

**Red Tārā: Lineages of Literature and Practice**

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## Abstract

Tārā is arguably the most popular goddess of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. She is well known in her Green, White, and Twenty-one forms. However, the numerous red aspects of the divinity have long been overlooked in both popular and academic literature on the goddess. This thesis aims to redress this balance.

This thesis presents the various manifestations of Red Tārā in the form of a survey of the literary and practice lineages of this goddess throughout Tibetan Buddhist history. The intention of the thesis is to examine individual forms of Red Tārā, excluding Kurukullā (who has received previous scholarly attention), in order to prove the hypothesis that not all Red Tārās are Kurukullā. The research has identified a preliminary historical order of Red Tārā lineages from the eleventh century works on Pīṭheśvarī and the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārās, through to the nineteenth and twentieth century forms of the goddess authored by the *dGe-lugs-pas* and A-paṃ gter-ston in the A-mdo region of Tibet. The red forms of Tārā are more 'worldly' than her Green or White incarnations, and the soteriological component of her worship is not always clear. Accordingly this allows a glimpse into the subjugating/ magnetising ritual process.

The thesis comprises three sections. Section One provides a general introduction to Tārā and Kurukullā, followed by a survey of the literature pertaining to Red Tārā identified in the course of this research. Section Two takes four lineages of Red Tārā literature as its focus. Each chapter refers to an individual lineage: Pīṭheśvarī, *Sa-skyapa*, the Twenty-one Tārās, and A-paṃ gter-ton's *gter-ma* cycle. Section Three deals with modern-day practice of the goddess in the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation and the Flaming Jewel Sangha.

The thesis relies on translation of primary sources from the Tibetan language, participant observation, and New Religious Studies methodology, and covers a wide range of areas including subjugation rituals, iconography, body-*maṇḍala* rituals, the adoption of Buddhism in the West, and New Religious Movements. It adds to current knowledge in a variety of fields including ritual, goddess studies, the Tibetan pantheon and its iconography, and Buddhism in the West.

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## **Abbreviations**

### **Organisations and Buddhist Centres**

|         |                                                               |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| CENSUR  | Centre for Studies on New Religions                           |
| CGF     | Chagdud Gonpa Foundation                                      |
| FJS     | The Flaming Jewel Sangha                                      |
| FPMT    | The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition |
| FWBO    | The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order                     |
| IMS     | The Insight Meditation Society                                |
| NKT     | The New Kadampa Trust                                         |
| NRM     | New Religious Movement                                        |
| PPI     | Padmasambhava Peace Institute                                 |
| SGI-USA | Sōko Gakkai International                                     |
| TBRC    | The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre                          |

### **Literature**

|      |                                                                            |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DAG  | <i>Deb chung a ru ra'i dga' tshal</i>                                      |
| DTC  | <i>Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo</i>                                       |
| GK   | <i>sGrub thabs kun bsdus</i>                                               |
| GMRL | <i>mGo log sman rtsis rig pa'i lo rgyus ngo mtsar nor bu'i rlab phreng</i> |
| MGRG | <i>A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems</i>                                    |
| MRFO | <i>A Manual of Ritual Fire Offerings</i> (Tulku and Perrott 1989)          |

## **Conventions**

Within the thesis terms have been provided in English with the Tibetan rendering in brackets. I have adopted the Wylie transliteration method for the spelling of each word. However, rather than capitalising the first letter of the word, as found in the Wylie system, I have instead chosen to capitlise the root letter of the first word of any Tibetan names. Where a Sanskrit term is provided it appears in brackets with the abbreviation Skt:



## **Prolegomenon**

Tārā is the best loved goddess of the Buddhist pantheon. Her worship extends across the Tibetan plateau and includes her various forms: the Green, the White, and the Twenty-one Tārās. A number of researchers have discussed her worship (Arènes 1996; Beyer 2001 [1973]; Bhattacharyya and Ghosh 1999; Wilson 1986)<sup>1</sup> and a number of books have been written for practitioners, including three published in the period of writing this thesis (Chodron 2005; Situpa 2009; Urgyen Rinpoche and Adeu Rinpoche 2007). Despite this plethora of secondary literature the red form of the goddess has consistently been overlooked, both in academic and practitioner focused material: this work aims to redress this issue.

This thesis provides an overview of the lineages of literature and modern-day practice of Red Tārā, addressing the need for an investigation into the various forms of the goddess. As such it takes the form of a survey of the lineages of Red Tārā, similar in style to previous works by English, Shaw, and Kinsley which have variously concentrated on Buddhist and Hindu goddesses (English 2002; Kinsley 1997, 1998 [1986]; Shaw 2006). Within the dissertation each form of Red Tārā which has an extant literary or practice lineage is allocated a single chapter. The work aims to provide an overview of the entire pantheon, while individual chapters may be viewed as separate studies through which the reader may appreciate a particular form of the goddess.

A number of scholars have applied a feminist methodology to the study of Buddhist goddess traditions (Cleary and Aziz 2000; Gross 1993; Klein 2001 [1995]; Shaw 1994, 2006). However, it is not my intention to discuss the role of women in Tibetan Buddhist tradition or to re-examine the tradition from a feminist perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> More information on previous research relating to Tārā will be provided in the Chapters One and Two.

Although Chapter Three touches briefly on this concept at the outset of my research I decided not to follow a feminist hermeneutic, primarily for the reason that the textual tradition itself does not make such a link explicit. As such I did not feel this line of enquiry was relevant to a study of the cult of Red Tārās. Despite this, it may be the case that future researchers use this preliminary study of the lineages of Red Tārā to aid their research and to shed further light on the role of the feminine in Tibetan Buddhism.

One aspect of Tibetan Buddhist practice that is made clear within the texts themselves is the role of Red Tārā as a subjugating deity. Based on my translations and an analysis of her practice and iconography it is hoped that this thesis will serve to illustrate the function of subjugating deities and the application of this form of ritual. This is a little-studied aspect of Tantric Buddhism and therefore any new information provides a sound basis for future study.

The thesis comprises three parts: Part One contains an introduction to the goddess Tārā and a survey of the traceable literary lineages of Red Tārā.<sup>2</sup> This list includes both texts which have been lost and those forms of the goddess for which a text or practice still exists. In the case of those lineages where the text has been lost or where I have not been able to gain access to the text no further analysis has been carried out. Part Two serves to discuss the extant literary lineages of which I have had access to the relevant text. Each lineage is described and analysed within a separate chapter. The process of selection for the Red Tārās included in Part Two and Three of the thesis was three-fold. First, I selected forms of the goddess for which I had access to the primary literature in the Tibetan language. Secondly, I included forms of Red

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<sup>2</sup> It is quite possible that many more forms of Red Tārā were practiced in India and Tibet throughout the history of Buddhist presence. However, since the Cultural Revolution in Tibet a great number of texts were destroyed and as such the practice lineages have consequently died out. I have included within this thesis a reference to every form of Red Tārā which I have come across in the period of my research. In a number of cases I found reference to a lineage but was unable to gain access to the text and these lineages have accordingly not received more detailed analysis.

Tārā that stand as individual goddesses. Thirdly, although this thesis includes Red Tārās who are related to Kurukullā in its survey of the forms of the goddess, its main intention is to highlight forms of Red Tārā other than Kurukullā herself. As discussed in Chapter Two, previous scholarship concerning the Buddhist pantheon, and more specifically the goddess Tārā, has generally overlooked Red Tārā, mentioning only Kurukullā as a red aspect of the deity (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 279, 302; B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 140; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198; Getty 1928: 126-27; Mehta 1999: 280; Reynolds 2002). This thesis aims to redress this bias and to provide information concerning other distinct forms of the goddess, enabling us to discover a pantheon of Red Tārās as deities independent of Kurukullā. Furthermore, all aspects of Red Tārā discussed here perform the function of subjugating/ magnetising (*dbang-gi 'phrin-las*, Skt: *vaśya*). As for the layout of Part Two, the presentation of these forms of Red Tārā follows a roughly historical trajectory. Part Three describes the modern-day practice of Red Tārā in two *rNying-ma-pa* lineages. The research for Part Three was conducted through participant observation in Brazil and the United States.

For each goddess examined within Part Two the analysis is primarily based on the available textual tradition. This usually takes the form of *sādhana* texts found either within the Tibetan canon or a *gTer-ma* corpus. The choice of particular text presented for each form of the goddess is justified within the relevant chapter. Original translations of the material have been undertaken and are provided where possible.<sup>3</sup> Regrettably I had to rely on one source text for this project and as such I have primarily relied upon the *sDe-dge bsTan 'gyur* (*Tenjur*) as the principal source of canonical literature. Where ambiguity arose in the *sDe-dge Tenjur* version other

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<sup>3</sup> Note that often within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition tantric material is deemed secret, and cultural sensitivity to this classification is required. In such cases I have either not presented a direct translation, preferring to include pertinent information in my own words, or I have removed extracts that are essential to the performance of the practice, such as the *mantras*.

*Tenjurs* were consulted for clarification purposes. Using these translations I have been able to identify the various historical personalities associated with the cult of Red Tārā, and therefore trace the lineage of the teachings. In most cases this procedure has made it possible to identify the school of Tibetan Buddhism to which the practitioners belonged. A progression of the lineage of the text has been identified in most cases, either from India to Tibet, or within Tibet itself. Where possible the historical period of the origin and transmission of the text has been identified.

Furthermore, the translation of these materials sheds light on the types of practice employed by Red Tārā practitioners, and provides new information concerning the function and role of the various forms of the goddess. In most cases there are very few iconographic representations of the relevant deity available. However, through description of the iconography in each case and analysis of what this iconography represents it is hoped that this thesis will provide new information on these rare forms of Tārā, especially valuable for art historians and scholars of iconography. It is hoped that more research into the implications of such iconography might follow from the findings discussed in this thesis.

It is further hoped that this survey of the lineages of literature and practice of the various forms of Red Tārā will fill a gap in the knowledge of researchers concerning the cult of Tārā, providing a new perspective on the role of the goddess. It provides translations of previously untranslated material, adds to iconographic knowledge surrounding Tārā, and also serves to illustrate her role as a subjugating deity, furthering knowledge surrounding this little-researched aspect of Tibetan Buddhism. As such future researchers may use this thesis as a stepping-stone to studies of the cult of Tārā, goddess iconography, and the role of subjugating rituals in the 'Four Actions' (*phrin-las*) of Tantric Buddhism.

## ***Summary of Contents***

Section One provides an introduction to the cult of Tārā and her common forms, and proceeds to a discussion of the red aspects of the goddess. In Chapter One a literature review of the academic and popular material pertaining to the study of Tārā is provided, followed by a discussion of the historical development of the cult in India and Tibet. The origin of Tārā worship is outlined, with a discussion of the key myths surrounding the goddess. Furthermore, the main forms of the deity are introduced.

Chapter Two moves this introductory material further, providing the necessary background information on the cult of Kurukullā, the best known subjugating goddess and a form of Red Tārā. Kurukullā has been studied by a few previous scholars (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]; Mehta 1999; Reynolds 2002; Shastri Pandey 2001; Shaw 2006). However, further research into the cult of this divinity is necessary. This introduction is followed by a survey of all the forms of Red Tārā to which I have found reference, divided according to school. Although this list is long it cannot claim to be comprehensive. It is highly possible that due to the esoteric nature of Tibetan Buddhism a large number of other Red Tārās were worshipped over time, and that I have not been privy to the literature and practices surrounded these cults.

Following this introductory material, Section Two moves on to discuss the literary traditions of Red Tārā. Here each chapter is concerned with a specific lineage of the divinity. This thesis was intentionally presented in this manner in order to present an overview of the pantheon of Red Tārās. Likewise, individual chapters may be consulted in order to gain a deeper understanding of a particular aspect of Red Tārā.

Chapter Three concerns the wrathful goddess Pīṭheśvarī, a Red Tārā also known as Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā. The practice of this deity is said to originate with the *yoginī* Vajravatī (dates unknown), who herself hailed from Uḍḍiyāna. The chapter moves on

from a discussion of the personality of Vajravatī to include the other authors and translators in the lineage, and tracks the movement of this practice from its origins in India, through to its inclusion in the Tibetan *Tenjur*. Alongside this historical analysis, a discussion is also undertaken into the subjugating role of this goddess. As the practices concerned with this divinity take the form of a body-*maṇḍala* and make numerous references to the cult of *pīṭha* sites these concepts are discussed. Shaw's analysis of this tradition focused on the role of female Buddhist practitioners in the worship of Pīṭheśvarī, and this chapter also examines failings in Shaw's methodology and findings (Shaw 1994: 2006).

Chapter Four concerns the *Sa-skya-pa* forms of Red Tārā. First the early literary history of this cult is discussed relying on the numerous works found in the *sGrub thabs kun bstus* cycle and also a *Tenjur* version of the text. A translation of the *Tenjur* text is included and the lineage of Buddhist masters is uncovered. This is followed by an analysis of the iconography and subjugating function of the goddess. The end of the chapter deals with the later commentarial literature concerning the goddess, composed by both *Sa-skya-pas* and also members of a number of other Tibetan Buddhist schools. Here, once more, the members of the lineage are discussed, providing a socio-cultural setting for the development of this practice. Furthermore, the relationship between the original teachings of the *Sa-skya-pa* school and the later development of the lineage is outlined.

Chapter Five moves on to discuss the well-known group of goddesses known as the Twenty-one Tārās. Here the colour of each goddess is indicative of her power (*'phrin-las*) of pacification, increase, subjugation, or destruction. The Red Tārās found in the various commentarial lineages of Twenty-one Tārā practice are introduced and their specific functions and iconography listed in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the role of subjugation in the wider context of Tibetan Buddhist



ritual. As the Twenty-one Tārās constitute a widely known and practised tradition this information is vital to any discussion of Red Tārās.

The *gter-ma* cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston (1895-1945), and specifically the Red Tārā practices found within it, are the focus of Chapter Six. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the *gter-ma* tradition, in order to contextualise this specific study. This is followed by an outline of the life and works of A-paṃ gter-ston, the originator of this form of Red Tārā, that were discovered only recently in the early twentieth century. A description of the numerous Red Tārā texts discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston is followed by an analysis of the iconography and function of each form of the goddess, who closely relate to Kurukullā. This chapter also aims to shed light on the concept of modern day *gter-ma* discovery and dissemination.

Following on from the literary traditions of Red Tārā available for discussion Section Three discusses the practice of Red Tārā in the modern-day Buddhist world. This analysis involves the use of sociological theories of religion in order to categorise these new religious traditions. Chapter Seven concerns the practice of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā cycle by the pan-American followers of Chagdud Tulku (1930-2002). In addition to providing an example of modern day Buddhist practice, discussion of this sort sheds light on the appropriation of Tibetan Buddhist practice by the western world and the ways in which Tibetan Buddhist practice is undertaken outside its traditional setting. Furthermore, the movement of this recently discovered *gter-ma* cycle to the West in a short period of time allows us to expand upon our discussion of the *gter-ma* tradition as a whole. The chapter begins with information concerning the life of Chagdud Tulku, followed by an introduction to Buddhist practice in the Western world, and also includes a discussion of the role of Western Buddhist teachers, both male and female. The use of Red Tārā practice by the

Chagdud Gonpa Foundation (CGF) is examined. Research for this chapter involved participant observation among CGF groups in the Americas.

Finally, Chapter Eight discusses the Flaming Jewel Sangha (FJS) and their leader Traktung Tulku (Stuart Kirkpatrick, b. 1959). Kirkpatrick teaches his students a particular form of Red Tārā not evidenced in the literary traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, either historically or in more recent *gter-ma* works. This analysis enables us to examine briefly the legitimacy of *gter-ma* texts and teachers in the Tibetan Buddhist milieu. Furthermore, analysis of the FJS allows us a brief glimpse at the phenomenon of New Religious Movements (NRM), making use of New Religious Studies methodology as defined by Bromley (Bromley 2007: 65-66). Although the inclusion of these teachings of questionable origin in an academic thesis of this sort may be queried by some, since the intention of this study is to provide a comprehensive survey of the literary and practice lineages of Red Tārā in the present day, and more generally in Tibetan history, to omit a living practice such as this would undermine the aim of the thesis.

The conclusion of the thesis aims to draw together the material discussed in Sections Two and Three. Here the new material concerning the individual forms of Red Tārā and the function of subjugation are brought together to provide an overview of the goddess and her role in Tibetan Buddhism.

**Part One**  
**Introduction to the Buddhist Deity Tārā**



## Chapter One

### An Introduction to the Buddhist Goddess Tārā

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Tārā in order to contextualise the study of Red Tārā in particular. It begins with a literature review of material relating to Western academic discussion of Tārā. This is followed by a general examination of the place of Tārā within the Buddhist tradition, her historical origins within India and the Hindu and Buddhist religions, stories regarding the mythological origin of the goddess, and also her relationship with practitioners. Her role in Tantric tradition and Tibet will then be discussed. As little to no literature relates specifically to Red Tārā this chapter will focus on the traditions relating to the other main aspects of Tārā.

#### 1.1. Literature Review of the Material Relating to a Study of Tārā

In order to contextualise our analysis of Red Tārā and introduce the wider concept of the Buddhist goddess Tārā, this study will begin with a brief literature review of the main secondary English-language works on Tārā. At present, there is only one publication specifically concerning Red Tārā, a short introduction by Chagdud Khadro, in which the author explains the history and practice of Red Tārā within A-paṃ gter-ston's *rNying-ma-pa* tradition (Khadro 2003). The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation also produce some audio commentaries on this *rNying-ma-pa* practice (Chagdud Tulku *a*; Khadro 2003).

Concerning Tārā in general, most works have taken Green Tārā, White Tārā, or the Twenty-one Tārās as their focus. The main scholarly examples are Beyer's work on the ritual cult of Tārā and Willson's lengthy translations of Tārā-related material from Sanskrit and Tibetan.

### 1.1.1. Scholarly Works Focusing on Tārā

Stephan Beyer's *The Cult of Tara: Magic and Ritual in Tibet* is regarded as the seminal work on the divinity. This scholarly work embarks upon a discussion of the ritual systems of Tibetan Buddhist practice through an examination of the cult of Tārā in three main sections: Worship, Application, and Acquisition. 'Worship' introduces Beyer's research and follows the outline of a Tārā ritual to its completion.

'Application' sets out to discover the use of powers gained through ritual, including fire-rituals (*sbyin-sreg*). 'Acquisition' studies the concept of long-life, initiation, and ritual service. Beyer's work is a comprehensive examination of the cult of Tārā as it relates to the ritual life of one monastery but also pertains to the wider worship of Tārā by Tibetan practitioners. The author includes lengthy translations of ritual texts in each of the three sections. However, as he did not provide the Tibetan versions of these they are of limited use to the scholar. This is currently the major scholarly work relating to Tārā worship both in Tibet and in exile and constitutes an invaluable reference work on both the goddess Tārā and ritual practice in the Buddhist tantric tradition. It provides an important resource for the present study (Beyer 2001 [1973]).

In an early article from 1894 Waddell discusses the cults of Avalokita (Avalokiteśvara) and Tārā based on his travels around India, during which he found many *Mahāyāna* images, including Tārā, at most sites he frequented. This work describes Tārā as the *śakti* (consort) of Avalokita and finds that in the tantric tradition she took on his active qualities. Waddell makes links between the goddess and Durgā, Lakṣmī, and the Virgin Mary. He goes on to describe Green Tārā as the most popular aspect of the goddess and details some of her forms. He includes a translation of a practice guide, and finishes with descriptions of twenty-seven variant forms of Tārā (Waddell 1894). Although very early this article is quite comprehensive. Waddell makes certain judgments about *Mahāyāna* Buddhist practice, but despite this his

descriptions of the goddess's iconography and practice in India are valuable to any study of her cult.

Sastri's 'The Origin and Cult of Tārā' is an early article examining the cult of Tārā in India and beyond. He examines her place in the Brahmanical tradition, discusses her role as second of the *Mahāvidyā* goddesses, then examines references to Tārā in Brahmanical literature and also the Jain tradition. Following this, he details various iconographic representations of Tārā and includes a discussion of her place within the Buddhist tradition. Sastri posits that Tārā was originally a Buddhist goddess, and explores the place and date of the origin of her cult, further describing her iconography within the Buddhist tradition (Sastri 1925). This early but comprehensive article is a remarkable work for its time. The scope of the text covers almost every aspect of the cult as it pertains to India and beyond. It remains a key text in the study of the cult of Tārā to this day. However, some of his arguments seem naive in the light of later research, such as that of Ghosh and Dasgupta.

Klieger's short article takes a modern look at the debate surrounding Tārā's origin within either the Hindu or Buddhist tradition. He provides scriptural evidence to back up his thesis that Tārā is a syncretic blend of the two traditions (Klieger 1982). However, much of this work has been undertaken by previous authors and some of his comments remain unconvincing. As such, this work adds little to the findings of previous scholars on the topic.

Martin Willson's book on Tārā texts was published over a decade after Beyer's work and criticises Beyer's translation style. Willson however, does not concentrate on the ritual aspects of the Tārā cult, but instead provides translations of the key Tārā texts from Tibetan and Sanskrit, including canonical works concerning Tārā, Tāranātha's historical text, the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*, songs by Indian and Tibetan devotees, and numerous *sādhana*s. He also includes drawings of the Tārās

who save from the Eight Fears. Each section is introduced and where possible the lineage is examined. This wide-ranging study of the textual tradition concerns Tārā in both India and Tibet, and makes available these texts in the English language, thereby providing a useful source of comparison when translating related Tārā material. However, Willson provides no reference to Red Tārā specifically, only referring to Red Tārās as they are found in the Twenty-one Tārā tradition of Sūryagupta (7th/8th century) (Willson 1986).

Day's article on the Twenty-one Tārās could be deemed scholarly, in that it appears in a scholarly work on goddess traditions. However, the scholarship is mostly gleaned from other sources, in particular the work of Beyer and B. Bhattacharyya. Day introduces his article as a "review and revision" of modern-day scholarship on Tārā, moving on to state that many questions surrounding the history and interpretation of the Tārā cult remain unanswered. However, he does not list these questions for us, nor make any real attempt to advance the field, but instead quotes past scholars on the subject in much the same way as other previous works. Day discusses the place of origin of the cult and its introduction to Tibet, at times making new assertions on the debate, but fails to back these up with evidence. He moves on to discuss the various forms of Tārā and her ritual, using material largely taken from Beyer's work. He concludes with a discussion of Tārā and gender which focuses on the *yab-yum* iconography and the role of Kuan-yin in female, male, and androgynous forms. This article makes claims that it unfortunately does not fulfil and the attempts to move the field forward lack corroborative material. Day employs uncommon terms such as 'Mahātārā' and 'Tārāism' - which he claims is a more appropriate label for Tibetan Buddhism than that of 'Lamaism', a term which scholars have in any case largely abandoned. Despite his intentions, Day's article fails to advance the field of study as he intended (Day 1990).



A short article by N. Bhattacharyya briefly outlines the historical cult of Tārā. Although published in 1996 it takes a very outdated view of many aspects of the cult. The article focuses largely on the goddess within the Hindu tradition, but also analyses the Buddhist goddess. The author attempts to classify the Tārās by colour, and thus gives a short outline of their various forms - something the present study also attempts. In this section he provides useful iconographical descriptions of numerous aspects of the goddess (N. Bhattacharyya 1999).

Shaw's *Buddhist Goddesses of India* provides an overview of various goddess traditions that prevailed in Indian Buddhism. Although Shaw investigates numerous goddesses the chapters on Tārā and Kurukullā are of particular interest here. The chapter on Tārā takes the same approach as that adopted by most scholars, discussing the goddess' origin, history, name, and role using many previously examined sources. Little new information or analysis is provided. However, Shaw's work sheds some light on the lesser-known manifestations of Tārā, a topic that few other scholars have focused upon. Within this section a short discussion of Red Tārā describes both the *Sa-skyapa* form, A-paṃ gter-ston's *rNying-ma-pa* goddess, and also the lesser-known Indian goddess Pīṭheśvarī, a wrathful form of Red Tārā, briefly describing her iconography and role. The chapter concerned with Kurukullā is more informative. As Shaw herself points out, Western academic literature on Kurukullā is very sparse. Therefore, any discussion of the history, iconography and role of this deity is valuable to researchers (Shaw 2006). Although Shaw's work claims to focus on Indian Buddhist goddesses most of her sources are Tibetan-language materials or Western scholarly works on Tibet. In fact, she includes a separate bibliography for Tibetan sources, whereas Sanskrit and Newar sources are incorporated within the English-language bibliography. Although the Tārā section offers little new material, the book

is useful as an overview of the Indian Buddhist goddess tradition, and, especially as far as the present study is concerned, for its information on Kurukullā.

### 1.1.2. Practice Guides and *Sādhana* Translations Focusing on Tārā

In recent years many authors have focused explicitly on Tārā in commentarial work or translations of Tibetan texts intended for Western Buddhist practitioners. The majority of authors focus on the Twenty-one Tārā tradition, providing teachings on the verse and iconography of the individual goddesses. The texts include stories of the history of Tārā, how she became a goddess, and her various names (Bokar Rinpoche 2001; Chodron 2005; Sherab and Dongyal 2007; Situpa 2009). These books provide some information pertinent to our discussion of the Twenty-one Tārās in Chapter Five, yet their practitioner-based focus does not allow for in-depth information.

Bokar Rinpoche's concise book discusses a specific Green Tārā *gter-ma* (Treasure Text) within the *bKa'-rgyud-pa* lineage, the Sūryagupta tradition of the Twenty-one Tārās, and Tārā and the Eight Fears (Bokar Rinpoche 2001). *Tārā's Enlightened Activity* written by two Rinpoches discusses the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās on four levels of meaning: Word (*tshig gi tshul*); General (*spyi'i tshul*); Hidden (*sbas-don gyi tshul*); and Ultimate (*mthar-thug gi tshul*) in relation to *Mahāyoga*, *Anuyoga* and *rDzogs-chen* practice (Sherab and Dongyal 2007). As practice at this level is rarely discussed the book may provide a useful accompaniment to translation for the scholar without access to those knowledgeable in the field. Tai Situpa also discusses the *rNying-ma-pa* Twenty-one Tārās, yet lacks background information on the tradition, preferring to detail the praise and iconography of each goddess (Situpa 2009). These books introduce the concept of Tārā from a Tibetan perspective and provide insight into the place of Tārā within Tibetan society and thought.

Western authors such as Thubten Chodron have also worked on the Twenty-one Tārās. Her *How to Free Your Mind* begins with instructions on Tārā meditation, and discusses her role in alleviating the Eight Fears. She provides translations of the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* in the Sūryagupta tradition and the *Song of Longing for Tārā*. However, they are taken from the work of others including Willson. She concludes with an exposition of emptiness and dependent arising as they pertain to Tārā (Chodron 2005). Although this is a useful introductory text for the scholar, much of the work is presented in earlier studies by other authors and little new ground is covered. Donald Lopez and other authors also translate the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* (Anonymous 2007; Lopez Jr 1997; Thartse Rinpoche 2001; Zopa Rinpoche and Yeshe 2000). In the case of practitioner-centered literature it may permit examination of the Tārā lineages practiced in the West. These texts are also useful to the translator, providing a comparative source for translation styles. For instance some translators aim to preserve the Sanskrit terminology, whereas others try to create new English language equivalents. Yet, without commentarial literature these neologisms have only a limited use.

Tibetan authors have composed teachings of Tārā practice: Bardor Rinpoche's *The Practice of Green Tārā* is an English language commentary intended to accompany the *Zab thig sgrol ma maṇḍal cho ga* practice of Green Tārā used by Karma Triyana Dharmachakra practitioners in the West. The work includes instructions on practice and another commentary on the Twenty-one Tārās followed by questions and answers (Anonymous b; Tulku Rinpoche 2005). *Skillful Grace* is a recent translation of the teachings of two Rinpoches on *The Essential Instruction on the Threefold Excellence*, mChog-gyur gling-pa's (1829-1870) Mind *gTer-ma* (*dgongs-gter*) widely practiced in the *bKa'-rgyud-pa* tradition. The translation and related teachings by the Rinpoches maintain their personalities (Urgyen Rinpoche and

Adeu Rinpoche 2007). Once again although aimed at practitioners these two texts provide useful comparison translations, and also provide information on the cult of Tārā from a Tibetan perspective, whilst commentaries may aid a scholar looking for further clarification.

The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives translated an important Tibetan text by the *Jo-nang-pa* scholar Tāranātha (Kun-dga' snying-po, 1575-1635) which details the history of Tārā, how she became a goddess, her role in our aeon, descriptions of her role as a protectress, and the lineage of the *Tantra* in question (Tāranātha 1995 [17th century]). This translation provides a useful introduction to the history of the cult of Tārā, and as it is based on a primary Tibetan source it is essential to any study of the goddess.

