

INTERPRETING THE BODY *MAṆḌALA*: TSONGKHAPA VERSUS LATER GELUG SCHOLARS

Yael Bentor

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

To Elliot, my teacher at Indiana University

Introduction

According to Tsongkhapa writing in 1405,¹ deity yoga is the defining characteristic of the Mantra Vehicle, making it superior to the method of the Perfection Vehicle. The creation stage² is the deity yoga of the Highest Tantra that is superior to the deity yoga of the Lower Tantras.³ In practicing the creation stage the meditators visualize themselves as deities endowed with the Buddha's three bodies, thus this meditation—like many other meditations, but perhaps even more so—presumes the creative power of the mind. Nevertheless, Tibetan scholars differ considerably as to extent of the creative power they are willing to grant to a mind engaged in meditation. Moreover, they vary in the degree they accept the reality of the vision seen by yogis when they visualize themselves as awakened beings. At one antipode, the yogis in fact see themselves as they are, since awakening is their true nature, while at the other, the yogis merely meditate on themselves as having appearance similar to the Form Body of the Buddha.

At the same time, if mere visualization is regarded as creating a true reality, it would be like a beggar boasting to be a king. For this reason the vast majority of Tibetan scholars from all schools maintain that the creation stage is 'contrived' or 'conceptual'. For example, Tsongkhapa calls the creation stage, 'contrived yoga' or 'conceptual stage',⁴ Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–99) regards it as 'contrived yoga',⁵ Dwags po Bkra shis nmam rgyal (1512–87) names it 'fancied creation stage',⁶ and Dge rtse Paṇḍita Tshe dbang mchog grub (1761–1829) refers to it as 'mentally imputed'.⁷

These scholars assert then that since the method of the creation stage involves mental contrivance, the deity's body that arises from it is contrived too, and therefore only the subsequent steps of the path, which do not involve mental creations, can lead to true divine bodies.

1 Tsongkhapa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), *Sngags rim chen mo*, p.21.

2 Skt. *utpatti-krama*, Tib. *bskyed rim*.

3 It is superior because it relies on the special innermost actual interconnections between the deity endowed with the Buddha's three bodies and the future birth, death and intermediate state of the meditator.

4 *Sngags rim chen mo*, pp.455–456, *bcos ma'i rnal 'byor* or *brtags pa'i rim pa*.

5 *Shes bya kun khyab*, vol. 3, p.173, *yongs su brtag pa'i rnal 'byor*.

6 *Gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i spyi don mdor bsdus pa legs bshad nor bu'i 'od zer*, 170.1, *kun btags kyi bskyed rim*.

7 *Bskyed pa'i rim pa cho ga dang sbyar ba'i gsal byed zung 'jug snye ma*, 26, *blos kun tu brtags pa*.

Thus while most Buddhist traditions emphasize the creative power of the mind, they are well aware of its boundaries. For example, Tsongkhapa states:⁸

Therefore, meditators on the creation stage perfect the divine body through a method contrived by the mind, and the deity's body that arises from this method is also contrived. Meditators on the completing stage perfect the body of the deity through the yoga of the winds, drops and so on—a method not contrived by the mind. On the basis of this method they realize emptiness, and finally arise in the body of the deity, that is not conceptualized by the mind.

For Tsongkhapa the true transformation takes place within the completion stage on the basis of the subtle body, when during the practice of the illusory body the actual body of perfect wisdom is attained.⁹ Similarly for Zhe chen Rgyal tshab Padma 'gyur med rnam rgyal (1871-1926) of the Nyingma tradition,¹⁰ it is when the conceptual meditation on the creation stage turns into the special realization of the completion stage and the form of the deity unfolds as the natural expression of awareness, that the true transformation occurs.

