

# Articles

## A NOTE ON DGOS-'BREL

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### INTRODUCTION

This note is about the group of terms used in India and Tibet for specifying the conditions that a piece of writing should be a work of science, a *śāstra* (bstan-bcos). These terms describe the connection between the whole work and the general purposes for which it was written and is to be studied. The Indians do not seem to have had a single word for these terms and the topic covered by them, but in Tibet the word *dgos-'brel* was used.<sup>1</sup> In this note we deal mainly with the application of the *dgos-'brel* terms to the tantras. Tibetan texts keep this topic separate from the topic called *bshad-thabs*,<sup>2</sup> i.e., “methods of explaining (the tantras).” While *dgos-'brel* is applied to the tantras themselves, *bshad-thabs* is about the methods used in commenting upon them; still, there are some areas of overlap.

Though the *dgos-'brel* texts do not say *explicitly* that the tantras are *śāstras*, they do make use of the traditional criteria for a piece of writing to be a *śāstra*, and they show how the texts satisfy these criteria. Only one such passage (as far as I know) has come to us in Sanskrit. This is found in the Vimalaprabhā, the celebrated commentary on the Kālacakratāntra which is held in such high esteem in both India and Tibet. That passage is given in both Sanskrit and Tibetan in Appendix A.

The *dgos-'brel* of a work is often discussed under five headings, viz. the \*text<sup>3</sup> (rjod-byed, abhidhāna), its \*topic (brjod-bya, abhidheya), the immediate \*purpose (dgos-pa, prayojana) for which it was written, the more \*distant purpose (dgos-pa'i dgos-pa or nying-dgos, prayojanaprayojana), and the \*connection ('brel-ba, sambandha) between them. All these words are commonplace, but they take on a specific shade of meaning in this context. Our authors tell us mainly what are their referents, without specifying their senses (perhaps supposing these to be well-known). I will try to fill this gap. Some of the difficulties of translating intensional terms such as the two *prayojanas* are discussed in Appendix B. The most interesting Tibetan account of *dgos-'brel* known to me is that of Bkra-shis Rnam-rgyal (1512-87), discussed in sec. 2.7 and partly given in Tibetan in Appendix C.

### 1. THE GENERAL USAGE OF THE DGOS-'BREL TERMS

1.1 *dgos-'brel*. This word is used in Tibetan texts only, not in translations of Indian texts. It may be no more than a contraction of *dgos-pa* and *'brel-ba*, a kind of dvandva. Since it is a specialised technical term, I will not translate it at all. Its main concern is with the interpretation of a work as a whole, and not with that of its parts; here too it differs from \*methods of explanation (*bshad-thabs*, see note 2).

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The Indian Vajrayāna works known to me which discuss *dgos-'brel* all belong to the mother division of the anuttarayogatantras (Hevajra, Cakra-saṃvara, Kālacakra). *dgos-'brel* is concerned mainly with the literal or expressed sense of the texts, and its appearance in connection with the mother-tantras no doubt has much to do with the fact that they are meant to be taken (comparatively) literally. In contrast, the father-tantras rely much more on various kinds of indirect or implied sense;<sup>4</sup> this is dealt with more fully in *bshad-thabs*, and so it is not surprising that the father-tantras have an elaborate *bshad-thabs*. But Tibetan authors tend to apply both *dgos-'brel* and *bshad-thabs* to both the father and mother tantras.

To see how the *dgos-'brel* terms fit together, we may consider Vajragarbha's account of them in relation to the Hevajra-tantra,<sup>5</sup> an account which he seems to be quoting from the Hevajra-tantra in 500,000 verses:<sup>6</sup>

In the laghu-tantra [in 700 verses],<sup>7</sup> the \*topic is the Jina Hevajra together with Nairātmyā. The \*text is the collection of chapters of the tantra which bring about understanding (rtogs-pa). The \*connection is the mark of this \*text and its \*topic of being mutually related as text and topic.<sup>8</sup> The \*purpose is to grant power to enter the maṇḍala, etc. The \*distant purpose is to bring about clarity on the nature of things after empowerment.

These five remarks by Vajragarbha spell out the referents of the five terms in the case of the Hevajra-tantra. Let us now, under the remaining headings, explain their senses as they seem to have been used in various texts.<sup>9</sup>

1.2 *rjod-byed* (the \*text; *abhidhāna*). This term is not intensional. In general it stands for words, sentences, *discourse*, as a system of signs, that is, considered as associated with the conventions or rules which govern their use for communication between people familiar with the language of which they form a part. In the present *dgos-'brel* context, the word is used to refer just to the tantra or other work under consideration. (Bu-ston and Tsong-kha-pa are taking certain *bshad-thabs* materials as the \*text; all our other authors are mainly concerned with the tantra as \*text, but Bkra-shis Rnam-rgyal supplies in addition a parallel analysis where the \*text is the primary *dgos-'brel* he has supplied for the Hevajra-tantra). The Vimalaprabhā distinguishes between the general notion of discourse (*vācaka*) and the particular \*text (*abhidhāna*) under consideration; this distinction is special to the *dgos-'brel* context and was ignored by the translators of the VP, who rendered both words by *rjod-byed* (cf. Appendix A and note 8).

