

# THE GREAT SEAL AND THE PATH OF MEANS ACCORDING TO PAR PHU PA BLO GROS SENG GE

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## Introduction

Many of the ideas contained in the *Dohās* ascribed to Saraha became the basis for the great development of the doctrine and the practice of Mahāmudrā that took place in Tibet from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In this period, the rhetoric of spontaneity and innatism related to the notion of *sahaja*, the “Innate”, became prominent among many Indian and Tibetan followers, especially within the lineages originating from Maitrīpā and his disciples.<sup>1</sup> Tibetan masters like sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1153), who inherited Maitrīpā’s teachings, taught Mahāmudrā as a unique distinct path, different from (and even superior to) the conventional Path of Means (*upāyamārga*).<sup>2</sup> The ideas contained in the entire *Dohā* corpus of Saraha surely played a central role in these developments. The case of Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge is emblematic in this sense. Although he makes no direct reference to sGam po pa in his works, he seems to share with the latter the same view of the Mahāmudrā as a spontaneous and direct path, quite distinct from the conventional tantric path. Both authors draw a clear line of distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga, emphasizing the direct recognition of mind’s nature in a spontaneous and effortless way. In this article I will focus in particular on Par phu pa’s critique of the yogic techniques of the Upāyamārga, a topic treated in detail in his commentary on Saraha’s *King Dohā*.

## Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge

Par phu ba blo gros seng ge,<sup>3</sup> founder of the monastery of sPar phu dgon, authored some of the earliest indigenous commentaries on Saraha’s Three Cycles of *Dohā* (*Dohā skor gsum*).<sup>4</sup> According to ’Gos lo tsā ba, he was born in g.Yor ru gra and

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1 On the innovations introduced by Maitrīpā and the formation of a sūtra-based Mahāmudrā, see Mathes 2006.

2 On sGam po pa’s view of Mahāmudrā, see Jackson 1994: 9-38. On the influence of Saraha’s *Dohās* on bKa’ bryud Mahāmudrā, see Braitstein 2011.

3 His name is differently spelled as sPar phu ba Blo gros seng ge, sPa phu ba Blo gros seng ge, Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge.

4 See Passavanti 2008: 485-86.

belonged to the ancient family of rNgan.<sup>5</sup> In his youth he engaged in extensive studies under the guidance of the abbot of the gSang phu monastery<sup>6</sup> Phyā pa Chos kyi Seng ge (1109-1169), eventually becoming one his ‘four wise disciples’ (*shes rab can bzhi*). Phyā pa belonged to the lineage of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109), one of the key figures in the history of the Madhyamaka thought in Tibet during the early *phyi dar* period. As we can imagine, Par phu pa’s early career was definitely scholastically-oriented. It was only in a later phase that Par phu pa became familiar with the Mahāmudrā teachings. The definitive turnpoint in his life was the meeting with Gru shul ba, from whom he received the formal transmission of Saraha’s *Dohā skor gsum* and the related oral instructions.<sup>7</sup> Another important event in Par phu pa’s life was the meeting with Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110-1170), whom he met in gDan sa mthil in an unknown date between 1162 and 1168. ’Gos lo tsā ba tells us that when Yel pa Ye shes brtsegs,<sup>8</sup> one of Phag mo gru pa’s disciples, heard from Par phu pa the teachings on the *Dohās*, he asked him to pay a visit to his master.<sup>9</sup> Par phu pa eventually accepted to meet Phag mo gru pa and had a long conversation with him. According to ’Gos lo tsā ba, during this first meeting Phag mo gru pa urged Par phu pa to adopt the Cittamatra view, but the latter apparently thought that the master had nothing new to teach him. During a second meeting, Phag mo gru pa offered to Par phu pa a piece of brown sugar on which he made an imprint of a lotus flower; Par phu pa initially refused to eat it, but after being urged by Yel pa, he finally accepted to eat the piece of sugar. This episode can perhaps be interpreted as a symbolic reference to Phar pu pa’s former intellectual knowledge (the lotus flower) *versus* Phag mo gru pa’s approach, which was based on direct experience (the sugar). In any case, the role of Phag mo gru pa in Par phu pa’s career seems to have been crucial. ’Gos lo tsā ba portrays Par phu pa before his meeting with Phag mo gru pa as a sort of proud and arrogant scholar, who was teaching Mahāmudrā without a genuine realization of its deep and experiential meaning, but only of its intellectual aspects. ’Gos lo tsā ba summarizes the content of Par phu pa’s teaching as follows:

“Since he thought that one’s own realization and the realization of a Buddha were not different in their essence, he had his own tenet called ‘The Realization of non-origination’: therefore, he taught that there are no stages of realization of the gradual experience of the four yogas.”<sup>10</sup>

5 Cf. DTG: 667; BA: 556. Guenther (1969: 18) has g.Yor po for g.Yo ru gra, and rNga for rNgan. The LGR has Ru’i gra pa rNgan.

6 This monastery, situated to the south of Lha sa, was founded by rNgog Legs pa’i shes rab, a pupil of Atiśa and ’Brom ston, probably around 1073. See Seyfort-Ruegg 2000: 28.

7 Cf. DTG: 1010; BA: 864.

8 Yel pa (Sangs rgyas Yel pa, b. 1134) spent six years with Phag mo gru pa between 1162 and 1168. In 1171 he founded the Shar yel phug monastery in Khams.

9 Cf. DTG: 667-69; BA: 566-67.

10 *rang gyi rtogs pa dang sangs rgyas kyi rtogs pa gnyis ngo bo la khyad med dgongs nas / rtogs*

This passage underlines Par phu pa's straightforward approach: since the awakened qualities are present *ab aeterno* within each individual's mindstream, the realization of Mahāmudrā should take place instantaneously, naturally and spontaneously, without depending on a series of progressive stages of mental development, but rather on the direct and immediate recognition of mind's nature.

According to 'Gos lo tsā ba, Par phu pa's teachings were transmitted to sGyer sgom (1144-1204), who visited the Par phu monastery in 1174. sGyer sgom founded the Nye phu Shug gseb monastery in 1181, and later gave rise to the Shug gseb bKa' brgyud pa order, one of the lesser bKa' brgyud pa schools descending from Phag mo gru pa.<sup>11</sup> This school became renown for its specialization in the exegesis of the *Dohās*. Indeed, it was thorough the Shug gseb lineage that Par phu pa's teachings were handed down to 'Gos lo tsā ba<sup>12</sup> and to Karma 'phrin las pa (1456-1539).<sup>13</sup> After the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century the tradition of Par phu pa seems to have progressively lost its influence and to have become marginal. The oblivion in which the works of Par phu pa have fallen in the last four centuries is perhaps explained by the dramatic decline of the Shugs gseb monastery around the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Origin of the Lineages of Gradual Awakening and of Instantaneous Awakening according to the *Bla ma brgyud pa'i rim pa*.**

The *Bla ma brgyud pa'i rim pa* [LGR]<sup>14</sup> contains an account of the legendary origin of the lineage of Mahāmudrā starting from the Buddha Śākyamuni up to Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge. Its anonymous author, who belongs to Par phu pa's lineage and lived two generations after him, speaks of two separate lineages of teaching, related respectively to the gradual (*rim gyis*) awakening and to the immediate (*cig car*) awakening. These two lineages are associated respectively to Mañjuśrī (*alias* Ratnamati) and to Avalokiteśvara (*alias* Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva), to Nāgārjuna and to Saraha, and to the two peaks of Śrīparvata, i.e. Cittavṛāma and Manabhaṅga:

Śākyamuni, the Emanation Body, perfectly and completely exposed to his disciples the three wheels of the teaching. Through [the teaching of] the three

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*pa skyed med bya ba'i grub mtha' yang yod / des na rnal 'byor bzhi po nyams rim yin gyi rtogs pa'i rim pa min zhes gsung /* (Cf. DTG: 669).