What is then the use of the creation stage? This question raised already in the *Hevajra Tantra*¹¹ received various answers, yet most Tibetan scholars agree that both the creation and completion stages are necessary since without first engaging in the creation stage, it would be impossible to later on achieve the uncontrived goals of the completion stage that are the goals of the Mantra Vehicle. According to Tsongkhapa¹² the unique purpose of the creation stage is to ripen the meditator towards the completion stage and the fruit. This ripening is achieved by creating roots of virtue, habituating oneself to the three bodies, and cultivating the wisdom realizing emptiness, thereby making the elements of the subtle body serviceable. Likewise, Zhe chen Rgyal tshab Padma 'gyur med rnam rgyal¹³ states that a person, in whose continuum the wisdom of the completion stage has not arisen, first meditates on the creation stage in order to ripen for the wisdom of the completion stage. Mkhas grub rje Dge legs dpal bzang po (1385–1438) explicates this in the context of the meditation on the body *maṇḍala*:¹⁴

The main cause of enlightenment, the supreme attainment, is the completion stage, arising from the meditation by penetrating the vital points in your body. For this purpose, now [during the creation stage] you generate all the parts of your body as deities, bless them, and habituate over and over to this; thereby the channels, winds

8 *Sngags rim chen mo*, p.456.

9 *Sngags rim chen mo*, p.456, *ye shes kyi sku dngos*.

10 *Bskyed rim spyi 'i rnam par bzhag pa nyung gsal go bder brjod pa rab gsal nor bu 'i me long*, p.71.

11 *Hevajra Tantra*, II.ii.34.

12 *Sngags rim chen mo*, pp.471–472. In the same work, p.457, Tsongkhapa says: “[Qualm:] If this is the case, the meditators should create the body of the deity though the method of the completion stage alone... What is the point of the contrived method for creating the body of the deity... [Reply:] That is not so, without having been habituated to the contrived method, the meditator will not be able to perfect the uncontrived method.”

13 *Bskyed rim spyi 'i rnam par bzhag pa nyung gsal go bder brjod pa rab gsal nor bu 'i me long*, p.71.

14 *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho*, folio 125b, p.252.1-2.

and drops of your body would become serviceable. This [meditation of the creation stage] will be a special ripener for the easy arising of the realization of the completion stage when you will be meditating by penetrating the vital points in your body.

All these scholars defer the actual attainments to the completion stage, thereby relegating the creation stage to little more than a preparatory practice.

Meditation on the body *maṅḍala* according to Tsongkhapa

In its elaborate form, the first step in the meditation on the body *maṅḍala* is the meditation on the body as the celestial mansion of the body *maṅḍala*. Then in the second step the yogis visualize deities on individual parts of their bodies that have become the palaces for these deities. We will take as an example the meditation on the body *maṅḍala* that is included within the creation stage of the *Guhyasamāja*, and ask what would be the effect of visualizing one's body as the celestial mansion of the *maṅḍala*, and of meditating on the deities that reside there. Here the same tension is found: On the one hand, for example, Lūyīpā,¹⁵ in one of the authoritative works on the body *maṅḍala*, explains that when yogis set deities on their psycho-physical constituents of their bodies, these constituents are purified, in other words, transformed. Yet various Tibetan scholars agree that the impure body—a product of karma and afflictive emotions—cannot be transformed into the pure body of the Buddha through the power of the mind alone. What is the result then of the visualization of the meditator's body as the divine *maṅḍala*?

An important scriptural source for the meditation on the body *maṅḍala* of the *Guhyasamāja* is the following line of the *Vajramālā*:¹⁶ “The body turns into the celestial mansion, the perfect support of all Buddhas.” Likewise in his own *Sādhana* Tsongkhapa says:¹⁷ “All the parts of the body turn into the respective parts of the celestial mansion.” These sources typically present the meditation as achieving its results, creating the sense that actual transformations are indeed taking place.

However this is not what Tsongkhapa's own explanations on the *Sādhana* tell us. In his *Bung ba'i re skong*, one of his exegeses on the *Guhyasamāja Sādhana*, Tsongkhapa describes how to meditate on the body as the celestial mansion of the body *maṅḍala*:¹⁸

The way to meditate on the body as the celestial mansion of the body *maṅḍala* is to gather simultaneously the parts of the celestial mansion of the outer *maṅḍala*, such as the four corners and so on, and the parts of the yogi's body such as

15 *Bhagavad-abhisamaya*, *Dpal bcom ldan 'das mngon par rtogs pa*, Toh. 1427, folio 186b. For a study of this *Sādhana*, see Gray 2011. Skt.: *evaṃ skandha-dhatv-āyataneṣu devatā-viśuddhiḥ*. Tib.: *de dag ni phung po dang khams dang skye mched rnam kyī lha'i rnam par dag pa'o*.