1.3 *brjod-bya* (the \*topic, *abhidheya*). This term is intensional, since whether U is the topic of V depends on the name used for U; see Appendix B. *Abhidheya* in general means *that which is to be expressed* (literally, just as *abhidhā* is the literal sense of a word). However, here in *dgos-'brel* the referent of the terms *abhidheya*, *brjod-bya* seems to be simply what the \*text is about; Hevajra and Nairātmyā in the above quotation from Vajragarbha. But the term is more intensional than this suggests. The word "topic" has an intensional ambiguity: it can mean either the topic indicated by the *words*, or

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the topic *intended* by the author (of course these are normally identical). This ambiguity is found also in the present use of *abhidheya*, *brjod-bya*, and motivates my choice of “\*topic.” However, the word does not denote an *intention* in the *dgos-'brel* context (though it may do elsewhere), this being the province of the two \*purposes. The Sanskrit again distinguishes between the general case (*vācya*) and the present case (*abhidheya*) in a way not reflected in Tibetan (*brjod-bya*).

1.4 *'brel-ba* (the \*connection, *sambandha*). Obviously the general idea here is that of the connection between a work and its topic. The use of discourse (*vācaka*, *rjod-byed*) is governed by conventions, and these limit the range of things which a piece of discourse can be held to be about. In a long piece of discourse, such as a whole tantra or *śāstra*, we might expect that the \*text would determine the \*topic uniquely. Perhaps this is the point of the word *phan-tshun* (*parasparam*, App. A) which means “mutually”; however, this is not to be taken too seriously, since the \*topic will never determine the \*text uniquely. \*Text and \*topic must be *appropriately* connected; so the *sambandha* has often been called “aptness” or “fitness”; “connection” is literal.

1.5 *dgos-pa* (the \*purpose, *prayojana*). In all cases it is supposed that the \*text is uttered with some intention beyond a strictly perlocutionary one (for instance if a maṇḍala-rite is described the perlocutionary intention may be to get people to do it). The \*purpose is a more general purpose, yet related to the immediate form of the \*text.

1.6 *dgos-pa'i dgos-pa* (or *nying-dgos*: the \*distant purpose, *prayojanaprayojana*). The \*purpose of the text is not necessarily the ultimate goal which its utterance is intended to achieve. The \*purpose may be achieved for the sake of a further purpose; the latter is the \*distant purpose. The Sanskrit and Tibetan phrases might be more literally rendered by “secondary purpose,” indicating the dependence of the *dgos-pa'i dgos-pa* on the *dgos-pa*; yet the \*distant purpose is often more important than the \*purpose, and so I avoid the word “secondary.”

1.7 The necessary and sufficient conditions for a text to be a *śāstra* are that it should have a \*topic and a \*purpose, and that \*text and \*topic should be suitably \*connected. Our texts do not always mention the \*text, presumably since it is taken for granted. On the other hand there is a real controversy over whether the \*distant purpose is necessary or even useful. The point at issue can be seen by taking the \*text to be the Nyāyabindu of Dharmakīrti. Sūtra I.1 says that right knowledge will be expounded (*vyutpād-*) since it precedes the achievement of all human aims (*artha*). Vinītadeva<sup>10</sup> says that the \*purpose of the work is to expound right knowledge, and the \*distant purpose (the purpose of the purpose) is to achieve all human aims. Dharmottara<sup>11</sup> ignores this distinction and explains how the \*purpose of the work is expressed by the entire sūtra.

## 2. THE DGOS-'BREL TERMS AS USED IN INDIVIDUAL VAJRAYĀNA TEXTS

2.1 *Vimalaprabhā*<sup>12</sup>: the \*text is the Kālacakrantra, the \*topic is Kālacakra, the \*purpose is to accumulate merit through entering the maṇḍala and giving worldly empowerment, and the \*distant purpose is to accumulate both merit and awareness once the “disconnected” (*niranvaya*) siddhis of mahāmudra have been obtained, following the transworldly fourth empowerment of great *prajñā*. This passage is given in Appendix A, and following it the VP speaks of the arising of the goal of buddhahood in the aspirant once the five parts (of *dgos-'brel*) have been experienced.

2.2 *Vajragarbhaṭṭkā*: see section 1.1 above.

2.3 *Bde-mchog Stod-'grel*<sup>13</sup> the \*topic is Heruka (i.e., Cakrasaṃvara), the \*text is the Cakrasaṃvaratantra, the \*connection is as in 1.1 above. The \*purpose is to achieve worldly *siddhi* and act for the benefit of beings (after) entering the maṇḍala; the \*distant purpose is to achieve the siddhis of mahāmudra (through) accumulations of merit and awareness, and (to attain) Buddhahood.