### **1.1.3. Iconographic Studies Focusing on Tārā**

Mallar Ghosh's published PhD thesis examines iconographic representations of seven forms of Tārā in India. Ghosh begins with an introduction to the origin of Tārā in which she mostly references other Indian scholars working in the field. She reflects on texts within the *Sāadhanamālā* and discusses the iconographic representations she finds of these in statues, carvings, or pictures, followed by a discussion of the *Prajñās* of the five *Tathāgathas* and Bhṛikuṭī [*sic*] (Ghosh 1980). Ghosh manages to shed light on the historical place of Tārā within Indian Buddhist tradition through the iconographic study of these forms of Tārā. Although this work takes rare forms of Tārā as its focus it provides a useful guide to the general iconography of the goddess.

*The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, an early book by B. Bhattacharyya, is an iconographical study based on the *Sāadhanamālā*, an Indian Buddhist compilation of *Sādhana* texts in the Sanskrit language. Bhattacharyya used seven versions of this text as the basis of his study and believes that the *Sāadhanamālā* is a work of great

importance to the study of Buddhist iconography. He provides iconographical descriptions and depictions of a large number of Buddhist deities, and the work contains a translation of the *Kiñcit-vistara-tārā-sādhana*. The book provides a useful point of reference for our study as Bhattacharyya includes iconographical descriptions of numerous forms of Tārā and Kurukullā (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]).

Dasgupta's *Iconography of Tārā* discusses the source of the cult of Tārā and the location at which it may have begun. He argues that previous authors have wrongly asserted that the cult originated within Buddhism and provides evidence to the contrary. He employs iconographic evidence from India to back up his claim that although Buddhism influenced later Hindu ideas of the goddess, it was in fact within Hinduism that Tārā originated (Dasgupta 1967). Dasgupta's arguments are well defined and backed up by a substantial degree of iconographical evidence. Later scholars have largely agreed with his analysis, and there can be no doubt that this is a vital article for any study concerning Tārā.

Sen Gupta briefly discusses iconographic representations of Tārā at Ellora, including a description of a previously ignored panel found in the caves which depicts Tārā. He then moves on to briefly detail other Tārā depictions in the Indian Buddhist cave complexes (Sen Gupta 1955-57). Sircar's short article provides an introduction to the Tārā of Candravipa. He includes some brief historical and iconographical information and his short study mainly relates to the iconography of this particular image (Sircar 1967). D.C. Bhattacharya introduces a previously unstudied form of Tārā, the fierce Mahāmāyāvijayavāhinī. Bhattacharyya describes her as "a war-goddess destroying the forces of the enemies" with one thousand heads and arms. His article attempts to identify Mahāmāyāvijayavāhinī with Tārā and follows various lines of enquiry to reach that goal. He employs both Hindu and Buddhist resources and concludes that in actual fact Mahāmāyāvijayavāhinī is derived from the Brahmanical

Devī (D. Bhattacharyya 1967). All three of these texts are important to the study of Buddhist iconography.

Mullin's *Female Buddhas* is the catalogue of an exhibition on Buddhist goddesses held at the Rubin Museum of Art, New York. One chapter of the work focuses on Tārā and includes examples from the Rubin collection of *Ārya* Tārā, the Twenty-one Tārās, and the Tārās who save from the Eight Fears. The First Dalai Lama dGe-'dun grub-pa (1391- 1474) is quoted to contextualise the pictures, and Tārā's place in Tibetan society is briefly analysed. We also find a depiction of Red Tārā in Atiśa's lineage of Twenty-one Tārās (Mullin 2003). Although this is an introductory text aimed at the lay reader the high quality of the images and translations from the First Dalai Lama provide an interesting point of comparison.

All the above texts are relevant to a general study of Tārā, her cult, iconography, and history. It will be clear from this review that Red Tārā has never been the focus of scholarly attention and that she has also been largely neglected in works intended for a Buddhist readership, even those which relate closely to the cult of Tārā. It is hoped that this study will remedy the shortage of information, whilst providing a starting point for later scholars. Any new iconographic information is vital to the fields of Buddhology and Tibetology.

## **1.2. The History of Tārā**

This introduction continues with a brief overview of the history of Tārā, as it pertains to the Indian and Tibetan traditions, examining the origin of the cult of Tārā, and her worship within the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions. The time and place of the origin of the cult will be analysed. This is followed by an examination of her cult within the wider Buddhist tradition and the Tantric and Tibetan traditions. Then the

mythological origin stories of Tārā are outlined. This serves as a basis for deeper examination of specific Tārās and is followed by a brief outline of the key Buddhist texts concerning her. This section serves to contextualise the in-depth study of the forms of Red Tārā which follows in the later chapters of this thesis.

### **1.2.1. The Origin of Tārā**

The history of Tārā and the first evidence for her worship are rooted in India, in both the Hindu and Indian Buddhist pantheons. Many scholars have investigated the literary and archaeological evidence available in order to ascertain the exact origin of the cult of Tārā. In particular, H. Shastri, M. Dhavalikar, Dasgupta, N. Bhattacharya, and B. Bhattacharyya comment on the foundations of the cult of Tārā in India. These scholars examine the available evidence in an attempt to locate the place and time of the origin of the cult, and to discover whether Tārā worship was originally a Hindu or Buddhist practice. It is to this research that we now turn.

Our discussion begins with the date of origin of the cult of Tārā of which Sastri was one of the first researchers. He believes her worship was unknown prior to the fourth century and identifies the earliest images of Tārā to be those in the caves of Nasik, Ellora, and Kānheri. He dates these to the sixth or seventh centuries, based on the fact that these images are found in *Mahāyāna* temples. Sastri believes that Tārā's worship grew in popularity from the seventh century onwards (Sastri 1925: 11-12, 19-21). Dasgupta concurs that no images of Tārā from prior to the sixth century have been discovered: some from that period were found at Ellora (Dasgupta 1967: 117).

Waddell and Ghosh corroborate this dating when they discuss sightings of Tārā worship found in the seventh century in the work of Hiuen Tsiang [*sic*] (Xuán-Zàng/ Hsüan-tsang). He described the Bihari complexes of Tilāḍhaka and Nālandā where he found temples to Tārā, and Ghosh states that during the seventh century

Tārā's position began to be elevated (Ghosh 1980:8; Waddell 1894: 63). Shaw discusses this elevation of Tārā's position and agrees with the seventh century dating. She relates this to the rise in importance of several Hindu goddesses and the worship of the *Mahādevīs*, for example Durgā and Mahālakṣmī. Shaw writes that Durgā was known as Tārā, who ferries her practitioners to the other shore. Furthermore, one form of Tārā, Durgottārīṇī-Tārā, saves from imprisonment, execution, and attack by demons (Shaw 2006: 313).

With regard to early references to Tārā in Hindu literature Beyer posits that the first Hindu reference to the goddess is found in Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* (5th century), an argument with which N. Bhattacharyya concurs. The reference takes the form of a pun: "The Lady Twilight was seen, devoted to the stars and clad in red sky, as a Buddhist nun [is devoted to Tārā and is clad in red garments]". The pun is based on the word Tārā, which may be translated as star. Beyer believes that the cult of Tārā must have been quite widespread during Subandhu's time for it to appear in his work. Subandhu's exact dates are not known, but he is believed to have lived in the mid-seventh century. Bhattacharyya argues this pun is proof that Tārā originated as a Buddhist deity who was later adopted into Hinduism (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 7-8; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 190).

The spread of Tārā's cult began soon after this time. Dhavalikar, Getty, Jordaan and Sastri all mention a Javanese image of Tārā dating to 778 A.D.<sup>4</sup> They claim this is the first image of the goddess outside of India, with Jordaan going so far as to state that this is the earliest inscription relating to Tārā. The image is found in the Candi Kalasan temple built by the Śailendra Prince in order to worship Tārā the Saviouress. An inscription at the site details the contents of the remains and it is

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on this temple see Jordaan's article on the Javanese image in which he attempts to connect Tārā with another goddess, Nyai Lara Kidul, through an examination of their iconography (Jordaan 1997).



known that the temple was dedicated to Tārā: her image forms the central shrine (Dhavalikar 1963-64; Getty 1928: 120; Jordaan 1997: 287; Sastri 1925: 12).

Some scholars have tried to pinpoint the place where the cult originated. The first to do so was Sastri in 1925, he locates the point of origin as Ladakh, or what he terms 'Indian Tibet'. Sastri maintains that as there is little to no evidence of worship in the South the cult must have originated in the North, such as Chīna, or Mahāchīna [*sic*]. This he believes is evidenced in the tantras. The source is not however identified as China as such, but rather a country located close to the Himalayas. Sastri hypothesises that the cult originated on the Indo-Tibetan borderland or within Indian Tibet. He comes to the conclusion that Ladakh is a possible place of origin, with her cult later travelling to Tibet, and surmises that her worship may have travelled to India via Nepal, moving on to Kalinga through Magadha, and via India to places such as Java, where we find the image of Tārā mentioned above (Sastri 1925: 14-16).

Dhavalikar's short article questions previous scholarship on the origins of Tārā practice, in particular its location. He disagrees with Sastri's conclusion that Tārā practice originated in Ladakh, believing that there is little evidence to corroborate this thesis. He instead locates the origin of the cult in Western India, employing evidence found at the Ellora and Ajanta cave complexes and temple ruins in the area (Dhavalikar 1963-64).

Mallar Ghosh reviewed Sastri and Dhavalikar's work in an attempt to locate the origins of Tārā's cult and comes to a different conclusion. She refutes Ladakh as the point of origin as this thesis does not correlate with the archaeological evidence. She argues that the earliest such evidence of Tārā is found in India, and believes that the conception of Tārā was an active attempt on behalf of the Buddhists to create a goddess similar to Durgā. The trouble comes when one tries to locate the exact place in which the cult began. Dhavalikar believes Western India to be the source, whereas

Sircar steers towards Eastern India, both quoting archaeological evidence to support their arguments. Ghosh writes that it is because of the long-lasting nature of the Western Indian evidence that this assumption is made: in fact the origin cannot be sourced to Western India, as earlier images are to be found at the main temple in Nālandā, dating from the sixth century, whereas Western Indian depictions date only from the seventh century onwards. Ghosh however decides not to pinpoint a precise spot and awaits future archaeological evidence (Ghosh 1980: 26-31). N.

Bhattacharyya mentions a twelfth-century inscription from Nālandā regarding the construction of a temple to the goddess (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 191).

Now that we have dated the origin of Tārā worship to the sixth to seventh centuries and located a possible place of origin in Western India the religious origins can be discussed. Scholars have long argued over whether Tārā was originally a Buddhist or Hindu goddess, and which way the influence moved. Sastri posits that Tārā originated within Buddhism as she is represented within Buddhism as a *bodhisattva* in her own right. He believes that the name Tārā is Buddhist and claims the *tantras* show Tārā as Buddhist in origin, as worship of the Chinese form is required in the Brahmanical texts such as the *Śivaśaktisaṅgamatantra* (Sastri 1925: 12). Sastri also states that the inscriptions relating to Tārā of which he is aware all relate to the Buddhist goddess and not the Brahmanical form of the deity (Sastri 1925: 8). Wayman corroborates Sastri's argument in his article on the Twenty-one Tārās. He believes that the worship of Tārā originated in Buddhism itself, following the argument of Handiqui (Handiqui 1956: 548-51 cited in Wayman 1959).<sup>5</sup>

However, within later scholarship this view changed. Dhavalikar examines the literature of the era and found that mention of Tārā in Buddhist literature occurs later than the Brahmanical references. He surmises that Tārā was not a Buddhist goddess

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<sup>5</sup> I have not had access to Handiqui's work.

before the fifth century. From this evidence Dhavalikar proposes that Tārā originated in the Hindu religion and passed over into the Buddhist faith, and then further into the Jain pantheon. He believes that within Hinduism Tārā was originally a goddess of sailors, aiding them in their 'swimming across' waters and troubles. He also notes similarities between Tārā, Parvātī, and Durgā, as both Tārā and Durgā are seen as mothers (Dhavalikar 1963-64).

Dasgupta posits that Sastri and N. Bhattacharyya were both incorrect in their assumption that Tārā was integrated into Hinduism from a pre-existing Buddhist cult. He argues that Sastri is wrong to locate the origin of the cult outside of India, as he used later evidence to come to his conclusions. Dasgupta states that earlier evidence is found in the caves of the Western Deccan. However, he goes on to state that Buddhism did in fact influence Hindu concepts of the goddess in her later tantric forms. He writes that "there seems to be little doubt that the concept of Tārā was originally borrowed by the Buddhists from the Brahmanical concept of Devī", but he goes on to urge that further literary study is necessary to confirm his thesis (Dasgupta 1967: 126).

Many scholars have traced the links between Tārā and various Brahmanical goddesses. N. Bhattacharyya believes Tārā to be the same as Kālī, whilst other scholars have linked her to Durgā (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 191). Sastri argues that because Tārā is the counterpart of Avalokiteśvara, as Durgā is of Śiva, they are both also seen as the mother of the gods (Sastri 1925: 12). Dasgupta agrees with Sastri in this regard. He also links the relationships of Tārā and Durgā as the *śaktis* of Avalokiteśvara and Śiva respectively, and points out that etymologically the names of both indicate that they remove dangers. Dasgupta goes on to correlate the two deities both conceptually and etymologically (Dasgupta 1967). Bühnemann's article on Mahācīnakrama-Tārā (Ugra-Tārā) is recommended as an examination of a particular

form of Tārā within the Hindu tradition. She traces the origin of Mahācīnakrama-Tārā back to the Buddhist tradition (Bühnemann 1996).

Klieger argues, along the lines of Dasgupta and Dhavalikar, that the worship of Tārā is an example of the integration of Hindu deities into *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Klieger employs some examples, including the identification of Tārā with Durgā and explains that they are both goddesses who remove the Eight Fears. Klieger goes on to state that in the fourth to fifth centuries Durgā and Hindu Tārā were also very similarly represented (Klieger 1982).

Ghosh also attests to the link between Tārā and Durgā or Devī, the great mother and Saviouress. Both goddesses act as Saviouress, and in fact it is as Tārā, or Tārīṇī, that we see Durgā in this role. Within the Buddhist pantheon this relationship is exhibited by Durgottārīṇī-Tārā. In the *Devī-māhātmya* Devī is described as rescuing people from the Eight Great Fears and helping practitioners to cross the ocean of existence, and Ghosh states that by examining the *Devī-māhātmya* one can establish that the Buddhist deity Tārā was developed from the concept of Devī. She believes that through examination of the names of various Tārā manifestations the relationship between the two becomes clear (Ghosh 1980).

With regards to other goddesses B.K. Bhattacharya, N. Bhattacharyya, and Sastri identify the link between Tārā and Ekajaṭā, Ugra Tārā, and Nīlasarasvatī. Sastri hypothesises that Tārā is not in fact three different deities in this way, but rather that the three goddesses are each aspects of her, as is the case with other deities in the Brahmanical tradition (B.K. Bhattacharya 2003; N. Bhattacharyya 1999; Sastri 1925).

B.K. Bhattacharya's *Tārā in Hinduism* is a study by an Indian scholar into the role of Tārā within the Brahmanical tradition. Bhattacharya examines the idea of Mother Goddess in the Hindu tradition, followed by a survey of images of Tārā, a textual survey of her appearance in Brahmanical textual sources, and an analysis of

the significance of Tārā in the culture and spiritualism of Brahmanical religion. He writes that within Buddhism Tārā is not seen as terrible, whereas in Brahmanism she is depicted in her terrible form, such as within the *Mahāvidyā* goddess group. She destroys greed, hatred, and delusion, and is the embodiment of sacred speech. Bhattacharya tells us that the Brahmanical *Tārātantra* dates to the sixth to eighth centuries and that in the ninth to twelfth centuries Tārā was considered an incarnation of Lakṣmi (B.K. Bhattacharya 2003).

As we can see from B.K. Bhattacharya's work, Tārā has a place within the ten *Mahāvidyās* alongside other important goddesses including Kālī. Kinsley has worked extensively on these goddesses and relates that representations of the ten are often found on temple walls in India today. The myth surrounding the *Mahāvidyās* concerns Satī and Śiva: after Satī is invited to a sacrifice performed by her father she becomes angry at Śiva for he does not want her to attend. In her anger she manifests ten wrathful forms: the *Mahāvidyās*. One of these is Tārā, who in this context is nearly identical to Kālī, wearing tiger skins and a necklace of severed heads. She is dark, pregnant, and stands with her left foot on a corpse on top of a funeral pyre. The individual deities are mostly found within the context of tantric literature. Kinsley believes that the *Mahāvidyā* Tārā only appeared after her Buddhist *bodhisattva* form, and that the Hindus prefer her in this fiercer aspect (Kinsley 1997; 1998 [1986]: 161-65).

In Hinduism Tārā's link to Kālī is evidenced by her nighttime practice in cremation grounds. At times Tārā, who stands on a corpse or *preta* (ghost), is known as the fire of the cremation ground and is associated with fire's destructive aspect. Kinsley believes that the form of Akṣobhya in Tārā's hair is indicative of her move from Buddhism. He relates the story of Vasiṣṭha, who worshipped Tārā after Brahma explained that it is through the power of Tārā that he himself makes the world, Viṣṇu

protects it, and Śiva destroys it. Brahma instructed him to practice Tārā's *mantra*. Following years of no success Tārā appeared to Vasiṣṭha and told him that Viṣṇu in the form of Buddha knows of her cult, instructed him how to worship her in the form of Cīna-Tārā, and that he must go to China to learn of this type of worship. On the way to Tibet he received instructions in the tantric practice of Tārā from the Buddha. The temple of Tārāpīṭh in Bengal depicts Tārā suckling Śiva on her lap, and is based upon an elaboration of Vasiṣṭha's story, the image having been taught to him by the Buddha. The Buddha instructed Vasiṣṭha in worship involving meat, alcohol, and women, and then told him to return to India to a place sacred to Tārā in Bengal: Tārāpīṭh. At this site following his practice Vasiṣṭha requested Tārā to appear to him in her motherly form, at which point she arose and turned to stone, forming the central image of the temple. A flourishing tradition of worship continues at Tārāpīṭh to this day: blood sacrifice is still performed and there is a cremation ground nearby. The temple is located where the third eye of Satī fell during the formation of the *pīṭha* sites (Kinsley 1997: 92-112).<sup>6</sup>

Sastri examines the literary evidence of the cult of Tārā in Brahmanical tradition and argues that references to Tārā/ Tārīṇī in the *Mahābhārata* refer to a distinct deity. However, he questions whether later authors of the works concerning Tārā as a *Mahāvidyā* goddess felt that this was the case. He doubts they were aware of the cult of Tārā in the *Mahābhārata*, further doubting that the Tārīṇī of the *Mahābhārata* is linked to the tantric form of the goddess (Sastri 1925: 3-4).

The etymology of the term Tārā has been discussed by numerous scholars. Tārā has often been translated from Sanskrit to mean "star", however Landesman writes that:

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<sup>6</sup> This story is found in the *Brahmayāmala*, *Rudrayāmala*, *Tārārasasya*, and the *Mahācinācārakrama* (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 194-95; Kinsley 1997: 262).

A widely held yet unproven theory is that the veneration of the Goddess Tārā originated from an ancient star cult that guided seafarers across dangerous waters under a dark night sky (Landesman 2008: 46).

Dasgupta further analyses the etymology of the term and explains that it is derived from *tār* (*tr*+*ṇic*), indicating she helps worshipers across the ocean of troubles or of existence (Dasgupta 1967: 115). In relation to this, Sastri describes Tārā in the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* as a distinct deity, who is head of the boat-women (Skt: *śakti/nāviki*) who control navigation and suppress floods. He writes "Tārā, the mother, who can control the rush of waters, is the chief of those *śaktis* who navigate or guide boats and have dark complexion". Sastri posits that although this form of Tārā is not that found within the *Mahāvidyās* she is a prototype for the goddess (Sastri 1925: 5-7). Widely accepted thought dictates that a more accurate translation of Tārā is 'She who carries across' or 'Saviouress'. Ghosh relates that Tārā began as a saviouress from fears and perils and continues in this role even as the supreme goddess (Ghosh 1980: 8). Tārā's role in allaying practitioners' fears is discussed in greater detail below.

With regards to the Jain tradition Sastri mentions that although she is not a key deity Tārā does appear as Sutārā/ Sutārakā, the *Śāsanādevatā* of the ninth Jina Suvidhinātha, and as Bhṛkuṭī, a form of Tārā, the *Śāsanādevī* attendant of the eighth Jina. Sastri asserts that in all likelihood Bhṛkuṭī's cult arose after that of Tārā (Sastri 1925: 9-10). Waddell also briefly mentions that several of the names of Tārā are identical to those of the Jaina *Yakshinīs* who accompany the *Tīrthankaras*. He believes that the tantric cults of both traditions are similar in this regard (Waddell 1894: 65).

### 1.2.2. Tārā in the Indian Buddhist Tradition

As for Tārā in the Buddhist tradition, Shaw writes of her widespread appeal:

Tārā finds mention in almost any work on Buddhist history or culture in South Asia and the Himalayas, for her presence in the religious landscape is impossible to ignore. Her

worship crosses lay and monastic lines and spans devotional, ritual, and Tantric practices (Shaw 2006: 307).

Whilst Waddell states:

Nearly every Buddhist site visited by me contains Tārā's images in a variety of forms, testifying to the popularity of her worship by Indian Buddhists (Waddell 1894: 63).

The first known instances of Tārā within the Buddhist pantheon date from the sixth century C.E. where two goddesses, one holding a lotus, are seen alongside Avalokiteśvara in reliefs at Nālandā and Kānheri. Ghosh argues that through close examination of the sources Tārā is in fact found to originate in the Brahmanical religion. When Ghosh examined the evidence in depth, she found that the earliest image of Tārā dates to the sixth century A.D. She contests Sastri's argument that early Brahmanical writings lack Tārā. In the fourth century text the *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*, Ghosh finds Tārā within the *Lalitopākhyāna* section as a *mahāśakti* guarding the gate of the nectar-lake and calming flood waters. Many green *śaktis* accompany her rowing boats. According to Ghosh the *utpala* flower, which has come to be the quintessential symbol of Tārā, is borrowed from Brahmanical tradition as it was seen in the hand of *Mātrikās* from the Kushāṇa period and also on the consort of Maheśvara (Ghosh 1980).

In Sastri's explanation Tārā is a goddess of navigation invoked for assistance with crossing waters and when water is causing a problem for a devotee. However, Sastri does not find evidence for Tārā as a goddess of this sort in the Buddhist material, however he does provide epigraphical and sculptural evidence to support his thesis. He makes a connection between the worldly desire to be saved from troubles of the water, to the soteriological goal of crossing over from the cycle of rebirth. As such she is the Saviouress from the sufferings of cyclical existence (Sastri 1925: 5-6, 16-19).



Susan Landesman's analysis of the *Tārāmulakalpa* (Tārā's Basic Ritual Text, hereafter TMK) posits that the TMK was formative in the development of both the cult of Tārā, and also the role of women in Tantric Buddhism. As it derives from the seventh century this text appears early on in the cult of Tārā. At four hundred folios it is also the largest text on Tārā from the period. Landesman writes that although Tārā is at the centre of the text as the main deity and identified as a Buddha, the author of the text has borrowed style and even content from lineages that relate to male deities such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and the *Vairocana-ahisaṃbodhi-tantra*. She sees this as an attempt to legitimise the practice of Tārā by associating it with well-respected traditions. In the text the practitioner worships Tārā through first arising as Avalokiteśvara, then through his voice reciting the *vidyā* (spell) of Tārā, so that she too may arise. This is the nature of what is termed "The Great Secret" between Tārā and Avalokiteśvara, although the reason behind it is not stated in the text. In later tradition, after Candragomin's (7th century) commentary on the Twenty-One Tārās differentiated her from Avalokiteśvara the worshipper was able to evoke Tārā on her own. The Tibetan version of this text states that it was taken to Tibet by Atiśa (984-1054) in 1042 (Landesman 2008; forthcoming).

### **1.2.3. Tārā in the Tantric Tradition**

As the cult of Tārā travelled from India to Tibet it found itself an almost natural home. Beyer is often quoted as stating that "To understand something of her cult is to understand something of the whole structure of Tibetan culture and religion" (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 3). Tārā's worship is so thoroughly integrated into the Tibetan Buddhist system that it is a part of daily life for most Tibetan people through to this day. Tārā is in all likelihood the most popular goddess of the Tibetan pantheon. Day goes further when he writes:

[W]ithin the Tibetan theistic system, the goddesses especially had become conceptually organized as a Tārā-pantheon, a hierarchical system of devis having the name "Tārā" (Tibetan "Dölma") in their titles on account of being regarded as emanations and relatives of a principal Tārā, identified as "Vajratārā" or "Mahātārā" (Day 1990: 83).

He goes on to state that her emanations have superseded every other Tibetan deity group.

Tantric Buddhism is widely practiced in Tibet. Therefore, we must examine the place of Tārā within the tantric tradition. As for the origin of the Tārā *tantras*, Tāranātha states that during our aeon Avalokiteśvara spoke the Tārā *tantra* and *mantra* ten million times (Tāranātha 1995: 3). Bokar Rinpoche elaborates, stating that during the four periods of our aeon<sup>7</sup> Avalokiteśvara taught the *tantra* on the Potala mountain a number of times in each period (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 51).

However, this is not this same *tantra* as the one that has survived to be practised in the modern day: Śākyamuni Buddha also taught a Tārā *tantra* in this aeon. The night before his enlightenment, Śākyamuni sat beneath the *bodhi* tree and a host of *Māras* descended upon him, at which point Tārā appeared and subdued the demons by emitting eight laughs. Because of this Śākyamuni was able to sit in meditation and achieve enlightenment the next day, after which he spoke the Tārā *tantra* (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 52-3).

As is the case with most *tantras*, they are believed to have been first taught at the time of the Buddha although not practised then, to arise again later at an appropriate time in which they would be of benefit. As for the *Tārā Tantra*, it was taught again in the third century B.C. when Vajrapāṇi transformed into King Indrabhūti and hid the *tantras* in book form and it was practised in secret (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 51-54; Tāranātha 1995: 3-4).

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<sup>7</sup> Our aeon (Skt: *kalpa*) is divided into four periods: totally endowed; endowed with three-quarters; endowed with two-quarters; and endowed with conflicts. Each one a further disintegration from the original period in which humans lived for a long time in great happiness (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 52).

Bokar Rinpoche describes Hayapāla, a Bengali monk who originated from a Brahmin family, as the principal propagator of the Tārā *tantra*. Hayapāla's teacher Guhyaśīla received the Tārā teachings directly from Vajrapāṇi and Hayapāla received the initiation from him. He then travelled to Uḍḍiyāna to receive further tantric initiations directly from the *ḍākinīs* (*mkha'-'gro-ma*), including *The Fundamental Tantra on Tārā's Origin* (*sGrol ma 'byung ba'i rtsa bshad kyi rgyud*). In India he built a temple to the *tantras* he had received and taught the *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Mahāyāna sūtras*. He also taught the *Tārā Tantra* to his most gifted disciples: the lineage follows from Hayaghoṣa, to Nāgārjuna (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 55-56; Tāranātha 1995: 13-14, 105).

Sūryagupta, born in Kaśmir, was known as a Tārā practitioner of seven lifetimes. He received initiation into the cult of Tārā from Nāgamitra and it was known that he was adept at the one hundred and eight *Tantras* of Tārā. During his lifetime he composed thirteen Tārā texts, and his lineage of Twenty-one Tārās is particularly famous, as discussed in Chapter Five (Tāranātha 1995: 14-15).

In the tantric tradition Vajra-Tārā is seen as the *karma-devī* (consort) of Amoghasiddhi, appearing alongside him in his *maṇḍala*.<sup>8</sup> She belongs to his Action (Skt: *karma*) Family, as indicated by her green colour. As a goddess of action she acts swiftly to assist her devotees (Willson 1986: 21).

Willson discusses the apparent contradiction of the role of Tārā. Is she a *bodhisattva*, a *buddha*, or both? He states that at some point Tārā was a person practising the *bodhisattva* path, but what makes her special is that she added her own vow to be reborn only in the female form to the standard *Bodhisattva* Vows. Willson qualifies the state of a tantric Buddha, as one who has achieved Buddhahood, and

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<sup>8</sup> B. Bhattacharyya also believes that Tārā is a member of Amoghasiddhi's family, seen above her crown, as opposed to that of Amitābha. He goes as far as to state that Tārā is an emanation of Amoghasiddhi (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 136).

writes of Tārā that "She attains enlightenment... She is then in *Nirvāṇa*, but because of her perfect Compassion does not 'enter' *Nirvāṇa* in the sense of disappearing into blissful extinction and ceasing to manifest for the benefit of sentient beings". Therefore, she fulfills her *bodhisattva* vow and action, employing her enlightened powers (Willson 1986: 11-12, 20-21).