11 Cf. DTG: 1042; BA: 893.

12 'Gos lo tsā ba lists the names of the masters of the lineage thorough which he received the *Dohās* according to the system of Par phu pa (*par lugs*): sGyer sgom, Sangs rgyas dbon, Brag 'bur ba, Shug gseb ri ba, Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, Mi nyag she rab bzang po, Ri mi 'babs pa bsod nams rin chen. (Cf. DTG: 1010; BA: 864-865). For a history of the Shug gseb lineage deriving from sGyer sgom see DTG: 1042-47; BA: 893-96.

13 See Guenther 1993: 29.

14 Ms. 1095.1 of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the Library of IsIAO in Rome. For the cataloguing of the text, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 395-96. Diplomatic edition in Passavanti 2008: 435-88.

vehicles he thoroughly tamed his disciples. Then, after completing all his holy activities, he went to Karahaṭa to the South of Jambudvīpa. On that occasion, the eight main Bodhisattvas and the Eight Chief Spiritual Sons circumambulated the Lord and asked him: “The Lord has exposed different vehicles for the sake of his disciples; we have [already] requested all the vehicles of provisional and definitive meaning, [but] we still haven’t requested the essential meaning of the instantaneous awakening. We ask you to teach it for the benefit of the Bodhisattvas and for the benefit of all the other disciples.”

The Lord said: “If you wish to realize the essential meaning, summon also the other Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions.” Then, also the other Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions gathered. Among them there were the main Bodhisattvas – Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin, Samantabhadra – and the Chief Spiritual Sons – the Bodhisattvas Candraprabha, Sūryaprabha, Vimalaprabha, Vimalakīrti, Ratnamati, Dharmodgata – and also the Ḍākas etc. He empowered them by displaying the Dharmadhātumaṇḍala of the naturally pure dimension to the countless number of hundreds and thousands of millions that surrounded [him]. In that moment the Bodhisattvas could not see any *dharma* whatsoever; because of not seeing any *dharma* whatsoever, each *dharma* became free from mentation (*yid la byar med pa*). In that moment there wasn’t any *dharma* that was not completely pure to be seen, nor [any *dharma*] that was not pure to be meditated, nor [any *dharma*] that was not pure to be experienced, nor any *dharma* that was not completely pure to be obtained. [The Awakened One] thus spoke: “This indeed is the right view, the right meditation, the right conduct and the right fruit.” In that moment the Bodhisattvas received the empowerment into the nature of things just as it is, they had the direct vision of the absolute truth of the nature of things, they directly realized the essential meaning and gained certainty.

The Lord said to Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara: “Among the people of Jambudvīpa there are worthy ones who are capable of gradual awakening (*rim gyis pa*), and worthy ones who are capable of instantaneous awakening (*cig car pa*): you should act for their benefit!” At that point he made a prophecy: “I see that, right after my *parinirvāṇa*, in the land of Jambudvīpa, two Emanation Bodies will appear: they will ripen and liberate those [who belong respectively] to the Lineage of Gradual Awakening and to the Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening. You will hold these [two lineages]!”. So he prophesied.

Then, in Kuśināgarī, he reabsorbed the manifestation of his Emanation Body, so that the beings who regard things as permanent could generate disenchantment and the lazy ones could practice with diligence. While he was displaying the mode of the *parinirvāṇa* he was dwelling in the Akaniṣṭha dimension in the form of the Body of Complete Enjoyment.

Then, the two mighty Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara saw with their eye of gnosis that, among the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, there were noble persons, fortunate ones who were suitable vessels for the instructions on gradual awakening and for the instructions on instantaneous awakening. Thus, they went respectively on the Cittaviśrama Mountain and on the Manabhaṅga Mountain. Mañjuśrī manifested himself as the Bodhisattva Ratnamati (Blo gros rin chen). He went to the Cittaviśrama Mountain and ripened the mind-stream of the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna through the instructions on gradual awakening. The noble Avalokiteśvara manifested himself as Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva (bDe chen mgon po dpal rTa 'grin). He went to the Manabhaṅga Mountain and ripened the mind-stream of the Great Brahmin Saraha through the instructions on instantaneous awakening. [Avalokiteśvara] went to Śrīparvata in the South: gazing with his eye of gnosis he saw the youngest of the [five] sons of the court-Brahmin of Mahāpāla, the king of the region of Varaṇāsi; he recognized him as the suitable vessel for the teaching on the instructions on instantaneous awakening; he saw that he was to be converted by any means whatsoever. Seeing that he had to be converted by displaying a young girl, he emanated his body [in the form of ] five *ḍākinīs* of gnosis: he manifested himself as four Brahmin girls and as one fletcheress (*mda' mkhan ma*).<sup>15</sup>

In other parts of the text, the author gives specific informations about the nature and content of the teachings of the two lineages. In the account of the legendary life of Saraha, we read:

At that time he had a vision of the Bodhisattva [Mahā]sukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva: he apprehended the instructions on the essential meaning which is the Great Seal of instantaneous awakening. He became free from all the worldly and transcendent conceptualizations: he became free from all those conceptualizations such as “I’m a Brahmin, I’m not a Brahmin”, “I’m an ordained monk, I’m not an ordained monk”, “I’m a yogin, I’m not a yogin” and so forth. Because of being instantly liberated by the power of the holy master’s blessing (*byin rlabs*) and by the power of the master’s symbols (*brda'*) – without depending on a path and without depending on a meditative practice (*lam bhem*)<sup>16</sup> *ba la ma ltos par*) – he was called an ‘instantaneist’ (*cig car ba'i gang zag*).<sup>17</sup>

In the account of the legendary life of the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna, we read:

The first master [of the Lineage of Gradual Awakening] was the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna. He was born within a family of Brahmins, in the market-town of Bheta in the

15 Cf. LGR: ff. 1b4-3a2.

16 Abbreviated form (*bsduṣ yig*) for *bhāvanā*.

17 Cf. LGR: f. 4a2-4a6.

South. His father was the Brahmin Krig gra ya, his mother was called Gha ti. At the moment of his birth the name “Nāgārjuna” resounded in the sky. His father and his mother called him Dāmodara. As an ordained monk, his name was Śākyamitra; when the Bodhisattva Ratnamati accepted him as a disciple, his name was Advayavajra; he was famed as Nāgārjuna. He met the Bodhisattva Ratnamati – an emanation of Mañjuśrī – and studied with him the five stages, the four seals etc. He learned from him all the instructions on gradual awakening. Then he met the Great Brahmin Saraha and learned from him all the instructions on instantaneous awakening.<sup>18</sup>

If we put together the different elements found in these parts of the LGR, we can easily get a picture of the hermeneutic framework thorough which Par phu pa and his followers structured their teachings. According to this school, the tradition of Saraha is related to the Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening stemming from Avalokiteśvara, it is based on the master’s blessing and on special kind of direct symbolic transmission, and it does not rely on the transformative methods of conventional tantric practice. On the contrary, the tradition of Nāgārjuna is related to the Lineage of Gradual Awakening stemming from Mañjuśrī, it is based on the five stages<sup>19</sup> and on the four seals (*phyag rgya bzhi, caturmudrā*).<sup>20</sup>