2.4 *Bsod-nams-rtse-mo*<sup>14</sup>: the \*text is the tantra under discussion, the \*topic is the “three tantras”<sup>15</sup> of ground, path and goal, the \*purpose is to get oneself and others to internalize (*nyams-su len-pa*) the “three tantras.” The \*distant purpose is to go to the ultimate in these three tantras (*rgyud gsum-par mthar-phyin-pa*). The \*connection is the connection as of cause and effect between means and that which arises from means [e.g., the connection of the two *satyas*, Madhyamakāvātāra VI.80].

2.5 *Bu-ston*<sup>16</sup>: here the context is the “seven ornaments”<sup>17</sup> of the Pradīpoddyotana, upon which Bu-ston is commenting. The \*text is the “thirteen ornaments not different from the tantra,”<sup>18</sup> viz., the six alternatives (*mtha-drug*), the four methods of explanation (*tshul-bzhi*) and the two styles of explanation (*bshad-tshul gnyis*). The \*topic is the remaining ornaments, viz., the introduction (*gleng bslang-ba*), the four arguments on rising into buddhahood (*sangs-rgya-ba'i rigs-pa bzhi*), and the “certainty about the two *satyas*” (*bden-gnyis nges-pa*).<sup>19</sup> The \*purpose is that the person entering the tantra become certain about this \*topic, [specifically] the two *satyas*. The \*distant purpose is the two levels of *siddhi*.

2.6 *Tsong-kha-pa's treatment*<sup>20</sup> can easily cause confusion because he is commenting not on the Guhyasamāja itself but on its *ākhyā-tantra* (*bshad-rgyud*) the Jñānavajrasamuccaya. This does not contain the usual maṇḍalas, rituals, etc., but consists of \*methods of explanation (*bshad-thabs*) for the GST. He says that when studying any tantra one should always be asking: *What is the \*topic? What is the \*purpose? (etc.)*. Then he says of the JVS: the \*topic is the seven ornaments of *bshad-thabs*. The \*purpose is that on the basis of this tantra (viz., the JVS) one should well understand the *don* (*artha*) of the tantra under consideration (viz., the GST). The \*distant purpose is that when

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one is convinced of this *artha* and has taken it to heart, the most able will attain the *siddhi* of a buddha, the medium the eight types of *siddhi*, and the least able the *siddhis śānti*, etc. The \*connection is understanding how the *artha* of \*topic, \*purpose, and \*distant purpose depend on the tantra under study. [On this use of *don (artha)*, cf. the end of Appendix B.]

This reads like a simple attempt to combine the *dgos-'brel* of the explanatory tantra JVS with that of the mūlatantra GST. It might be better to acknowledge that each needs separate explanation, and perhaps also to separate *dgos-'brel* in the style of *Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal* (sec. 2.7).

It is interesting that Tsong-kha-pa's \*distant purpose (*nying-dgos*) is practically the same as the \*purpose (*dgos-pa*) given in verse 16 of the *Pradīpoddyotana*:<sup>21</sup>

/dgos-pa yang ni bshad-bya ste/ /zhi-sogs bya-ba'i cho-ga dang/  
/de-bzhin grub-pa brgyad dang ni/ /sangs-rgyas kyang ni mchog yin-no/

which might perhaps be rendered:

To explain the \*purpose: it is the procedure for calming and so forth,  
and the eight *siddhis*, and the highest buddhahood.

Thus according to Tsong-kha-pa, the \*purpose of the seven ornaments is similar to the \*distant purpose of *dgos-'brel*, at least for the GST. This example warns us against the careless transfer of such technical terms from one context to another.<sup>22</sup>

2.7 *Sgam-po-pa Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal*.<sup>23</sup> The introduction to his commentary [E] on the Hevajra-tantra contains an account of *dgos-'brel* more elaborate than any so far considered. He starts by setting it in the context of Vasubandhu's *rnam-bshad rig-pa*, identifying it with *dgos-pa* (purpose), the first of five conditions<sup>24</sup> without which explanations of the sūtras are said to fail. He then gives two applications of each of the four main *dgos-'brel* terms; these applications will be distinguished by suffices. The first set takes the tantra under discussion as the \*text, while the second set takes for its \*text the explanation of the *dgos-'brel* for the first \*text. He says:<sup>25</sup>

In order to arouse the interest of the listener,<sup>26</sup> before the tantra is explained it is necessary to speak of the *dgos-'brel*. [The *rnam-bshad rig-pa*] says: "In order to arouse the interest of a listener who has heard about the greatness of the sūtras, one should first speak of the purpose." Now, in *dgos-'brel* there are four well-known items (chos): \*topic, \*purpose, \*connection and \*distant purpose; or, if the \*text itself is added, five. Consider the set of four. Then the *artha*<sup>27</sup> indicated by the words of the text (*gzhung*) is the \*topic<sub>1</sub>. The *artha* to be understood (go-ba) on the basis of these words is the \*purpose<sub>1</sub>. The *artha* to be realised by the person [receiving instruction] is the \*distant purpose<sub>1</sub>. The connection between the \*topic<sub>1</sub> and these two \*purposes is called the \*connection<sub>1</sub>.