16 The *Rdo rje 'phreng ba*, one of the explanatory tantras of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, Toh. 445, D. vol. 81 [ca], ch. 68, folio 275a, p.549.2: *lus ni gzhal yas khang du 'gyur*.

17 Tsongkhapa, *Sādhana*, folio 41a, p.97.2: *de ltar lus kyī cha thams cad gzhal yas khang gi cha so sor gyur*.

18 Tsongkhapa, *Bung ba'i re skong*, folio 21b, p.379.3-6. See also Mkhas grub rje, *Bde mchog dril bu lus dkyil gyi dbang du byas pa'i bskyed rim gyi dka' gnas*, folio 9a, p.781.5-6.

its front and back. Thereby through the substantial cause and the cooperative conditions, the subsequent similar moments of the body *maṇḍala* arise.¹⁹ By meditating in this way, the third stage of the completion stage and the actual celestial mansion of the fruition time are attained.

In the last sentence Tsongkhapa is saying that this meditation would lead to the illusory body during the completion stage on the path, and to the actual attainment of the celestial mansion when the fruit of Buddhahood is achieved. In other words the actual role of this meditation is merely one step within the long path to enlightenment.

In the first line Tsongkhapa explains how this meditation takes place in the mental continuum of the meditator and indicates that for creating the celestial mansion of the body *maṇḍala*, the prior visualization of the outer *maṇḍala*, the *maṇḍala* in which the meditator—visualized as the deity—resides, is no less important than the body of the yogi. The first step is to gather the four sides of the outer *maṇḍala* together with the four sides of the yogi's body, its front, back, right and left parts to create the four sides of the body *maṇḍala*. In this way on the basis of each former moment²⁰ of the visualization of the outer *maṇḍala* and each part of the body, the subsequent similar moment of the visualization of the body *maṇḍala* arises.

Moreover, Tsongkhapa distinguishes between the substantial cause and the cooperative conditions for the body *maṇḍala*. Though not explicitly stated, the parts of the outer *maṇḍala*—the ones mentioned first—seem to be the substantial cause, while the parts of the yogi's body—mentioned later—are the cooperative conditions. In this case, the visualization of the outer *maṇḍala* plays a greater part than the yogi's body in creating the body *maṇḍala*.

In his '*Dod pa 'jo ba*, a commentary on the *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara according to Lūyīpā, Tsongkhapa's elaborates on the meditation on the celestial mansion of the body *maṇḍala*, emphasizing that one meditates on the body *maṇḍala* on the basis of the outer celestial mansion that one has visualized earlier.²¹

When it is time to meditate on the body *maṇḍala*, you do not dissolve the former visualization of the outer *maṇḍala*, rather you meditate on the basis of the celestial mansion that you have visualized earlier.

And:²²

From now on, the continuum of your earlier visualization of the stacked up physical elements, Mt. Meru and the celestial mansion proceeds without being dissolved. Therefore when you begin your meditation on your body as the celestial mansion, on the basis of each former similar moment and each part of the body, a subsequent similar moment arises.

19 Tib. *phyi ma 'i rigs 'dra*.

20 Tib. *rigs 'dra snga ma*.

21 '*Dod 'jo*, folio 121a, p.439.3.

22 '*Dod 'jo*, folio 122b, p.442.5-6.

In his own commentary on Cakrasaṃvara body *maṅḌala*, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456) cites this passage only to object to this method,²³ but we will not go into this here. The important point for us is that according to Tsongkhapa the former meditation on the celestial mansion of the outer *maṅḌala* serves as a basis for the celestial mansion of the body *maṅḌala*, no less [if not more] than the yogi's body. Hence although in his own *Sādhana* Tsongkhapa instructs:²⁴ “All the parts of the body turn into the respective parts of the celestial mansion,” the nature of the transformation of the yogi's body is not all that corporeal.

Meditation on the body *maṅḌala* according to later Gelug scholars

Paṅ chen Bsod nams grags pa (1478–1554) explains this method of meditation on the body *maṅḌala* on the basis of the former visualization of the outer *maṅḌala* and the respective parts of the body, through the example of coloring a cloth:²⁵

You meditate on the body *maṅḌala* on the basis of a continuum similar to the celestial mansion of the outer *maṅḌala*. Here is how you meditate: As for example, when you make the first moment of a woolen cloth the substantial cause, and the first moment of the lac-dye the cooperative condition, these will turn into a subsequent similar moment of a colored woolen cloth. Likewise, when you make a similar type of the first moment of the outer *maṅḌala* the substantial cause, and the propelling of the thought: ‘the individual parts of the body become the respective parts of the *maṅḌala*’, the cooperative condition, these will become the subsequent similar moment of the body—the celestial mansion of the body *maṅḌala*.