Fig. 1.1: Tibetan monks queuing to worship Tārā.  
Mahābodhi Temple, Bodhgaya, India.  
(Photograph Author's Collection, 2005).

#### 1.2.4. Tārā in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition

Sherab and Dongyal discuss the early mythology of the Tārā tradition within Tibet. They explain that Padmasambhava brought many Tārā teachings to Tibet, including the Twenty-one Tārās, and transmitted these to his students, who included Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, herself considered an incarnation of Tārā. The *rNying-ma-pa* school held both *bKa'-ma* (Oral) and *gTer-ma* (Treasure Text) traditions of Tārā practice which

have since died out. In the twelfth century the *gTer-ston* Guru Tshe-brtan<sup>9</sup> revealed the large Tārā *gter-ma* but after a few centuries the lineage was discontinued. The middle length Tārā practice was hidden by Padmasambhava and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal in the Shang-zam Phu-lung. It was to intended be found by Gu-ru Jo-'bar, but the text was never discovered. The small Tārā text, another *gter-ma* of Padmasambhava's, was discovered by Re-gshi lha-mo. However, this practice also died out (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 13-15).

In the nineteenth century 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse dbang-po (1820-1892) brought about a revival of Tārā practice. He met the *dharmapāla* Tshe-ring-ma who offered him all the Tārā texts and received the initiations and instructions from her. Padmasambhava, Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, and Re-gshi lha-mo who were all present. He taught these texts to his main disciples including mChog-gyur bDe-chen gling-pa (1829-1870), 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-1899), and Mi-pham rgya-mtsho (1846-1912) and these lineages continue into the modern day (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 13-15).

Beyer argues along the lines of Lalou that evidence indicates that the earliest Tārā texts in Tibetan were translated in the eighth century. He finds three texts in the *lHan kar ma* (also known as the *lDan kar ma*) which dates from Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan's era: *The Spell called "Mother of Avalokiteśvara"* (Ye-shes-sde), *The 108 Names of the Goddess Tārā (bKa' 'gyur kha)*, and *The Praises of the Noble Tārā Who Saves from All Great Terrors (Candragomin kha)* (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 10-11; Hermann-Pfandt 2002; Lalou 1953: 328-329).<sup>10</sup> This evidence indicates that the cult of Tārā had been adopted in Tibet in the eighth century, but this is by no means proof that it was widely practised at this early point.

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<sup>9</sup> Gu-ru Tshe-brtan rgyal-mtshan (1207-1266) is identified by Ehrhard as a *gter-ston* who discovered *gter-ma* in Bhutan (Ehrhard 2003).

<sup>10</sup> These texts are numbered 388, 439 and 454 in Lalou's list (Lalou 1953: 328-329).

Atiśa is reputed to have introduced the practice of Tārā into Tibet. The sGrol-ma lha-khang (Tārā Temple) built by his disciple 'Brom-ston-pa in the eleventh century stands to this day at sNye-thang, outside of Lhasa (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 263). At the centre of the temple is a beautiful shrine room dedicated to the Twenty-one Tārās containing life-size statues of each. These statues are considered to be the originals, the temple having survived the Cultural Revolution.

Atiśa was born into the Bengali royal family and it is said that after he was born his parents heard music coming from outside their palace, at which time the Queen saw a lotus fall from the sky to the baby's cradle and the boy's face transformed into that of Tārā. She continued to appear to him throughout his life. At the age of twenty-nine Atiśa became a monk and was later invited to Tibet. As he was the abbot of Vikramaśīla University he was hesitant to leave, but Tārā intervened. She instructed him numerous times to travel to Tibet, but warned him that his life would be shortened: he would live to seventy-three instead of ninety-two. Because of Tārā's intervention Atiśa travelled to Tibet at the age of fifty-nine and spent the rest of his life there (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 56-59; Chattopadhyaya 1999 [1967]).

Atiśa is the author of four texts concerning Tārā, including one to White Tārā based on Vāgīśvarakīrti's texts, and two to Green Tārā. He also translated six works relating to Tārā, including two by Candragomin. The Tibetan tradition of White Tārā practice derives from Atiśa's translations of three works on the goddess by Vāgīśvarakīrti. Atiśa did not translate any of the scriptures forming the textual authority for Tārās cult as they were considered tantric, due to this the scriptural authority for Tārā worship arrived in the country over the following century (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 11-13).

In the late eleventh century Dar-ma-grags, a translator from gNyan, brought the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* to Tibet. This has become one of the most

important Tārā texts in the country as the *Praise* is known by practically all Buddhist Tibetans. A discussion of this text will follow in Chapter Five (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 4).

The cult of Tārā runs very deeply through Tibetan culture to the point that the Tibetan people trace their origin directly to the coupling of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, from the myth of the origin of the Tibetan people in which Avalokiteśvara and Tārā are described as the mother and father of the Tibetan race, through their coupling as rock demoness and monkey (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 4). This myth led to Tārā, 'The Mother of All Buddhas', being adopted as the mother of the Tibetan people, securing her place at the pinnacle of the female Buddhist pantheon.

Another aspect of this cult was the recasting of the Chinese and Nepalese wives of Srong-btsan sgam-po (reigned 617-650) as emanations of Green and White Tārā respectively, whilst he himself was seen to embody Avalokiteśvara. In this tradition it is believed that in the seventh century the Nepalese Princess brought a sandalwood statue of Tārā to Tibet, which would make this the first image of the goddess in the country. Later Western writers applied the aspects of Green and White Tārā to the Queens, whereas in Tibetan sources however they are described as emanations of Green Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī. Traditionally Avalokiteśvara is partnered with Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī in a triad (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 5-6, 8-10).

Tārā is important to all sects of Tibetan Buddhism and is practised by worshippers, whatever their lineage. Beyer examines the role of Tārā in the various sects. The *dGe-lugs-pas* pay special devotion to Tārā, as they consider themselves the disciples of Atiśa and believe that Tārā vowed to Atiśa that she would especially protect his followers, the *bKa'-gdams-pa*'s. Beyer writes that the First Dalai Lama in particular was especially devoted to the goddess. Within the *Sa-skya-pa* school special reverence is held for Tārā in her form as the protectoress Kurukullā, examined

in Chapter Two. The *bKa'-brgyud-pas* worship White Tārā, as she relates to their founder sGam-po-pa, in descent from Atiśa (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 14-15).

The *Bon-po* pantheon allows a similar goddess to Tārā, 'Byams-ma, 'the Loving Lady'. She is the manifestation of another goddess, Sa-trig Er-sangs, 'the Mother'. 'Byams-ma is the feminine form of the Buddhist deity Maitreya and is a yellow colour. She holds a golden vase in her right hand and a mirror in her left and sits upon a throne supported by lions. Like Tārā she has various manifestations and is seen in five-fold or eight-fold forms. In her eight-fold form she is reminiscent of the Buddhist Tārā Saving from the Eight Fears. Instead 'Byams-ma saves from the Eight Fears (*'jigs-pa brgyad-skyobs*): enemies, magic, families, *klu* (Skt: *nāga*), heretics, harm, death, and planets. This list differs from the Eight Fears of Buddhism, which descends from the Indian tradition (Kvaerne 1995: 25-28).

Miraculous stories surrounding Tārā statues and pictures in Tibet abound. They have often been known to speak out loud, stand up on their own, or to arise spontaneously (*rang-'byung*). The image of Tārā in Pharping, Kathmandu Valley is one of the best known and is renowned for its continuing growth over the years (see Fig. 1.2). China Galland relates that there are now three self-arisen images of the goddess within the cave (Galland 1990: xxiii). In its upper shrine room the exile monastery at Hunsur, South India has both a speaking and standing Tārā, both of which were rescued from Tibet and receive a steady flow of pilgrims wishing to receive the blessings of the goddess.

In his examination of the cult, Beyer relates many stories of Tārā which continue the theme of images of the goddess talking to practitioners or providing assistance. Beyer includes a modern-day story, from 1968, in which a traveller to Nepal who attempted to smuggle a Tārā statue out of the country was caught when the statue gradually became heavier and heavier as he proceeded through the airport,



leading to the image being confiscated and thereby saved. Through their actions images such as these represent the protectress in her aspect of assisting the practitioner, be it through speech, or movement (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 236-40).



Fig. 1.2: Self-arising Tārā image. Pharping caves, Nepal.  
(Photograph Author's Collection, 2008)

#### 1.2.5. Tārā Origin Stories

*The Golden Rosary: A History Illuminating the Origin of the Tārā Tantra* (*sGrol ma'i rgyud kyi byung khungs gsal bar byed pa'i lo rgyus gSer gyi phreng ba zhes bya ba*) details the history of the Tārā cult and its entry into the Indian and Tibetan traditions. It recalls in detail the mythological histories of Tārā, and appears to be a key primary resource for such stories. Written in 1604 by the *Jo-nang-pa* scholar Tāranātha (Kundga' snying-po) it collates the stories of Tārā that he heard from his Masters (Tāranātha 1995). Much of the following information is gleaned from this text with additional information from secondary resources.

The main myth of Tārā's origin, as detailed by Tāranātha, describes the world of Multicoloured Light, where the princess Wisdom Moon (Ye-shes zla-ba, Skt: Jñānacandrā) was very devoted to Drum Sound (rNga-sgra, Skt: Dundubhīśvara), the Buddha of the aeon. The Princess made ten million offerings to the Buddha for a hundred thousand years, at which time she received from him the *Bodhisattva* Vow, aroused *bodhicitta*, and promised to aid sentient beings.

The monks of the time told Ye-shes zla-ba that she should pray to be reborn in a man's body, so that she might benefit beings and the *dharma* and become enlightened faster. However, because of her understanding of the concept of non-duality Tārā responded:

Here there is no man, there is no woman,  
No self, no person, and no consciousness.  
Labelling 'male' or 'female' has no essence,  
But deceives the evil-minded world (Willson 1986: 34).

She also felt that very few people had attained buddhahood in the body of a woman, and took a vow to assist beings in her female form until all beings are enlightened, she stated:

There are many who desire Enlightenment in a man's body, but none who work for the benefit of sentient beings in the body of a woman. Therefore, until *samsāra* is empty, I shall work for the benefit of sentient beings in a woman's body (Willson 1986: 34).

Having spent ten million one hundred thousand years in meditation, the Princess realised the non-originating nature of *dharma*s (*mi skye ba*, Skt: *anutpāda*): the tenth *bhūmi*, and thus attained the power Saving All Beings. She freed ten million one hundred thousand sentient beings each morning and evening and thus became known as the Saviouress, and the Buddha Drum Sound stated that she would henceforth be known as the Goddess Tārā for as long as she manifests *bodhi* (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 64-66; Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 19-20; Shaw 2006: 307-308; Tāranātha 1995: 1-2; Willson 1986: 33-36).

In the Very Vast (Skt: *vibuddha*) aeon Tārā vowed to the buddha Amoghasiddhi to protect all beings of the ten directions from harm and entered the meditation known as the Defeating all Māras for around ninety-five aeons. This enabled her to place one billion one hundred thousand beings into deep meditation and to protect beings from harm, as soon as they called on her for help she was there to aid them. Each night Tārā became the mistress of Kāmadeva's realm, where she destroyed ten million one hundred thousand Maras. Because of these actions she was named Swift and Courageous, Heroine, and Mainstay (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 19-20; Shaw 2006: 307-308; Tāranātha 1995: 2; Willson 1986: 33-36).

In the All Pervading aeon the monk Radiant Pure Light received the Rays of Compassion initiation from the mind of the buddhas of the ten directions and became the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara. The buddhas of the five families also gave him this empowerment and he achieved divine wisdom, at which point Tārā arose from the father and mother union of the two rays of compassion and wisdom at Avalokiteśvara's heart. She protected the beings of the aeon from the Eight and the Sixteen Great Fears<sup>11</sup> and accomplished the wishes of the buddhas. Because of this Tārā was called the Daughter of the World's Sovereign (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 21; Tāranātha 1995: 2-3).

Sometimes this story varies with Tārā arising instead from the tear of Avalokiteśvara. Upon feeling he was unable to overcome the suffering of all sentient beings in spite of his infinite compassion, Avalokiteśvara shed tears which formed a lotus, from which arose Tārā. The Goddess told Avalokiteśvara that she would help him to release beings from their suffering. As later tradition developed, this story

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<sup>11</sup> The Eight Great Fears are dealt with separately in Section 1.3.4. The Sixteen Great Fears are: enemies; lions; elephants; fire; snakes; thieves; prison; ocean waves; flesh-eating ogres; leprosy; Indra's angels; poverty; loss of relatives; royal punishment; vajra missiles; ruination (Tāranātha 1995: 36).

evolved to describe Green Tārā arising from the left tear and White Tārā from the right (Shaw 2006: 307; Waddell 1894: 64). Getty relates that in a variant story Tārā is believed to have been born from a blue ray of light, which emanated from the eye of Amitābha (Getty 1928: 120). In the Vastly Good aeon Tārā taught the stage Innumerable Encouragement. In this aeon, Asaṅga, and the Buddhas of the ten directions consecrated her as the Mother of All Buddhas (Tāranātha 1995: 3).

#### **1.2.6. Tārā and the Female**

Tārā is often regarded as the incarnation of the feminine divine. She is considered as the Mother of all Buddhas and the embodiment of Prajñāpāramitā, the Perfection of Wisdom, as she is the *saṃbhogakāya* (Enjoyment Body) manifestation of Prajñāpāramitā. Bokar Rinpoche states that other female deities such as Vajravārāhī are also in essence Prajñāpāramitā, the nature of mind. Bokar Rinpoche explains that because Tārā is beyond concepts, time, and space she is the Mother of All Buddhas (Skt: *sārva-buddha-mātā*), as all buddhas have attained enlightenment through the realisation of emptiness (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 18). Shaw elaborates on this, stating that although all Buddhist goddesses are the Perfection of Wisdom and the Mothers of all Buddhas this comes to the fore with Tārā (Shaw 2006: 317). N. Bhattacharyya writes that it is "[b]y the fulfilment of this *pāramitā* that a Bodhisattva reaches the goal" (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 190).

Mullin explains further, Tārā is also known as the Mother of all Buddhas because she is the aspect of *buddha-karma* (*sangs-rgyas gyi 'phrin-las*), in which form she is known as the *Karma Lady* (*'Phrin-las-ma*), as from *buddha-karma* arise the conditions necessary for birth. In this way, she is seen to embody Enlightened Activity (*'phrin-las*). As mother of enlightened energy Tārā represents the Mother of all Buddhas in the tantric system, whereas Prajñāpāramitā embodies the Mother in the

path of the *sūtras* as she gives birth to transcendental wisdom (*ye-shes*) (Mullin 2003: 55-57).

Sherab and Dongyal relate the idea of Mother back to the story of Ye-shes zla-ba, describing how male and female forms are very different on the relative level. The Princess chose the female body as a medium through which to achieve enlightenment as a manifestation of her open, spacious nature of the mind, known as the Great Mother, the Mother of All Buddhas, or the Mother of All *Samṣāra* and *Nirvāṇa*. Reconnecting with our ultimate nature is possible because the Mother gives birth to and develops the enlightened mind. They consider Tārā the *nirmāṇakāya* (emanation body) aspect of the Mother, who emanates in order to directly work with sentient beings. Tārā appears in human form so that sentient beings can relate to her, which enables her to better serve their needs and lead them to enlightenment (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 17, 21). In the Tibetan tradition Tārā plays a key role in conception and in the protection of mothers and their newborn children (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 234, 289-90).

Stories of Tārā always include her history as Ye-shes zla-ba, in which she vows to return in all future lives as a female and achieve enlightenment in the female body in order to prove that females have a capability equal to males within the Buddhist tradition, as discussed in Section 1.2.5. This story is said to have inspired famous later practitioners, both historical and mythological, such as Ma-gcig lab-sgron and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal.<sup>12</sup> It has also inspired a host of modern day practitioners, with some women even retaking Tārā's vow in the West.

Tenzin Palmo (b. 1964), a British nun in the Tibetan tradition, who famously spent twelve years meditating in a cave in the Himalayas, retook the same vow as

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<sup>12</sup> Janet Gyatso examines the question of the historicity of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal in her 2006 article *A Partial Genealogy of the Lifestory of Ye shes mtsho rgyal* (Gyatso 2006).

Tārā. Having faced problems because of her gender she took the vow to attain enlightenment in female form. She states:

Of course being male or female is all relative, but at this moment we are living on the relative plane and the point is that there is such a dearth of female spiritual teachers. So at this time being female is helpful (Mackenzie 1999: 58).

However, as we shall see in Chapter Three, when it comes to academic enquiry not all feminist approaches to the study of Tārā are as enlightening as they first appear.

### 1.2.7. Tārā in the Lives of Practitioners

Bokar Rinpoche's *Tara: The Feminine Divine* includes modern-day stories of Tārā's influence on practitioners' lives, ranging from Kalu Rinpoche to local residents of the Darjeeling area and also stories from Tibet before the 1950s. Typically, in these examples, a problem or danger in the life of a practitioner is dispelled after recitation of Tārā's *mantra* or *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*. Blofeld also relates modern day accounts of Tārā's assistance (Blofeld 1990 [1977]: 55-64; Bokar Rinpoche 2001).

Tāranātha's *The Golden Rosary* contains many tales of Tārā's influence in the lives of her Indian practitioners. These include stories relating to famous practitioners, such as how Tārā urged Nāgārjuna to attain perfection, or how she twice protected Candragomin from his fear of water. The text also contains many accounts of Tārā statues and so forth. Tāranātha further describes how the eight *Ācāryas* who were saved from the Eight Fears lived from the period of Sūryagupta through to Lalitavajra (Tāranātha 1995: 5-12, 15).

Another aspect of Tārā's influence in Tibet comes in the form of women who are believed to be incarnations of Tārā, they include the best-known Tibetan female

practitioners. Tārā manifested in India as Mandarava and Ni-gu-ma<sup>13</sup> and her incarnations in Tibet include Ma-gcig lab-sgron (1055-1153) and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 24; Willson 1986: 24-25). During Khri-srong lde'u-btsan's (742-c.800) time Tārā appeared in the form of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, the possibly mythological figure who is known as the King's wife and later the tantric consort of Padmasambhava. She is arguably the most famous female Tibetan Buddhist practitioner and is said to have preserved Padmasambhava's teachings in the form of *gter-ma* (Lopez 1997: 549). Ma-gcig lab-sgron (1062-1149) is famed as the founder of the Tibetan tradition of *gCod* and is one of the most famous emanations of Tārā. In her biography it states that Ma-gcig lab-sgron said:

From the moment Arya Tara was inspired to help sentient beings and became Prajna Paramita until my birth as Dorjeing kyi Wang Chug, I have had 107 lives (Allione 2000: 203).

The famous *A che lha mo* folk opera of Tibet tells the story of another well known Tārā incarnation sNang-sa 'od-'bum, a '*das-log* or one who 'returns from death'. Her parents were Khadiravaṇī Tārā practitioners. Her mother dreamt of Tārā and the seed-syllable *tām* descended from Tārā into her heart centre. When the baby sNang-sa 'od-'bum first drank milk she recited a prayer of homage to Tārā, and when she descended into the cold realms during her journey through death she is known to have prayed to Tārā to allay her fears. When she met Gu-ru Tshul-khrims rin-chen he told her that she was an incarnation of Tārā and so she would be accepted in a way that ordinary female practitioners would not, but that because of her great beauty she would find it difficult to practice (Allione 2000: 221-90; Beyer 2001 [1973]: 56-59).

Another '*Das-log* of the modern era was 'Das-log Zla-ba sgrol-ma, the mother of Chagdud Tulku, a teacher important to the Red Tārā lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston.

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<sup>13</sup> Ni-gu-ma (Ye-shes mka'-'gro-ma/ Nges-par sbas-ma) was either the sister or wife of the Indian *Siddhā* Nāropa. She was the teacher of the twelfth century *yogi* Khyung-po rnal-'byor, who founded the *Shang-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa* school of Tibetan Buddhism. Her 'Six *Yogas*' (*Chos drug*) form the basis of the *Shang-pa* practice (Pellegrini 2006; Shaw 1994: 107-109).

Her life story is recounted in the book *Delog* from which this information has been gleaned (Drolma 2001). Zla-ba sgrol-ma was guided through her death experience by information she received from White Tārā in visions and she herself was a recognised emanation of White Tārā. Having returned from death she was treated as a high Lama would be, and sat amongst the male Lamas on a high throne during religious ceremonies. This signifies that despite being female her status as an advanced practitioner was recognised. Many times during her youth she was protected by Tārā. During the time she passed away she visited the realms of Padmasambhava, the six beings, Avalokiteśvara, and Tārā, and it was necessary to have a girl with the name of sGrol-ma (Tārā) present during that period. 'Das-log stories such as these inspire great faith in the Tibetan population and are often told by travelling men, known as *Ma-ñi bla-mas*, who use paintings to illustrate the stories they told (Gelle 2003; forthcoming). For more information on the 'Das-log phenomenon see Chapter Six. In the case of both 'Das-logs and other famous Tibetan women (either historical or mythological) the hagiographical back-story is key to their social status. It is through exactly this mythology that these women are able to elevate themselves through the social ranks and receive recognition as religious leaders and practitioners of worth.

### **1.3. The Tārā Pantheon**

Amongst the many aspects of Tārā the best known are Green Tārā, White Tārā, and the Twenty-one Tārās, yet forms of Tārā abound: the Tārās Protecting from the Eight Fears; Khadiravaṇī Tārā (Tārā of the Acacia (*khādira*) Forest); Red Tārā; Yellow Tārā; Dream Tārā (rMi-lam sgrol-ma); and Tārā Peaceful by Day, Wrathful by Night (sGrol-ma nyin-zhi mtshan-khro). Alongside this there are also other goddesses within the Tibetan pantheon who are believed to be emanations of Tārā. These



include Kurukullā, especially Kurukullā-Tārā, in which form she is believed to arise from Tārā, Bhṛkuṭī (Khro-gnyer-chen), Sitatapatra (gDugs-dkar), Uṣṇīṣavijayā (rNam-gyal-ma), Nairātmyā (bDag-med-ma), and Kālacakra's consort Viśvamātā (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 39). Sherab and Dongyal state that:

[Tārā's] *sambhogakāya* emanations include Vajravārāhī, Vajrayoginī, the five Mother Dhyānī Buddhas, and the five wisdom dakinis. Her *nirmāṇakāya* emanations include the Twenty-one Emanations of Tārā praised in this homage, plus many more in different colours (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 23).

As such they identify *sambhogakāya* emanations as emanated goddesses and *nirmāṇakāya* emanations as the various aspects of Tārā.

Tārā is believed to be a Buddha, depicted by her possession of the thirty-two major and sixty minor marks of a Buddha, and the three buddha-bodies (Shaw 2006: 316). Tradition has also deemed Tārā a *bodhisattva*. However, Pierre Arènes found no evidence for this assertion in the literature he reviewed, and Shaw calls it a misconception which she believes may stem for Tārā's association with Avalokiteśvara, as well as her *Mahāyāna*-style iconographic depictions (Arènes 1996; Shaw 2006: 322). We will now move on to examine Tārā's main forms.

### 1.3.1. Green Tārā

According to Getty, Green Tārā is the original Tārā:

In fact, the Tibetan name for the goddess is *do-ngon*, which means 'the original Tārā'; but *ngon* (original) has been confused by the ignorant lamas with *sngo*, meaning 'green' (or blue), and the epithet 'green' has become inseparable from the form of Tārā, which symbolizes the Divine Energy (Getty 1928: 123).

Getty's comment seems to conform very closely with the work of Waddell some decades earlier. Waddell writes that the title '*sGrol-dkar-sngon*' [*sic*] although translated by Tibetan Lamas as 'The White-Green Tārā', should in fact translate to 'The Pure Original Tārā'. Waddell therefore concludes that the term Green Tārā is a mistaken appellation (Waddell 1894: 66).

Green Tārā (sGrol-ljang) is the most popular form of the goddess, represented on the walls of all monasteries throughout Tibet. Shaw asserts that in Indian tradition this form of the deity is simply called Tārā, without the epithet Green (Shaw 2006: 325). Her iconography is well known: her green body represents awakened activity and she is often considered the consort of Amoghasiddhi, the Lord of the Action Family, within the five Buddha families, the colour of which is green. Nonetheless, Shaw questions this association, stating that her origin stories, in which she emanates from Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara, place her in the Lotus (Skt: *padma*) Family, whose colour is red. Although this discrepancy might appear problematic it is in fact the case that Tārā is found in either the Lotus or Action Family depending on the cycle of teachings, their lineage, the context or the particular function she is required to perform.

Shaw posits that her green colour is indicative of an association with the natural world and plants (Shaw 2006: 326-31). Chodron describes the significance of Tārā's green colour as representing activity and success. She states that Tārā "specifically embodies the enlightening influence by which the Buddhas act to benefit and guide us". Moreover, Chodron believes that Tārā is the embodiment of the purified aspect of air, which brings about growth. As the representation of success, Tārā answers prayers and aspirations quickly (Chodron 2005: 20).

Green Tārā sits in the 'posture of royal ease' (*g.yas-brkyangs g.yon-bskum-gyi 'dug-stangs* Skt: *rājālīlāsana*) with her left leg bent and her right leg extended. Her bent left leg indicates her equanimity, renunciation of conflicting emotions, and control over subtle emotions, while her extended right leg depicts Tārā's readiness to stand up at any moment to come to the aid of sentient beings. The position of Tārā's legs reminds the practitioner that Tārā is both beyond *samsāra* and also within in it, assisting beings (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 44; Chodron 2005: 21-22; Shaw 2006: 325).

Tārā's right hand is in the giving *mudrā* (*mchog-sbyin-gyi phyag-rgya*, Skt: *varada-mudrā*) indicating her bestowal of ordinary and sublime *siddhis*, and through Tārā practice we may achieve realisation. Her left hand is in the *mudrā* of Bestowing Refuge (*skyabs-sbyin-gyi phyag-rgya*, Skt: *abhayamudrā*), with the thumb and ring finger touching and the remaining three fingers extended. These three extended fingers represent the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, whereas the two connected fingers are symbolic of the unity of wisdom and compassion (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 44; Chodron 2005: 21-22; Shaw 2006: 325).

Green Tārā holds either one or two blue *utpala* flowers, depending on the tradition. These flowers signify that all realisations have blossomed within her. On her left side the *utpala* is made of three blossoms: one open, one in blossom, and one in bud, which in turn represent the buddhas of the past, present, and future. She is crowned by Amitābha, the head of the Lotus Family, who embodies the Guru guiding us along on the path to enlightenment. He serves as a reminder of her teachings and vows. She is usually depicted as sixteen years of age (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 44; Chodron 2005: 21-22; Shaw 2006: 325).

Tārā wears the precious ornaments of necklaces, armlets, anklets, earrings and tiara, which symbolise the Six Perfections of generosity, ethics, patience, effort, concentration and wisdom. She is backed by a full moon denoting her happiness. The three syllables [*om*, *āh*, *hūm*] at her three places signify the body, speech and mind of the buddhas, and the Three Jewels of Buddha, *Dharma* and *Samgha* (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 44; Chodron 2005: 21-22; Shaw 2006: 325).

Green Tārā's *mantra* is *Om tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*, and this prayer breaks down each syllable's meaning:

OM to the transcendent subduer, Arya Tārā, I prostrate.  
Homage to the glorious one who frees with TARE;  
With TUTTARA you calm all fears;

You bestow all success with TURE;  
To the sound SOHA I pay great homage (Chodron 2005: 39).

Various scholars have supposed that there is a distinction in that only deities to whom the mantra *Om täre tuttäre ture svāhā* is assigned can be called Tārā, and B.

Bhattacharyya states that there are seven of these, all of whom share the *utpala* in the left hand, and the giving *mudrā* on the right. Both scholars believe that other goddesses who do not share this *mantra*, such as Kurukullā or Bhṛkuṭī, are simply related to Tārā, as discussed above (B. Bhattacharyya 1925; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 194). However, closer examination suggests that this is not the case. It may be noted that each of the Twenty-one Tārās, as well as White and Red Tārā each has her own variant *mantra*, yet they are commonly described as aspects of Tārā and share her name, rather than as separate goddesses who are related to Tārā.

The meaning of each syllable of the *mantra* is further discussed by Sherab and Dongyal, who claim that *om* is the invocation of auspiciousness, peace and balance, as well as the body of the buddhas. *Täre* reveals her role as liberator in which she frees beings from fear. With *tuttäre* she fulfils all wishes, leading beings to *nirvāṇa*. The non-dual state of the *dharmakāya* is expressed with *ture*, and *svāhā* places one in complete enlightenment (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 44).

Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Thubten Yeshe maintain that the *mantra* from *om* to *svāhā* signifies the path of the deity, and that the essence of Four Noble Truths is contained within the syllables of *täre tuttäre ture*. *Täre* indicates the release from *saṃsāra*, and *tuttäre* dispels fear in particular the Eight Fears, whilst *ture* releases from disease (Zopa Rinpoche and Yeshe 2000). As we can see each explanation of the meaning of the *mantra* alludes to various aspects of Green Tārā's power. For example, her ability to liberate from *saṃsāra* and to dispel fear. The various commentators have taken differing approaches to describe the individual syllables and how they fit

together as a whole in order to explain the path to enlightenment when one relies upon Green Tārā.

Mullin writes that the First Dalai Lama taught that Green Tārā's *mantra* is employed for eight main reasons: to increase life energy [*sic*]; increase creative energy [*sic*]; increase wisdom; increase personal renown; eliminate diseases; eliminate hindrances; pacify distractions and the wandering mind; and dispel bad dreams (Mullin 2003: 61).

### 1.3.2. White Tārā

White Tārā (sGrol-dkar, Skt: Sita-Tārā) is one of the triad long-life deities, with Amitāyus and Uṣṇīṣavijayā, and therefore her tantric initiation is often given in conjunction with the long-life ceremonies of important Tibetan Rinpoches. Individual practitioners perform White Tārā practice at times when their own health is threatened, be it by disease or accident (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 41). White Tārā practitioners have included the First Dalai Lama, whose practice helped to legitimise this form of Tārā worship in Tibet (Mullin 2003: 101).

The iconography of White Tārā differs from that of Green Tārā. She has a white body and her legs are crossed in the lotus position (*skyil-khrung*, Skt: *padma-asāna*), revealing that she is untouched by defilements. She is a member of Amitābha's Lotus family and her hands are held in the same *mudrās* as Green Tārā with an *utpala* flower on her left. White Tārā has seven eyes: three on the face, two on her palms, and two on the soles of her feet. Three eyes represent the goddess's ability to see reality through the three doors of liberation - emptiness, the absence of characteristics, and the absence of wishes, whilst the remaining four indicate her compassion generated through the Four Immeasurables of love, compassion, joy, and

equanimity. She can see the reality of the seven worlds<sup>14</sup> and heal all who reside within them. Shaw reports that in Nepal this deity is known as Saptalocana Tārā (Seven-eyed Tārā) (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 449-50; Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 45; Mullin 2003: 101-102; Shaw 2006: 333).

White Tārā's long-life *mantra* is an amendment to that of Green Tārā: *Om tāre tuttāre ture mama āyur puṇya jñāna puṣṭim kuru svāhā*. Many Tibetan practices of White Tārā originated with Vagīśvarakīrti, who developed certain White Tārā healing practices (Shaw 2006: 335). Meanwhile, Mullin explains that the First, Second, Fifth, and Seventh Dalai Lamas all wrote commentaries on the practice of White Tārā (Mullin 2003: 101).

White Tārā is also known as Cintāmaṇicakra Tārā (sGrol-dkar yid-bzhin 'khor-lo, Skt: Cintācakra Tārā), the "Wheel Accomplishing All Wishes". Her name relates to the *mantra* seen turning at her heart *cakra*. Where *om* is situated on the highest spoke of a ten-spoked wheel, with *hā* at the lowest spoke, the other eight syllables are placed horizontally on the remaining eight spokes (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 43). Shaw says that a yellow sphere first forms from the white light emanating from this 'protection circle' (*srung-'khor*), followed in turn by red, blue, green and indigo circles, and adds that when White Tārā is depicted surrounded by coloured spheres of light it is in direct relation to this practice (Shaw 2006: 335). Mullin goes further to identify the lights with the Four Actions of pacification, increase, subjugation, and destruction, and the combination of these in the fifth green light (Mullin 2003). The practice of meditating on this wheel fulfils all wishes. Also while meditating on White Tārā one must strongly imagine that all hindrance to the Guru,

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<sup>14</sup> Mullin describes these seven realms as that of hell, ghosts, animals, humans, lower gods, and the kama, rupa and arupa [*sic*] heavens (Mullin 2003: 102).

which make him appear sick, or prevent his wishes from being fulfilled, are purified (Zopa Rinpoche and Yeshe 2001).

### 1.3.3. The Twenty-one Tārās

Lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās descend from Sūryagupta, Atiśa, the *Sādhana-samucchaya*, Klong-chen-pa (1308-1364), and mChog-gyur gling-pa. According to Beyer:

*The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* is the single most important praise of the goddess in the entire literature, and its Tibetan translation is rendered into a meter unusual in its extreme 8-syllable regularity (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 211).

In most Tārā rituals *The Praise* is recited in order to honour the goddess. Modern day Tibetan poetry also employs the 8-syllable metre. The origin of the *Praise* and its related practices and functions are discussed in Chapter Five, alongside a discussion of the commentarial traditions and their variant iconography.

Each one of the Twenty-one Tārās has her own power, iconography, and *mantra* and after initiation practitioners may supplicate an individual Tārā for specific ends rather than the more standard Green Tārā whose *mantra* is used for the group as a whole. The role of each Tārā is highlighted in her individual verse within the supplication prayer. The verses in turn describe each goddess and her function. Tibetan Lamas either offer the initiation of the Twenty-one Tārās individually, or one-by-one as separate initiations. In fact, the initiation of the first of the Twenty-one, a Red Tārā, is sometimes offered in this way. Although pictures of the Twenty-one Tārās usually depict them as a group, at times devotees would commission individual pictures of one aspect of Tārā. The iconography of each commentarial lineage is examined in greater depth in Chapter Five of this thesis.



Fig. 1.3: **Tārā Saving from the Eight Fears.**  
**Stone carving, bKra-shis lhun-po, Tibet.**  
 (Photograph Author's Collection, 2006)

#### 1.3.4. Tārā and The Eight Fears

Willson believes that Tārā's popular appeal arose from her worldly function of saving from the Eight Fears in her form as Aṣṭamahābhaya-Tārā (Willson 1986: 13). It is from the seventh century onwards that Tārā took on the role of liberating sentient beings from the Eight Great Fears (*jigs-brgyad* Skt: *mahābhayas*): lions, elephants, snakes, fire, water, thieves, fetters and demons. Previously it was Avalokiteśvara who was known for this function (Shaw 2006: 318). This is attested in the Ajanta and Ellora caves. Ghosh discovered Avalokiteśvara in this role at Ajanta, and also at Ellora up to the seventh century. However, in Cave Nine dating from the seventh century Tārā is seen alone in this function, surrounded by depictions of the Fears. From this period onwards it was Tārā who was depicted in this occupation (Ghosh 1980: 21-23).

Ghosh further explains an eighth century text by Sarvajñamitra which pays homage to Tārā as Saviouress from the Eight Fears and other troubles, and includes



corroborative inscriptional evidence dating to the late eighth century (Sarvajñamitra). She states that Tārā in the role of Saviouress continues well into the twelfth century when inscriptions at Nālandā attest to Tārā's activity as saviour from the Eight Fears. Even through to the early thirteenth century, a late period of Buddhism in Northern India, stories of the Saviouress Tārā continued and evidence of her is found at Bodhgaya in Bihar (Ghosh 1980: 8-10).

A short early article by Mitra focuses on the role and origins of Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā. He explains that in Sarvajñamitra's eighth-century praise to Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā the Eight Fears are shipwreck, conflagration, enraged elephant, brigand, pouncing lion, serpent, prison, and demons: an inscription at Dambol by King Vikramāditya, dating from 1095 states that Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā saves from lions, elephants, fire, snakes, thieves, fetters, the ocean, and demons. Mitra tells us that there are many images of this goddess which conform with her *sādhana* in the *Sāadhanamālā*. A large part of Mitra's article is given over to analysis of the role of Avalokiteśvara as saviour from the Eight Fears, prior to the advent of Tārā in this function, confirming Ghosh's thesis. As the *Mahākāraṇika*, Avalokiteśvara assists in relieving the Eight Fears. Mitra informs us that numerous sculptures and paintings from the fifth to seventh centuries represent Avalokiteśvara in this capacity, including the five representations at Ajanta. He states that as Tārā became associated with Avalokiteśvara she took on this function from him so that in later times it is Tārā who came to be associated with protection from the Eight Fears (Mitra 1957).

As we can see, this quality emerges in the mythological stories of Tārā's history. Time after time she is described as alleviating the fears and problems of those who call on her. This aspect of her worship has led to her lasting appeal as a deity able to remove the mundane sufferings. At first the removal of fear may not seem to be a soteriological goal, as it relates largely to the worldly problems of day-to-day

life. However, Buddhists believe Tārā removes the fears of practitioners so that they may be better able to practise Buddhism and ultimately achieve enlightenment.

The role of Tārā in the removal of a practitioner's fears is widely documented, exhibited in the stories from the lives of famous practitioners, and the doctrines on Tārā (D. Chattopadhyaya). However, there are also philosophical elements to this aspect of Tārā's story. Bokar Rinpoche discusses the two types of fear: that of not obtaining what we wish for and that of not being able to get rid of dangers and threats. He explains that the source of fear is actually the ego: the greater the attachment to the self the more fearful we become. There is a strong relationship between the belief in a self and fear. Sometimes fear arises because of a predisposition in an individual's *karma*. Bokar Rinpoche writes that people will often look to the outside world for protection from these fears, but when this fails they may turn to the buddhas, and Tārā is the embodiment of protection from fear. Bokar Rinpoche further explains that just as the world is a manifestation of the mind, so too is fear. Tārā can help because of her compassion and through one's devotion in her. The most important aspect is the realisation that the fear is inherently empty, and that in fact it is the mind which must be changed. When one realises the true nature of the mind all fears will disappear (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 21-22).

The First Dalai Lama (dGe-'dun grub-pa, 1391-1474) attributes each of the Eight Fears to a state of mind. Although one can call on Tārā to assist against any fear he or she might face, the goddess is traditionally associated with the Eight Fears and their related 'afflictive emotions' (*nyon-mongs* Skt: *kleśa*): a fear of elephants relates to delusion; lions to pride; fire to anger; snakes to jealousy; thieves to erroneous philosophies; fetters to greed; water to desire and attachment; and demons to doubt (Shaw 2006: 319). As well as protecting from external fear Tārā also removes the underlying afflictive emotion, that is the cause of the problem (Bokar Rinpoche 2001:

25). The First Dalai Lama composed the poem, *A Crown Ornament for the Wise*, in which the Eight Fears and their emotional counterparts are elucidated after completing a Tārā retreat. In her commentary to this poem Chodron explains how it may be used by practitioners (Chodron 2005: 43-57; dGe-'dun grub-pa dpal-bzang-po ka).

Reliefs from Ellora and Ratnagiri in the seventh to tenth centuries depict Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā's iconography. In some depictions she is seen standing surrounded by eight depictions, whereas in others she is seated. In some she has eight arms, each relating to one of the fears, while in other traditions each fear is depicted by a separate goddess. However, Shaw argues that in Tibet it was Khadiravaṇī Tārā who took on the function of protecting from the Eight Fears (Shaw 2006: 321). In Tibet one finds *The Dhāraṇī of Tārā Who Protects from the Eight Fears* in chapter eleven of the *Tārā Root Tantra* (Mullin 2003: 79).

#### **1.4. Key Buddhist Texts Relating to Tārā**

There are many Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist texts relating to the various forms of the goddess Tārā, as evidenced by the vast selection found within the Tibetan *Kanjur* (*bKa' 'gyur*) and *Tenjur* (*bsTan 'gyur*). In Tibet it is possible to find Tārā texts in the Collected Works (*gSung 'bum*) of almost every *gTer-ston*. Willson's 1986 work is an overview of the main Tārā texts, in which he has translated works from both Tibetan and Sanskrit, and as such is a valuable resource for textual analysis of the Tārā tradition (Willson 1986). Tāranātha's *The Golden Rosary* is one such text: a history of the Tārā cult largely based on the *Tārābhavatantra* (*The Origin of Tārā Tantra*) and teachings received by Tāranātha from his masters. It details Tārā's history and the *tantras* relating to the goddess, and also includes numerous stories of Tārā assisting

practitioners who cry out for help. As such it has become a popular text in its English language translations (Shaw 2006: 311; Tāranathā 1604; 1995; Willson 1986: 33-36, 169-206).

Many Indian practitioners wrote songs in praise of various forms of Tārā, and these are found in the Tibetan language within the canons. Authors include Candragomin, Sūryagupta, Sarvajñamitra, Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti and Atiśa. Willson's work on the literature pertaining to Tārā worship includes examples of these and more. Other seventh-century works composed by Candragomin and Sūryagupta, including some *sādhana* texts. The majority of these famous practitioners received visions of the goddess in which she guided their practice, and the stories concerning these events have endured. Four praises to Tārā by Candragomin are extant in the Tibetan language: two of which deal with the Eight Fears (Candragomin *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *nga* and *ca*). The legendary proponent of the Twenty-one Tārā lineage, Sūryagupta, however, is also believed to be the author of a praise to the thirty-two names of the goddess (Sūryagupta *nga*).

Willson posits that Nāgārjuna's praise to Khadiravaṇī Tārā may be the first mention of the goddess, and thus the source of Khadiravaṇī Tārā worship (Nāgārjuna). The text was written in the early ninth century at the latest Willson recalls the work of Ghosh, in which it is explained that no images of the goddess occur prior to the ninth century. Within the praise it is stated that Nāgārjuna in fact meditated in the Khādīra-vāṇa forest. A praise by Candrakīrti also concerns Khadiravaṇī Tārā, who emanates forms such as Vajravārāhī (Candrakīrti; Willson 1986: 280-81).

Buddhist Masters in Tibet are also known to have composed praises in homage to Tārā. The First Dalai Lama is known to have worshiped both Green and White Tārā and is the author of one praise to Green Tārā, one to White Tārā, and also

a commentary on the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*. Within his praise to Green Tārā he focuses on both Khadiravaṇī Tārā and the Eight Fears (dGe-'dun grub-pa dpal-bzang-po 1981). Other praises were written by Blo-gros rgya-mtsho, a seventeenth to eighteenth century scholar. One is centred on the Twenty-one Tārās as they pertain to Nāgārjuna's lineage (Blo-gros rgya-mtsho).

The third Tibetan author Blo-bzang bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, a *dGe-lugs-pa*, was just eighteen years old when he composed the three-folio *Song of Longing for Tārā, the Infallible* [*rJe btsun sgrol ma'i gdung 'bod*], a famous Tibetan poem to the goddess (Blo-bzang bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan). Willson identifies the date of the author's birth as 1834-5, based on the author being eighteen in 1852 when the text was written. However, he writes that another source places his birth in 1836. Meanwhile, the TBRC provides dates of 1714-1762, locating the author in another century altogether. For a commentary on this beautiful poem the reader is directed to Chodron's *How to Free Your Mind*, where a whole chapter is dedicated to a translations and exhaustive elaboration on the meaning of the poem. Willson also provides a translation of the song. He comments that in the first verse rGyal-mtshan refers to Tārā as the Triple Gem, which Willson believes is rare in reference to Tārā as related to the three tantric jewels of *Bla-ma*, *mKha'-'gro-ma* and *Yi-dam* (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 60-63; Chodron 2005: 103-182; TBRC 2006; Willson and Brauen 2000: 322-28).<sup>15</sup>

The *Tārāmūlakalpa* (TMK) is a seventh century text of great significance to the Tārā cult (Bu-ston Rin-po-che). The text, spoken by Avalokiteśvara, teaches many Tārā practices. Landesman's analysis of the TMK places most of the practices

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<sup>15</sup> During research for this thesis I relied upon the 2006 version of the TBRC online database. However, in 2009 the TBRC was updated and is likely to update again in the future. Accordingly the bibliography contains a listing for <www.tbrc.org>. Any reference quoted here is fully searchable on the current TBRC database and as such individual bibliographic entries have not been included.

involved in the *kriyātantra* classification, and describes the rituals within the cycle as involving *mantra*, the construction of *maṇḍala*, paintings, fire-*pūjas*, and magical rites. Many iconographic forms of the goddess are introduced in this cycle, and the text is described by Shaw as being from the formative period of the Tārā cult. The TMK was translated into Tibetan in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Bu-ston (1290-1364) and classified as a *kriyātantra*, it can be found in the *Kanjur* (Landesman 2008; Forthcoming; Shaw 2006: 315).

As discussed above and in Chapter Five, the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* is a very important work for the worship of the goddess. Although the *Praises* will be discussed in more detail in other areas of this thesis, the reader is referred to other English language works for the various translations available of this text.<sup>16</sup> *The 108 Names of the Venerable Ārya-Tārā* (*bKa' 'gyur kha*) is another text extant in Sanskrit and Tibetan versions examined by Willson. He states that there are two versions of the text, the other is found in the Chinese canon. The text is made up of an introduction, the names themselves and the benefits of recitation. The *108 Names* comprises a teaching by Avalokiteśvara to Vajrapāṇi regarding the virtues of Tārā. Many of the epithets are also found in the names of Durgā (Willson 1986: 94-104).

Chapter One has offered an extensive introduction to the Buddhist goddess Tārā. A literature review of the secondary resources pertaining to a study of the divinity was followed by an examination of her history, through both myths and historical evidence found in India and Tibet, and her subsequent role in the tantric tradition. The origins of Tārā within Hinduism and Buddhism were discussed, and her main forms with their individual iconography were described. The chapter concluded with a brief

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<sup>16</sup> There are a great number of English language translations of and commentaries on the *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* text (Beyer 2001 [1973]; Chen 1974; Chodron 2005; Day 1990; Lopez Jr 1997; Mullin 2003; Tāranātha 1995; Willson 1986; Zopa Rinpoche and Yeshe 2000).

guide to the main primary texts concerning the goddess. We are now well placed to move on to Chapter Two, which takes as its focus the red forms of the goddess, it begins with Kurukullā, a brief introduction to the concept of subjugation, and concludes with a survey of the various identifiable lineages of individual Red Tārās.





## Chapter Two

### Introduction to Red Tārā

*In the Tantric works there are so many different varieties of Tārā that it is physically impossible to classify them correctly without reference to their particular colour* (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 306).

Chapter Two moves on from the general introduction to the Buddhist goddess Tārā found in Chapter One to examine the Buddhist goddess Kurukullā, a form of Red Tārā. The various forms of Kurukullā are listed, and the history of her cult is examined. Following this is a survey of the lineages of Red Tārā which the author has been able to identify. For each form of the deity a brief introduction is given. In some cases, due to a lack of source materials, no further research has been possible, while other forms will be investigated individually in Sections Two and Three of the thesis. Chapter Two serves as a comprehensive introduction to the Red Tārās in order to contextualise the later chapters.

#### 2.1. Red Tārā and Subjugation

What differentiates Red Tārā from the other Tārās examined above, and how does she fit within the cult of Tārā in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition? One key difference between Red Tārā and the other aspects of the goddess is the role of the former as a subjugating deity, and this is something that will be examined below in this section. Many Tārā emanations are peaceful, whereas others are wrathful. Red Tārā is the main example of Tārā as a subjugating deity, a function exemplified by her red colour.<sup>17</sup> Tārā the subjugating goddess takes us some distance from the more common appellations of 'Mother' and 'Saviouress'. In this subjugating role Tārā's actions take on

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<sup>17</sup> As we will see below in Section 2.2. Kurukullā is the main subjugating goddess in the Buddhist tradition. As an emanation of Tārā it could be said that she is the main example of this divinity in a subjugating role. However, as we have discussed above, Tārā emanations who take her name have a closer relationship to the original goddess than to those with differing appellations.

a magical aspect: her actions may ultimately be for the benefit of all sentient beings but at first sight seem rather brutal and intrusive.

Other deities identified with Tārā, such as Kurukullā, perform subjugating actions. However, Kurukullā is not a form of Tārā strictly defined, but rather a manifestation of Tārā by a different name, and this is where a key distinction lies. As we saw in Chapter One, some authors have identified a difference between the emanations of Tārā who have the *mantra* *Om tāre tuttāre ture svāhā* and other goddesses who are related to Tārā but are distinct from her insofar as they have their own *mantra*.

Kinsley writes:

One of the underlying assumptions of the Tārā Kurukullā rituals of subjugation seems to be that if one wishes to exert power over another person, or if one wishes to protect oneself from supernatural beings, the most effective kind of deity one can employ is fierce and terrifying. Such beings as Tārā Kurukullā, it seems, dramatically express the aggressive emotions that must accompany rituals of subjugation and also reassure the person seeking protection from equally fierce, hostile demons (Kinsley 1998 [1986]: 172).

The cult of Kurukullā will be examined in greater detail below.

The *Tenjur* contains one text which identifies Tārā in the role of subjugator: the *dBang du byed pa'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs* (rDo-rje myu-gu). Here, however, Tārā does not have the red colour normally identified with subjugating activities, but instead is depicted in her more usual green form. This differentiates her from the Red Tārās who are the focus of our study. The *sādhana* is provided in its entirety as follows:

### ***The Sādhana of Subjugating Tārā* (rDo-rje myu-gu)<sup>18</sup>**

In Sanskrit, *ba shya tā ra sā dha naṃ* [*Vaśayatārā-sādhana*]. In Tibetan,

*The Sādhana of Subjugating Tārā.*

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<sup>18</sup> The transliterated Tibetan is given in Appendix 1. The version translated here is from the *bsTan 'gyur gser gyi lag bris ma* as it is not found in the sDe-dge *Tenjur*.

I prostrate to *Ārya Tārā*.

From *tām*, imagine *Ārya Tārā* arises supressing the middle of the visualised *tām* syllable on top of an *utpala*. [She has a] green coloured body. In her left hand [she grasps] a blue *utpala*, while her right is in the *mudrā* of supreme generosity. [She] sits on a pure seat. After thinking of her crowned with Amoghasiddhi [she] becomes of a single taste with the wisdom-being.

Recite "*om tāre tuttāre ture che-ge-mo dbang-du gyis shig svāhā*" with the name of the object [inserted at *che-ge-mo*], the number of times explained above.

Even [though this form of *Tārā* is] without the weapon of an arrow<sup>19</sup> and suchlike the object's neck is bound with the *utpala*.

Fill the body of that assembled [object] with the light of your body. You should thus establish [the object] under your control.

*The Sādhana of Subjugating Tārā*. Composed by the teacher rDo-rje myu-gu. The End.

The text is interesting in its identification of *Tārā* with the family of Amoghasiddhi. As we have seen in the previous chapter *Tārā* is most often found within the Lotus Family of Amitābha. The *Tenjur* also includes a text relating specifically to a Subjugating Red *Tārā* that will be discussed in the forthcoming chapter on Red *Tārā* within the *Sa-skyapa* school.

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<sup>19</sup> The arrow referred to here is the flower bow and arrow held by Kurukullā in subjugating rituals. The text states that as this form of *Tārā* does not posses an arrow her *utpala* flower may be used in its place in order to bind the neck of the object.

As for the ritual of subjugation itself, Buddhist tantric activity is conventionally divided into four different actions (*'phrin las bzhi*, Skt: *catuḥkarma*) for which rituals are employed - pacifying (*zhi-ba'i 'phrin-las*, Skt: *śānti*); increasing/ enriching (*rgyas-pa'i 'phrin-las*, Skt: *puṣṭi*); subjugating/ magnetising (*dbang-gi 'phrin-las*, Skt: *vaśya*); and destroying (*drag-po'i 'phrin-las*, Skt: *maraṇa*). Beyer's work on Tārā quotes the *Sa-skya-pa* Lama Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216), as follows:

Each of these basic functions has many subsidiary functions. In pacifying, one may pacify disease, or pacify an evil spirit, or many other things. In increasing, one may increase one's life, or increase one's fortune or enjoyments, and so on. In subjugating, one may subjugate a king, and so on, or summon him before one, or many other things. And in destroying, one may kill, expel, isolate, petrify, and so on (Beyer 2001 [1973: 249-50]).

In his oral teachings on this topic Chogyam Trungpa (1939-1987) details the reasons for employing these various actions and their counter-result. Trungpa describes pacifying as 'making things into a peaceful environment', while the reverse of this action, *devaputra*, the 'son of gods', creates ego. This action is symbolised by the colour white and White Tārā is an example of a pacifying deity (Trungpa Rinpoche 1991: 25).

Enriching/ Increasing is exemplified by deities such as Vasundharā and Jambhala and the colour yellow, and is employed for increasing wealth, prosperity, merit, and knowledge (Reynolds 2002). Trungpa states "this is enrichment: gradually, spontaneously becoming rich". The appearance of one's spiritual teachers is considered as enrichment by Trungpa, who goes on to describe the counter-action as the '*māra* of accumulations' whereby mental difficulties are conversely acquired (Trungpa Rinpoche 1991: 27).

The function of subjugation is embodied by red-coloured deities such as Kurukullā and others mentioned in the 'Great Cloud of Blessings' prayer by Mi-pham rin-po-che ('Ju mi-pham rnam-rgyal rgya-mtsho, 1846-1912), for example Hayagriva

and Vajravārāhī (Mi-pham rgya-mtsho 1879). This action serves to attract, subjugate, magnetise, or bewitch someone into the practitioner's power (Reynolds 2002). This kind of activity is performed in order to provide what is needed for practice. As Trungpa explains, "Magnetizing means drawing everything into our situation like a magnet." The reverse of this is the *kleśa-māra* of conflicts, or "hang-ups" as Trungpa describes them (Trungpa Rinpoche 1991: 27-28).

The action of destruction is symbolised by the colour black. Here obstacles to the spiritual path and the spread of the *dharma* are removed. Destruction is undertaken by deities such as Siṃhamukhā (Lion-headed Dākinī) (Reynolds 2002). The four actions are also linked to the *maṇḍala*'s four gates: pacifying in the East; increasing in the South; subjugating in the West; and destroying in the North (Reynolds 2002).

In all traditions Red Tārā is a deity associated with the magnetising/subjugation class, signified by her red colour. This action is used in order to attract women, patrons, and kings to support one's *dharma* practice. Women are used as consorts in tantric activity, patrons provide the necessary support, financial and otherwise, for *dharma* practice, and kings aid the spread of the *dharma*. Positive things are drawn towards the practitioners, allowing them to continue successfully in their practice. Almost everything we come across in our Red Tārā texts are red, from the robes the practitioner must wear, through to the ritual objects. The colour of these items symbolises the subjugating power of this goddess.

With regard to the relationship between Red Tārā and subjugation, Sherab and Dongyal explain:

Red Tara, for example, is special for activating our realization and overpowering our ego-clinging and neurotic states. With her help we are freed from the confinement of our egos so we are able to reach out to all living beings with bodhicitta (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 23).

It is clear that many of these actions are open to misuse by erring practitioners. However, the textual tradition warns against their abuse. As Snellgrove writes concerning 'Tārā's Four Gazes of Subjugation':

The rites of slaying and so on which have been spoken of, are for frightening beings in order to subjugate them, and by means of that to put them on the right path; on the other hand if one actually killed them that would be a breaking of the convention of the Great Symbol and one would fall into the Avīci Hell (Snellgrove 1959: 86).

In our discussion of the various lineages of Red Tārā we will shed more light on the little researched topic of Buddhist subjugation rituals.

## **2.2. Kurukullā and Red Tārā**

Kurukullā is the best-known example of a subjugating goddess and is often called Red Tārā. Her worship combines a mixture of mundane and spiritual goals. Despite her popularity very little research has been undertaken into her role and worship. The most detailed examination of her ritual cult has been undertaken by Miranda Shaw, who dedicates a chapter of her *Buddhist Goddesses of India* to this divinity. Beyer also briefly examines the ritual application of Kurukullā. The only other Westerner to have undertaken a study – albeit brief - of the cult of Kurukullā is John Reynolds (Beyer 2001 [1973]; Reynolds 2002; Shaw 2006). This section will briefly outline Kurukullā's iconography and worship in order to establish the links between the two goddesses with the aim of laying the basis for a clearer understanding of the material presented later in this thesis.

Within the Tibetan tradition numerous epithets are applied to Kurukullā: Ku-ru-kulle, dBang-gi lha-mo, Rig-byed-ma, and Rig-byed lha-mo. The name Ku-ru-kulle is merely a derivative of the Sanskrit name Kurukullā. As dBang-gi lha-mo she is identified as the 'Female Buddha of Power', which classifies her as a spirit-taming

deity who offers protection from demons (Mullin 2003). In A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle Red Tārā is also known as Rig-byed-ma, as she is seen as an emanation of Kurukullā. Within other *rNying-ma-pa* traditions other names for Kurukullā are applied, and she appears as dBang-sdud rig-byed lha-mo, the fifth of the Twenty-one Tārās of Klong-chen-pa. In this case she is a two-legged, two-armed red Tārā, whose lotus is topped with bow and arrow (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 85-88). In the *rNying-ma-pa* school she may also be known as dBang-mdzad da-ki-ni (Tenzin and Oleshey 1975). The Indian tradition applies another epithet to Kurukullā: Trailokyavaśakariṇī, the Subjugator of the Three Realms (Shaw 2006: 434).