Next, we have the four [items of the *dgos-'brel*<sub>2</sub> based] on the words of the *dgos-'brel*<sub>1</sub>. The four items \*purpose<sub>1</sub> etc. [of the *dgos-'brel*<sub>1</sub>] based on

the words of the *gzhung* are the \*topic<sub>2</sub>. The \*purpose<sub>2</sub> is that on the basis of the words of the *dgos-'brel*<sub>1</sub>, the person should understand (rtogs-pa) these four items as being in the *gzhung*. The \*distant purpose is that when they have been understood, the person should enter<sup>28</sup> into the *gzhung*. The \*connection<sub>2</sub> is analogous to the \*connection<sub>1</sub>.<sup>29</sup>

Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal also spells out the five referents of “\*topic<sub>1</sub>” etc., as in sec. 2.3. Unfortunately he does not do this for the *dgos-'brel*<sub>2</sub>. For the Tibetan, see Appendix C.

2.8. *Padma-dkar-po*<sup>30</sup> and *Kong-sprul*<sup>31</sup> both give brief accounts of *dgos-'brel* in their works on the Hevajra-tantra. But they add little to Vajragarbha (sec. 2.2) and Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal (sec. 2.7) respectively.

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#### APPENDIX A: THE VIMALAPRABHĀ ON DGOS-'BREL

*Extracts from the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts*

*Sanskrit* This is transcribed from a microfilm of text E 13746 as filmed by the Nepalese-German Ms. preservation project. The section transcribed occurs at 10b7-11a2 and is part of the introduction to the work (i.e., not really commenting on any verse of the Kālacakratāntra). This part of the ms. is very clear and I have transcribed it without alteration apart from a single slip of the pen in the second sentence (ms.: abhidhiyaḥ).

ata uktād anena krameṇa pañcapaṭālasvabhāva tayāvasthitāḥ // kālacakro bhagavānagrābhidheyāḥ // asya pratipādakaṃ paṭālasamūhaṃ tantrarājam abhidhānaṃ // anayān abhidheyābhidhānayoḥ parasparaṃ vācyavācālakak-ṣaṇaḥ sambandhaḥ // vācyo bhagavān kālacakraḥ pañcapaṭālasvabhāva tayāvasthitāḥ // vācakaṃ kālacakram abhidhānam pañcapaṭālatmakam // aṇādibuddho bhagavān vācyāḥ // vācakaṃ ādibuddham abhidhānam iti, vācyavācālakakṣaṇaḥ // abhidheyābhidhānasambandhaḥ // ato maṇḍala-praveśāllaukikābhiṣeka dānena puṇyāsambhārārthakaraṇamprayojanam, mahāprajñācatūrthalokottarābhiṣeka dāna niranvaya mahāmudrāsiddhi lābhāya, puṇyājñānasambhārārthakaraṇam prayojanaprayojanam iti //

*Tibetan* This is transcribed from the reprint of the Sde-dge edition, 12a1-a5. (As is well-known, this reprint is excellent and very clear.)

དེས་མི་འཇགས་པ་འདིས་གསུངས་པའི་བྱིར་ལེན་ལྔ་འཇགས་ལྟེན་

གྱིས་གསུངས་པའི་བཙུན་ལྔ་འཇགས་དུས་གྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་མི་འདིར་བཙུན་

བར་བྱ་བའོ། །འདི་སྟོན་པར་བྱེད་པའི་ལེན་ལྔ་འཇགས་ལྟེན་གྱི་ལྔ་འཇགས་

རི་རྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པའོ། །བརྫོང་བྱེད་བྱེད་འདི་དག་ལམ་རྩམ་བརྫོང་  
 བྱེད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད་མི་འབྲེལ་བ་སྟེ། བརྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པ་མི་.....  
 བཙམ་ལྡན་འདས་དུས་ཀྱི་འཁྲུང་ལ་ལེའུ་ལྡེ་རྩ་ལོ་ལོ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བཞུགས་  
 བ་ཡིན་ལ། རྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པ་མི་དུས་ཀྱི་འཁྲུང་ལ་རྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པ་  
 ལེའུ་ལྡེ་བདག་ཉིད་དོ། །ཡང་དང་པོའི་སངས་རྒྱས་བཙམ་ལྡན་.....  
 འདས་མི་བརྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན་ལ་རྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པ་མི་དང་པོའི་.....  
 སངས་རྒྱས་རྫོང་བར་བྱེད་པའོ་ཞེས་བྱེད་བ་བརྫོང་བྱེད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་.....  
 མཚན་ཉིད་མི་བརྫོང་བྱེད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་བའོ། །དེས་ན་དཀྱིལ་.....  
 འཁྲུང་དུ་ཞུགས་པ་ལས་འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་དབང་སྤྱོད་པས་བསོད་ནམས་  
 ཀྱི་ཚལས་ཀྱི་དོན་བྱེད་པ་མི་དགོས་པའོ། །ཤེས་རབ་ཆེན་པོ་འཇིག་.....  
 རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པའི་དབང་བཞི་བ་སྤྱོད་པས་རིགས་མེད་པ་ལྷག་རྒྱ་.....  
 ཆེན་པོའི་དངོས་གྲུབ་སྐབ་པ་ལ་བསོད་ནམས་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཚལས་ཀྱི་  
 དོན་བྱེད་པ་མི་དགོས་པའི་དགོས་པ་བ་སྟེ།