Note that in this explanation both the substantial cause and the cooperative condition are mental. The substantial cause arises from the visualization of the outer *maṅḌala* and the cooperative conditions are not the individual parts of the body that turn the respective parts of the body *maṅḌala*, but the propelling of the thought to that effect.

According to the Second Dalai Lama Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542), the individual parts of the body themselves are the cooperative conditions:²⁶

On the basis of a previous similar moment of the former celestial mansion acting as the substantial cause, and the individual parts of the body acting as the cooperative conditions, subsequent mental moments of the similar continuum of the former celestial mansion are made into the basis of achieving the individual parts of the body [*maṅḌala*]. On this basis you visualize that [the body *maṅḌala*] is achieved in actuality.

23 *Dril bu pa'i lus dkyil gyi bshad pa*, folio 375b, p.402.2.1-2.

24 Tsongkhapa, *Sādhana*, folio 41a, p.97.2, cited already above.

25 *Mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog = Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi rnam gzhag mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog*, folios 53b–54a, pp.118.5–119.1.

26 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho, *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rim pa dang po'i lam la slob pa'i tshul*, folio 30a, p.559.1.

In any case according for these Gelug scholars who lived during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, the substantial cause are the parts of the outer *maṇḍala* the yogis hold in their minds and the cooperative conditions are related to the parts of the yogi's body.

However when we look at the writing of some Gelug scholars from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries we discover that the substantial cause and the cooperative conditions have been reversed. For example Lcang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan (1642–1714) explains:²⁷

By making the parts of your body the substantial cause, and making the parts of the outer *maṇḍala* the cooperative conditions, you generate the celestial mansion of the body *maṇḍala*.

Similarly, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje (1648–1721/22) says:²⁸

Having made the front part of the body the actual substantial cause and the corner of the outer *maṇḍala* the co-operative condition, meditate that these two gathered together arise as the eastern part of the body *maṇḍala*,” and so on.

This is the first step in the visualization of the body *maṇḍala*. The front part of the body serves as the basis for the eastern side of the celestial mansion of the body *maṇḍala*. According to 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje, this front part of the body is the actual substantial cause and the eastern corner of the outer *maṇḍala* is the cooperative condition. The result is the eastern part of the body *maṇḍala*.

In the case of the first group of scholars when the substantial cause is the visualization of the outer *maṇḍala*, the nature of the subsequent product—the celestial mansion of the body *maṇḍala*—is mental, whereas in the second case in which the substantial cause is the yogi's body, the result has a more material nature, though not necessarily physical. It seems that these later Gelug scholars felt that for the meditation on the body *maṇḍala* to have a greater impact, their actual bodies have to be the substantial cause. Such is the explanation of A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho (1803–1875):²⁹

Taking the body as the substantial cause has greater significance, because such a meditation leaves imprints for emanating the celestial mansion from the parts of the two illusory bodies and from Vajradhara's body, during the path and resultant stages respectively.

Even if A khu ching did like to see a more substantial transformation of his impure body into the divine palace of the *maṇḍala*, he still reminds us that the only effect the meditation on the body *maṇḍala* within the creation stage can have is to ripen towards the illusory body during

27 Lcang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan, *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rim pa dang po'i lam la slob tshul gyis dmigs rim 'khrul med bla ma dam pa'i zhal las byung ba zin thor bkod pa gsang chen myur lam*, folio 21a, p.194.4.2.

28 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje, *Gsang 'dus bskyed rim khrid kyi zin bris*, folio 34a, p.83.1-2.

29 A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho, *Mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung = 'Dus pa 'phags lugs lha so gnyis pa'i lam rim pa dang po'i khrid dmigs kyi brjed byang mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung*, folio 76a, p.155.1-5. Translated into English in Jinpa 2002: 136.

the completion stage and the Buddha's body at the resultant stage. In support of his position, A khu ching cites the scriptures we saw already, the *Vajra Garland Explanatory Tantra*³⁰ and Tsongkhapa's *Sādhana*,³¹ that indeed convey a sense of an actual bodily transformation. A khu ching also resorts to reasoning:³²

The definition of a substantial cause is this: 'That which primarily brings into being as its continuum that substance.' So nowhere is it said that cooperative conditions can become that effect.