This picture is further clarified in another long part of the LGR, where the author describes the encounter between Maitrīpā and his master Śabareśvara[pāda].<sup>21</sup> On the two peaks of Śrīparvata, Maitrīpā receives the textual transmission of both lineages by the master and his two consorts. In the long account of Maitrīpā’s life the author traces a fundamental distinction between the teachings of Mahāmudrā and those of the Upāyamārga. We can sum up this distinction with the use of the following scheme:

<b>Lineage of Gradual Awakening</b>	<b>Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening</b>
Mañjuśrī	Avalokiteśvara
Ratnamati	Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva
Nagarjuna	Saraha
Means ( <i>upāya</i> )	Discriminating wisdom ( <i>prajñā</i> )
Path of Means ( <i>upāyamārga</i> ): stages of creation and completion	Great Seal ( <i>mahāmudrā</i> )
Transmission of <i>Yoganiruttara</i> texts	Transmission of <i>Dohās</i> and <i>Vajragītis</i>
Cittaviśrāma	Manabhaṅga

18 Cf. LGR: f. 5a8-5b3.

19 The five stages are outlined in the homonymous work by the tantric Nāgārjuna, the *Pañcakrama*: (1) *vajrajāpa*, (2) *cittaviśuddhi*, (3) *svādhiṣṭhana*, (4) *abhisambodhi*, (5) *yuganaddha*. Together they encompass the whole system of practice of the Upāyamārga. See Wayman 1977: 171-73. On the five stages in the lineage of Maitrīpā / Maitreyanātha, see Isaacson & Sferra 2014: 329.

20 See n. 40.

21 For an English translation of this part of the LGR, see Passavanti 2014.

As we will see in the following pages, the distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga plays a central role in Par phu pa's interpretation of Saraha's *Dohās*, especially in the case of the *King Dohā*.

### **The *King Dohā* and Par phu pa's Commentary.**

The Indo-Nepalese Bal po A su (end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century) is credited with the first commentary on Saraha's *Dohākoṣanāmacaryāgīti* or '*King Dohā's* (*rGyal po'i dohā*). This work, titled *Do ha mdzod ces bya ba spyod pa'i glu'i 'grel pa don gyi sgron ma*, is the earliest irrefutable proof of the existence of the *King Dohā*. In fact, any reference to the existence of this text before the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century is purely hypothetical. Indeed, many Tibetan authors, especially Sa skya pa, questioned the authenticity of the *King* and *Queen Dohās* by claiming that these texts were in fact forged by Bal po A su himself; this claim, though based on serious grounds, has been repeatedly rejected by bKa' brgyud pa authors, for whom the *Dohā* trilogy represented one of the most precious teachings of their school.<sup>22</sup> Among the works ascribed to Saraha, the *King Dohā* can surely be read as sort of *manifesto* of the spontaneous path of *sahaja*, a path that, in the view of several bKa' brgyud pa commentators, is clearly distinguished from the approach of the Upāyamārga, which is based on the gradual and systematic application of yogic techniques and rituals.

The *Zla ba'i 'od zer* (ZBO) authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge is an extensive commentary on Saraha's *King Dohā*.<sup>23</sup> As far as we know, the ZBO is the first native Tibetan commentary on the *King Dohā*, and thus can be considered one of the earliest sources for the study of the doctrinal history of Mahāmudrā in Tibet. The ZBO and the other works on the *Three Cycles of Dohā* authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge were written in an unknown date, presumably by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the author was head of the monastery of Par phu.<sup>24</sup> Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Par phu pa's commentaries seem to have enjoyed a vast reputation, as we can suppose from the mention made by 'Gos lo tsā ba, who affirms that these texts spread everywhere.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, we find frequent quotations of Par phu pa's commentaries in the works of Karma Phrin las pa, who regards him as an authority in the exegesis of the *Dohās*. Nevertheless, despite their wide diffusion, Par phu pa's works have been progressively neglected during the centuries.

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22 For a detailed analysis of the controversies on the authenticity of the *Dohā*, see Schaeffer 2006: 71-78.

23 Ms. 1095.7 of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the Library of IsIAO in Rome.

24 For a summary of Par phu pa's works, see Schaeffer 2005: 65; Passavanti 2008: 485-86.

25 Cf. BA: 864.

### **Criticisms of the Yogic Techniques of the Upāyamārga in Saraha's *King Dohā*: English Translation of Stanzas 21-28 with Par Phu pa's Synopsis.**

Some of the most striking and problematic features found in the *King Dohā* are undoubtedly related to the author's critical hints to several popular and illustrious yogic techniques. As one immediately notices, the author seems to deny any soteriological value to some of the most important practices of the Upāyamārga. This critical attitude is particularly evident in the stanzas from 21 to 28, where the author addresses the following topics:

- 1) Critique of the well-known sexual practice involving the presence of a *karmamudrā* (stanza 21).
- 2) Critique of different kinds of somatopsychic manipulations involving the control of the vital energy (*prāṇāyāma*) and involving the meditation on the subtle body (stanza 22 and 23).
- 3) Critique of an unnamed technique similar to the *khengarīmudrā* (stanza 24).
- 4) General refutation of any kind of ecstatic experience or particular meditative state which might be confused with an authentic awakening (stanzas 25-26).
- 5) Critique of the practices involving the meditation on the dream-state (stanza 27).
- 6) Critique of the practice based on the four seals and on the symbolism of the syllable EVAM.

In this paragraph I provide an English translation of the stanzas from 21 to 28, together with Par phu pa's synopsis, which adds more clarity to the root text.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Translation**

II.2) The detailed explanation of the subdivisions dealing with the path and with what is not the path is divided into two sections:

- The necessity of] leaving aside the conceptualizations<sup>27</sup> of the Path of Means.
- The path of the Great Seal and its result.

The first section is divided into three subsections:

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of [the union] of means and wisdom.

<sup>26</sup> For the tibetan text of the stanzas 21-28 and Par phu pa's synopsis, see Appendix I below.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that here the author defines the whole system of practices related to the path of means as a form of conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa: vikalpa*): in fact, from the point of view of Par phu pa's approach to Mahāmudrā, any meditative support – be it a visualization, the recitation of a *mantra* or the intercourse with a *karmamudrā* – involves some kind of conceptualization or mental elaboration, which prevents the yogin from the realization of the innate.

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of dreaming.
- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of the four seals.

The first subsection is further divided into two sections:

- A specific refutation.
- A general refutation.

The first refutation is twofold:

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience based on someone else's body as the source of discriminating wisdom:

21        Being attached to the bliss of sexual union,  
             the fool speaks of it as the ultimate truth.  
             He is like somebody who leaves his house  
             and asks for reports of Kāmarūpa right at its gate.

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience based on one's body endowed with skillful means. This section is twofold:

Here the actual meaning [is explained]:

22        Through [the manipulation] of the vital energy,  
             in the empty house [of his body],  
             the yogin gives rise to an artificial [bliss] in many  
             different ways.  
             Since he yearns for the faulty [experience] of the  
             nectar that falls from the sky, he will fall unconscious.

Here an example is given: liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of melting the syllable HAM:

23        Like a brahmin who, with butter and rice,  
             makes an offering in a blazing fire,  
             [the yogin] gives rise [to an experience of bliss]  
             using the nectar that falls from of the sky.  
             He knows that [experience] and clings to it as if it  
             were reality as it is.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of sucking the uvula:

- 24 Some people raise the luminosity to the abode of  
Brahmā  
and with the tongue tickle the uvula as in a  
coition.  
What fetters them has made [their mind] utterly  
confused.  
Under the power of pride they call themselves  
yogins.

Now a general refutation:

- 25 Positively evaluating their self-knowledge, they  
teach it to others.  
What has fettered them, that indeed they call  
'liberation'.  
By discriminating [only] its color, they call  
emerald a glass trinket.  
The fools do not know to have imagined it to be a  
jewel.