### 2.2.1. The Origins and Textual Traditions of Kurukullā Practice

As for the origin of the cult of Kurukullā, in all likelihood she originated as an Indian tribal deity who was integrated into the Buddhist pantheon and gradually came to be identified with Tārā in her subjugating, red form (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 302). Shaw describes her as a "dhāranī goddess who presides over rites of love magic, subjugation and bewitchment (*vaśīkaraṇa*)". She goes on to say that:

[a]s Kurukullā rose in the pantheon, her sphere of influence expanded from the compulsion of love objects to the conquest of conceptual thought, Buddhist teachings, and primordial awareness itself.

However, Kurukullā "never completely shed her original function and continued to preside over unvarnished rites of subjugation" (Shaw 2006: 433-34).<sup>20</sup>

In the Tibetan tradition the main Kurukullā text is the *Ārya Tārā Kurukullā-kalpa* ('Phags ma sgrol ma ku ru kulle'i rtog pa, *The Ritual of the Noble Tārā-Kurukullā*) found in the *rGyud* (tantra) section of the *Kanjur* (Kṛṣṇa-Paṇḍita and Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba). This text has also been published in Sanskrit and Tibetan by

<sup>20</sup> Shaw includes an account of the origin of Kurukullā in her work, in which an emanation of Kurukullā works in the market-place and goes on to teach the serpent king (Shaw 2006: 433).

the Indian scholar Shastri Pandey (Shastri Pandey 2001). It was translated into Tibetan by Tsul-khrims rgyal-ba, a disciple of Atiśa (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 302).

Another important text relating to Kurukullā is the *Ārya Tārā Kurukullā-stotra* by Ḍombī-heruka (*'Phags ma sgrol ma ku ru kulle'i bstod pa, The Praise of the Noble Tārā-Kurukullā*) found in the sDe-dge, gSer-gyi lag-bris-ma, and Co-ne *Tenjurs*. Within the *Sa-skyapa* tradition Kurukullā lineages from all four levels of *tantra* are found (Mullin 2003: 122). Some Kurukullā *sādhana*s were written by well-known eighth to ninth century personalities such as Indrabhūti, Śabarapāda, Karuṇa Kavi, Sahajavimala, and Kṛṣṇapāda (Mehta 1999: 280-82).

### **2.2.2. The Forms and Iconography of Kurukullā**

There are numerous forms of Kurukullā within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and these are distinguished by their varied iconography. They include: Śukla Kurukullā; Tārobhāva Kurukullā; Uḍḍiyāna Kurukullā; Hevajrakrama Kurukullā, and Kalpoktā Kurukullā. However, other lesser known forms can also be identified (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198; Day 1990: 96). Kurukullā can be seen in two-, four-, six- or eight-armed forms, and the iconography and function of each of these goddesses differ. This section aims to examine these differences. This investigation of Kurukullā will enable us to make comparisons with Red Tārā manifestations later on in the thesis.

Shaw (Shaw 2006: 436-38) distinguishes the iconography of Kurukullā as belonging to two distinct groups, which depict either *Mahāyāna* or Tantric forms of the goddess. She relates that the *Mahāyāna* forms display similar attributes to other seated, peaceful *Dhāraṇī* goddesses, whereas Kurukullā's tantric forms are seen standing in a dancing pose, adorned with skull and bone ornaments.



In most of her emanations Kurukullā is crowned with the deity Amitābha (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198; Day 1990; Mehta 1999) and Day writes that Kurukullā is the "most widely revered of the Red Tārā emanations of the Dhyanī-Buddha Amitābha" (Day 1990: 96). This identifies her as a member of Amitābha's Lotus Family which is where Tārā is most commonly found. However, as Māyājālakrama Kurukullā and Māyājāla Kurukullā, B. Bhattacharyya claims that the goddess is distinguished by her crown of the five buddha families (*rgyal-ba'i rigs-linga*, Skt: *pañcatathāgatāḥ*). Much of the iconographical information described here is found within the work of B. Bhattacharyya and N. Bhattacharyya (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925] 55-59, 126-27; N. Bhattacharyya 1999).

### ***Śukla Kurukullā***

Śukla Kurukullā (Rig-byed-ma dkar-mo) is the only white form of the goddess. She has two arms which hold a rosary and a lotus bowl full of nectar. She is seated in the *vajraparayaṅka* [lotus-]position and has three eyes, and Amitābha is seated at her crown. She herself is seated on an unknown animal, on top of a white lotus. One text relating to Śukla Kurukullā is found within the *Sādhnamālā*. Śukla Kurukullā is surrounded by eight *nāginīs* (serpent goddesses), each with a colour of her own: Ananta and Kulika are white; Takṣaka and Mahāpadma are yellow; Karkoṭaka and Padma are black; Vāsuki and Śaṅkhaṇḍa are red. The *Sādhnamālā* states that these *nāginīs* form the jewellery worn by the goddess: for example her necklace is formed by Takṣaka, her bracelet by Śaṅkhaṇḍa, and so forth. In the Hindu tradition the serpents that adorn her represent serpent power (*suṣumnā-nāḍī*) (A. Bhattacharya 1967: 160; B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 55-6; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198; Mehta 1999: 280-82).

### ***Uḍḍiyāna Kurukullā***

Uḍḍiyāna Kurukullā (U-rgyan-nas byung-pa'i rig-byed-ma) is a fierce form of the goddess: she has a terrible appearance and is red in colour. She is depicted in the *ardhaparayaṅka* stance on top of a corpse, adorned with a garland of severed heads and crowned by five skulls. Her teeth protrude, as does her tongue. Her clothes are made of tiger skins and her brown hair rises up from her head as if it were a flame. Uḍḍiyāna Kurukullā has three round, red eyes which constantly move around. Her four arms wield the fully-drawn bow and arrow made of red lotuses, a lotus goad, and a red lotus (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 55-6; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198).

### ***Hevajrakrama Kurukullā***

Hevajrakrama Kurukullā (Kyi'i rdo-rje'i rim-pa'i rig-byed-ma) is held in special regard by the *Sa-skyapa* school as 'special patron and protector of the sect'. She is named Hevajrakrama Kurukullā as she is based on the *Hevajra Tantra*, in which her *mantra* is found. Within the 'Thirteen Golden Dharmas' iconographic group Hevajrakrama Kurukullā belongs to the 'Three Great Red Ones' (*dMar-chen skor-gsum*), which are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.2.3. She is red with four arms and wields the flower bow and arrow, an *utpala* flower of which the root forms a noose, and an iron hook. She is sixteen years of age, has three eyes and is adorned with severed heads, bones, and tiger skins (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 14; Reynolds 2002).

### ***Kalpoktā Kurukullā***

Day believes that Kalpoktā Kurukullā (rTogs-pa-las gsungs-pa'i ku-ru-ku-lle) is the most popular form of the deity for worship, yet little iconographical information is available on this aspect of Kurukullā. Kalpoktā Kurukullā is red, with four arms. She holds a drawn bow and arrow, and a red *utpala* flower, and displays the fearlessness

*mudrā*. She is adorned with the precious jewels and red silk garments and sits with her left leg extended inside the Kurukullā cave with Rahula and the lower gods of desire below her (Day 1990: 96; Watt *e*).

### ***Tārobhāva Kurukullā***

Tārobhāva Kurukullā (sGrol-ma rtogs-pa-las 'byung-ba'i ku-ru-ku-lle) is a fierce red form of the divinity, said to have emanated from Tārā. She is red with four arms and sits in the *vajraparayaṅka* position, upon a lotus, under which are found Kamadeva and his consort, who ride upon Rahu. In her four arms, one of her left hands is in the *abhaya-mudrā* and the other carries the arrow. Her right arms hold the bow and a red lotus. She is crowned by Amitābha and resides on the Kurukullā mountain. She is youthful and amorous and at times her bow and arrow are held aloft, ready to shoot. Five *sādhana*s to the goddess are found within the *Sāadhanamālā* body of texts, each varies slightly. All of the goddess's garments and ornaments are red, and when the practitioner worships her he too must wear red in order to visualise himself as Tārobhāva Kurukullā (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 56; N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198; Kinsley 1998 [1986]: 170).

### ***Māyājālakrama Kurukullā***

Māyājālakrama Kurukullā is a six-armed form of the goddess. Bhattacharyya writes that "[t]he six-armed variety only emanates from the combination of five Dhyānī Buddhas", where as other forms of Kurukullā emanate from the deity Amitābha (Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 126). However, as I have no access to the *Sāadhanamālā* collection I have not been able to verify this in the text. B. Bhattacharyya states that she is called Māyājālakrama Kurukullā because the *sādhana* related to her worship was restored from Kṛṣṇācārya's *Māyājāla Tantra*.

Māyājālakrama Kurukullā is a red goddess. She is seated in the *vajraparayaṅka* stance, on top of a sun disk, on top of an eight-petalled lotus. She wears red garments and has six arms. Her first pair of hands are in the *trailokyavijaya-mudrā*, her second pair display the *abhaya-mudrā* and hold a white *kunda* flower, whilst her third pair hold a rosary and a *kamaṇḍula* (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 126-27).

### ***Māyājāla Kurukullā***

The *sādhana* of Māyājāla Kurukullā is found in the *Sādhanamālā* and is separate from that of Māyājālakrama Kurukullā. Here the goddess has six arms. The first pair form the *trailokyavijaya-mudrā*, the second are in the *aṅkuśa-mudrā* and hold a red lotus, and the third wield a fully-drawn bow and arrow. Bhattacharyya mentions that he was unable to find any iconographic depictions of either Māyājālakrama Kurukullā or Māyājāla Kurukullā (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 127).

### ***Aṣṭabhuja Kurukullā***

Aṣṭabhuja Kurukullā (Rig-byed-ma'i phyag-brgyad-ma) is an eight-armed aspect of the goddess and her *sādhana* is found in the *Sādhanamālā*, Number 174. She is a mild and compassionate form of the goddess, in the flower of her youth. B. Bhattacharyya states that the *sādhana* relating to this aspect of Kurukullā was written by Uḍiyā Siddhācaryya Indrabhūti, dating to the eighth century. This *sādhana* includes a description of the complete *maṇḍala* of the goddess within which she is surrounded by twelve deities (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 58). Aṣṭabhuja Kurukullā is red and is seen in the *vajraparayaṅka* attitude on an eight-petalled sun disk. She has six arms: on the left is the *trailokyavijaya-mudrā* and on her right the *aṅkuśa-mudrā*. The arrow

she wields is drawn up towards her ear and her other hand holds the noose. The remaining arms hold a bow and lotus. She is adorned with many ornaments.

Her retinue of twelve deities include Prasannatārā to the east; Niṣpannatārā to the south; Jayatārā to the west; Kaṇṇatārā to the north; Cundā to the north-east; Aparājitā to the south-east; Pradīpatārā to the south-west; Gaurītārā to the north-west. All are crowned with Amitābha, are red in colour, and sit in the *vajraparyāṅka* attitude. Their two right hands are in the *varada-mudrā* and hold the arrow, whilst their two left hands hold the lotus and bow. The gates of her *maṇḍala* are guarded to the east by Red Vajravetālī, who is crowned by Akṣobhya. To the south is Aparājitā, yellow with Ratnasambhava at her crown. Ekajaṭā is at the west, blue, with Amitābha at her crown, and Vajragāndhārī in the north, golden with Amoghasiddhi on her tiara. All four goddesses stand in the *ālīḍha* pose (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 58).

### 2.2.3. Iconographic Symbolism

Kurukullā's iconography is exemplified by her flower bow and arrow, the most notable symbol of the goddess. The bow symbolises meditative concentration, and her arrow is wisdom; secretly they signify the ability to subdue. The noose and hook represent the ability to rein in the wandering mind and "kick-start" the lethargic mind, and secretly they depict control of ghosts and spirits. Her tiger skin skirt represents her fearlessness, and the red *utpala* flowers indicate the natural process used in subjugation (Mullin 2003: 122).

At a subtler level of activity, her implements can effect a change in consciousness, transmuting passion into wisdom. She uses her flowery bow and arrow to penetrate the minds of her targets and subjugate their selfish desire and dualistic thought, the hook to summon them into her blissful presence, and the noose to fling her fortunate captives into a higher realm of consciousness (Shaw 2006: 436).

Kurukullā is one of few goddesses in the Buddhist tantric pantheon to have more than two arms and Shaw believes this is indicative of her previous role as a *Dhāraṇī* Goddess (Shaw 2006: 411).

In his description of a Kurukullā ritual Beyer describes the use of the goddess' implements. He states that the noose is used to bind the neck of the one to be subjugated, and the iron hook strikes at the heart if male, or the vagina if female. The object is drawn to the feet of the practitioner through the power of the iron hook. At a later point in the ritual iron hooks of red light stream out from the practitioner and subjugate the object. Once again the object is pierced at the heart, or vagina, but this time with the flower bow and arrow. The Kurukullā *mantra* is recited, while imagining that the object is subjugated and comes under one's power (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 306-308).

#### **2.2.4. Kurukullā Worship and her Relationship with Tārā**

Kurukullā worship is known to have been popular in East India and China, and in Gujarat where an image of her is worshipped at Tāraṅga (Mehta 1999: 280-82). Her worship falls within the subjugation category, as discussed above in Section 2.1. However, over time her worship has become defined by certain particular characteristics and it is these that will now be examined.

The great number of reasons why a practitioner might employ Kurukullā worship are discussed within this section. Within Tibet many of the reasons for her worship appear at first to be rather mundane. Beyer writes that Kurukullā:

was called upon when building a monastery or when beginning any enterprise, that she might subjugate the human and demonic forces that stood in its way; she was called upon by students before an examination, that she might increase their wisdom; and, within my own experience, she has been called upon by at least one Tibetan refugee group to coerce the Indian government (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 302).

In the *Kurukullākalpaḥ* ten specific goals of the practice are mentioned: bringing someone under one's power; dispelling poisonous snakes; a wife subjugating her husband; amulets which protect against evil spirits and bad luck; spells for gaining power and wealth; cowrie shell divination; treasure finding divination; walking on water; avoiding grey hair; cures for impotence and frigidity (Reynolds 2002: Shastri Pandey 2001).

The eight *siddhi* which can be achieved by meditating on Kurukullā are mentioned as another list of benefits in Text 72 of the *Sāadhanamālā*: invincibility in battle; eye ointment which enables one to see spirits; swift-footedness; invisibility; alchemical elixir ingestion for long-life and rejuvenation; levitation or flight; movement through solid objects; and command over the underworld spirits (*sa-bdag*) (Reynolds 2002). Shaw also describes the achievements that may be received from Kurukullā practice:

Intoning her mantra seven times in the presence of an angry person or opponent will calm the person and make him or her a devoted follower. Drinking water over which her mantra has been pronounced will attract food; rinsing one's face with the water will bestow beauty. Holding the hem of one's garment while incanting the mantra twenty-one times will grant mellifluousness and oratorical power (Shaw 2006: 445).

'Tārā's Four Gazes of Subjugation' and the 'Four Trances of Kurukullā' are discussed by Snellgrove in his seminal work *The Hevajra Tantra* (Snellgrove 1959: 86). Once the *yogi* has trained to achieve the 'Four Trances of Kurukullā' he may halt the ripening of fruit or summon wild beasts, amongst other skills. As we can see these are mundane goals, like most of those mentioned above. Snellgrove however makes a clear distinction between the mundane achievements through Kurukullā worship and the higher spiritual accomplishment it might bring. He identifies the true aim of practice as the protection of the *Dharma* from slander, perversion of the teachings, and so forth. As we have seen in so many of the lists above and also within our

previous discussion of subjugation rituals in general, the true, spiritual goals often appear to be hidden behind the more mundane, worldly benefits of such practice.

One of the main aspects of Kurukullā worship discussed by scholars has been her role as a goddess of love with the power to attract a partner. However, on the spiritual level of understanding this is to be viewed as the ability to attract a tantric consort of the necessary qualities (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]; Getty 1928; Kleiger 1982; Reynolds 2002). When discussing the benefits of worshipping the goddess B.T. Bhattacharyya states that "Kurukullā is said to confer success in the Tantric rite of *vaśīkaraṇa* (subduing or bewitching men, women, ministers or even kings). Many interesting processes are given in some *sādhana*s for bewitching in different cases" (B. Bhattacharyya 1985 [1925]: 55).

As a goddess of *strī-vaśīkaraṇa* (the bewitchment of women) Kurukullā enables the practitioner to entice a woman from afar. The object of this worship may be a desired lover, an estranged spouse, or a tantric consort (Shaw 2006: 445). According to Getty, because of her association with attracting lovers Kurukullā is often worshipped by an unhappy lover, a practice that must only be undertaken when no female is nearby. Getty explains that "[s]he is believed to have been particularly successful in bewitching men and women, and her mantra is repeated ten thousand times to bring about all one's desires" (Getty 1928: 126-27).

Klieger on the other hand discusses Kurukullā's abilities in a wider role, appealing to both men and women. He describes the application of her worship as the ability "to bend to one's desires a recalcitrant man or woman" (Klieger 1982). In this role of 'goddess of love' Kurukullā has been linked with Aphrodite and Venus, her function being similar to theirs. Reynolds goes on to state that the bow and arrow carried by Kurukullā are similar to those of Eros and Cupid (Reynolds 2002).



In another aspect of her worship Kurukullā is viewed as the *Mahāyāna* goddess of wealth, because she is a member of the retinue of the god of wealth Kuvera. However, she is not his consort (Getty 1928: 126-27). Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes Kurukullā as seen alongside Red Jambhala, another god of wealth. In his retinue she is red, with a haughty expression and four arms which wield the bow and arrow, noose and iron hook, all of which are made from blue *utpala* flowers. She wears bone ornaments and many jewels (De Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996: 75-76).

As for Kurukullā worship itself, her *mantra*, employed for ritual subjugation is *oṃ kurukullā hūṃ hrīḥ svāhā* (N. Bhattacharyya 1999: 198). After the practitioner has performed the necessary preliminary ritual service to the goddess, he or she may perform a certain number of *mantra* recitations depending on the object of the ritual. For a man, woman, or minister one hundred recitations are appropriate; for the common world ten thousand; for a king one hundred thousand; for demigods and daughters of the gods seven hundred thousand; for cattle, or divine beings such as the *garuḍa*, ten million are necessary; and if one recites constantly, for a substantial period of time then power can be gained over the entire triple world (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 306-308).

Within the FPMT, a modern-day Western Tibetan Buddhist organisation in the *dGe-lugs-pa* tradition, we find a practice of Kurukullā designed for Western practitioners by Lama Zopa Rinpoche (b. 1946), the current head of the Foundation. In order to perform this ritual the practitioner does not require initiation, a waiver that is rare in Kurukullā practice. In this twelve-page booklet, following the usual preliminaries such as Taking Refuge, Generating *Bodhicitta*, establishing the correct motivation for practice, and offering the *maṇḍala*, we find three visualisations that one may perform. The visualisations are described as leading to three different

outcomes and the practitioner will pick which to perform depending on his desired goal.

Visualisation One is performed with the motivation of leading all sentient beings to enlightenment. Visualisation Two is used when other people are jealous or interfering with one's success,<sup>21</sup> and the purpose of the third is to change a person's mind. The *mantra* given for all three is *oṃ kurukullā hrīm svāhā*, a slight variation on the *mantra* above (Zopa Rinpoche 2001). Once again, within these three visualisation practices one notices the split between worldly and soteriological goals, something that is so often seen in activities related to the cult of Kurukullā. It is also interesting to note that although one is instructed to visualise the goddess no image of her is included in the booklet, unlike the usual *Dharma* materials intended for Western practitioners. The absence of an image may be motivated by a wish to preserve secrecy. Nor does the text describe the form of Kurukullā to be visualised. Because of these omissions we are not able to identify the specific Kurukullā emanation with which this practice is associated.

The special place that Kurukullā holds within the Tibetan *Sa-skyapa* tradition deserves a more detailed examination. The goddess is found within the *Thirteen Golden Dharmas* (*gSer-chos bcu-gsum*) cycle of practices, within which the practices of thirteen deities are contained: Kurukullā appears twice in this list. Within the 'Three Great Red Ones' (*dMar-chen skor-gsum*) Hevajrakrama Kurukullā appears alongside Red Gāṇapati and Red Takkirāja. She is also seen within the 'Three Small Red Ones' (*dMar-chung skor-gsum*) as Tārobhāva Kurukullā of the *Vajrapañjara Tantra*, alongside Red Vasudhārā and Tinuma (Watt *e*).

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<sup>21</sup> Beyer mentions a Tārā text by 'Jam-mgon kong-sprul, the *rJe btsun yid bzhin 'khor lo'i zla ba 'dod 'jo*, which describes a ritual for when someone is angry at, or lacks faith in, the practitioner (Beyer 2001 [1973]).

The most important source within the *Sa-skyapa* school is the *Hevajra Tantra*, within which Hevajrakrama Kurukullā's *mantra* is found, as discussed above. This lineage descends from Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's *Ku ru kulle'i sgrub thabs*, which is found in the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 14, 477; rJe-btsun grags-pa rgyal-mtshan). To receive the initiation into this form of the goddess one is required to have previously received the Hevajra empowerment. Within the *sGrub thabs kun btus* collection of *sādhana*s from the *Sa-skyapa* school there are five texts relating to Kurukullā and more are found within the *sGrub thabs rgya rtsa* (Reynolds 2002).

The relationship between Kurukullā and Tārā is very close, and M. Foucher calls the former 'the heart of Tārā' (Getty 1928: 126-27). As described in Section 1.3. Kurukullā is identified as an emanation of the goddess Tārā. This is especially clear in her Tārobhāva-Kurukullā form. When the majority of scholarly works mention Red Tārā in most cases it is actually Kurukullā to whom they are referring. Day writes that Kurukullā is the "most widely revered of the Red Tārā emanations of the Dhyānī-Buddha Amitābha" (Day 1990: 96). As Kurukullā has received scholarly attention in other works this thesis will focus rather on other lineages of Red Tārā, specifically excluding Kurukullā from the survey. It will become clear from this analysis that in fact many distinct Red Tārā lineages have existed in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and that not all are related to Kurukullā. I hope to demonstrate that although Kurukullā is indeed an emanation of Tārā and is one of her forms, it is not the case that all Red Tārās are related to Kurukullā. The link between these two goddesses, and the important distinction between them, is further examined in the following chapters.

### **2.3. Lineages of Red Tārā in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition**

This thesis aims to examine the Red Tārā lineages found in Tibet, in exile, and beyond, both those which continue to the modern day and those that have died out. The following outline provides a comprehensive list of the texts available to me at the time of writing. However, not all texts referring to Red Tārā were obtained in the limited time available. Many texts have been lost since the Chinese entered Tibet. In other cases I have found mention of certain texts, for example on the TBRC database, but access to the text itself has not been possible. In such cases the text has been included in this list, but no further examination or analysis has been possible. This short section serves to outline the known lineages and texts of Red Tārā, whereas later chapters will discuss the lineages where the texts are available. This sub-section aims to survey Red Tārā texts and lineages. It is possible that numerous other lineages of Red Tārā practice exist. However, these have not come to my attention and have therefore not been included in this survey.

#### **2.3.1. Red Tārā in India and Tibet**

As discussed in the Prolegomenon it is possible that I may have been denied access to information concerning some esoteric transmissions for reasons of secrecy in the tantric tradition. Furthermore, due to the Cultural Revolution in Tibet a number of lineages may have died out and their texts lost, or it may be the case that some lineages were lost prior to this. Consequently, this list can only claim to be provisional.

#### ***Pīṭheśvarī***

Within the Indian Buddhist pantheon Red Tārā appears as the wrathful deity Pīṭheśvarī or Uḍḍiyāna Tārā, a dancing tantric goddess. The Pīṭheśvarī lineage moved from India to Tibet, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Tibetan *Tenjur*. The practice

and lineage of Pīṭheśvarī, as well as the importance of the body-*maṇḍala* and *pīṭha* sites to her cult, are examined in greater detail in Chapter Three. This form of Red Tārā has been studied by only one Western scholar, Miranda Shaw, who included a short section on Pīṭheśvarī practice in her *Passionate Enlightenment*, and also briefly mentions her in *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Shaw 1994: 206). The Pīṭheśvarī practice lineage has not continued into modern times, possibly due to the argument that the lineage was originally intended to be taught specifically to the women of Uḍḍiyāna. Due to the monastic setting of most of Tibetan Buddhist practice it is possible that this lineage died out shortly after arriving in Tibet, although no historical information is available to back up this thesis (Shaw 1994: 104-105, 228-29).

### ***Cundā Tārā (Tsundā Tā-ra)***

Texts concerning this red form of Tārā are found in Tāranātha's *Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs Rin chen 'byung gnas* (Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08] *kha*: 308-09), Pañ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma's (1781-1853/4) *sGrub thabs rin 'byung gi lhan thabs rin 'byung don gsal* (Chandra 1974: 638-40), and Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab's (1677-1737) *gSung 'bum* (Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab 1996/7 *ka*; *kha*: 104-106). The Pañ-chen bla-ma's version of the text is quoted in full:

(638) Preceded by [taking] refuge in *Aryā Cundā Tārā*, [generating] *bodhicitta*, [and meditating upon] the Four Immeasurables remain in equanimity on the non-conceptual mind. Then, on the basis of the trunk, branches, and flourishing leaves of a *khādira* [acacia] tree you [arise] from *tām* on top of a lotus and moon [seat] as Tārā, with a shining red body. A web of red light rays diffuse from each pore of [Tārā's] body. Her loose hair is bound by bunches of red pearls. Her right hand, on top of her

knee, holds the fruit of the *picula* tree, yellow inside and blue outside. Her left [hand] holds a red *utpala* ornamented with a book at her heart. She sits with her feet crossed. She is adorned with jewels, silks and mostly with pearls. Having visualised a *tām* syllable together with the *mantra*-garland on a lotus and moon at her heart, recite "*Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*" as many times as you can. The deity's body dissolves and you meditate non-conceptually, after which you dedicate the merit. Then again, with the light at your heart [invite] Tārā together with her retinue to the sky in front [saying] "*badzra samādzah*". With regards to arranging a white *gtor-ma*, bless it just as in the *kriyā-tantras*. Offer [the *gtor-ma* to the deity and retinue] with "*oṃ āḥ hūṃ*" at the end of the ten syllables [of Tārā's *mantra*], seven times. As for performing the offerings and praise [to the deity], pray intensely. The Venerable Lady dissolves into your crown. (639) Offer the merit.<sup>22</sup>

The text goes on to describe the ritual initiation of the deity, but this has not been included here as it does not provide us with any further relevant information.

Cundā Tārā's seat under the *khādira* tree is reminiscent of Khadiravaṇī Tārā, and Beer describes the *picula* fruit held by the goddess as also being held by Vasudhārā (Nor-rgyun-ma). Beer further states that the book is usually held in a deity's left hand and represents the Buddha's speech (Beer 2003: 180-81, 205). Furthermore, Willson and Brauen provide a brief description of the text and a colour depiction of the goddess, Figure 2.1. below (Willson and Brauen 2000: 80-81, 275). None of the three available versions of the practice includes any information

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<sup>22</sup> The Tibetan text of this excerpt is found in Appendix 2.

concerning the historical lineage of the practice (Chandra 1974: 638-40; Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08]*kha*: 308-309; Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab 1996/7*ka*: 104-106).

This form of Tārā shares a name with the Buddhist deity Cundā, who in her usual form is white with four arms. She holds an alms-bowl, a book on a lotus, and a rosary, and displays the *varada*- (boon-granting) *mudrā*. Her book relates to her ability to bestow wisdom. Shaw states that their shared name is the only feature shared between these two deities (Shaw 2006: 265-75). However, the book held on a lotus appears to be a feature common to both deities. Cundā Tārā will not be discussed further in the present work due to the lack of comparative source texts and information concerning the lineage. Moreover, it is not clear from the text itself whether Cundā Tārā specifically performs the subjugating action which is the function of the Red Tārās discussed here.

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

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Fig. 2.1: **Cundā Tārā**  
(Willson and Brauen 2000: 81)

### ***The Twenty-one Tārās***

Chapter Five of this thesis focuses on the Twenty-one Tārās and the inclusion of various Red Tārās in this group of goddesses. The *dGe-lugs-pa* school offers an initiation into Red Tārā which takes the first Tārā of this group as its focus and this goddess has very similar iconography to that of Mitrāyogin's Red Tārā. An investigation into this particular deity alongside the other forms of Red Tārā found within the various iconographic lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās, forms the subject of Chapter Five.