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## APPENDIX B: TRANSLATING INTENSIONAL TERMS

As in the body of the paper we must distinguish carefully between intention (with a *t*) and intension (with an *s*). I shall treat *intention* colloquially, as similar to purpose. *Intension* is a term of art and needs definition. Consider any substantive (noun or adjective). The set of things to which it applies is called its *extension*. If its meaning is fully specified by giving its extension, it is said to be *extensional*; if not, it is *intensional*.

Roughly speaking, intensionality arises from the possibility of one thing having more than one name, as follows. Let *a*, *b* . . . be things (so “*a*”, “*b*” . . . denote things). We do not demand that *a*, *b* . . . all be distinct. Let *a\**, *b\** . . . be names of *a*, *b* . . .; of course we do not demand that each thing have a unique name, so that  $a \rightarrow a^*$  is not a function. Thus, \* acts as a kind of quotation mark. However, it is important to acknowledge explicitly that quotation does not *have* to be done with inverted commas “...”; in Tibetan it is done with . . . *zhes-pa*. I shall regard *a\**, *b\** . . . as used for the purpose of *identifying reference* in the sense of Strawson. So “ $a = b$ ” means that *a* and *b* are the same thing; “ $a^* = b^*$ ” means that *a\** and *b\** are the same name (under some unspecified individuation-condition). Normally neither of  $a = b$  and  $a^* = b^*$  follows from the other. Now let *F* be a predicate (standing for a property, say a *Begriff* in the sense of Frege). A typical subject-predicate sentence will have the form  $F(a^*)$ , say. If *F* is extensional as just defined, then the truth-value of  $F(a^*)$  is determined by *F* and *a*, but not by *a\**; if  $a = b$ , then  $F(a^*)$  and  $F(b^*)$  are true or false together. (Though it is not my purpose to give a rigorous argument, the assertion follows rigorously whenever meaning is determined by truth-conditions, in particular if meaning is taken to be Fregean sense.) However, if *F* is intensional, then even though  $a = b$ ,  $F(a^*)$  and  $F(b^*)$  may not be true or false together. This phenomenon is called *referential opacity* and its presence is the most useful (sufficient) criterion for intensionality.

Extensional terms are relatively easy to translate. We find out what the extension is (the set of things to which the foreign term applies) and we then try to find an English term with the same extension. The difficulty with intensional terms is that there seems to be no simple guideline of this type.

Consider the problem of translating *brjod-bya* (*abhidheya*). Anything whatever can be spoken of (*brjod-pa*, *vac-*), so anything can be a *brjod-bya*. This alone does not tell us what *brjod-bya* means. (What are we *saying* about something when we say it is the *brjod-bya* of something else? This is exactly the question which is begged if we claim that we know the meaning of *brjod-bya* once we know, for each *X*, what [if anything] is the *brjod-bya* of *X*. Yet this is just the kind of information given by most of the texts quoted in the body of the paper.) Thus the term is intensional. What more is there to the meaning? My “topic” is just a guess based on the examples mentioned in the texts (it has the right referents and seems to have the right kind of intensional ambiguity, as mentioned in sec. 1.3). Otherwise it just “seems to fit.” This is unsatisfactorily vague; we want a better criterion, but I don’t know any.

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Is *brjod-bya* (*abhidheya*) also referentially opaque? This depends on delicate questions of individuation. For instance, Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara are both Heruka, but Hevajra is not Cakrasaṃvara (contrast Frege's famous example: the morning star and the evening star are both Venus; but is the morning star the evening star?) Even so, it seems fairly clear that Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal is treating "*brjod-bya*" as referentially transparent. Consider [E, 15b2]: *spyir rgyud-kyi bstan-bya'i gtso-bor gyur-pa'i bcom-ldan-'das de-nyid brjod-bya/*; it seems clear that he would be prepared to treat this remark as a *schema*, into which the name of a tantra and *any* name of its chief deity can be substituted to yield a true sentence, as long as coferentiality is preserved. He actually gives an example in which (because of the context) the substitution of "Heruka" for "Cakrasaṃvara" preserves the reference, while the substitution of "Hevajra" for "Cakrasaṃvara" plainly would not.