- 26 They take brass to be gold:  
taking onto the path [their subjective] experience,  
they use it to establish the absolute.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of dreaming:

They become attached to the bliss [experienced in] dreams:  
they call 'eternal bliss' the impermanent aggregates.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of the four seals:

Having a subjective understanding of the syllable  
EVAM  
and establishing four seals by differentiating  
[four] noetic moments,  
they call what they experience 'The Innate'.  
It is like looking at reflected images in a mirror

- 28 Like deers that, under the power of illusion,  
run towards the water of a mirage without recognizing it,  
the fools don't quench their thirst and become fettered:  
they hold onto their bliss calling it 'the absolute'.

### Upāyamārga and Mahāmudrā in Par phu pa's *Zla ba'i 'od zer*

When we turn our attention to Par phu pa's ZBO, we notice that he does not feel compelled to attenuate the radical content of the statements contained in the stanzas 21-28, but that he reads them quite literally. In one passage of his commentry he speaks of the two paths of Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga in the following terms:

With regard to the accomplishment of the fruit of the Truth Body, there are the path of inborn Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma'i lam*) and the path of artificial means (*bcos ma thabs lam*). The path of inborn Great Seal is effortless. Being distinct from all the sorrows of conceiving hope and fear or acceptance and rejection etc., it is the path of great bliss. On the other hand, the path of artificial means involves effort (*'bad rtsol*). It is never free from the sorrows related to hope and fear or to acceptance and rejection. Therefore, it is a path pertaining to the level of the great bliss with defilements (*zag pa dang bcas*).

Those who abandon the sublime bliss of the Great Seal, and roam about elsewhere, in the Path of Means, rely on a path of liberation based on a forced bliss (*rtsol ba'i bde ba*), which arises from the faulty effort of one's body endowed with skillful means, or [they rely on a path based] on what arises from the union of *vajra* and *padma*: they will be far away from the Truth Body, the non-dual Innate.<sup>28</sup>

As it is evident from this passage, Par phu pa draws a solid line of distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga. In his view, the path of Mahāmudrā is effortless, natural and rooted in equanimity, while the Upāyamārga requires a special kind of effort and is constantly associated with the ups and downs of hope and fear, of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Both paths, he says, involve bliss (*bde ba, sukha*), but these two kinds of bliss are radically different: the bliss of Mahāmudrā is 'sublime', in the sense of being natural and unfabricated, whereas the bliss experienced by means of somatopsychic techniques or through ritual intercourse with a consort is a 'forced bliss'. Such forced bliss is said to be unnatural and artificial, as it is fabricated by means of a technique. Thus, the bliss of the Upāyamārga is seen by Par phu pa as nothing more than a refined form of attachment.

Commenting upon the stanza 8, Par phu pa lists three different types of individuals or 'vessels' (*gnod pa*) of the teachings: the ordinary ones, the precious ones, and the poisonous ones. He describes the last group of individuals as follows:

Apart from the ordinary and the precious vessels, there are also other vessels, namely the poisonous ones. These vessels [are filled with] the poison of attachment for what is not worthy of attachment. They are those who are involved with the imaginative process (*bsam pa*) of approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub, sevāsāadhanā*); they are attached to the pure sensory objects of form and so on.<sup>29</sup>

28 See appendix II, quote 1.

29 See appendix II, quote 2.

This passage refers to the various practices involving deity-yoga (*lha'i rnal 'byor*, *devayoga*) which are based on the visualization of a deity (*yi dam*) and its *maṇḍala*, on the recitation of its *mantra*, etc. These practices are supposed to bring about a complete purification of one's body, speech and mind (which become the body, speech and mind of the deity) and a purification of one's perception of the world (ultimately seen as the *maṇḍala* of the deity). In Par phu pa's view, the practice of deity-yoga has no soteriological value, because even the state of purity experienced through this practice is a potential source of clinging and attachment.

Par phu pa discusses in more detail the techniques of the Upāyamārga in his commentary on stanzas from 21 to 28. First of all he deals with the sexual practice involving the ritual intercourse with a *karmamudrā*:

### Stanza 21

No liberation is possible through the experience of relying on someone else's body as the source of discriminating awareness. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with: “**Being attached to the bliss of sexual union**” (*kha sbyor bde la yongs su chags nas*), etc. The foolish [yogin], being attached to the bliss of the union of *vajra* and *padma*, speaks of it as the actual gnosis<sup>30</sup> of ultimate truth: he won't get liberated by means of such [bliss]. This fact is illustrated through the simile of the fool who leaves his house in the town of Kāmarūpa. Not recognizing [the town he lives in], he asks right by its gate how Kāmarūpa is like. Similarly, [although] his mind dwells [already] in the Innate, the foolish yogin is unaware of it; he keeps on looking for the innate mind in the [experience of] bliss of the Path of Means, but he won't find it.

In the commentary on the next two stanzas, we find a detailed critique of one of the most important practices of the Upāyamārga, namely the practice of inner heat (*gtum mo*). According to Par phu pa's view, the practices involving the manipulation of the vital energy (*rlung*, *prāṇa*) are bound to produce in the yogin a state of stupefaction, a sort of unnatural and unbalanced condition, similar to a state of intoxication.<sup>31</sup> Such state is not a natural and spontaneous condition, but rather an artificially-produced experience that can be easily mistaken for a genuine realization of reality. Furthermore,

30 The 'actual gnosis' (*don gyi ye shes*) is the gnosis experienced by the yogin during the fourth empowerment. It is opposed to the the 'gnosis based on a similitude' (*dpe'i ye shes*) which is related to the previous three empowerments.

31 These kind of yogic techniques are ridiculized in Saraha's *Mind Treasury* (*Thugs kyi mdzod skye med rdo rje'i lus*): “Drawing energies up and down in the turning centres, guided by those methods, the truth cannot be found; although you may grasp and eject and unite and ignite, there is no difference between these breath control practices and a fool suffering from asthma.” See Braitstein 2011: 77-78.

such state of forced bliss is seen as a powerful source of attachment, not at all different from the common sensual pleasures to which normally one clings onto in daily life:

### Stanzas 22-23

No liberation is possible through the experience of melting the [syllable] HAM. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **through [the manipulation] of the vital energy** (*rlung gi rgyu la*) etc. Within the house of one's body, which has been made empty inside according to the principles of the meditation on the vital energy,<sup>32</sup> one gives rise to an artificial [bliss] in different ways and through different methods of meditation on the vital energy. If one extends it, purifies it, shoots it like an arrow, makes it whirl like a wheel and raises it as it whirls, one finally experiences the downward flow of the ambrosia of *bodhicitta* from the HAM located in the center of the great bliss, right in the space of the crown of the head.<sup>33</sup> Such yogin yearns for the experience associated with the faulty act of penetrating into the specific points of the vital energy.<sup>34</sup> He will be intoxicated [with that experience] and will fall unconscious. By practicing in this way he

32 The vital energy is generally divided into five main 'winds' (*rlung lnga, pañcavāyu*): 1) *prāṇa* (*srog 'dzin*); 2) *apāna* (*thur sel*); 3) *udāna* (*gyen rgyu*); 4) *vyāna* (*khyab byed*); 5) *samāna* (*me myam*). These five winds are further associated with five Buddha-families, five colours, five elements, five seats and five bodily functions. Cf. Torricelli 1996: 151.