#### **2.3.2. Red Tārā in the *Sa-skyā-pa* School**

##### ***The Sa-skyā-pa Cycle of Red Tārā (Skt: Rakta-Tārā)***

The *Sa-skyā-pa* school hold a cycle of teachings on Red Tārā which dates back to the early period of Tārā worship in Tibet. This cycle of texts, entitled the *rJe btsun sa skyā pa'i sgrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs rjes gnam las tshogs dang bcas pa'i skor*, is examined in Chapter Four. The cycle is found within the nineteenth-century *sGrub thabs kun btus* collection compiled by 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po and 'Jam-dbyangs blo-gter dbang-po (1847-1914) (*sGrub thabs kun btus* 1902ga). The cycle comprises nine texts, including two *sādhana*s, a fire-*pūja* commentary, and numerous pith instructions, and finishes with a lineage prayer. One text, a *sādhana* composed by rDo-rje gdan-pa, is also found within the *Tenjur* (rDo-rje gdan-pa 1988 [1731-41]).

##### ***'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs***

A related Red Tārā practice, composed by the *Jo-nang-pa* scholar 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (a.k.a. Thub-bstan dge-legs rgya-mtsho, 1844-1904) also details the *Sa-skyā-pa* form of the goddess. The twenty-page text in question, the *rJe btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma*



*dmār mo'i sa lugs bsnyen pa'i khrid yig ut pal dmar po'i phreng ba*, is found within his *gSung 'bum* (Collected Works). This and other related versions of the practice are discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 199?).

### **Mitrayogin**

The TBRC lists another *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā text: the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs kyi sgrub thabs* [*The Sādhana of the Sa-skyapa Red Tārā*], located within the *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* of Mitrayogin (otherwise known as the *Mi tra brgya rtsa*). This short text is found in Mitrayogin's collection within the *sGrol ma'i sgrub thabs* [*Tārā Sādhana*] sub-section (Mitrayogin *ka*). As I have no access to Mitrayogin's *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* no further analysis of this variant of Red Tārā is possible. However, more information on the iconography of the goddess can be found on The Himalayan Art Resource website where iconographic representations of the deities found within Mitriyogin's *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* are included (Watt *b*). Here we find a picture of the Red Tārā in question with eight arms holding the *vajra* and bell; bow and arrow; wheel of the *dharma* and spear; sword and goad. She is red with two eyes and is seated in the lotus position. She is adorned with the precious ornaments and is seated on top of a green lotus flower. A picture of the goddess is seen at Figure 6.1.

This form of the goddess is almost identical to the first Tārā of the Twenty-one Tārās in the lineage of Sūryagupta, Rab-tu dpa'-ba'i sgrol-ma. However, this aspect of the goddess holds a conch shell in place of the spear. Due to these iconographical links some further analysis of this form will be carried out within Chapter Five of this thesis, as the iconography closely mirrors that of the individual Red Tārā initiation within the *dGe-lugs-pa* school. However, the iconography of this deity differs greatly from the other *Sa-skyapa* traditions discussed here.

### 2.3.3. Red Tārā in the *rNying-ma-pa* School

#### *A-paṃ gter-ston*

The works of A-paṃ gter-ston are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis. Chapter Six concerns a Red Tārā cycle found within his *gTer chos* [Revealed Teachings] (Ta-re lha-mo 199?; Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976; A-paṃ gter-ston 1985). The *gTer chos* is a collection of A-paṃ gter-ston's texts extant in India, Nepal and Bhutan, after his passing away c.1945. The cycle numbers twenty-six separate texts. In the work of A-paṃ gter-ston the goddess adopts various iconographic forms.

Chapter Seven examines the living tradition of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā practice. The Chagdud Gompa Foundation (hereafter CGF) centres in both America and Brazil regularly practise Red Tārā, as it descends from A-paṃ gter-ston. The lineage of Red Tārā was brought to the United States by Chagdud Tulku, who initiated a great number of Westerners into her ritual cult. Now all thirty-four GCF centres regularly practise Red Tārā. Since the passing of Chagdud Tulku in 2002 these practitioners have continued the lineage into the modern day. Currently initiations are given by these Western practitioners, a number of whom have completed long retreats on the practice and have accordingly been awarded the title 'Lama'. Although lCags-mdud dgon-pa in Khams, Tibet, was not destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, no lineage of Red Tārā exists at the temple, as Chagdud Tulku only received initiation into her cult only once he had escaped into exile in India.

#### *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*

This text is a modern-day Red Tārā practice seemingly composed by Stuart Kirkpatrick for his 'Flaming Jewel' practice group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It comprises roughly four pages and is only available in English (Traktung Rinpoche *a*).

The lineage of this text is questionable, as is the title of Rinpoche attached to its author. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight, as will the text itself. Despite the controversial nature of this text, practice, and lineage, insofar as it is a modern-day practice of Red Tārā it should clearly be included and analysed within this thesis.

### ***sMin-grol-ling***

sMin-grol-ling is one of the main *rNying-ma-pa* monasteries of Tibet, and the exile monastery is located in Dehra Dun, India. According to the website of the International Campaign for Tibet, monks from the exile monastery travelled to Washington D.C. on 20-21<sup>st</sup> September 2005 to create a Red Tārā sand-*maṇḍala* at the offices of the International Campaign for Tibet (Save Tibet). This event was held in honour of the seventieth birthday of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. A *thang-ga* (scroll painting) of the goddess was also consecrated at the event. The article states that:

The iconography of the Red Tara is based on ancient Tibetan Buddhist texts prophesizing the birth of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and including a special prayer invoking Red Tara to assist the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to overcome extreme external and internal obstacles that could arise in his lifetime. Red Tara, one of the female deities in the Buddhist pantheon, is meditated upon to protect from fear (Save Tibet).

This association with protection from fear is more often linked to Green Tārā or Tārā Who Protects from the Eight Fears. It may be that this Red Tārā relates to the Twenty-one Tārās or Kurukullā. However, any identification would entail further analysis of the text itself.

Despite numerous visits to the exile monastery of sMin-grol-ling in Dehra Dun and e-mails to the relevant personalities, I was unable to obtain this text. Without access to the text no detailed examination of the lineage and practice is possible. I hope to gain access to this work in the future in order to examine the iconography and

function of the goddess, in particular her special association with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

### ***Rang-rig rdo-rje***

The 42-volume *gTer chos* (Revealed Teachings) of Rang-rig rdo-rje includes three works concerning Red Tārā: the *sGrol dmar dbang sdud ma'i sgrub thabs* [*The Sādhana of Subjugating Red Tārā*]; the *sGrol dmar rjes gnang* [*The Permission [to perform] Red Tārā*]; and the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang gi 'khor lo* [*The Wheel of Subjugation of Red Tārā*]. Rang-rig rdo-rje (1847-1903) was a *rNying-ma-pa gter-ston* (Treasure Revealer) from Nyag-rong, dKar-mdzes Prefecture, Khams (TBRC 2006). These three texts are all found within Volume 23 of his *gTer chos* (Rang-rig rdo-rje 2005*ka, kha, ga, nga*).

These Red Tārā texts will not be discussed in further detail. This decision was made due to the fact that Rang-rig rdo-rje's Red Tārā texts belong to a larger cycle of teachings concerning the four colours of Tārā: white, yellow, red, and black. These colours correspond to the four actions (*'phrin las bzhi*), and Tārā here is merely presented as performing one of these four activities. The cycle accordingly falls beyond the scope of this thesis, which is concerned primarily with individual Red Tārās aside from Kurukullā. Interested researchers are referred to the *gTer chos* for further information.

### ***Tshe-dbang nor-bu***

The TBRC lists one text by the *rNying-ma-pa* Tshe-dbang nor-bu (Kaḥ-thog rig-'dzin tshe-dbang nor-bu/ dPa'-bo don-grub rdo-rje/ bSod-nams theg-mchog bstan-'dzin dpal-bzang-po/ Chos-byings ran-grol/ Karma bstan-pa mtha'-rgyas, 1698-1755) of Kaḥ-thog monastery, the rebirth of Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin padma nor-bu (TBRC 2006).

The *sGrol ma dmar mo mi mthun kun sel gyi 'don 'grigs bklags chog tu bkod pa* [*The Red Tārā Liturgical Arrangement Suitable for the Recitation which Removes All Discord*]. The text is found in his Collected Works. As I have no access to this text for translation or analysis it has not been possible to include discussion of this form of Red Tārā herein (Tshe-dbang nor-bu).

### 2.3.4 Red Tārā in the *dGe-lugs-pa* School

#### *Blo-bzang byang-chub bstan-pa'i sgron-me*

Blo-bzang byang-chub bstan-pa'i sgron-me (Che-shos chos-kyi rdo-rje/ Che-shos mi-skyod rdo-rje, 1861-1933/4/5) is the author of the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i cho ga cha lag tshang ba khams gsum dbang du sdud pa'i lcags kyu* [*The Complete Sections of the Red Tārā Ritual: The Iron hook that Subjugates the Three Realms*] found within his Collected Works. He is listed as the 71st gDan-rabs (Abbot) of sKu-'bum byams-pa gling, a *dGe-lugs-pa* monastery in A-mdo, and the Third in the Che-shos lineage, head of the Che-shos sgar, a subsidiary of sKu-'bum monastery (Blo-bzang byang-chub bstan-pa'i sgron-me; TBRC 2006). Although I was able to gain access to this text no translation or further analysis was possible, due to the illegible nature of the block print. Further discussion of this form of Red Tārā is therefore impossible.

#### *'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las*

The TBRC cites two Red Tārā texts, possibly identical, as works W13303 and W13304 respectively. These texts, both entitled *sGrol ma dmar mo* [*Red Tārā*] are said to have been composed by 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las, a nineteenth century *dGe-lugs-pa* scholar. 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las was also known as Thon-yon, or Thon-yon 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las. He was born in the nineteenth century but no specific dates are given for his birth or death. He was a *dGe-lugs-pa* practitioner and his main

teacher was Ye-shes don-grub bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan. Unfortunately the TBRC database does not include any information on the monastery to which 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las was most closely allied (TBRC 2006).

The text(s) comprise one folio within the author's nine-volume *gSung 'bum* [*Collected Works*], which consists of 367 works, from a Mongolian print found in the Potala Palace. This information is confirmed by the *dGe lugs gSung 'bum*, which contains a listing of the contents (*dkar chag*) of the *gSung 'bum* of Thon-yon 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las. The *sGrol ma dmar mo* is listed as Text 39, within Volume *Ja* (7) of the *Collected Works* ('Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las). It seems likely that an error has been made by the TBRC when compiling their database, and that in fact these texts are one and the same. This is a reasonable conclusion as all the information listed on these two texts is identical. It also seems unlikely that the author wrote two texts with such similar titles. As I have no access to this/ these text(s) an examination of the content has not been possible.

### ***'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho***

'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho (1866-1948) is listed by the TBRC as the author of a Red Tārā daily practice text, the *dBang mdzad sgrol ma dmar mo'i rgyun 'khyer mdor bsdus* [*The Concise Daily Practice of Red Tārā, the Subjugator*]. 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho was from Ka-ring dgon-pa. The TBRC states that this text is found in Volume Three of his *gSung 'bum* (Collected Works), from an impression made from wood blocks at mDo chod dpal zhing bkra shis chos 'khor gling (TBRC 2006).

The TBRC lists this text under topic T645, which places it as a *Sa-skyapa* lineage text. It may therefore be the case that this text relates to the *Sa-skyapa* lineages discussed in Chapter Four, but this cannot be verified without access to the source. The *dGe lugs gsung 'bum* lists the contents (*dkar-chag*) of rJe 'Jigs-med

'phrin-las rgya-mtsho's *gSung 'bum*. The six-volume *Collected Works* listed in this source does not, however, include a *dBang mdzad sgrol ma dmar mo'i rgyun 'khyer mdor bsdus* in Volume Three, or indeed anywhere for that matter ('Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho). Despite the attribution of this text to the *Sa-skyapa* lineage, it appears that 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho was in fact a *dGe-lugs-pa* scholar, also known as [A-lags] Bla-kho 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho. He was considered the reincarnation of 'Jam-dbyangs rgya-mtsho, the fiftieth throne holder of Bla-brang bKra-shis-'khyil,<sup>23</sup> where 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho himself also resided as the fiftieth *gDan-rabs*. He is listed as having eight main teachers and seventeen main disciples (TBRC 2006). As I have no access to the *gSung 'bum* of 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho or a copy of the specific text, it has not been possible to examine or translate this daily practice. Therefore, no further discussion of this text is included within this thesis.

### ***Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho***

Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho is listed by the TBRC as the author of a *sGrol ma dmar mo'i sbyin sreg* [*Red Tārā Fire-Pūja*]. This Red Tārā fire-*pūja* text, comprising three folios is contained in Volume Two (*Kha*) of Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho's two-volume *gSung 'bum* (Collected Works). The TBRC located this text in the Beijing Mi-rigs dpe-mdzod-khang [Beijing Peoples Library] (Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho). As I have not found a copy of this text it has not been analysed further in this thesis.

The *dGe-lugs-pa* scholar Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho (1839-1905) was born in mDo-smad (Amdo) Khya-dge se-tshang. He was recognised as a rebirth of

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<sup>23</sup> I have been unable to clarify to what exact position in the monastery the term 'throne holder' refers to. This is the term used by the TBRC for which they provide no clarification (TBRC 2006).

rGya-mkhar-ba dKon-mchog bstan-pa'i nyi-ma. In 1845 he was installed at his predecessor's monastery, the rGya-mkhar dgon dga'-ldan bshad-sgrub dar-rgyas-gling, which he later restored. Until 1885 he studied at Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil in the Thos-bsam-gling Chos-grwa, where he was enthroned in 1889. In 1895 he also came to the throne of bDe-mo-thang dga'-ldan chos-'khor-gling. He is listed with various names, mostly indicative of his status as the throne-holder of a number of monasteries: Chas-pa Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho, rGya-gar/mkhar-ba Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho, Bla-brang-khri Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho, and dGe-'dun 'jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje (TBRC 2006).

### ***'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje***

The TBRC lists another fire-*pūja* text, specifically a subjugating fire-*pūja*, relating to Red Tārā entitled the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang gi sbyin sreg* [*The Subjugating Fire-pūja of Red Tārā*]. According to the TBRC the author of this text was the eighteenth-century 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje, but no exact dates are given for this *dGe-lugs-pa* scholar, who is not identical to the dGe-'dun 'jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo rje listed above. This five folio text was found in the Potala Palace collection, in the one-volume *bKa' 'bum* of 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje. The TBRC states that he was born in mDo-khams and occupied throne of Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil from 1802 (TBRC 2006). It appears from this date that 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje must in fact have lived during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The *dGe lugs gsung 'bum* lists the contents of 'Jam-dpal Grub-pa'i rDo-rje's *gSung 'bum*. It states that the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang gi sbying sreg* is Text 14 in the Collected Works ('Jam-dpal Grub-pa'i rDo-rje). As I have no access to this text no further analysis of its contents will be undertaken within this thesis.



#### 2.3.4.1. Red Tārā at rGya-mkhar dgon-pa

There appears to be a strong link between Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho, the author of the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i sbyin sreg*, and 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje the author of the *sGrol ma dmar mo dbang gi sbyin sreg*. Both authors are connected to the rGya-mkhar dgon-pa,<sup>24</sup> a *dGe-lugs-pa* monastery in Khan-lho Prefecture, Gansu Province. Both authors held the title rGya-mkhar-ba<sup>25</sup> and also the title Chas-pa. Both moved on from dGya-mkhar Monastery to become throne-holders of Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil: 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje in 1802 and Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho in 1889. The TBRC lists one of 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje's personal names as rGya-gar-ba 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje, and Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho's title is listed as the exact same name: rGya-gar-ba 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje. It appears from the available information that the lineage of rGya-mkhar-ba's at rGya-mkhar dgon-pa includes 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje (18<sup>th</sup> century), dKon-mchog bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (1794-1854), Ye-shes smon-lam (19<sup>th</sup> century), dKon-mchog bstan-pa'i nyi-ma (d. 1838), and Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho (1839-1905).

The nineteenth century rGya-mkhar-ba Ye-shes smon-lam had one student, a bSam-'grub bstan-'dzin, who is listed as having another main teacher, 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las. This same 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las is the author of work W13303/4, the *sGrol ma dmar mo* (TBRC 2006). Therefore, it appears that there is a further link between 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las and the Red Tārā text authors at the rGya-mkhar dGon-pa. Without access to these texts or the opportunity to conduct fieldwork in Tibet it has not been possible to analyse the tradition or to draw any further conclusions.

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<sup>24</sup> The rGya-mkhar monastery is also spelled by the TBRC as rGya-gar or rGya-khar (TBRC 2006).

<sup>25</sup> The rGya-mkhar incarnation lineage held the seat at the Chas-pa rgya-mkhar-dgon dga'-ldan bshad-grub dar-rgyas-gling monastery (TBRC 2006).

#### 2.3.4.2. Red Tārā at Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil Monastery

There also appears to be a strong link between Red Tārā lineages in the *dGe-lugs-pa* school and the Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil Monastery in A-mdo.<sup>26</sup> 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho (1866-1948) was the 50<sup>th</sup> *gDan-rabs* (Abbot) of Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil Monastery and wrote the *dBang mdzad sgrol ma dmar mo'i rgyun mkhyer mdor bsdus*. The authors of the two fire-*pūja* texts, 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje (18<sup>th</sup> century) and Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho (1839-1905) were both throne-holders of the Monastery in 1802 and 1889 respectively.

This indicates that Red Tārā was practised in the upper echelons of Bla-brang Monastery in A-mdo, and various texts concerning the goddess were written by throne-holders and abbots of the monastery during the eighteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Concurrently *rNying-ma-pa* practitioners such as A-paṃ gTer-ston and Rang-rig rdo-rje were also finding Red Tārā *gter-ma* texts in A-mdo and nearby Khams at this time. It appears that the period from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries was a prolific era in the history of the composition of texts relating to Red Tārā practice.

#### 2.3.5. Red Tārā in the *bKa'-brgyud-pa* School

The only individual Red Tārā to have identifiable links with the *bKa'-brgyud-pa* schools is Pīṭheśvarī, through the '*Brug-pa bka'-brgyud* masters Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211) and his disciple dBang-phyug brtson-'grus (1187-1240) (see sections 3.2.2.3. and 3.2.2.4.).

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<sup>26</sup> Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil Monastery is situated in A-mdo. It is one of the six main monasteries of the *dGe-lugs-pa* school and was founded in 1709. At its heyday Bla-brang housed approximately four thousand monks and had 138 branch monasteries. As Bla-brang bkra-shis-'khyil was situated at the crossroads of Tibet, China, Mongolia and Turkestan on the Silk Road it was influenced by numerous cultures, in particular the Mongols (Berzin 2003 [1991]; Gruschke 2001).

On numerous occasions I discussed Red Tārā with *bKa'-brgyud-pa* monks in India and questioned them regarding a possible individual practice lineage within their tradition. Occasionally I was told that the *bKa'-brgyud-pa* did in fact practice Red Tārā: however, closer examination revealed that it was in fact the Twenty-one Tārā group of goddesses to which they were referring, and Red Tārā's inclusion in that group was counted by these monks as Red Tārā practice. At Bokar Rinpoche's monastery<sup>27</sup> in Mirik, North-east India I was invited to a "Red Tārā" *pūja* only to find upon arrival that the monks were performing the standard Twenty-one Tārā ritual. Despite my enquiries and research no other lineage of Red Tārā within the *bKa'-brgyud-pa* school has come to my attention. It may be that there is are *bKa'-brgyud-pa* Red Tārā lineages held secretly by the practitioners about which they are unwilling to share information.

Chapters One and Two introduced not only the goddesses Tārā and Kurukullā but also surveyed the forms of Red Tārā known to me at the present time. Part Two will examine the individual extant literary lineages of the goddess: Pīṭheśvarī, the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārās, the Twenty-one Tārās, and A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārās.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Bo-dkar nges-don chos-'khor gling.



**Part Two**  
**Red Tārā: Lineages of Literature**



### **Chapter Three**

#### **Pīṭheśvarī: The Red Tārā of Uḍḍiyāna**

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

**Fig. 3.1: Black and white line drawing of Pīṭheśvarī,  
O-rgyan sgrol-ma gnas-kyi dbang-phyug-ma  
(Chandra 1986: 250)**

Whilst Section One provided a background to the Buddhist goddess Tārā and a survey of her red forms, Section Two moves on to discuss the individual forms of Red Tārā for which a textual tradition can still be traced. This section examines the wrathful Red Tārā Pīṭheśvarī, the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā, Red Tārās in the Twenty-one Tārās, and the Red Tārās found within A-paṃ gter-ston's *gter-ma* cycle. These lineages are presented in a rough chronological order.

Chapter Three places the Indian Buddhist goddess Pīṭheśvarī,<sup>28</sup> a wrathful form of Red Tārā, in the wider context of Buddhist practice through an examination of the available textual sources. Miranda Shaw is the only modern academic to date to have undertaken research into the goddess Pīṭheśvarī and the practice of this divinity with a six-page examination of the cult in *Passionate Enlightenment*, and a brief mention in *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Shaw 1994: 102-107; 2006). Shaw's research findings led her to believe that the lineage originated with the *Yoginī* Vajravatī, a *Brahmin* lady from Uḍḍiyāna. Shaw argued that the practice of Pīṭheśvarī, as taught by Vajravatī, was originally intended specifically for the royal women of Uḍḍiyāna. As such, this allegedly female practice lineage provides an interesting focus of study and will shed more light on our examination of the lineages of Red Tārā that exist within Tibetan Buddhism. However, we will be discussing Shaw's methodology and its impact on her findings further.

It is not my intention here to dismiss Shaw's methodology as a whole, but rather to discuss and analyse more specific methodological problems in her chapter concerning the practice of Pīṭheśvarī. However, a number of scholars have questioned Shaw's feminist methodology and overall findings. Davidson devotes a section of his *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* to disproving Shaw's thesis. He emphasises that all the

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<sup>28</sup> Note that within this work I have adopted the spelling Pīṭheśvarī, correct in Sanskrit, as used by Miranda Shaw. However, the name also appears as Pīṭhiśvarī or Pīṭhīśvarī in the works of Chandra and Willson and Brauen (Chandra 1986; Willson and Brauen 2000).



known ritual literature, including that composed by female authors, was directed towards male practitioners and was therefore not indicative of the equal participation of women. In a conference paper presented in 2008 Bentor discussed the approach employed by Shaw to assert her conviction that scholars have overlooked the role of women in *Vajrayāna* Buddhism. Bentor concludes that Shaw's thesis would have been better served by an examination of the works of Buddhist scholars such as Candrakīrti or Tsong-kha-pa. Both these influential authors, Bentor argues, state that not only does the male practitioner rely on a consort for spiritual attainment in this lifetime, but the consort in turn relies on the male practitioner. Women are in fact active and equal practitioners of sexual *yoga* as a means to their own enlightenment. Moreover, it seems that as a consort the female practitioner is elevated without recourse to the standard training required for tantric practice. Although they emphasised the potential of women to achieve enlightenment, these Indian and Tibetan authors were aware that the ritual manuals of the time were written for male practitioners. Furthermore, in a book review Kinnard states that "Shaw is engaged in interpretation and a certain degree of manipulation of her sources." As we will see, this seems to be the case with Shaw's selective use of the primary sources concerning Pīṭheśvarī (Bentor 2008a, 2008b; Davidson 2002: 91-98; Kinnard Jul 1995).

This chapter will begin by listing the various textual traditions of Pīṭheśvarī, before embarking on a closer examination of Vajravatī and other authors mentioned in the colophons of the various texts in order to contextualise the practice and shed light on its possible lineage. After that, a translation from the *Tenjur* on the goddess will be presented, followed by a study of the cult of sacred sites in these texts. The chapter will conclude with a brief analysis of the content of the Pīṭheśvarī texts. It is intended that this examination should qualify Shaw's previous work on the topic and

provide new information to those engaged in feminist theory, the study of goddesses, and research into Buddhist iconography.

### 3.1. The Textual Tradition of Pīṭheśvarī Practice

The *Tenjur* contains a number of texts that focus on the goddess Pīṭheśvarī. In the sDe-dge *Tenjur* all these texts are found within Volume 27 (*Sha*) of the *rGyud* (Tantra) Section. In order to make a fair comparison with Shaw's work the sDe-dge *Tenjur* has been chosen as the main source for this study as Miranda Shaw relied upon this *Tenjur* for her research on the goddess. I had easy access to this version of the *Tenjur* and all texts translated in this chapter originate from this compendium. Shaw identifies two of these works as compositions by Vajravatī, and as we will see, this deduction appears to be correct. The two works in question are the '*Phags ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma'i sgrub pa'i thabs* (Vajravatī and 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje) and the *U rgyan gyi rim pa'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs* (Vajravatī and Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan).

However, other works focusing on the goddess can also be found in adjacent locations in the sDe-dge *Tenjur*, and it appears that Miranda Shaw did not examine these other lineages in the research for her book *Passionate Enlightenment*. Included among these other works is one which directly mentions Vajravatī in the colophon. If Shaw's research had included these additional works, the conclusions of her thesis concerning the female provenance and focus of these teachings are likely to have been very different. This argument will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

There are four texts composed by various other practitioners. These are the *dPal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa* ('Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje

ka), the *U rgyan gyi sgrol ma rim pa* ('Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje kha), the *Zhing gi dbang phyug ma'i mchod pa'i rim pa* (Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan), and the *Zhing gi dbang phyug ma'i bstod pa* (Blon-po'i rigs-shin-tu dga'-ba'i paṇḍita).

Tāranātha's *Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs rin chen 'byung gnas*, which forms the Volume Fifteen (*Ba*) of his *gSung 'bum* includes an untitled text concerning Pīṭheśvarī (Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08] kha). A work entitled *U rgyan sgrol ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma* is also found in the Seventh Paṇ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma's two-volume redaction of Tāranātha's work, the *sGrub thabs rin 'byung nas gsung pa'i lha tshogs rnams kyi sgrub thabs kyi rim pa phyogs gcig tu bkod pa don gsol* (Nyi-ma kha, ga).

Another text dealing with Pīṭheśvarī appears in Mitrayogin's *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* entitled *O rgyan sgrol ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma'i sgrub thabs* (Mitrayogin kha). I have been unable to obtain further information about this text and have no access to Mitrayogin's collection. In view of the dearth of source materials, a deeper analysis of the Pīṭheśvarī tradition of Mitrayogin is not possible here. However, another lineage of Red Tārā according to Mitrayogin does exist, as discussed in Chapter Two. I shall now move on to detail the various texts concerning Pīṭheśvarī and their respective authors and translators.

#### *Text PI*

*'Phags ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma'i sgrub pa'i thabs* [Pīṭheśvarīsādhana, *The Sādhana of the Noble Lady Pīṭheśvarī of the [Sacred] Places*] (Vajravatī and 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje)

The colophon of this *sādhana* gives the Tibetan translator as 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje. Then follows what appears to be a lineage for the text: rDo-rje ldan-ma, Paṇḍita

Pa-ra-he-ta,<sup>29</sup> Wa-ni-ta bha-dra, Saṃ-gha shrī-bha-dra, 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje and mKhas-pa sa-phug-pa.

### *Text PII*

*dPal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa* [Śrī  
*oḍḍiyānatārābhīmasamayakrama-nāma, The Stages of the Clear Visualisation of the  
Glorious Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā*] ('Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje ka)

This text was written by 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje and Paṇḍita Saṃ-gha-shrī-bha-dra, the student of Wi-ni-ta-bha-dra. The text is also mentioned in *The Blue Annals*,<sup>30</sup> which states that the *Oḍḍiyānatārābhīsamayakrama* was taught by the Paṇḍita Jayākara from East Varendra to Vairocanarakṣita, a disciple of Maitrī-pa (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 845). However, we find no mention of Paṇḍita Jayākara or Vairocanarakṣita within the text itself.

### *Text PIII*

*U rgyan gyi sgrol ma rim pa* [*Oḍḍiyānatārākrama, The Stages [of Practice] of  
Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā*] ('Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje kha)

The colophon to this short 'Sequence [of Practice]' text states that it was written by Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta, Saṃ-gha shrī, and translated by 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje. It then lists the lineage holders: Ḍākinī rDo-rje ldan-ma, Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta, Wa-ni-ta-

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<sup>29</sup> Throughout this chapter I have listed the original Tibetan spellings of names and places found within the texts, privileging the sources themselves. The possible Sanskrit equivalents are located in the Glossary provided as Appendix 3.1. at the end of this chapter. I have adopted this approach to enable the reader to identify consistent misspelling across the various texts. Using this information it might be possible for future researchers to identify a particular author, scribe, or lineage across the manuscripts. A similar approach is adopted in Gyatso's *Apparitions of the Self* where Tibetan misspellings are included (Gyatso 1998).

<sup>30</sup> *The Blue Annals (Deb ther sngon po)* were compiled 1476 by Gos lo-tsa-ba gZhon-nu dpal (1392-1481).

bha-dra, Kha-che'i paṇḍita Saṃ-gha ma-he-bha-dra, and 'Jam-dpal gsar-ma des-sa-phug-pa.