The situation is even more difficult for the translation of *artha* (*don*) when it means roughly "meaning" or "intention," or for *prayojana* (*dgos-pa*) when it means roughly "purpose." These English expressions do not refer at all, there seem to be no *things* called meanings, purposes, etc. That being so, what could constitute evidence for the correctness of "meaning," "purpose," *even in particular cases*, except a kind of vague goodness of fit? And if nothing counts as evidence in any particular case, nothing can count as evidence in general (e.g., for the linguistic meanings). Similar difficulties occur with such terms as *brjod-don*, *dgos-don*, *dgongs-gzhi*, etc. (also other compounds of *dgongs-pa*). In this area there does seem to be a good case for adopting the Tibetan expedient of simply *ruling* that a certain English expression (perhaps picked out by some typographical device, such as the prefixed asterisk) shall stand for some specified Sanskrit or Tibetan expression. Needless to say, a device of this kind creates a new word. This is very far from the claim that the English word (without the asterisk) *means* the same as that Sanskrit or Tibetan word; and it seems hard indeed to know what *this* claim might mean.

These themes are well illustrated by the passage of Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal given in section 2.7. There we see the intensionality of *don*, *artha* in some of the many ambiguous ways in which it is used. These include the *concept* conveyed by a word or a phrase; the general *purpose* for which sentences or texts may be uttered; the *content* which may be conveyed by means of their utterance; and the intention or purpose towards which the audience may be directed as a result of hearing (and perhaps acting upon) the utterance. All these ways of using *don*, *artha* might perhaps be broadly covered by "sense." (Clearly many other uses will not be covered; consider e.g., *paramārtha-satya* or *artha-śāstra*.) So let us invent the pseudo-English *\*sense*; the middle of Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal's remarks becomes (dropping the suffices):

Then the *\*sense* indicated by the words of the text (*gzhung*) is the *\*topic*.  
The *\*sense* to be understood (*go-ba*) on the basis of these words is the *\*purpose*. The *\*sense* which is to be realized by the person [receiving instruction] is the *\*distant purpose*.

Is this English? Does it make better sense, as we naively say? We need a short word ambiguous for the object or the content of an intentional state. Colloquial English does not seem to possess such a word. Could *\*sense* function in this way?

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APPENDIX C:  
BKRA-SHIS-RNAM-RGYAL ON DGOS-'BREL: TIBETAN TEXT  
[Source: E, 15a b]

ཉན་བ་པོ་གུས་བ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་བྱིས་ཀྱུད་བཤད་པའི་ཐོག་.....

མར་དགོས་འབྲེལ་བཅེད་དགོས་ཀྱི། དེ་ཉིད་དུ།

མདོ་དོན་ཆེ་བ་ཉིད་ཐོས་ནས། །

ཉན་བ་པོ་དེ་གུས་བྱེད་པས། །

ཐོག་མར་དགོས་བ་བཅེད་པར་བྱ། །ཞེས་སོ། །

དེ་ཡང་དགོས་འབྲེལ་ལ། བཅེད་བྱ་དང་དགོས་བ་དང་ཉིད་དགོས་

དང་འབྲེལ་བ་སྟོ་ཡོངས་སུ་གྲགས་བ་དགོས་སྐྱེས་ཚས་བཞེས་མ།

བཅེད་བྱེད་གཞུང་དང་བཅས་པའི་དགོས་སྐྱེས་ཚས་ལྡེ་ཡང་བཤད་

དོ། །དེ་ཡང་དགོས་འབྲེལ་གྱི་རྣམ་དབྱེ་བྱེ་ན། གཞུང་གི་ཚིག་ཙམ་

ལ་ཡོད་བ་བཞི་ནི། གཞུང་ཚིག་གི་བསྟན་པའི་དོན་གང་ཡིན་བ་དེ་

བཅེད་བྱ། ཚིག་དེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་དོན་གང་ཡིན་བ་དེ་གོ་བ་དགོས་



བ། དེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྐྱིས་བྱས་དོན་དེ་སྐྱབ་བ་ཉིང་དགོས།

དགོས་བ་གཉིས་བཟོད་བྱ་དེ་ལ་བསྟོན་ཤིང་འབྲེལ་བ་ནི་འབྲེལ་བའོ།།

།།དགོས་འབྲེལ་གྱི་ཚིག་ལ་ཡོད་བ་བཞི་ནི། གཞུང་གི་ལུས་

ལ་ཡོད་པའི་དགོས་སྐྱབས་ཚས་བཞི་ནི་བཟོད་བྱ། དགོས་འབྲེལ་གྱི་

ཚིག་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྐྱིས་བྱས་གཞུང་ལ་དགོས་སྐྱབས་ཚས་བཞི་ཡོད་པ་

བར་རྟོགས་བ་དགོས་བ། དེ་སྟོན་རྟོགས་ནས་གཞུང་ལ་འཇུག་བར་

འགྱུར་བ་ཉིང་དགོས། འབྲེལ་བ་ནི་གོང་བཞིན་འོ།།

.....སྐྱིས་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་བསྟན་བུའི་གཙོ་བོར་གྱུར་པའི་བཙམ་ལྷན་

འདས་དེ་ཉིང་བཟོད་བྱ། དེ་སྟོན་པའི་རྒྱུད་གཞུང་གང་ཡིན་བ་དེ་

བཟོད་བྱེད། དེ་གཉིས་ཨན་རྩུན་ཅིག་ལ་ཅིག་བསྟོན་བ་འབྲེལ་བ།

རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་བསྟན་དོན་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་གནས་སྐབས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་མཐའ་དག་

གྲུབ་བ་དགོས་བ། མཐའ་ཐུག་གི་འབྲས་བུ་གྲུབ་བ་ཉིང་དགོས་སུ་

བཤད་དེ། བདེ་མཚོག་སྟོན་འབྲེལ་ལས། .....