33 The melting of the the syllable HAM refers to the practice of 'inner heat'. After visualizing the multitude of energy channels of the subtle body, the yogin meditates on the ignition of the red syllable A visualized in the navel. The ignition of the A is realized by means of different techniques of *prāṇāyāma* (the so-called 'vase-breathing', *kumbhaka, bum pa can*) and by means of yogic postures (*yantra, 'phrul 'khor*). The blazing A is then visualized as entering the central channel and finally as melting the white syllable HAM located in the head. The progressive 'dripping' of nectar slowly permeates his whole body giving rise to a set of four distinct joys (*dga' ba, ānanda*) which are gradually experienced at the level of the four energy centers. These joys culminate in the fourth joy, the so-called 'innate joy' (*lhan cig skyes pa 'i dga' ba, saḥajānanda*). The practice of inner heat as outlined here follows the concise exposition found in Tilopa's *Ṣaḍdharmopadeśa*. See Torricelli 1996.

34 The specific points (*gnad pa, marman*) of the vital energy refer to the channels of the yogin's subtle body; here the term refers mainly to the central channel (*rtsa dbu ma, avadhūtī*) in which the vital energy is forced to enter by means of various techniques. I base the translation of this line on the emendation I made on the manuscript: the scribe writes *rlung nad du 'gro* ('get a wind-disorder') while I read *rlung gnad du 'gro* ('penetrate into the specific point of the vital force'). Both choices could be accepted as possible translations: the first one has a less technical meaning, implying that the yogic techniques of forcing the vital energy are bound to produce an imbalance in the body. The second choice of translation is more specific, as it refers to the techniques based on the manipulation of the vital energy flowing into the subtle channels. The choice between these two possible translations is complicated by the fact that Karma phrin las pa in his commentary [GDT 189.4] writes *nad du 'gro ba* instead of *gnad du 'gro ba*.

won't attain liberation.<sup>35</sup> This topic is illustrated by the stanza starting with **like a brahmin** (*ji ltar bram ze*) etc. A brahmin who wishes to attain liberation makes an offering in a blazing fire using butter and rice, but since he will never be free from clinging, he won't attain it. Similarly, [a yogin] gives rise to a meditative experience by contemplating (*bsams pas*) the downward flow of ambrosia as the nectar of the HAM [located] in the space of the center of the great bliss on the crown of the head. He will not attain liberation because he knows the bliss of that experience and clings to it as if it were reality as it is (*de kho na nyid*).

The next stanza deals with an unnamed practice that probably refers to the *khacarīmudrā* described in many texts of tantric Śaivism and in *haṭhayoga* treatises. It involves the freeing and lengthening of the tongue in order that it might be turned back and inserted above the soft palate to reach the door of Brahmā, (*brahmadvāra* or *brahmarandhra*) so that the yogin can drink the *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality, which is stored behind it:<sup>36</sup>

### Stanza 24

Through the experience of sucking the uvula no liberation is possible. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **some people** (*kha cig*) etc. Some monks, after raising the luminosity from the syllable located in the navel up to the abode of Brahmā located on the crown of the head,<sup>37</sup> meditate on the downflow of bodhicitta. [The act of tickling the uvula] with the tongue as in a coition, refers to the pleasurable experience that occurs by sucking and tickling the uvula with the tip of the tongue. Since [these monks] become attached to it, that experience actually fetters them and confuses the stream of their mind. Under the manifest power of pride they call themselves yogins. They won't be liberated by means of this technique.

In the next section Par phu pa deals with the risk of mistaking the meditative experiences of the Upāyamārga for authentic awakening:

35 Karma phrin las pa follows almost *verbatim* Par phu pa's commentary: *rang lus thabs ldan gyi gdams pa la brten nas rtsa rlung thig le nyams su blang na grol bar 'gyur ro snyam na de yang zag bcas bcos ma'i lam yin pas gnas lugs mthong bar mi 'gyur ro ci'i phyir zhe na rlung bsgom pa'i rgyu mtshan las rang lus khang stong lta bur bsgoms pa'i khyim du ni rlung sbyor sgom thabs rnam pa sna tshogs du ma'i tshul gyis bcos ma'i thabs mang du byas pa stong l mda' ltar 'phang ba dang 'khor lo ltar bskor ba dang bum pa ltar dgang ba sogs la brten nas nam mkhas mtshon pa spyi bo'i ham las byang sems bab pa'i nyams la zhen te nad du 'gro ba'i nyes pa dang bcas pa'i nyams kyi gdung bas myos shing dran med du brgyal bar 'gyur ba'i skyon yod pas de 'dra'i rnal 'byor pa de ni grol bar mi 'gyur bas na rang lus thabs ldan la yang zhen pa thong zhig (GDT 189.2).*

36 For an overview of the development of this technique, see Mallinson 2007: 17-33.

37 In this context, the abode of Brahmā (*tshangs pa'i gnas*, *brahmāvihāra*) refers to the *tshang pa'i bu ga* (*brahmarandhra*, 'the aperture of Brahmā') located on the crown of the head.

### Stanza 25 and first two lines of stanza 26

And now a general refutation. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **[positively evaluating] their self knowledge** (*rang rig de nyid*) etc. and in the following half stanza. **Their self-knowledge** means ‘their own subjective experience’ (*rang gyi nyams su myong ba*).<sup>38</sup> **Positively evaluating** means ‘taking as authoritative’ (*tshad mar byas*). Thus, taking as authoritative their own subjective experience, the [foolish yogins] do even teach it to others. Under the influence of the afflictive emotions, using as a means what in fact fetters them, **they call it liberation**; however, **the fools do not know to have imagined it to be a jewel**. Since they are confused about its green color, **they call emerald a glass trinket** and, since they are confused about a piece of gold, **they take brass to be gold**. Carrying onto the path (*lam du khyer*) their [subjective] experience and using it to establish the absolute actual gnosis (*don dam don gyi ye shes*), they become confused.

The commentary on the next half stanza contains a direct critique to the well known practices of ‘dream yoga’, which involve the recognition and the manipulation of dreams as a means of liberation. Again, Par phu pa regards this kind of practices as ephemeral and as a potential source of attachment:

### Second two lines of stanza 26

The half stanza starting with **they become attached** (*rmi lam bde la rjes su chags par byed*) etc. deals with the [necessity] of abandoning attachment to the experience of dreaming. Some people say that if one [is able to] recognize the dream-state, one [will be able to] recognize the intermediate state and therefore will attain liberation. However, as these people recognize the dreams, refine them, build them up and change their course, they become progressively attached to the bliss of the dream-experience. Claiming that the aggregates are impermanent while the bliss of the dream-experience is permanent, they affirm that they will be liberated by recognizing the intermediate state. [However], because they are attached to that experience and because [that experience] is impermanent, they won’t be liberated.