Clearly A khu ching is keen to see an actual effect on the yogi's body. Still he is hesitant to reach a conclusion that would explicitly contradict the position of earlier masters whom he names. He says:³³

In any case, it is difficult to reach a definite, conclusive position on this.

Moreover A khu ching is well aware of the limitations of logical reasoning with regard to yogic experiences:³⁴

It is, however, vital to ensure that one does not fall into excessive analysis, for experiential realizations based on imaginative meditations both on the path and resultant stages are infinite.

It is palpable that the methods of formal debate that developed in the Gelug school had an effect on the analysis of the later scholars. Still A khu ching certainly allows the meditation to have its own operational logic. For the sake of achieving actual results the meditators have to convince themselves that their visualizations have true effects. There is a clear tension here between the limitation of mere mental imaginations and the wish of the meditators to see real bodily as well as spiritual transformations.

Tsongkhapa versus Mkhas grub rje on the meditation on the deities of the body *maṅdala*

A similar development occurs in the second step of the meditation on the body *maṅdala*: the meditation on the deities residing in it. Here the yogis meditate on the transformation of mental and physical

³⁰ The *Vajramālā*, *Rdo rje 'phreng ba*, Toh. 445, D. vol. 81 [ca], ch. 68, folio 275a, p.549.2: "The body turns into the celestial mansion."

³¹ *Sādhana*, folio 41a, p.97.2: "All the parts of the body turn into the respective parts of the celestial mansion."

³² A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho, *Mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung*, *ibid.*, folio 76a-b, pp.155.6–156.1, translated by Jinpa. For the sake of consistency in the terminology I have replaced 'material cause' with 'substantial cause'.

³³ A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho, *Mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung*, *ibid.*, folio 76b, p.156.1. Translated by Thubten Jinpa.

³⁴ A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho, *Mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung*, *ibid.*, folio 76b, p.156.1-2; translated by Jinpa with minor changes.

components of their bodies into the deities residing in the body *maṇḍala*. The foundation of this practice is the special link between the ordinary impure psycho-physical elements of the body and their purified aspects in the forms of the thirty-two deities of the Guhyasamāja *maṇḍala*. Thus the yogis visualize that each of the five aggregates respectively becomes the corresponding Tathāgata, each of the four physical elements the equivalent Mother, each of the six senses a Bodhisattva, and so on.

With respect to the first step of this meditation, the transformation of the form aggregate into Vairocana whose seed syllable is *Om*, Tsongkhapa instructs in his *Sādhana*:³⁵

From the crown of my head to my hair line, the essence of the form aggregate, white *Om*, completely transforms into white Vairocana.

The relations between the white seed syllable *Om* and the essence of the form aggregate is somewhat unclear here. Tsongkhapa explains this further in his *Slob tshul*:³⁶

Here is how you meditate: For example, in the area from the crown of the head up to the hair line, the essence of the form aggregate that abides in the appearance of the seed syllable white *Om*, completely transforms and is generated as Vairocana complete with faces and arms. Later on, you need to visualize that that Vairocana is indivisible in essence from the form aggregate. Likewise meditate on the others.

There are three steps here: (1) First the essence of the form aggregate abides in the appearance of the seed syllable, (2) then it completely transform into Vairocana, and (3) finally the meditator visualizes that Vairocana is indivisible in essence from the form aggregate.

But according to Mkhas grub rje:³⁷

For example, you meditate that your eye faculty completely transforms into the syllable *Thlīm*, and then the *Thlīm* completely transforms into Kṣitigarbha. But, if you first generate *Thlīm* in your own mind without a basis, and from that you generate Kṣitigarbha, and after that you merely visualize that Kṣitigarbha is indivisible from your own eye faculty, that is insufficient.