[For the subsequent quotation see sec. 2.3; the Tibetan is similar to that in appendix A.]



GST: Guhyasamājantra  
 JVS: Jñānavajrasamuccaya  
 PPD: Pradīpoddyotana: (Peking)  
 PPDT: PPD-abhisandhi-prakāśikā-nāma vyākhyā-ṭīkā by Bhavyakīrti (Snar-thang)  
 VG: Vajragarbhaṭīkā (Snar-thang)  
 VP: Vimalaprabhā  
 VPS, VPT: Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of VP (cf. Appendix A)

- A. Sa-skyapa Bsod-nams Rtse-mo (1141–82): Rgyud-sde spyi'i rnam-bzhag  
 B. Bu-ston (1290–1364): Dpal gsang ba 'dus-pa'i ṭīka sgron-ma rab-tu gsal-ba  
 D. Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419): Ye-shes rdo-rje kun-las btus-pa'i rgya-cher 'grel-pa  
 E. Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1512–87): Kye'i rdo-rje'i 'grel-pa legs-bshad nyi-ma'i od-zer  
 H. Padma-dkar-po (1527–92): Dpal kye'i rdo-rje'i spyi-don grub-pa'i yid-'phrog  
 J. Kong-sprul (1813–99): Brtag-gnyis spyi-don gsang-ba bla-med rdo-rje drwa-ba'i rgyan  
 K. Kong-sprul: Rgyud bla-ma'i snying-don-gyi rnam-'grel phyir mi-ldog-pa'i sengge'i nga-ro

NOTES

1. *dgos-'brel* is the term used by Bsod-nams-rtse-mo, Tsong-kha-pa and Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal and seems fairly standard. Padma-dkar-po and Kong-sprul use the variant *dgos-don*. Odder is Bu-ston's *dgongs-'grel*.
2. For a survey, see my "*bshad-thabs: Some Tibetan Methods of Explaining the Tantras*," in the *Proceedings of the 1981 Csoma de Kőrös Symposium* (ed. Steinkellner and Tauscher, Vienna 1983).
3. The asterisk \* before an English word indicates a cipher for the corresponding Tibetan or Sanskrit expression *in the relevant context*. This device is intended to help the reader who does not know oriental languages, without committing me to unsupportable claims about "translation." See Appendix B.
4. The distinction between expressed and implied senses, e.g., that of *vācya/vyaṅgya* (brjod-bya/gsal-bya) is fundamental in such Indian works on poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*) as the Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana, and clearly influenced the treatment of *bshad-thabs* in the introduction of Bhavyakīrti's important commentary PPDT on the PPD. Bh. also uses the distinction of *śabdālaṅkāra* and *arthālaṅkāra* in the same way as all *alaṅkāraśāstra* works since Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin. See my "Killing, Lying, Stealing and Adultery: a Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras," to appear in the *Proceedings of the 1984 Conference on Buddhist Hermeneutics*, held at

the Kuroda Institute, Los Angeles (ed. Lopez). However this influence of poetics on tantric commentary seems to have been much weaker in Tibet, and so will not be mentioned further in this note. Again, even when the *vocabulary* of poetics is not available for whatever reason, the problem of expressed and implied sense remains. Many Tibetans dealt with it by using a vocabulary of their own (not derived entirely from Sanskrit). See, e.g., my “Abhiprāya and Implication in Tibetan Linguistics”, *J. Ind. Phil.* vol. 12, pp. 1–33, 1984. Yet again, the implied sense enters into *dgos-'brel* only indirectly, in connection with the two \*purposes, and so will not be further considered here. (See also note 17.)

5. VG 7a3

6. kye'i rdo-rje 'bum-lnga-pa las, *ibid.*

7. This reference is to the Hevajra-tantra as we now have it, here called *nyung-ngu'i rgyud-gzhung*.

8. brjod-par-bya-ba dang rjod-par-byed-pa (also in the VP; Skt. is *vācyavācaka*, not *abhidheyābhidhāna*).

9. It is desirable to maintain a feeling for the distinction between the *general* rules for using a word and the rules which apply in the special context under consideration, even though this distinction is difficult to draw clearly. I shall attempt to deal with both.