The next section opens with a discussion of the syllable EVAM and the four seals. The point that is stressed by the author is the absolute transcendence of *sahaja*. The

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38 In Cittamātra literature, the term *rang rig* (*svasamvedana*), which I translated here as ‘self-knowledge’, refers to self-reflexive awareness. In this particular case, as it is clearly suggested by Par phu pa’s commentary, this term should be interpreted in a more vague and general sense. It refers to all the subjective and fabricated yogic experiences which one may wrongly take as authentic realizations of awakening.

realization of the Innate cannot be the result of any specific technique, nor it can fit in a particular meditative experience, for any individual experience is necessarily dualistic, as it implies a subject and an object, a realizer and something realized. Thus, any meditative or ‘ecstatic’ experience is necessarily limited and dualistic because it is an object for the mind. It has a number of specific characteristics (*mtshan ma, lakṣaṇa*) that a meditator can perceive as objects of his meditation. On the other hand, the innate, being completely devoid of characteristics and being not an object for the mind, cannot be reduced to any particular meditative state nor should be conceived in terms of a subject-object relationship:

### Stanzas 27-28

No liberation is possible by means of the experience of the four seals. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **having a subjective understanding of the syllable EVAM** (*e baṃ yi ger rang gis*<sup>39</sup> *go bar byed*) etc. It is said that one understands the ignition and the movement of the syllable E on the crown and of the syllable VAM at the navel. Moreover, E is discriminating awareness or emptiness, while VAM is means or appearance. After the two syllables are joined together, one has a personal understanding indicated by the syllable EVAM. Moreover, by differentiating four noetic moments – i.e. the moment of development, the moment devoid of characteristics and so forth – the so-called *karmamudrā*, the *dharmamudrā*, the *samayamudrā* and the *mahāmudrā* are established.<sup>40</sup> Although what lies at the core of such experiences is said to be the Innate, the characteristics (*mtshan ma*) of these experiences are not the Innate: an experience without foundations (*rtsa bral*) and non-dual, [that indeed] is the Innate! Therefore, those who claim that a [particular] experience (*myong ba*) is the Innate are deluded. They resemble someone who clings to the reflected images in a mirror as if they were concrete objects, or a herd of deers

39 *gis* DC; *gyis* NQ.

40 One of the first mentions of the symbolism of the syllable EVAM is found in the *Hevajatantra* (II.iii.4-9), where it symbolizes the union of the opposites realized by the yogin. It is further linked with the four joys (*ānanda, dga' ba*) and with the four noetic moments (*kṣaṇa, skad cig*) that the yogin is supposed to experience during the four empowerments. The four moments are: 1) the moment of variety (*vicitra, rnam pa sna tshogs*); 2) the moment of development (*vipāka, rnam pa smin pa*); 3) the moment of consummation (*vimārda, rnam pa nyed pa*); 4) the moment devoid of characteristics (*vilakṣaṇa, mtshan nyid bral ba*). These elements are associated with four kinds of emptiness (*stong pa, śūnya*) and with four types of seals (*phyag rgya, mudrā*). As to the four seals, they are listed in different orders according to the different authors: 1) *karmamudrā*; 2) *dharmamudrā* (sometimes referred to as *jñānamudrā*); 3) *mahāmudrā*; 4) *samayamudrā*. For a discussion of the complex distinction between the various seals and the four moments, the four emptinesses and the four joys, see Snellgrove 1959: 34; Snellgrove 1987: 243-66. On the four seals in Saraha's adamantine songs, see Braitstein 2011: 62-65; for a discussion of the nature and arrangement of these fourfold elements in the lineage of Maitrīpā / Maytreyaṅātha, see Isaacson & Sferra 2014: 94-111; 385-409.

who mistake the water seen in a mirage for real water, and run towards it. But since a mirage is nothing more than an immaterial appearance, and since no water can be found in it, [the deers] cannot quench their thirst. Similarly, [the yogins] mistake the bliss of the Path of Means for the Innate and, as a consequence, hold onto that bliss: they will not be liberated by means of this method.

## **Conclusions**

In this article I have tried to shed light on the elements that, according to the tradition of Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge, distinguish the path of Mahāmudrā from the conventional tantric methods of the Upāyamārga. To do so, I highlighted several passages from the LGR and the ZBO that are of particular relevance for our discussion. How should we realize Sahaja, the Innate? Is it the outcome of a technique? Is it something that can be produced or fabricated? Is it possible to grasp it within the framework of a meditative experience? Is it possible to perceive the Innate as an object or a mental state, i.e. in terms of a subject-object relationship? In Par phu pa's view all the meditative techniques of the Upāyamārga are ultimately dualistic and artificial, as they are based on a subject (the 'yogin') and on an object (the 'experience'). Furthermore, the subtle state of bliss experienced in many tantric practices – such as ritual intercourse, deity yoga, meditation on subtle-body, *prāṇāyāma*, *khecarīmudrā*, dream yoga, etc. – is a kind of 'intoxication', and is always accompanied by a trace of craving or attachment that eventually reinforces the dualistic framework in which the experience occurs. Clinging is thus the most powerful obstacle to Sahaja, because it urges the yogin to seek something outside himself and prevents him from realizing non duality.

For Par phu pa, the genuine realization of Mahāmudrā cannot be based on techniques, since it involves the complete withdrawal from any dualistic attitude and from any form of grasping. The Great Seal is beyond effort, and requires a simple and direct act of recognition: like the fool of Kāmarūpa, each individual has to recognize the Innate he dwells within. From this point of view, the search for the Innate – the 'quest' itself – is what prevents one from realizing it.

## Appendix 1

### Stanzas 21-28 of the *Dohākoṣanāma Caryāgīti* together with Par phu pa's Synopsis

The following edition of the Tibetan text of the stanzas 21-28 of Saraha's *Dohākoṣanāma Caryāgīti* or 'King Dohā', is based on one xylograph printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). I compared lHa btsun's edition with four canonical sources. The variants between the different sources are quoted in footnote. lHa btsun's xylograph is titled *Bram ze chen pos mdzad pa'i dho ha bskor gsum / mdzod drug / ka kha dho ha / sa spyad rnams*. This text is a 37 folios xylograph containing several *Dohākoṣas*. According to the colophon, it was printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal at Brag dkar rta gso monastery in 1543 (*sa pho phyi ba*). The four canonical sources that I consulted are from *sNar thang* (N), *sDe dge* (D), *Cone* (C) and Peking (Q) printed editions of the *bsTan 'gyur*. N and D were accessible to me in the original blockprints of the Narthang and Derge Tanjur kept in the Library of IsIAO in Rome. I consulted Q in the reprint edition of the Peking *Tibetan Tripiṭaka* of the Otani University, Kyōto (TT) and C in the microfiche reproduction of the Cone Tanjur kept in the Library of Congress.<sup>41</sup> I have included in the present edition also a synopsis authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge. This short text, titled *Dho ha bzhi bcu' ba'i don bsdu pa* gives a succinct outline of the topics treated in the *King Dohā*. In order to clearly distinguish the text of the *King Dohā* from Par phu pa's synopsis, the root text is written in italics.

### Legenda

<i>gcig</i>	[ 1 ]
<i>gnyis</i>	[ 2 ]
<i>gsum</i>	[ 3 ]
<u>gyin</u>	[Uncertain or unclear reading]
MED	[Ideographic sign meaning <i>med</i> ]
ci ltar	[ <i>Incipit</i> of the sections of the <i>King Dohā</i> ]
{mda'}	[Reconstructed]

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laṃ dang laṃ ma yin ba'i dbye' ba bye brag du bshad pa la *gnyis* ste | thabs laṃ gyi

41 N: *rGyud*, vol. *TSI*, ff. 26b5-28b3; Q: *rGyud*, vol. *TSI*, ff. 31b3-34a2; D: *rGyud*, vol. *ZHI*, ff. 26b6-28b6; C: *rGyud*, vol. *ZHI*, ff. 27a2-29a3; lHa: ff. 2a5-4a6.

rnam par rtog pa spang ba dang | [1b5] phyag rgya chen po'i lam 'bras bu dang {b}  
cas pa'o | dang po la *gsum* ste | {thab}s dang shes rab kyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang  
| rmi lam rmi lam gyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang | e bam phyag rgya bzhi'i nyams  
[1b6] myong gyis myi grol ba'o |

dang po la *gnyis* ste | so sor dgag pa dang | mthun mong du dgag pa'o | dang po la *gnyis*  
ste | gzhan lus shes rab la brten ba'i nyams myong [1b7] gyis myi grol ba dang |