Apparently Mkhas grub rje offers his divergent suggestion because for him a significant transformation of all the psycho-physical elements of one's body into the seed syllables of the deities is crucial. For him merely visualizing that the essence of the psycho-physical element abides in the appearance of the seed syllable, as instructed by Tsongkhapa, is an insufficient initial step for the transformation of the impure body into a pure divine mansion. Therefore he requires a complete transformation of each psycho-physical element into the respective seed syllable *within the visualization*, before the seed syllable completely transforms into a deity. At the same time Mkhas grub rje never regards the creation stage as capable of producing true transformations.

³⁵ *Sādhana*, folio 41a, p.97.2-3.

³⁶ Tsongkhapa, *Slob tshul*, folios 16b–17a, pp.32.5–33.2. See also his *Bung ba'i re skong*, folios 21b–22a pp.379.6–380.1.

³⁷ Mkhas grub rje, *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho*, folios 125b–126a, pp.252.5–253.1.

The discrepancy between the instructions of Tsongkhapa and Mkhas grub rje did not remain unnoticed by later members of the Gelug tradition. Mkhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho (1423–1513), first presents Tsongkhapa’s method and then Mkhas grub rje’s instructions without going into discussion why they differ, but leaving it for the reader “to examine what are their intentions”:³⁸

Taking Kṣitigarbha for example, the all knowing lord [Tsongkhapa] teaches that you need to visualize that the eye faculty is the essence of *Thlim*; then you completely transform the *Thlim* and from that you generate Kṣitigarbha and set him on your eye, then you visualize that he is in essence no different from your eye faculty; whereas Mkhas grub rje explains to meditate that your eye faculty completely transforms into the seed syllable *Thlim*, and the *Thlim* completely transforms into Kṣitigarbha. You need to examine what are their intentions.

Similarly Grags pa bshad sgrub (1675–1748) points out the difference between the instructions of the two masters, opting for the method of Tsongkhapa, for the reason that others prefer it as well, yet leaving us wondering why:³⁹

Here is how you meditate on the deities of the body *maṅḌala*: In the area from the crown of your head up to the hair line visualize the essence of the form aggregate as white *Om*, and from its complete transformation generate Vairocana as in the *Sādhana*. Mkhas grub rje explains that at that time, for instance, the form aggregate completely transforms into *Om*, and from it you generate Vairocana. But many others explain that according to the words of the *Sādhana*, you visualize the essence of the form aggregate itself in the appearance of *Om*; therefore you should meditate in this way.

Still most Gelug scholars take no notice of this dissimilarity between these two forefathers of their tradition, though some do follow Mkhas grub rje in this matter. To this group latter group who follow Mkhas grub rje belongs the second Dalai Lama, Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542), [who was a disciple of Mkhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho, who follows Tsongkhapa]:⁴⁰

Take Kṣitigarbha for example, the yogi should visualize that the two eye faculties completely transform into the two seed syllables *Thlims*, and these seed syllables completely transform into two Kṣitigarbhas who arise at the center of the two eyeballs as a reflected image arises within a mirror.

Interestingly some later Gelug scholars distinguish, also in the present context of the deities residing in the *maṅḌala*, between the substantial cause of the deities that are the psycho-physical elements of the body and the cooperative conditions—the seed syllables of the deities. According to the first Lcang skya Rinpoche:⁴¹

38 Mkhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho, *’Dus pa’i bskyed rim gyi don gsal bar byed pa’i sgron me*, folio 107b3-5.

39 Grags pa bshad sgrub, *’Dus pa’i bskyed rim gyi rnam bshad gnad don kun gsal*, p.53.

40 Dge ’dun rgya mtsho, *Dpal gsang ba ’dus pa’i rim pa dang po’i lam la slob pa’i tshul*, folio 30b, p.560.2-3.

41 Lcang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan, *Dpal gsang ba ’dus pa’i rim pa dang po’i lam la slob tshul gyis dmigs rim ’khrul med bla ma dam pa’i zhal las byung ba zin thor bkod pa gsang chen myur lam*, folio 21a, p.194.4.4-6.

Here is the method for generating Vairocana: your form aggregate is the actual substantial cause, and the seed syllable *Om*, that you visualize as indivisible in essence with this form aggregate, is the cooperative condition. Having generated Vairocana, cultivate stable divine identification and clear appearance, and seal with bliss and emptiness. The meditation on the other deities is similar.