10. Vinītadeva's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* (ed. Poussin) on NB I.1, e.g.,

ཡང་དག་བའི་ཤེས་བ་བསྐྱུ་བ་མི་དགོས་བ་ཡིན་ཅོ། (32.8)

སྤྱི་བུའི་དོན་ཐམས་ཅད་འགྲུབ་བ་མི་ཡང་དག་བའི་ཤེས་་་

བ་སྐྱུ་དུ་གྲོ་བ་ཅན་ཡིན་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འདི་སྤྱི་ཉི་དེས་མི་དགོས་བའི་་་

ཡང་དགོས་བའོ། (33.7)

Both Vinītadeva and Dharmottara refer to the N.B. as *prakaraṇa* (work, treatise) but Vinītadeva explicitly identifies this word with *śāstra* at 31.6.

11. Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* (ed. Malvania) on NB I.1: *samyajjñāna-pūrviketyādīnā'sya prakaraṇasya abhidheyaprayojanam. . . prakaraṇa-abhideyasya samyajjñānasya sarvapuruṣārthasiddhihetutvaṃ prayojanamuktam/*

12. VPS 10b7, VPT 12a1; see Appendix A.

13. Quoted by Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal, E 15b3. The *bde-mchog stod-'grel* is a commentary, no doubt of Indian origin, on some work of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle, and is often quoted in bKa-brgyud works. However, I have been unable to locate it in the *bstan-bsgyur*.

14. A 62a4

15. The three tantras of ground, path and goal go back to GST ch. XVIII. For

Bsod-nams-rtse-mo they are the most important of all devices for explaining the tantras (*rgyud-kyi bshad-thabs*). For a detailed account of the three tantras, see my “Ground, Path and Goal in the Vajrayāna: Padma Dkar-po on Tantra,” to appear in this journal.

16. B 21a3.

17. rgyan bdun, *saptālaṅkārah*. These are found in the introductory section of the PPD, and form the basis of its \*methods of explanation (*bshad-thabs*). See B, 20b2 ff., and my survey mentioned in note 2. Each ornament is itself a group of \*methods, often individually called ornaments too, making 27 in all. Here Bu-ston divides them into two classes, actually of 12 and 15 (see note 18).

18. tha mi-dad-pa'i rgyan bcu-gsum, B 21a3. This remark is clarified at 20b7: mtha-drug tshul-bzhi bshad-pa-gnyis-te bcu-gsum-po rgyud-las tha-mi-dad-pa'i rgyan yin-la/. (“Thirteen” reflects the Tibetan custom of adding one to the total of a list.) Similarly for the remaining ornaments.

19. Most of these technical terms are explained in the article mentioned in note 2.

20. D 173b8

21. In the PPD, the first of the seven ornaments, the “introduction” (*upodghāta*, *gleng-bslang-ba*) contains five items: the name of the tantra, its author, the kind of person for whom it was written, its length and its \*purpose. Steinkellner rightly remarks in note 12 of his “Tantristic Hermeneutics” (*Proceedings of the 1976 Csoma de Kőrös Symposium* held at Mátrafüred, Hungary, ed. L. Ligeti) that this ornament is connected with the general conditions for the composition of *śāstras*; we see that this connection is rather indirect (he did not suggest otherwise). This indirectness was certainly appreciated in Tibet, since otherwise works containing an exposition of the “introductory ornament” would not have needed to deal *additionally* with *dgos-'brel*.

22. This again confirms the indirectness of the connection mentioned in note 21.

23. E 15a2 (see Appendix C)

24. The verse of the *rnam-bshad rig-pa* [E 15a3] lists them as: dgos-pa, bsdus-don, tshig-don, mtshams-sbyar and brgal-lan. Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal glosses these [ibid.] as: rgyud-kyi dgos-'brel (the *dgos-'brel* of the tantra), brjod-bya'i bsdus-don (the summarized *artha* of the \*topic), gzhung-gi tshig-don (the literal meaning of the source-text), bshad-pa'i mtshams-sbyor (the connection between the parts of the explanation), and lung-rigs-kyi brgal-lan (replies to queries [based on] scripture or reasoning).

25. E 15a4; a few words have been dropped, and material in square brackets [ ] is my interpolation.

26. This is a common motivation for *dgos-'brel*; compare Dharmottara on NB I.1.

27. The use of *don*, *artha* here as a kind of blanket intension is noteworthy. This word is so vague that it is almost impossible to translate it consistently by one English word. [Both these points are developed in Appendix B.]

28. 'jug-pa (*praveśa*), E 15b2: de-ltar rtogs-nas gzhung-la 'jug-par-'gyur-ba nying-dgos/

29. Of all our authors, Bkra-shis-rnam-rgyal is the most sensitive to the idea that once a text has been interpreted, it can be re-interpreted; or, once the meanings of words have been changed, they can be changed again, etc. For another example, related to the well-known vajra-song in HT II.iv, see E 208b; his discussion of this is taken up in note 85 of my "Does Tibetan Hermeneutics throw any light on *Sandhābhāṣa*?": *Journal of the Tibet Society* vol. 2, pp. 5-39, 1982.

30. H 5b3 ff.

31. J 16a1 ff. A slightly different account is given at K 25bf ff.

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