21 | *kha sbyor bde la*<sup>42</sup> *yongs su chags nas ni*<sup>43</sup> |  
| 'di nyid don dam yin zhes rmongs pas<sup>44</sup> smra |  
| gang zhig khyim nas byung nas sgo drung du |  
| kā ma rū pa'i gtam ni 'dri bar byed |

rang lus thabs ldan la brten ba'i nyams myong gyis myi grol ba'o | | 'di la *gnyis* ste |  
rlung gyi don dang |

22 | *rlung gi rgyu la*<sup>45</sup> / *stong pa'i khyim du ni* | D 28a  
| rnam pa du ma'i tshul gyis bcos ma bas |  
| *nam mkha' las bab*<sup>46</sup> *nyes pa*<sup>47</sup> *dang / bcas pa*<sup>48</sup> | Q 33a  
| *gdung bas brgyal bar gyur pa'i rnal 'byor pa*<sup>49</sup> |

ci ltar dpe *gnyis ham* bzhus pa'i nyams kyis myi grol [2a1] ba dang |

23 | *ji ltar bram ze mar dang 'bras kyis ni*<sup>50</sup> |  
| 'bar ba'i me la sbyin sreg<sup>51</sup> byed pa ni |  
| nam mkha'i bcud kyi rdzas kyis bskyed pa ste |  
| 'di de nyid du zhen par shes pa nyid |

kha gcig lce chung nu ba' nyams kyis myi grol ba'o |

24 | *kha cig tshangs pa'i gnas su 'od spar nas* |  
| lce yis kun du ru yis lce chung bskyod |  
| 'ching bar byed pa shin tu<sup>52</sup> dkrugs byas te<sup>53</sup> |  
| nga rgyal dbang gis rnal 'byor pa zhes zer |

42 *la* DC; *ba* NQ.

43 *ni* NQ; *su* DC.

44 *pas* NQ; *pa* DC.

45 *la* NQ; *las* DC.

46 *bab* DC; *babs* NQ.

47 *pa* DC; om. NQ.

48 *pa*'i DC; *pa yi* NQ.

49 *pa* DC; *pa'o* NQ.

50 *ni* DC; *su* NQ.

51 *sreg* DC; *bsreg* NQ.

52 *tu* NQ; *du* DC.

53 *byas te* DC; *byed de* NQ.

mthun mong du dgag pa ni

25 | *rang rig de nyid rig pas gzhan la ston* |  
 | *gang gis bcings / pa<sup>54</sup> de nyid grol zhes zer* | N 28a  
 | *kha dog dbye bas 'ching bu mar gad<sup>55</sup> zer* |  
 | *rmongs pas rin cher brtag<sup>56</sup> pa ma shes pas* |

26 | *de ni ra gan gser gyi blo yis len* |  
 | *nyams myong khyer nas don dam sgrub par byed* |

rmi lam rmi lam gyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang |  
 | *rmi lam bde la rjes su chags par byed* |  
 | *phung po mi<sup>57</sup> rtag bde ba rtag ces zer* |

e bam phyag rgya bzhi'i nyams [1b6] myong gyis myi grol ba'o |  
 27 | *e bam yi ger rang gis<sup>58</sup> go bar byed* |  
 | *skad cig dbye bas phyag rgya bzhi bkod cing* |  
 | *nyams su myong bas lhan cig skyes pa / zer* | C 28b  
 | *gzugs brnyan zhes pa<sup>59</sup> me long lta ba bzhi<sup>60</sup>* |

28 | *ji ltar ma rtogs smig<sup>61</sup> rgyu'i chu la ni* |  
 | *'khrul pa'i dbang gis ri dags rgyug par byed* |  
 | *rmongs pa<sup>62</sup> skom pa mi ngoms 'ching bar 'gyur* |  
 | *don<sup>63</sup> dam zer zhing bde ba len par byed<sup>64</sup>* |

54 *bcings pa* DQC; *bcing ba* N.

55 *mar gad* NQC; *margad* (ligature of *ra* and *ga*) D.

56 *brtag* DQC; *brtags* N.

57 *mi* NDQ; *ma* C.

58 *gis* DC; *gyis* NQ.

59 *pa* DC; *pas* NQ.

60 *ba bzhi* DC; *bzhi no* NQ.

61 *smig* DC; *mig* NQ.

62 *pa* DC; *pas* NQ.

63 *don* NQ; *gang zhig don* DC.

64 *len par byed* NQ; *len* DC.

## Appendix II

### Excerpts from Par phu pa's Zla ba'i 'od zer

#### Legenda

Tham<s ca>d	[ <i>bsdus yig</i> ]
dgo <sub>ng</sub> s	[written with small characters]
<i>gcig</i>	[ 1 ]
<i>gnyis</i>	[ 2 ]
<i>gsum</i>	[ 3 ]
<i>bzhi</i>	[ 4 ]
<u>gyin</u>	[Uncertain or unclear reading]
MED	[Ideographic sign meaning <i>med</i> ]
SOGS	[Ideographic sign for <i>sogs</i> ]
=	[Unreadable]
{mda'}	[Reconstructed]

#### Quote 1

'bras bu chos kyi sku sgrub ba la phyag rgya chen po myug ma'i lam<sup>65</sup> dang | bcos ma thabs kyi lam *gnyis* las | phyag rgya chen po ma bcos pa'i lam ni rtsol ba MED ci re dogs dang blang dor la [4a8] sogs pa rtog pa'i zug rngu tham<s ca>d dang *gnyis* la bas bde' ba chen po'i lam yin la | bcos ma thabs kyi lam ni 'bad rtsol dang bcas shing | re dogs dang blang dor la SOGS pa'i zug rngu dang yang ma bral [4b1] la | zag pa dang bcas pa'i bde' ba cen po'i sa ma yin ba'i lam ma yin ba'o || de lta 'dir phyag rgya chen po dam pa'i bde' ba spangs nas thabs lam gzhan du 'gro zhing [4b2] | <r>do <rj>e dang pad ma 'dus pa las 'byung ba'm | rang lus thabs ldan gyi rtsol ba'i skyon las skyes pa'i rtsol ba'i bde' ba la thar pa'i lam re ba byed de | gnyis MED lhan *gcig* skyes pa chos kyi [4b3] sku las ring du 'gyur te | dper na sbrang mas me tog la sbrang rtsi bshibs shing rang gyi khar bcug pa de nyid phung bar myi byed cing snod gzhan du bsags pas gzhan gyis khyer nas longs [4b4] spyad du MED cing ring bar 'gyur ba bzhin du ces bya'o ||

#### Quote 2

chags pa'i gnas ma yin ba la chags pa snod dug can ni zhes bya ba'i shu log *gcig* dang tshig yig gcig gyis ston te | rin po che'i snod dang | [5a5] phal pa las gzhan dug can

65 Read: *gnyug ma'i lam*.

bsnyed pa<sup>66</sup> bsgrub ba'i bsaṃ pa can ni | gzugs la SOGS pa'i yul rnaṃs dag<sup>67</sup> la rnaṃ  
par chags so |

### Commentary on stanza 21

gzhan lus shes rab brten ba'i nyams kyis mi grol ba ni [9b4] kha sbyor bde' la zhe bya  
ba'i shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | ḍo<sup>68</sup> dang pad ma khaḥ byar<sup>69</sup> ba'i bde' ba la chags nas  
'di nyid don daṃ don kyī ye <sh>es yin no zhes rmongs pa rnaṃs smra ste des rnaṃ  
par myi grol lo || [9b5] dper na rmongs pa gang zhig grong khyer ka ma ru pa'i khyim  
nas byung nas ka ma ru pa ngo ma shes nas sgo drung du ka ma ru pa gang yin zhes  
'dri ba dang 'dra bar rang gyi seṃs lhan *gcig* skyes pa la gnas [9b6] bzhin du | de ngo  
ma shes par thabs laṃ gyi bde' ba la seṃs lhan *gcig* skyes pa tshol bar byed de mi  
rnyed ces bya ba'o |