*Text PIV*

*U rgyan gyi rim pa'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs* [*Oḍḍiyānakramatārādevīsādhana, The Sādhana of Tārā of the Stage of Uḍḍiyāna*] (Vajravatī and Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan)

This *sādhana* text is found on pages 145 to 149 of the sDe-dge *Tenjur* Volume above. The colophon describes this text as the words of the mKha'-'gro-ma rDo-rje ldan-ma. It was translated by Nag-tsho dge-slong Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan and Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta, who was a student of Ma-ha ā-tsa-rya Ratna shrī.

*Text PV*

*Zhing gi dbang phyug ma'i mchod pa'i rim pa* [*Pīṭheśvarīpūjākrama, The Stages of Offerings to Pīṭheśvarī of the [Sacred] Realms*] (Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan)

This 'Sequence of Offering' was translated by Pa-ra-he-ta and the *dge-slong* Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan.

*Text PVI*

*Zhing gi dbang phyug ma'i bstod pa* [*Pīṭheśvarīstotra, The Praise of Pīṭheśvarī of the [Sacred] Realms*] (Blon-po'i rigs-shin-tu dga'-ba'i paṇḍita)

This 'Praise' to Pīṭheśvarī was translated by Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta, Ye-shes rdo-rje and Nag-tsho chen-po, it is found at pages 167 to 171 of the sDe-dge *Tenjur* as above.

*Text PVII*

Tāranātha's Pīṭheśvarī Text (Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08]*ga*)

The text is found within his *Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs rin chen 'byung gnas* composed in 1606-1608 (Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08]*kha*). In this practice and empowerment text the lineage prayer reads as follows: Tārā, Ḍākinī rdo-rje ldan-ma, the *Siddha* Pa-ra-he-ta, Bi-na-te-bha-tra, Saṃ-gha-ma shrī, sGeg-pa rdo-rje, Shākya rdo-rje, mNgon-pa dbang-phyug btson-'grus phags-pa.

### *Text PVIII*

*U rgyan sgrol ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma* [Pīṭheśvarī of the [Sacred] Places, Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā] (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810*ga*)

This text is found in the Seventh Paṇ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma's *gSung 'bum*. It does not include mention of any lineage masters and is a redaction of Tāranātha's text.

## **3.2. Lineage Masters in the Textual Tradition of Pīṭheśvarī**

Having briefly examined the texts involved in the dissemination of the Pīṭheśvarī practice, we must move on to discuss in more detail the lives of the numerous masters mentioned within the colophons of these works. This discussion contextualises the tradition in order to aid further analysis of the lineage and its place in the wider context of Tibetan Buddhism. Section 3.2. begins with a discussion of the life of Vajravatī, about whom we have some information. This will be followed by an examination of the other practitioners in the lineage as far as the available information allows.

### **3.2.1. Vajravatī (rDo-rje ldan-ma)**

Who is the main author of the texts in the Pīṭheśvarī tradition? What was her intention in composing these practices and in disseminating them? Miranda Shaw discusses the

practice of Pīṭheśvarī in *Passionate Enlightenment* and again briefly in *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Shaw 1994, 2006). In these works Shaw focuses solely on the Pīṭheśvarī traditions that descend from Vajravatī. Shaw's book *Passionate Enlightenment* set out to examine the role of women in Tantric Buddhism and to highlight female lineages and female teachers wherever they are found in these literary sources.

Shaw's thesis concerning the cult of Pīṭheśvarī is that the work was written by a woman and intended as a practice lineage specifically for the royal women of Uḍḍiyāna. Shaw uses this example, amongst others, to support her feminist thesis that a woman's role in Tantric Buddhism was not merely as an aid to the male practitioner in the form of consort. Instead, she argues that in many instances the women themselves were acting autonomously and were recognised as equals within the tantric rituals in which they took part. Moreover, Shaw identifies various instances of women as the instigators and primary teachers of whole cycles of practice, and sets out to re-examine the tantric literature, scouring it for any mention of female practitioners. The author's aim is to correct what she sees as a gender bias in the work of previous scholars and translators. The implications of Shaw's thesis are examined in more detail later in this chapter. Prior to this we must undertake an examination of the relevant material, beginning with an analysis of the role of Vajravatī in the cult of Pīṭheśvarī using the available primary sources.

There is little information concerning the life of Vajravatī, and what is available is not found within her own works. Rather, one mention of the author is seen in the *Blue Annals* where she is listed in the lineage of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 362). Another is found within the literature of Lakṣmīṅkarā (a.k.a. lHa-lcan rje-btsun-ma dpal-mo, Skt: Śrīmatīdevī), another female tantric practitioner and author from India. Lakṣmīṅkarā is known within Buddhism as the

author of the Severed-headed Vajrayoginī (dBu-bcad-ma) practice, similar to the Hindu goddess Chinnamastā.<sup>31</sup> Miranda Shaw discovered this hagiographical material concerning Vajravatī in Lakṣmīnkarā's *lHan cig skyes grub kyi gzhung 'grel*, found in the sDe-dge *Tenjur* (Lakṣmīnkarā). Shaw writes that this story contains no mention of the Pīṭheśvarī tradition for which Vajravatī is well known (Shaw 1994: 102-107, 227-28), as we will see in the full translation included below. However, the legend does provide an interesting parallel between Vajravatī's conversion to the internal practices of Buddhism and her later teachings concerning internal pilgrimage of the body-*maṇḍala* (*kāyamaṇḍala*). This short section it is not so much a biography of Vajravatī as it is a short story concerning her meeting the *Yogi Ānandavajra*. The following is a full translation of the passage concerned (Lakṣmīnkarā).<sup>32</sup>

(21) The *Brāhmaṇī* Vajravatī [was] in the place of glorious Uḍḍiyāna itself. *Brāhmaṇī* Vajravatī had perfected [the practices of] cleansing and bathing and was able to purify and liberate [herself] just through that [ritual of] purifying and bathing [alone]. At the time, and from that place [of Uḍḍiyāna], she travelled somewhere else [and there] bathed at the riverbank, where she made offerings to her beloved deity.

At that place the *Yogi Ānandavajra*, a weaver, was stringing one [thread] to the next [whilst] hearing the history of the *Brāhmaṇī* [Vajravatī's] past and future. After [he had heard her story] it is understood that he accepted that *Brāhmaṇī* [as his disciple]. The weaver [Ānandavajra] came to the riverbank of that *Brāhmaṇī*. She was bathing at that place and he met her [there].

<sup>31</sup> For more information on Chinnamastā the reader is referred to Elisabeth Benard (Benard 2000 [1994]).

<sup>32</sup> The Tibetan transliteration of this text is found in Appendix 3.2.



He spoke these words to that *Brāhmaṇī*, "*Brāhmaṇī*, by bathing like that why are you looking only at the external stains? Or will you [also] look at internal [purification]?"

The *Brāhmaṇī* said, "The best [course of action] is to look at both [the inside and outside and to view them] as pure. It is taught that even Brahma said this, in as many words."

The *Yogi* Ānandavajra stated "*Brāhmaṇī*, as for your effort to purify yourself, I will not hinder [you]. I suppose that you believe through your external bathing you will also purify the internal personification [the Self]. I do not believe [in this route to] purity. Furthermore, it has been said that even if you believe in [achieving] purity through bathing, it is not the case [that one can purify oneself through this method]. [It is not] even [the case] of fishermen [who are not pure despite much bathing], not to speak of the fish and so forth [that] reside day and night [in the water and are not pure]. Thus it is said. (22) Furthermore, if rice arises from a rice-seed it is not the case that wild millet [will also arise from a grain of rice]. Likewise *Brāhmaṇī*, from the source of afflictions arise afflictions themselves. [Therefore] it is not the case that complete purification [can arise from the afflictions]."

The *Brāhmaṇī* said, "In that case, I pray that you teach me - through what [form of] bathing will the internal nature become pure?"

The *Yogi* said, "Purify the whole body through effortless, purificatory bathing. [Practice in this way and] you will be completely pure inside and out."

[The *Brāhmaṇī*] said. "I pray that you will teach me well that [style of] effortless bathing [in order to purify, in a manner] like [yours, a person of

a] high level [of achievement]." Having said that and having arranged [some] corn with flowers [she] offered [these items to the *Yogi*] together with her upper garments.

The *Yogi* said, "*Brāhmaṇī*, after pure clouds have arisen from the pure expanse of sky they dissolve right there and then. [Likewise] pure fish arise from the pure river. Just like that, you *Brāhmaṇī* [should] look at your mind. This [method] is called "the wisdom water of entering the beginningless realm of all the buddhas." [It will] completely purify the stains of belief in a Self." After saying that he went [back] to his place.

Thus, the *Brāhmaṇī* also completely understood the wisdom-method of entering the realm of all buddhas. Thus, she stayed [in that area] and led [to liberation] even all those others [who were] stained by the belief in Self. This is the state of the *Brāhmaṇī*.

This short passage, less than two pages in length, describes the meeting of Ānandavajra and the *Brāhmaṇī* Vajravatī. In the passage Vajravatī is described as adhering to and perfecting the Brahmin practices whereby one purifies the body through external bathing, and she performs this act by the riverside. When Ānandavajra hears the life-story of the *Brāhmaṇī* he goes to the waterside to meet her and accepts her as his student. For Shaw this meeting is important: she believes that at the time any meeting between a lowly weaver and a lady of the priestly caste would be very controversial and would have shed a bad light on the *Brāhmaṇī*. Shaw supposes a meeting between the two would cause many problems, Vajravatī would be viewed as polluted by this event (Shaw 1994: 102-103). However, Ānandavajra had seen her as a suitable vessel for his teachings.

Aside from this short section describing the meeting of these two practitioners no other information on Vajravatī has been found, as is the case with the majority of Indian tantric teachers. The TBRC does not include any information on her in its database and she does not appear in the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*, hereafter DTC (Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002). She is however mentioned in the colophon of Pīṭheśvarī Texts PI, PIII, PIV, and PVII. As so little information on her exists, I have found no dates for her life, and it is therefore difficult to locate the century in which these practices were first taught, although one must presume their existence prior to their translation into Tibetan and inclusion in the canon.

### 3.2.2. Other Authors and Translators of Pīṭheśvarī Texts

This section begins with the names of the masters listed within the colophons to the Pīṭheśvarī Texts and the relevant text numbers in a rough chronological order:

- *Dākinī* rDo-rje ldan-ma (Vajravatī) (Texts PI, PIII, PIV, and PVII)
- Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta (11th century) (Texts PI, PIII, PIV, PV, and PVII)
- Wa-ni-ta-bha-dra (Texts PI, PII, and PIII)/ Bi-na-te-bha-tra (Text PVII)
- Nag-tsho dge-slong Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (11th century) (Texts PIV and PV)/ Nag-tsho chen-po (1011-1064) (Text PVI)
- Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211) (Text PVI)
- mNgon-pa dbang-phyug brtson-'grus (1187-1240) (Text PVII)
- 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje (Texts PI, PII, and PIII)/ sGeg-pa'i rdo-rje (Text PVII)
- Saṃ-gha shrī-bha-dra (12th century) (Texts PI and PII)/ Paṇḍita Saṃ-gha shrī/ Kha-che paṇḍita Saṃ-gha ma-he-bha-dra (Text PIII)/ Saṃ-gha ma-he shrī (Text PVII)

- Ma-ha ā-tsa-ra Ratna shrī (Text PIV)
- mKhas-pa sa-phug-pa (Text PI)/ 'Jam-dpal gsar-ma sa-phug-pa (Text PIII)/  
Sākya rdo-rje (Text PVII)
- Tāranātha
- The Seventh Panchen Lama bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma

Four texts mention *Dākinī* rDo-rje ldan-ma, who is our Vajravatī, whilst Text PVII identifies her as second in the lineage to Tārā herself. Paṇḍita Parahita is listed in five texts and as such appears to be a key member of the Pīṭheśvarī lineage.

Samghaśrībhadra and 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje are listed in four of the same texts (Texts PI, PII, PIII, and PVII), with Wa-ni-ta-bha-dra also found in three of the four (Texts PI, PII and PVII). As we can, see there are definite links between some members of the lineage, as each text mentions a number of the lineage masters. However, in no one text do we find them all listed together.

As we have noted rDo-rje ldan-ma is Vajravatī, the *Brāhmaṇī* of Uḍḍiyāna examined above. However, these other authors and translators deserve closer examination, as their lives may give us clues to the lineage and dates of these practice texts. Neither the TBRC nor DTC includes any information on rDo-rje ldan-ma, Pa-ra-he-ta, Ma-ha ā-tsa-ra ratna shrī, Wa-ni-ta bha-dra, or 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje. Therefore, further discussion of some of these Masters is not possible.

### 3.2.2.1. Pa-ra-he-ta (Skt: Parahita)

Pa-ra-he-ta is listed in the colophon of five of our texts: PI, PIII, PIV, PV and PVII and as such seems to have been an important master to the lineage. In *The Blue Annals* we find brief mention of one Parāhita [*sic*], described as a learned *Paṇḍita* from Kashmir and listed in the Indian lineage of the Thang-sag-pa Monastery in

'Phan-yul. The work states that during his time in Kashmir Atiśa attended on six teachers, one of whom was Parāhitabhadrā [*sic*] (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 87, 325, 344). The translator rNgog Blo-ltan shes-rab (1059-1109) also worked with Parāhita in Kashmir for seven years (Davidson 2005: 259). If this is our Pa-ra-he-ta then it would link him with the lineage of Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba via Atiśa. Chattopadhyaya states that Parāhitabhadrā is mentioned in a lineage of Indian *paṇḍitas* described in the work of Bu-ston and that this Parāhitabhadrā accompanied Atiśa to Tibet (A. Chattopadhyaya 1999 [1967]: 5, 314). In this case Parāhitabhadrā must also have known Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba, who is discussed below. The link to Kashmir also seems to indicate that this might be our Pa-ra-he-ta as we will see that another of our lineage masters, Saṃghaśrībhadra, was also a Kashmiri.

### **3.2.2.2. Nag-tsho dge-slong Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan/ Nag-tsho chen-po**

Text IV mentions Nag-tsho dge-slong Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, whilst Text PV lists dGe-slong Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan. However, in Text PVI we find one Nag-tsho chen-po. In the TBRC database there are two people listed under 'Nag-tsho'. The first is Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba (1011-1064) the famous disciple of Atiśa (TBRC 2006), and the other is Nag-'tsho Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, who is identified as an eleventh century 'later translator' (TBRC 2006). Now as we have seen in Texts PIV and PV the name is given as Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan. However, in Text PVI we find Nag-tsho chen-po, where the title Chen-po (Great) is usually reserved for the more famous Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba. Thus it appears that either both Nag-tsho chen-po and Nag-tsho Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan were involved in the translation of Pīṭheśvarī texts or some confusion has arisen concerning the two during the composition of the relevant colophons.

The *Blue Annals* includes a vast amount of information on the translator Nag-tsho Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba. He was born in AD 1011, the year of the Iron Female Hog, one year before the birth of Atiśa. He hailed from Gung-thang, mNga'-ris, and is said to have been the uncle of sGam-po-pa bSod-nams rin-chen (1079-1153) (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 88, 245, 258, 328, 404, 930). Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba was known as Gung-thang-pa, a reference to his regional provenance, as well as by the ordination names Tshul-khrims rgyal-ma, 'Dul-ba mkhas-pa, mKhyen-pas 'dul-'dzin-pa, and by the Indian name Jayaśīla (A. Chattopadhyaya, 1999 [1967]: 298; Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002: 1197).

It was in fact Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba who in 1037 was sent to Vikramaśīla in Bihar, India by lHa bla-ma Ye-shes-'od to invite Atiśa to Tibet and he was given gold by Byang-chub-'od to present as an offering to Atiśa. When he arrived with four companions, Atiśa instructed him to study and not to tell others that he was there to invite him to Tibet. He promised the Abbot of Vikramaśīla that he would take Atiśa to Tibet for no longer than three years. They resided for one year at the Stham Vihāra in Nepal, which Atiśa himself built along the lines of Vikramaśīla. They arrived in Tibet in 1042 and travelled to gTsang in 1046 (Davidson 2005: 109; : Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002: 1197-98; Roerich 2007 [1949]: 245-47).

Whilst Atiśa resided at dPe-dkar gling in bSam-yas, where he arrived in 1047, he translated many texts with the help of Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba, such as the *Nyi khri snang ba*, the Commentary on the *Theg bsdus (Mahāyāna-saṃgraha)*, and the *Sems tsam (Cittamātra)* of Vasubhandu, amongst others. Later they translated the *Mādhyamakahrdayavṛttitarkajvālā* (Davidson 205: 109; Roerich 2007 [1949]: 257-58). Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba is said to have composed the *Stotra of Eighty Ślokas (bsTod pa brgyad cu pa)*, a praise to Atiśa which details his life (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 31-32, 324).

Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba attended Atiśa for nineteen years and received a number of initiations from him, including the *Śrī-Cakrasaṃvarasādhanaśarvasāla-nāma-ṭīkā Tantra* and the *Cycle of Yamāntaka*. He is also known to have studied under Atiśa's disciple rGya brTson-'grus seng-ge and to have met Nāropā at Pullahari Monastery in 1038/9. He was the teacher of Po-to-pa Rin-chen-gsal (1027-1105) (Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002: 1197; Davidson 2005: 145, 172, 250). There was some controversy concerning the fact that Nag-tsho was not present at the time of Atiśa's demise. He had travelled to Nepal to meet with a *Paṇḍita* at the time of Atiśa's passing, and although he had agreed the trip with the master the *bKa'-gdams-pa* school discredited him on the grounds that he had not kept his vows (A. Chattopadhyaya 1999 [1967]: 304-305; Roerich 2007 [1949]: 260-61, 374, 380). Nag-tsho continued his work of translation after the passing of Atiśa and is attributed as having translated 125 texts in the *Tenjur* (A. Chattopadhyaya 1999 [1967]: 306).

### 3.2.2.3. Ye-shes rdo-rje

The TBRC has numerous listings for Ye-shes rdo-rje, covering various centuries, whilst the DTC does not contain a listing for him. However, following the information below we find one Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211) as the teacher of dBang-phyug brtson-'grus. He was in fact the first 'Brug-chen gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje, a Master of the '*Brug-pa bka'-brgyud* school (TBRC 2006). The DTC listing for gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje confirms these dates. He was the main disciple of Gling ras-pa, was renowned as a *gter-ston*, and was the founder of a number of monasteries with a large number of students (Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002: 1662)

#### 3.2.2.4. mNgon-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus phags-pa

The TBRC includes a listing for one *'Brug-pa dkar-brgyud* master mNgon-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus and states that he might be identical with one dBang-phyug brtson-'grus (1187-1240), otherwise known as Lo-ras dBang-phyug brtson-'grus, dBu-ri-pa, and Grags-pa rdo-rje. The teacher of this dBang-phyug brtson-'grus was the Ye-shes rdo-rje above (TBRC 2006). The DTC confirms that rGyal-ba lo-ras-pa, otherwise known as Grags-pa dbang-phyug or dBang-phyug brtson-'grus, was one of the main students of gTsang-pa rgya-ras-pa Ye-shes rdo-rje (Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las 2002: 695). As dBang-phyug brtson-'grus's teacher was one Ye-shes rdo-rje it seems likely that this dBang-phyug brtson-'grus is the Master found in Text PVII, thus indicating a shift of the lineage of Pīṭheśvarī from the *bKa'-gdams-pa* school to the *'Brug-pa bka'-brgyud*.

#### 3.2.2.5. Saṃ-gha shrī-bha-dra (Skt: Saṃghaśrībhadrā)

The TBRC lists one Saṃ-gha shrī who was born in the twelfth century and name his teacher as a certain Śākyaśrībhadrā (1125-1225). Saṃghaśrībhadrā's teacher Kha-che paṇ-chen Śākyaśrībhadrā is renowned as an astrologer who travelled to Tibet from Kashmir. He is known to have founded the Four Tshogs-pa Monasteries and to have taught masters from all lineages. In 1208 Śākyaśrībhadrā bestowed full monastic ordination on Sa-skyā Paṇḍita, "an event that is held to mark the inception of the Sakyapa as a properly monastic order" (Kapstein 2006b: 110-11; Snellgrove and Richardson 2003 [1968]: 139; Trichen Rinpoche 1983: 16-18). Since the TBRC listing for Śākyaśrībhadrā includes the words 'kha-che paṇ-chen' (Kashmiri scholar), it is possible that his student may be the Saṃghaśrībhadrā in question, as Text PIII also calls him "kha-che paṇḍita" directly alluding to a link to Kashmir with the word



*kha-che* (Kashmir).<sup>33</sup> Also his dates coincide with those of the other known lineage holders of the tradition (TBRC 2006). The DTC does not include any information concerning this person. We find a number of related names in the colophon of other Pīṭheśvarī texts: Saṃ-gha shrī-bha-dra (Texts PI and PII), Paṇḍita Saṃ-gha shrī/ Kha-che paṇḍita Saṃ-gha ma-he-bha-dra (Text PIII), Saṃ-gha ma-he shrī (Text PVII). It is tempting to identify all five names as referring to this master, so that our Saṃghaśrībhadra was involved in the dissemination of Texts PI, PII, PIII, and PVII. As such we see a shift from the *bKa'-gdams-pa* sect into the *Sa-skyapa* lineage.

### 3.2.2.6. mKhas-pa Sa-phug-pa Shākya rdo-rje

Neither the TBRC nor the DTC list a mKhas-pa Sa-phug-pa. However, the TBRC database contains a Shākya rdo-rje whose various titles include both Sa-phug-pa Shākya rdo-rje and Khams-pa sa-phug-pa Shākya rdo-rje, no dates are given for this individual (TBRC 2006). It is likely that this listing refers to the mKhas-pa sa-phug-pa mentioned in Text PI and that he is in fact identical with the Shākya rdo-rje listed in the colophon of Text PVII. The absence of information concerning 'Jam-dpal gsar-ma sa-phug-pa suggests that he is either this same Sa-phug-pa Shākya rdo-rje or else a student of his. The title Sa-phug-pa seems to indicate that this person resided in an cave (*sa-phug*, earth cave). No dates are known for these personages.

### 3.2.2.7. Tāranātha

As we saw in Part One, Tāranātha is important to the cult of Tārā in Tibet as the author of *The Golden Rosary*, a work on the history of Tārā practice based on *The Origin of the Tārā Tantra* (Skt: *Tārā-bhava-tantra*) and his master's tales. This work firmly helped to establish the cult of the goddess on Tibetan soil. However, in the case

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<sup>33</sup> See Section 3.2.2.1. for more information concerning the link to Kashmir.

of Red Tārās it was through his *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* that he was able to preserve a number of lesser known Tārā manifestations, and it is within this collection that we find this Pīṭheśvarī text. But who exactly was Tāranātha?

Tāranātha (Kun-dga' snying-po/ sGrol-ba'i mgon-po, 1575-1635) studied at Jo-mo-nang monastery in gTsang, and rebuilt both this site and dGa'-ldan Phun-tshogs-gling. In 1615 he also built the monastery of rTag-brtan dam-chos-gling nges-don dga'-ba'i-tshal in gTsang.<sup>34</sup> In his next life he incarnated as 'Jam-dbyangs sprul-sku, the *dGe-lugs-pa* rJe-btsun dam-pa, in Mongolia, where he himself passed away. Even today this incarnation is the leader of Mongolian Buddhism (Jonang Foundation 2008; Stearns 1999: 70, 212; Tāranātha 1995: vii-viii).

Tāranātha was the last master of the *Jo-nang-pa* school prior to the Fifth Dalai Lama's destruction of a large number of *Jo-nang-pa* monasteries or forcible conversion of them to *dGe-lugs-pa* institutions. Furthermore, the works of both Dol-po-pa (1292-1361) and Tāranātha were banned in an attempt to halt the spread of the *gzhan-stong* teachings. The monastery of rTag-brtan dam-chos-gling, built by Tāranātha himself, fell to this fate: it was seized in 1650 and converted to a *dGe-lugs-pa* institution in 1658 (Jonang Foundation 2008; Kapstein 1997: 462).

In his career Tāranātha studied a wide range of topics, from history to commentarial texts and was also an expert on the *Kālacakra Tantra*. He is known to have provided commentaries to the work of his predecessor Dol-po-pa, discussed above. Amongst his various main teachers he was taught by an Indian, Buddhaguptanātha (Sangs-rgyas sbas-pa'i mgon), from whom he heard many tales

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<sup>34</sup> In 1642 'Jam-dbyangs sprul-sku established a monastic college (*bshad-grwa*) at Tāranātha's monastery rTag-brtan dam-chos-gling, and the monastery was converted from *Jo-nang-pa* to *dGe-lugs-pa* in 1650 and renamed rTag-brtan phun-tshogs-gling. Interestingly 'Jam-dbyangs sprul-sku was recognised as the incarnation of Tāranātha, the rJe-btsun dam-pa, by the Fifth Dalai Lama and the State Oracle. Stearns argues that the reasons for this recognition were political, as to recognise a *dGe-lugs-pa* as the incarnation of Tāranātha effectively cut off his *Jo-nang-pa* line of incarnation (Stearns 1999: 70-71).

about India. Tāranātha is the author of a history of Buddhism in India, the *rGya gar chos 'byung*, composed in 1608, and his twenty-three volume Collected Works covers a wide range of topics, testament to his extensive knowledge (Jonang Foundation 2008; Kapstein 1997; Tāranātha 1995: viii).

### **3.2.2.8. The Seventh Paṇ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma**

bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma (1781-1852/4) was the Seventh Panchen Lama (Paṇ-chen bla-ma), the incarnate leader of the *dGe-lugs-pa* bKra-shis lhun-po monastery in Shigatse (gZhis-ka-rtse), gTsang. The monastery was founded in 1447 by the First Dalai Lama (Ta-la'i bla-ma) dGe-'dun grub-pa. Born in gTsang his father was dPal-ldan don-grub and his mother 'Chi-med rgyal-mo. The TBRC lists his main teachers as 'Jam-dpal rgya-mtsho, Blo-bzang bstan-'dzin rgya-mtsho, Blo-bzang mkhas-mchog, Blo-bzang byams-pa'i-dpal, and Yon-tan rgyal-mtshan. bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma was one of the preceptors of the Eleventh Dalai Lama (mKhas-grub rgya-mtsho, 1838-56) and served as the Regent of Tibet from August 1844 until March 1845. Richardson notes that this was the only time in which a Panchen Lama acted as Regent (Richardson 1984 [1962]: 55; TBRC 2006).

The institution of the Panchen Lamas of bKra-shis-lhun-po began when the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682) appointed his teacher Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan (1570-1662) as Abbot of bKra-shis lhun-po, recognised him as an incarnation of Amitābha ('Od-dpag-med), and bestowed upon him the title "Paṇ-chen bla-ma" (*Paṇḍita chen-po*, Great Scholar). Due to the posthumous recognition of his predecessors to the line Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan was in fact the Fourth Panchen Lama, the first being mKhas-grub rje (1385-1438). After the time of Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho subsequent Panchen Lamas were recognised as incarnations. Therefore, bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma is the seventh

in this line of incarnate *bla-mas* (Kapstein 2006b: 139; Richardson 1984 [1962]: 54-55; Snellgrove and Richardson 2003 [1968]: 220).

The information we have unearthed about these lineage holders appears to link the transmission of the Pīṭheśvarī cult to the disciples of Atiśa, in the eleventh century. As discussed in the Introduction, Atiśa is widely credited with bringing the worship of Tārā to Tibet, as she was his tutelary divinity. This connection between the disciples of Atiśa and the cult of Pīṭheśvarī is interesting as it would link the introduction of the Pīṭheśvarī practices directly to the introduction of the cult of Tārā to Tibet and to the introduction of the higher *tantras* during the *phyi-dar* period. It also leads us to conclude that the worship of Pīṭheśvarī was introduced by the patriarchs of the *bKa'-gdams-pa* school and continued through '*Brug-pa bka'-brgyud* and *Sa-skyapa* masters, placing it firmly within the *gSar-ma* schools.

### **3.3. Pīṭheśvarī Translation: A Text from the sDe-dge *Tenjur***

Text PII (rDo-rje *kha*) has been selected for translation here in order to represent the Pīṭheśvarī literature. One reason for its selection is that Miranda Shaw's *Passionate Enlightenment* only included translations of excerpts from the Pīṭheśvarī literature composed by rDo-rje ldan-ma, who is not mentioned in the colophon of this text. As we have seen above it is also mentioned in *The Blue Annals*. Furthermore, the text was chosen as it is an example of the body-*maṇḍala* (*kāyamaṇḍala*) ritual prevalent in Pīṭheśvarī literature. These aspects will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. As the text is found within the *Tenjur* it is widely available and free for translation. However, the *mantras* have been removed in order to prevent misuse of the text.

