n. 8.

25/ As noted in section 2.2 above.

26/ A. Hofstadter, "On the Interpretation of Works of Art," in **The Concept of Style**, ed. Berel Lang (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 74.

27/ Klong-chen-pa claims, in his commentary to this chapter, to employ "the exuberant style of the vajragīti" (rdo-rje'i glus ngom-pa) to express his existential understanding. **Shing-rta chen-po**, p. 895. This style is evident in his use of imperative mood, rhetorical (and often paradoxical) questions and sonorous outbursts of lyrical expression.

28/ H. Guenther, **Kindly Bent to Ease Us** vol. 1, 179.

29/ Both works emphasize the importance of studying (thos), thinking about what one has studied (bsam) and imaginative cultivation (sgom). While Tsong-kha-pa deals mainly with study, viewing it as a preventative measure to closed-minded fixation in meditation (see **Lrcm**, 16.4 f. especially), Klong-chen-pa devotes five chapters to each of these subjects (see Diagram H). For Tsong-kha-pa, cultivation remains thematic and discursive, a way of intellectually 'familiarizing' oneself with the preliminary topics, bodhicitta and so on. For Klong-chen-pa, the preliminary topics are subject matter for thinking, enabling us to gain certainty about what we have studied, whereas cultivation brings about a non-dichotomic originary awareness.

30/ Tsong-kha-pa's inclusion of these topics points to a distinctive feature of the Tibetan lam-rim genre: its attempt to attract aspirants of different levels of intellectual acumen and different persuasions in order to lead them toward awakening. In a predominantly Buddhist atmosphere, the authors were not as concerned as their Indian forerunners with excluding non-Buddhist sectors of their society. (Foreigners, particularly the Chinese, could always be singled out as the scapegoat for endemic misrepresentations).

31/ See R. Sherburne, **A Lamp for the Path...**, 166 f.

32/ **Lrcb**, 184.3.

33/ **Lrcb**, 184.4.

34/ **Lrcm**, 3.3.3.

35/ **Thar-rgyan**, 143a.

- 36/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 426, commentary on **SN**, Ch. 6, verse 4.
- 37/ **YZ**, 660.
- 38/ See **YZ** abridgement, section 3.5 above.
- 39/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 273.
- 40/ **Padma dkar-po**, 204.
- 41/ As shown in **BP** abridgement, section 3.1 above.
- 42/ **Lrcb**, 193.3.
- 43/ **Lrcb**, 193.5.
- 44/ **Thar-rgyan**, 141a-b.
- 45/ **Thar-rgyan**, 149a.
- 46/ Cited in **SN** abridgement, section 3.4 above.
- 47/ See also **SN** abridgement and note 36, sectionf 3.4 above.
- 48/ **SN**, Ch. 3, verse 11, and **Shing-rta chen-po**, 211.
- 49/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 222.
- 50/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 222-3.
- 51/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 276.
- 52/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 421-2.
- 53/ **Shing-rta chen-po**, 897.

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