Likewise 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje explains:⁴²

Merely meditating on parts of the body and the deities as indivisible essence is not meditation on the body *maṇḍala*. Therefore *having visualized yourself as Emanation Body Vajra Being*,⁴³ by making the form aggregate of your body the actual substantial cause, and the seed syllable *Om* and the emblem, upon which you meditate as indivisible in essence with the form aggregate, the cooperative condition, meditate on Vairocana at the crown of your head and cultivate both identification and clear appearance of him. Likewise, by making, according to the instructions in the ritual guide, *each part of your body visualized as Emanation Body Vajra Being the actual substantial cause*, and by making the seed syllables upon which you meditate as indivisible in essence with that part of the body the cooperative condition, generate the respective deities which have the nature of a body. This is a meditation on the body *maṇḍala*.

Once more it is important for these teachers that the deities of the body *maṇḍala* will be endowed with a certain bodily nature. At the same time 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje reminds us [in the passages in *italics*] over and over of the fact that the basis for this meditation is not just the body of the meditator, but the body of the meditator visualized as Emanation Body Vajra Being.

Conclusion

Gelug scholars that followed Tsongkhapa were certainly willing to challenge, or improve upon, the explanations of their founder on the working of the Guhyasamāja Sādhana. Their modifications seem to have resulted from the internal contradictions in the notion of transforming the body by means of creative visualization. Their aim was to find a way to bridge over between the limitations that general Buddhist theoretical considerations put on the transformative power of the mind and the point of view of meditators who were seeking a more substantial transformation than visualization alone can provide.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho (1803–1875). 'Dus pa 'phags lugs lha so gnyis pa'i lam rim pa dang po'i khrid dmigs kyi brjed byang mi bskyod mgon po'i zhal lung. *Collected Works*.

42 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje, *Gsang 'dus bskyed rim khrid kyi zin bris*, folio 34a, p.83.2-6.

43 Tib. *sprul sku rdor sems*. In this system of the body *maṇḍala* of the Guhyasamāja, the body *maṇḍala* is set on the yogi visualized as Emanation Body Vajra Being.

- New Delhi, 1973, vol. 2, pp.5–208. Translated into English by Jinpa as *Sacred Words of Lord Akshobya*. New York, 1999, unpublished.
- Dge 'dun rgya mtsho, the Second Dalai Lama (1476–1542). Gsang bskyed, = Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rim pa dang po'i lam la slob pa'i tshul. *Collected Works*, vol. *nya*, 44 folios, pp.501–587. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2006. W1CZ2857.
- Dge rtse Paṇḍita Tshe dbang mchog grub (1761–1829). Bskyed pa'i rim pa cho ga dang sbyar ba'i gsal byed zung 'jug snye ma. *Sgrub pa bka' brgyad kyi bskyed rdzogs zab chos thun min skor bzhugs*. Odiyan: Dharma Publishing, 2004. Made available and translated into English by Dharmachakra Translation Committee as *Deity, Mantra, and Wisdom*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2007.
- Dwags po Bkra shis nram rgyal (1512–87), *Gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i spyi don mдор bsdus pa legs bshad nor bu'i 'od zer*. Delhi: Drikung Kagyu Publications, 2004. 368 pp. W29340. Translated into English by Peter Alan Roberts in *Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions: Core Teachings of the Kagyu Schools*. Boston: Wisdom Publications and the Institute of Tibetan Classics, 2011: 401–620.
- Graggs pa bshad sgrub (1675–1748). 'Dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi nram bshad gnad don kun gsal. *Gsang bde 'jigs gsum gyi rim gnyis kyi 'khrid*. Sera Smad, Bylakuppe: n.d., pp.1–70.
- Gray, David. Experiencing the Single Savior: Divinizing the Body and the Senses in Tantric Buddhist Meditation. In *Perceiving the Divine through the Human Body: Mystical Sensuality*, ed. by Thomas Cattoi and June McDaniel. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Kong sprul Yon tan rgya mtsho (1813–1899). *Shes bya kun khyab*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982. The relevant part was translated into English by Guarisco and McLeod as *The Elements of Tantric Practice*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2008: 71.
- 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje (1648–1721/22). Gsang 'dus bskyed rim khrid kyi zin bris, = Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim khrid kyi zin bris rig 'dzin yongs kyi gzhung lam. *Collected Works*, New Delhi: 1972, vol. 2, 55 folios, pp.17–125.
- Lcang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan (1642–1714). Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rim pa dang po'i lam la slob tshul gyis dmigs rim 'khrul med bla ma dam pa'i zhal las byung ba zin thor bkod pa gsang chen myur lam. *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 32 folios, pp.501–587. Peking: 19th century. W1KG1321.
- Lūyīpā, *Bhagavad-abhisamaya, Dpal bcom ldan 'das mngon par rtogs pa*. Toh. 1427, D. vol. 21 [wa], folios 186b–193a, pp.372.3–385.1.
- Mkhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho (1423–1513). Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi don gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me. In *Mkhas grub nor bzang rgya mtsho'i gsung gsang 'dus bskyed rim dang de'i rdzogs rim*. 83 folios, 180 pp.[n.p.], [n.d.], block print. W1KG1254.
- Mkhas grub rje Dge legs dpal bzang po (1385–1438). Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho, = Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho. *Collected Works*, Old Zhol, vol. 7, pp.3–381. New Delhi: Gurudeva, 1982.
- . Bde dril bskyed rim, = Bde mchog dril bu lus dkyil gyi dbang du byas pa'i bskyed rim gyi dka' gnas. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 12 folios, pp.765.1–787.2.