### Commentary on stanzas 22-23

‡ | haṃ bzhu' ba'i nyams kyis myi grol ba ni | rlung gyi rgyu las zhes bya [9b7] ba'i  
shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | rlung bheṃ ba'i<sup>70</sup> rgyu mtshan las rang gyi lus khong stong  
du byas pa'i khyim du rlung bsgoṃs ba'i thabs rnaṃ pa du ma'i thsul gyis bcos ma  
byas pa ste | bsring ba dang *bsang* ba dang [9b8] mda' ltar 'phang ba dang | 'khor lo  
ltar bskor ba dang | 'khyims na gdon pa la SOGS pa byas na naṃ mkha' spyi bo bde'  
ba chen po'i 'khor lo la gnas pa'i haṃ las bdud rtsi byang chub kyī seṃs [10a1] 'bab  
pa'i nyams ni | rlung nad du<sup>71</sup> 'gro ba'i nyes pa dang bcas pa'i nyams myong la gdung  
bas myong zhi rgyal bar 'gyur ba'i<sup>72</sup> rnal 'byor pa de ni nyams des myi grol zhes bya  
ba'o | [10a2] dpe' ni ji ltar braṃ ze zhes bya ba shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | ci ltar braṃ  
ze mar dang 'bras kyis su | 'bar ba'i me la sbyin sregs byed pas thar pa thob bar 'dod  
pa ni zhen pa dang ma bral bas [10a3] myi thob ba *bzhin* du | spyi bo bde' ba chen po  
nam mkha'i haṃ gyi bcud kyī rdzas bdud rtsi 'bab bar bsaṃs pas ni nyams myong  
skyed par byed pa ste | nyams kyī bde' ba 'di de kho na nyid du zhen par shes pa  
[10a4] nyid yin bas thar pa myi thob bo |

66 Read: *bsnyen pa*.

67 Read: *rnam dag*.

68 *bsdus yig* for *rdo rje*.

69 Read: *kha sbyar*.

70 *bhāvanā*.

71 Read: *gnad du*.

72 Read: *myos shing brgyal bar 'gyur ba'i*. Cf. GDT 189.5: *myos shing dran med du brgyal bar 'gyur*.

### Commentary on stanza 24

| lce chu<sup>73</sup> 'jib ba'i nyams kyis myi grol ba ni kha *gcig* ces bya ba'i shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | dge' slong la SOGS pa kha *gcig* spyi bo tshangs pa'i gnas su lte ba'i yi [10a5] ge las 'od spar nas byang chub kyi sems 'bab bar bsgom mo || lce'i kun du ru ni lce'i rtse mos lce chung la 'jib cing bskyod pa nyams myong bde' ba skyes pa la zhen pas 'ching bar byed pa'i nyams des [10a6] rang gyi rgyud bkrugs par byas ste | mngon ba'i nga rgyal gi dbang gyis bdag ni rnal 'byor pa yin zer mod kyi | des ni mi grol zhes bya'o |

### Commentary on stanza 25 and on the first two lines of stanza 26

mthun mong du dgag pa ni | rang rig de [10a7] nyid ces bya ba'i shu log phyed dang *gnyis* ston te | rang rig ni rang gyi nyams su myong ba'o | rigs pas zhes bya ba ni tshad mar byas nas so | des na rang gyi myong ba tshad mar byas nas gzhan [10a8] la yang ston te | nyo<n> m<ong>s pa'i dbang gyis bcings pa de nyid thabs dang ldan bas grol lo zhes zer mod kyi | rmongs pas rin po che'i rtag pa ma shes pas de ni mdog ljang kur 'dug pa la 'khrul [10b1] nas nor bu 'ching bu la rin po che mar gad yin zer ba dang | ser ba tshal la 'khrul nas ra gan gser yin snyam ba'i blos len ba bzhan du<sup>74</sup> | nyams myong lam du khyer nas don dam don gyi ye <sh>es [10b2] sgrub bar byed ste 'khrul zhes bya ba'i don ho |

### Commentary on the second two lines of stanza 26

rmi lam gyi nyams la zhen pa spa ba<sup>75</sup> ni | rmi lam zhes bya ba'i shu log *gnyis* kyis ston te | kha *gcig* na re rmi lam du zin na bar 'dor zin bas thar pa thob [10b3] ces rmi lam bzung ba dang | sbyang ba dang | spel ba dang | mos pa sgyur ba la gos pa rmi lam gyi nyams kyi bde' ba la chags par byed cing | 'di skad ces phung po 'di mi rtag ces cing yang rmi lam gyi nyams [10b4] kyi bde' ba rtag pas bar 'dor zin nas grol bar 'gyur zhes zer te | nyams la zhen pa dang myi rtag pas des myi grol ces bya'o |

### Commentary on stanzas 27-28

| phyag rgya bzhi nyams kyis mi grol ba ni | e bam zhes bya [10b5] ba'i shu log *gnyis* kyis ston te | spyi bor e | lte bar bam | de'i bsreg g.yos go bar byed gsung | yang na e shes rab stong pa dang | bam thabs snang ba dang | sbyar nas e bam gyi yi ges [10b6] mtshon nas rang nyid go bar byed de | de yang rnam par smyin pa'i skad *gcig* ma dang mtshan nyid dang bral ba'i skad *gcig* ma la SOGS pa'i dbye' ba *bzhi* las rten <na>s las kyi phyag rgya dang | chos kyi phyag rgya dang | [10b7] dam thsig gi phyag rgya

73 Read: *lce chung*.

74 Read: *gzhan du*.

75 Read: *spang ba*.

dang | phyag rgya chen po zhes bya bar 'god *gcig*<sup>76</sup> cing | de tham<s ca>d kyang  
 nyams myong ba'i ngo bor gnas pa la lhan *gcig* skyes pa zhes zer mod kyang | nyams  
 su myong mtshan ni | [10b8] lhan *gcig* skyes pa ma yin te | nyams rtsa ba dang bral  
 zhing *gnyis* su MED pa ni lhan *gcig* skyes pa yin no | myong ba lhan *gcig* skyes par  
 'dod pa ni 'khrul pa ste | gzugs rnyan la don du zhen [11a1] pas me long la lta ba 'am  
 | smyigs sgyu<sup>77</sup> la chur 'khrul bas ri dags rgyug par byed kyang gzugs gzhan la gzugs  
 MED pa dang | smyig 'gyu<sup>78</sup> la chu MED pas ngoms par myi 'gyur [11a2] ba bzhin  
 du | thabs lam gyi bde' ba la lhan *gcig* skyes par khrul nas bde' ba len par byed de des  
 myi grol zhes bya ba'o |

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76 Scribal error.

77 Read: *smig rgyu*.

78 *Ibid.*

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## Abbreviations

- BA *Blue Annals* (Roerich 1976).
- DTG *Deb ther sngon po* by Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nus dpal.
- GDT *rGyal po do ha’i ṅka* By Karma ’phrin las pa.
- LGR *Bla ma brgyud pa’i rim pa* (Passavanti 2008)
- ZBO *Zla ba’i ’od zer* by Par phu ba Blo gros seng ge (vol. 1095/7, Tucci Tibetan Collection).