- . Dge bshes kon ting gug sri ba la phul ba, work no. 43 in: *Gsung thor bu. Ibid.*, vol. 9, folios 153a–169b, pp.775.1–808.1.
- Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456). Dril bu pa'i lus dkyil gyi bshad pa. *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*. Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1969, vol. 10, folios 117b–140a, pp.398.1.1–405.4.1.
- Pañ chen Bsod nams grags pa (1478–1554). *Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi rnam gzhag mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog*. 85 folios, pp.13–182. Mundgod, Karnataka: Drepung Loseling Library Society. 1982–1990. W23828.
- Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419). *Collected Works*. New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1975–1979. 27 vols. Reproduced from an example of the old Bkra shis lhun po redaction from the library of Klu 'khyil monastery of Ladakh. Listed here in the order found in this edition of his *Collected Works*.
- . Sngags rim chen mo, = Rgyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad nam par phye ba, *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 441 folios, pp.1–494 and vol. 5, pp.1–530. My notes refers to the edition published in Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1995.
- . Bung ba'i re skong, = Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim blo gsal bung ba'i re skong gnad don gsal ba. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 29 folios, pp.338–394.
- . Slob tshul, = Rdo rje 'chang gi go 'phang brnyes par byed pa'i lam la slob pa'i tshul. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, pp.1–43.
- . 'Dod 'jo, = Bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi mngon par rtogs pa'i rgya cher bshad pa 'dod pa 'jo ba. *Ibid.*, vol. 14, 22 folios, pp.72–460.
- . Dril dbang, = Rnal 'byor dbang phyug dril bu lugs bde mchog lus dkyil gyi dbang chog rin po che'i bang mdzod. *Ibid.*, vol. 15, 27 folios, pp.56–109.
- . Sādhana, = Gsang ba 'dus pa'i bdag bskyed, = Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bla brgyud gsol 'debs dang bdag bskyed ngag 'don bkra shis lhun po rgyud pa grwa tshang gi 'don rgyud rje thams cad mkhyen pas zhus dag mdzad pa. [n.p.], [n.d.]. 180pp. My notes refer to this publication. Partly translated into English by Robert A. F. Thurman, as “Practicing the Creation Stage.” In: *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995, pp.213–247.
- Vajramālā*, = *Vajra-mālābhīdhāna-mahā-yoga-tantra-sarva-tantra-hṛdaya-rahasya-vibhaṅga*, *Rdo rje phreng ba*, = *Rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba*, Toh. 445, D. vol. 81 [ca], pp.415.1–554.3, folios 208a1–277b3. Translated into English by David R. Kittay. *Interpreting the Vajra Rosary: Truth and Method Meets Wisdom and Method*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 2011.
- Zhe chen Rgyal tshab Padma 'gyur med rnam rgyal (1871-1926). Bskyed rim spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa nyung gsal go bder brjod pa rab gsal nor bu'i me long. In *Bskyed rim spyi'i rnam bzhag: Instructions on the Development Stage*. New Delhi: Shechen Publications, 2004. Translated into English by Dharmachakra Translation Committee as *Vajra Wisdom*. Boston: Snow Lion Publications, 2012.