*dPal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa zhes bya ba*<sup>35</sup>

(134) In Sanskrit, *shrī o ḍi ya na tā re kra mā bhi sa ma ya nā ma* [*Śrī-Uḍḍiyānatārābhīmasamayakrama-nāma*].

In Tibetan, *The Stages of the Clear Visualisation of the Glorious Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā*.

I prostrate to the Noble Tārā. As for [you] whose heart is moistened with compassion, the one who is like the illuminating sunlight, the [one who] obscures the suffering [of] *samsāra*. I prostrate to you always.

At first, the *yogi* or *yoginī* sits on a soft cushion in a meditation room [conducive] to a harmonious mind. [The letter] *a* arises on a moon-*maṇḍala*, on top of which is a red *tām* syllable at your heart from which a mass of light rays emanate. Meditate that the whole sky is filled with the retinue [of the goddess].

Then, the complete *Guru*, the *Yi-dam* deity, and the *Tathāgathas* are seen as visions of light, mentally perform offerings to them. Say the Going for Refuge and so forth to the Three Jewels.

Visualise everything, animate and inanimate beings, as empty of inherent existence. Recite the *mantra* – [*mantra removed*].<sup>36</sup> Afterwards, Wrathful

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<sup>35</sup> The transliteration from the Tibetan text is found in Appendix 3.3.

<sup>36</sup> English states that the *mantra*, here removed, is "a standard feature of mainstream *sādhana*s". The meditation which goes alongside this *mantra* aims to remove the conventional perception that objects,

Vajra who arises from a *hūṃ* syllable [and who] resides on a lotus and sun[-disk] in the sky banishes the obstructions.

Meditate on the *vajra* fence. In the centre of the abiding inverted triangle (*chos-'byung*, Skt: *dharmodayā*)<sup>37</sup> visualise the *haṃ* syllable on a moon, inside a celestial palace. Then, see the *haṃ* syllable emanate all the *tathāgathas*. Meditate that you are in the form of Tārā. [She] dances [with] a red body, four faces, [and] eight arms. She has a garland of skulls [and] is adorned with all the ornaments. [Her] lower garment is a tiger skin. She resides in the midst of an assembly of *yoginīs*. She has three eyes [and] frowns wrathfully. The first of these faces is red, the right one is black, the left one green, and [the face] on top is yellow and calm. In her right hands she wields a *ḍa-ma-ru* (*ḍamaru*, drum), skull, sword, and *vajra*. On the left she wields a lotus, jewel, (135) bell, and tantric staff (*kaṭvāṅga*).

Then, visualise the retinue on a lotus, the eight [goddesses] - Su-ra-ti-shwa-ri,<sup>38</sup> Su-ra-ta-sonta-ra, Su-ra-ta-tsandra, Su-ra-ta-ma-li-ni, Su-ra-ta-bha-kṣi, Su-ra-ta-ka-mi-ni, Su-ra-ta-u-gra, Su-ra-ta-utta-ma. [They are] white, green, blue, yellow, white, red, blue [and] yellow [in order]. In that manner they wield in their right [hands] a *ḍa-ma-ru* (*ḍamaru*) and *ka-pā-la* (*kapāla*, skull-cup). With their left [hands] they wield a bell and

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the visualisation, and the practitioner are different. On these grounds English adopts the term "nondual mantra" (English 2002: 126).

<sup>37</sup> English describes the inverted triangle of the *dharmodayā* as "a spatial and visual metaphor for the unoriginated transcendental plane of reality" (English 2002: 149).

<sup>38</sup> See the Glossary in Appendix 3.1. at the end of the chapter for possible Sanskrit renderings of these goddess and place names, and for more information on the individual goddesses.

*kaṭvāṅga*. They frown and are adorned with a garland of skulls and all the ornaments.

[Visualise a] wheel on the outside of that [lotus], on the twelve spokes [of the wheel visualise the goddesses] Shi-khi bhi-ma, Shi-khaṇḍī, Ka-rā-lī, Dzaṭ-lī, Ra-u-dra, Dzo-trī, Tsanḍrī, Ma-u-dhi, Pi-ka-ta, U-ta-ka-ta, Ki-ri-ti, Na-rta-ki. All of their left [sides] are red, whilst their right halves are green. In their right [hands] they wield a wheel and *vajra* [and] in their left [hands] they wield a skull and *kaṭvāṅga*. Their faces grimace wrathfully and they are adorned with all the ornaments. Their hair hangs down loose and they stand in the *pratyālīḍha* stance.

First, they move from left to right. Furthermore, outside of that [circle of deities visualise the] four door ladies - Kaṃ-pu-tsi, Pu-kkra-sī, Ḍom-bi-nī, and Ma-taṃ-gī. In their right [hands] they wield a *gri-gug* (hooked knife) and a skull. With their left [hands] they wield a severed head and *kaṭvāṅga*. Their faces display bared teeth and they are adorned with serpent ornaments. [They stand] on a sun seat with their left leg drawn in and the right extended. [In that posture] they circle anti-clockwise, on top of the four *māras*. Meditate [that these goddesses are of] various colours.

Then, perform the rituals of place.<sup>39</sup> With respect to those [places on the body, they are]: the cranium (*mtshog-kha*);<sup>40</sup> the crown of the head; the

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<sup>39</sup> This section of the text appears to be a body-*maṇḍala* (*kāyamaṇḍala*) practice in which the twenty-four goddesses and sacred sites are situated internally within the body of the practitioner. The concept of the body-*maṇḍala* is discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.1.

left ear; the back; the shoulder blades; the right ear; in between the eye  
brows; the two eyes; the shoulders; the armpits; the two breasts; the navel;  
the tip of the nose; the mouth; the heart; under the navel; the genitals; the  
anus; the two thighs; the two shins; the heel of the feet; under the feet; the  
toes of the feet; and the two knees according to this order.

*pu dzā o a, (136) go rā de mā, ka o tri ko, ka la kā hi, pre grī so su, na si  
ma ku.*

The four [sacred] sites (Skt: *pīṭha*) are Pu-llī-ra-ma-la-yaṃ, Dzā-lam-dha-  
raṃ, O-nya-lan, A-rbu-daṃ. The four subsidiary [sacred] sites (Skt:  
*upapīṭha*)<sup>41</sup> are Go-dā-wa-rī, Rā-me-shwa-ra, De-wī-ko-ṭi, Mā-la-wa.

The two places (Skt: *kṣetra*) are Kā-mā-rū-pa and O-tre.

The two subsidiary places (Skt: *upakṣetra*) are Tri-sha-ku-ne and Ko-sa-  
laṃ.

The two assemblies (Skt: *chandoha/ saṃdoha*) are Ka-liṃ-ga and Laṃ-  
bā-kaṃ.

The two subsidiary assemblies (Skt: *upachandoha/ upasaṃdoha*) are  
Kānytsi and Hi-mā-la-yaṃ.

The two geographical places [of pilgrimage] (Skt: *melāpaka*) are Bre-ta-  
pu-ri and Grī-ha-de-ba-ta.

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<sup>40</sup> I have been unable to trace a meaning for the term *mtshog-kha*. Gray and English in their discussions of the body-*maṇḍala* practice in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* both use the term 'head' at this point. According to English's depiction it appears to be a spot somewhere on the forehead (English 2002: 198-202; Gray 2007: 58). However, I believe *mtshog-kha* to be a mistake for *mtshog-ma* (cranium). Therefore I had used the term cranium at each point alongside the Tibetan *mtshog-kha* provided in brackets.

<sup>41</sup> Snellgrove writes of the term "near by" or "subsidiary" denoted by the prefix *upa-* in Sanskrit. When applied to the term *pīṭha* or "sacred site" the word *upapīṭha* means the "subsidiary sacred site" (Snellgrove 2002 [1987]: 170).



The two subsidiary geographical places [of pilgrimage] (Skt: *upamelāpaka*) are So-rāṣṭam and Su-wa-rṇa-ḍwī-pa.

The two charnel grounds (Skt: *śmasāna*) are Na-ga-ram and Sindhu.

The two subsidiary charnel grounds (Skt: *upaśmasāna*) are Ma-ru-di-sham and Ku-lu-tā.

Bless the [body places of the] cranium (*mtshog-kha*), mouth, heart, navel, genitals, and two thighs in turn. [Reciting] [*mantra* removed] is the armour [which protects one's body].<sup>42</sup>

In the centre of that *vajra* lotus wheel are [the syllables] *hūṃ*, *āḥ*, *oṃ*.

Like that, the wisdom [deity descends]. Meditate on the wisdom-being, then perform the consecration [of oneself as Pīṭheśvarī].

The five Tathāgatas are on the head of the goddess[es] - Ratnasambhava is on the head of Su-ra-ti-shwa-ri and so forth. Vairocana is on the head of Shi-khi and so forth. Akṣobhya is on the head of Kaṃ-bu-tsi and so on.

Then, give *argham* [water for the mouth]. Then, [you] taste the nectar.<sup>43</sup>

For this, from *yaṃ* [and] *raṃ* fill a lotus bowl on top of the two [wind and

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<sup>42</sup> English describes the process of "armouring" (Skt: *kavacanam*) in which the inner body of the practitioner is transformed into the goddess. During the first step of the process the body is protected with an armour (*go-cha*) of sacred syllables, after which the pledge- (*dam-tshig*, Skt: *samaya*) being and the knowledge- (*ye-shes*, Skt: *jñāna*) being combine (English 2002: 163-64).

<sup>43</sup> English discusses the "tasting of the nectar" as it is found within the Vajrayoginī practice and describes it as the first part of the *bali* (*gtor-ma*) offering ritual (Skt: *balividhiḥ*) when food is offered to local spirits and/ or the principal deity (English 2002: 208).

fire] *maṇḍalas* with the five nectars and [the five] meats.<sup>44</sup> Bless [these offerings] with [*mantra* removed].

Then, as for reciting the *mantra* - the ten syllables with *phaṭ* at the end [are] purificatory [with this syllable]. Leave out the *svāhā* at the end of the *mantra*.

To do the *mantra* recitations for all the goddesses [you] recite the *mantra* starting with *om* [followed by] the letters of [the goddess's] name and ending with *hūṃ phaṭ*. Recite [these *mantras*] to all the door goddesses together with [*mantra* removed].

Having arisen from [your] meditation you should meditate [that you] apprehend the body of the goddess.

In that way, offer whatever you can. Give the *gtor-ma*. For this [*gtor-ma* offering this] is the *gtor-ma mantra*: [*mantra* removed].

If [the practice] is performed continuously [then] accomplishment will be achieved, do not have any doubt.

(137) This is the complete *Stages of the Clear Visulisation of the*

Bhagavatī *Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā*. It was translated by the Tibetan Translator

'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje and the student of Wi-ni-ta-bha-dra, Paṇḍi-ta

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<sup>44</sup> The five nectars are semen, blood, flesh, urine and faeces, whilst the five meats are cow, dog, horse, elephant, and human (English 2002: 210).

Sam-gha-shrī-bha-dra, who received the transmission empowerment from the Great Compassionate [Deity] three times.

### 3.4. The Iconography of Pīṭheśvarī

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Fig. 3.2: Pīṭheśvarī, O-rgyan sgrol-ma gnas-kyi dbang-phyug-ma  
(Willson and Brauen 2000: 76, No. 137)

Shaw translates Pīṭheśvarī as the "Sovereign Mistress of the Great Secret Place" and identifies the "Great Secret Place" in question as Uḍḍiyāna (Shaw 1994: 105). However, Willson and Brauen translate the same as "Lady of the Sacred Sites", in plural (Willson and Brauen 2000: 485). The latter translation appears to be the more accurate, since, as we will see below, the practice of Pīṭheśvarī relates to the twenty-four sacred sites (Skt: *pīṭha*). A number of other female deities are also particularly identified with Uḍḍiyāna, such as Uḍḍiyāna-Kurukullā and Uḍḍiyāna-Mārīcī. Sircar believes that this association indicates the importance of Uḍḍiyāna in the tantric world (Sircar 1998 [1973]: 16).

Pīṭheśvarī is a red, wrathful form of the Buddhist goddess Tārā. She is referred to as a form of Tārā in her practice texts, where the practitioner is encouraged to praise and prostrate to Tārā. Also, she is specifically named Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā in the titles of Texts PII, PIII, and PIV. Shaw explains that Pīṭheśvarī is described as a female Buddha because she is an aspect of the female Buddha Tārā (Shaw 1994: 105).

As in the other Red Tārā lineages examined in later chapters and within the subjugating class of rituals in general, the location of the ritual is important. Although Text PII emphasises a site conducive to one's own mind Texts PI and PIV state that the practice may be performed in charnel grounds, mountain peaks, caves, brothels, riversides, the place of the worldly *dākinīs*, and so forth: sites particular to subjugation practice. Although not examined further here Shaw discusses these locations in her examination of the cult (Shaw 1994: 105).

#### *Text PI*

Pīṭheśvarī has a red body with four faces and eight arms. She wears a tiger skin lower garment and is seated in the *ardhaparyāṅka*. She has three eyes and is of a wrathful countenance. Her main face is red, the left is blue, the right is green, and the top is yellow. In her right hands she holds a skull-cup, *vajra*, sword, and drum. In her left hands she brandishes the wish-fulfilling jewel, *kaṭvāṅga*, bell, and red lotus.

#### *Text PII*

Pīṭheśvarī has a red body, four faces, and eight arms. She wears the tiger skin skirt and all the ornaments. She is surrounded by twenty-four *yoginīs*. She is wrathful with three eyes. Her main face is red, the right is black, the left green, and on top face is calm and yellow, whilst the first three faces are wrathful. In her right hands she holds

a drum, skull-cup, sword, and *vajra*. In her left hands she holds a lotus, jewel, bell, and *kaṭvāṅga*.

#### *Text PIII*

No iconographic description of the goddess is included in this work.

#### *Text PIV*

Pīṭheśvarī is red with four faces and eight arms. Her main face is red, the others are blue and green and the face on top is yellow. Her three eyes look towards the left. She is adorned with all the ornaments and a crown of the five wisdoms. She wears the tiger skin skirt and dances with one leg extended and the other drawn in (Skt: *pratyālīḍha*). In her hands she holds the *vajra*, sword, lotus, jewel, skull-cup, *kaṭvāṅga*, bell, and drum.

#### *Text PV*

The iconography of Pīṭheśvarī here varies significantly from the previous texts. Here she is called the Tārā of the [Sacred] Places (*zhing gi sgrol ma*), and is white with five faces and ten arms. Her main face is white, the right face is yellow, the left face is blue, the rear face is red and the face on top is black. In her right hands she wields the *vajra*, wheel, sword, iron hook,<sup>45</sup> and double triangle (*chos-'byung*).<sup>46</sup> In her left

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<sup>45</sup> The iron hook (*lcags-kyu*) is indicative of subjugating deities and often paired with the noose (*zhags-pa*). The iron hook relates to the elephant goad, as the wild elephant represents the wild mind in Buddhist tradition. Often the iron hook is held in the right hand of the deity and is used to hook negativities and pull sentient beings away from cyclic existence towards enlightenment (Beer 2003: 146-47).

<sup>46</sup> The *chos-'byung* is described by Beer as "the *dharmodayā* or 'reality source' that represents the visualized ground from which certain deities arise." In this case the *chos-'byung* in question appears to be similar to that of Vajrayoginī in that it is a six-pointed star or double triangle (Beer 2003: 209-11).

hands she brandishes the jewel, lotus, bell, noose,<sup>47</sup> and the book of omniscient wisdom.

#### *Text PVI*

Pīṭheśvarī is red with four faces, one of which is happy while the other three are wrathful. She has three eyes and sits in the *ardhaparyāṅka* posture. She wears a tiger-skin skirt. Her implements vary slightly from the first four texts. In her right hands she carries the alms-bowl, sword, *vajra*, and drum, and in her left she wields a *kaṭvāṅga*, bell, jewel, and lotus.

#### *Texts PVII and PVIII*

The iconography found in these two texts is identical. Pīṭheśvarī is red with eight arms. She has four faces, each with three eyes. The main face is red, the right is black, the left is green and the top is golden. In her right hands she holds a drum, a skull-cup filled with blood, a sword, and a *vajra*. In her left hands she wields an *utpala*, jewel, *kaṭvāṅga*, and a bell. She dances with her left leg extended and wears a tiger skin skirt. She is adorned with a crown of dry skulls, a necklace of fresh skulls and the five ornaments. Her yellow hair streams upwards and she stands amidst a mass of flames.

The iconography of Pīṭheśvarī is distinctive. Although it varies slightly between the *Tenjur* texts some common features of the goddess that can be identified through an examination of these works. Pīṭheśvarī is a red goddess, who in most cases<sup>48</sup> has four faces each with three eyes and eight arms. She is wrathful and wears a tiger skin

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<sup>47</sup> The noose (*zhags-pa*) is usually held in the left hand of a deity, alongside the iron-hook held on the right. The noose signifies captivating or binding activities. Together with the iron hook the combination of mindfulness and clear understanding are illustrated. Beer describes how the three subjugating activities of snaring, binding, and strangling the ego represent discipline, meditation and wisdom – the three Buddhist trainings (Beer 2003: 147-48).

<sup>48</sup> All texts except for Text PV.

skirt.<sup>49</sup> In all cases her main face is red, and although she might have a peaceful yellow head on top, the other three faces are wrathful. Her two faces at the left and right faces are either black and green (Text PII, PVII, and PVIII) or blue and green (Text PIV and PV).

Texts PI, PII, PIV, PVII, and PVIII describe the goddess with identical implements: the right hands hold a drum (Skt: *ḍamaru*),<sup>50</sup> skull-cup,<sup>51</sup> sword,<sup>52</sup> and *vajra*,<sup>53</sup> while her left hands brandish the *kaṭvāṅga*,<sup>54</sup> lotus,<sup>55</sup> jewel,<sup>56</sup> and bell.<sup>57</sup> Text PI is more descriptive and the jewel is further described as a wish-fulfilling jewel, whilst her lotus is red. In Text PVI the iconography varies slightly as Pīṭheśvarī holds an alms-bowl,<sup>58</sup> rather than the skull-cup. This may be for a number of reasons such as a regional variation in the practice, or a different lineage of the teachings. This appears to be the case as the translators of Text PVI are Nag-tsho chen-po and Ye-shes rdo-rje. Ye-shes rdo-rje is only mentioned in the colophon of Text PVI and this seems to imply that the lineage of Text PVI differs from the other texts in the corpus.

<sup>49</sup> Beer describes the tiger skin skirt as the dress of a wrathful male deity (Beer 2003: 163).

<sup>50</sup> The drum (Skt: *ḍamaru*) is held in the right hand of the deity. It is used to call the buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and *dākinīs* and sounds out great bliss (Beer 2003: 107-10).

<sup>51</sup> The skull-cup (*thod-pa*) is made from a human skull and is an attribute of many tantric deities. Beer writes that "[i]t is held in the left hand of *yogins*, *siddhis*, *dakinis*, *yidams*, and protective deities". Often deities holding the skull-cup in their left hand will also hold the curved knife. The skull-cup when filled with blood represents the mind of the deity filled with great bliss (Beer 2003: 110-12).

<sup>52</sup> The sword (*ral-gri*) represents wisdom and discriminating awareness, whilst the wisdom sword is the weapon of wrathful divinities which severs hindering demons. It is held in their right hands (Beer 2003: 123-24).

<sup>53</sup> The *vajra* (*rdo-rje*) symbolises the absolute reality of Buddhahood and the skilful means of the deity (Beer 2003: 87-92).

<sup>54</sup> The tantric staff (*kaṭvāṅga*) is a symbol of *bodhicitta* – the union of great bliss and emptiness. It may be seen in either the right or left arms (Beer 2003: 102-107).

<sup>55</sup> The lotus (*padma*, *utpala*) is the main symbol of Tārā. Beer writes that the lotus "symbolises the nectar-like transmission of the *Buddhadharma*, which attracts disciples like bees to the pure and unconditional fragrance of the spoken or 'ear-whispered' teachings." The lotus is also associated with Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara, members of the Lotus Buddha Family (Beer 2003: 169-71). Furthermore, the lotus is a symbol of purity and the unstained mind.

<sup>56</sup> The jewel (*rin-chen*, *nor-bu*) is often held by deities associated with wealth and prosperity (Beer 2003: 190-92).

<sup>57</sup> The bell (*dril-bu*) symbolises the feminine 'Perfection of Wisdom'. The combination of *vajra* and bell represents the *yi-dam* and the deity's *maṇḍala* (Beer 2003: 92-95).

<sup>58</sup> The alms-bowl (*lhung-bzed*) is the black bowl used by monks to receive their alms donations from the laity. Beer writes that the attributes of a Buddha may often be depicted on his alms-bowl (Beer 2003: 182-84).

However, this slight difference in iconography might also indicate a divergence in the function of the goddess in this text. Nonetheless, this is not suggested in the body of the text itself and this being the case no further analysis can take place. As no modern day practice lineage of Pīṭheśvarī has been identified no lineage holder is available to provide further clarification on either the variations in function of the goddess indicated by her varied implements or the possible reasons behind these differences.

Shaw describes the *vajra*, *kaṭvāṅga*, and *ḍamaru* as indicative of Pīṭheśvarī's blissful state, alluded to in one of her names: Ānandasukeśvarī, the "Glorious Queen of Bliss and Joy" (Shaw 1994: 106). There is a slight difference between the texts in the stance that the goddess adopts. In Text PI and PVI she is seated in the half-lotus posture (Skt: *ardhaparyāṅka*), whereas in Texts PIV, PVII and PVIII she is dancing in a similar stance. Text PII does not mention the posture of the goddess. In Texts PI, PII, PIV, PVI, PVII and PVIII she is described as possessing three eyes and Text IV elaborates that these eyes look to the left. The iconography in Text PV is very different from that found in the other works. Some of the texts describe Pīṭheśvarī as surrounded by her *maṇḍala* of twenty-four *yoginīs*; this will be discussed in more detail below.

There are very few iconographic representations of Pīṭheśvarī in secondary literature. However, Lokesh Chandra does include a picture of 'Pīṭheśvarī Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā' (Orgyan sgrol-ma gnas-kyi-dbañ-phyug-ma [*sic*]) in Volume I of his *Buddhist Iconography of Tibet*, (Chandra 1986: 47, 250), see Figure 3.1.<sup>59</sup> In this black and white line drawing the three wrathful faces and the calm face on top of Pīṭheśvarī's head are clearly depicted. She stands with her left leg on the lotus and her right leg drawn in. She wears a tiger skin skirt and a garland of skulls. Her right hands (from

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<sup>59</sup> This picture is Number 626 of the "Narthatang Pantheon" in Chandra's work. This use of the term "Narthatang Pantheon" by Chandra does not appear to refer to the *sNar thang brgya rtsa*, but instead to the *Five Hundred Gods of Narthatang*, as discussed in a footnote below (Chandra 1986: 646).



top to bottom) hold the drum, conch, *vajra*, and sword, whilst her left hands hold the lotus, jewel, bell, and *kaṭvāṅga*. She is surrounded by flames and under her lotus is a triangle. This image appears in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* pantheon of sNar-thang Monastery, near Shigatse, founded in 1153.<sup>60</sup>

Another depiction of the goddess is found in the *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism* (Willson and Brauen 2000), where we find a colour version of the above picture, entitled "Pīṭhīśvarī Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā (*O-rgyan sgrol-ma gnas-kyi dbaṅ-phyug-ma*)", "The Lady of the Sacred Sites (*pīṭha, pīṭhī*)", also called the "All-governing Lady", see Figure 3.2.<sup>61</sup> The picture shows her red body, with her main red face. The face to her right is black, and to her left is green. The top, peaceful face is yellow and wears a five-pointed crown of dry skulls. She stands on a red sun disk and her yellow hair flames upwards. This picture clearly depicts her garland of fresh skulls. The *mantra* given for her is *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture hūṃ phaṭ* - the *mantra* of wrathful Tārā emanations (Willson and Brauen 2000: 76-77, 272, 485). This illustration is a depiction of Pīṭheśvarī in Text PVIII, composed by the Paṅ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma and as such the illustration of the deity is identical to the iconography described in Texts PVII and PVIII.

The prayer to the goddess tells us about her function:

You manifest in Uḍḍiyāna,  
And in other transformations,  
Govern all the sacred sites,  
Pīṭhīśvarī to you I bow.

You Body emits Conqu'ror's emanations,  
Your speech like thunder proclaims mantras;  
Endowed with all-pervading Power,  
All-governing Lady - to You I bow.

Please quell all adversity,  
Accomplish all my aims as I

<sup>60</sup> This work of Lokesh Chandra focuses on the *Rin 'byung snar thang brgya rtsa rdor 'phreng bcas nas gsungs pa'i bris sku: mthong ba don ldan bzugs so*, within which are contained depictions of the *Rin 'byung, sNar thang*, and the *rDor 'phreng* pantheons (Chandra 1986: 47-48).

<sup>61</sup> This picture is Number 137 of the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* (Willson and Brauen 2000: 77).

Wish, and please bestow on me  
All *siddhis* of body, speech and mind! (Willson and Brauen 2000: 272).

However, it does not enlighten us as to her subjugating function. Willson and Brauen state that the lineage of this practice descended from Saraha,<sup>62</sup> although this is not verified by the lineage listed in Tāranātha's text from which it descends, nor is Saraha mentioned in any of the other texts. As the image appears in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* collection, which descends from the Seventh Paṇ-chen bla-ma, one can assume that the lineage continued (although diminished) at least until the composition of this text in 1810 (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810*kha*). The purpose of the Paṇ-chen bla-ma's compilation was to preserve lineages which were in danger of dying out.

### 3.5. Pīṭheśvarī and the Twenty-four Sacred Sites of India

How is the practice of Pīṭheśvarī related to the concept of the twenty-four sacred sites of India? Miranda Shaw briefly mentions the link between Pīṭheśvarī and the tantric *pīṭha* sites in her examination of the cult of Pīṭheśvarī. However, she does not go into much detail, only describing the colours of the twenty-four goddesses and their directions. Moving beyond the textual evidence, Shaw posits that Vajravatī taught the body-*maṇḍala* practices to her female disciples in order that they should purify their vision and view the world as a *gaṇacakra* tantric feast (Shaw 1994: 106-107). In our case it seems prudent to examine this link in more detail, as even a cursory examination of the name Pīṭheśvarī seems to indicate a close link between the practice of this deity and the concept of the Indian *pīṭha* sites.

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<sup>62</sup> The *Mahāśiddha* Saraha was also known as the *Brahmin* Rahulā and his dates are hard to establish. It is thought that Atiśa studied his songs (Guenther 1973 [1968]).

### 3.5.1. The *Pīṭha* Sites of India

The twenty-four *pīṭha* sites as they originally featured in Indian Buddhism were outwardly a set of twenty-four or thirty-two sacred sites of India, where *yogis* and *yoginīs* gathered to practise and hold tantric feasts (Skt: *gaṇacakra*). They are subdivided into sacred sites (Skt: *pīṭha* and *upapīṭha*), sacred fields (Skt: *kṣetra* and *upakṣetra*), desirable places (Skt: *chandoha* and *upachandoha*), unobstructed places (Skt: *pīlava* and *upapīlava*), meeting places (Skt: *mela* / *melāpaka* and *upamelāpaka*), and cemeteries (Skt: *śmaśāna* and *upaśmaśāna*) (Beer 1999: 251; Snellgrove 2002 [1987]: 165-70). These sacred sites also relate internally to centres within the human body: "[a]ll these places are identified with "veins" relating to various "lotus centres"... up and down the spinal cord" (Snellgrove 2002 [1987]: 170).

Various lists of these sites exist within the tantric texts. Huber states that they were developed further in literature of the *yoganiruttaratantra*<sup>63</sup> level of practice (Huber 1990: 123). Lists of these sites can be found in the *Hevajra Tantra*, the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, and so forth. Davidson lists the twenty-four sites as they pertain to the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*:

Four *pīṭhas*: Uḍḍiyāna, jālandhara, pulliyamalaya, and arbuda.  
Four *upapīṭhas*: godāvarī, rāmeśvara, devīkoṭa and mālava.  
Two *kṣetras*: kāmārūpa and oḍra; and two *upakṣetras*: triśākuni, and kośala.  
Two *chandohas*: Kālīṅga, and lampāka; and the two *upachandohas*: kāñci and himālaya.  
Two *melāpakas*: pretapuri and gṛhadevatā; and two *upamelāpaka*: saurāṣṭra and suvarṇadvīpa.  
Two *śmaśānas*: nagara and sindhu; and the two *upaśmaśānas*: maru and kulatā (Davidson 2002: 207).

Dowman provides this same list when he describes "The twenty-four tantric power places in Dzogchen Nyintik literature and the Mother Tantra" (Dowman). Although in a different order the place names correlate exactly.

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<sup>63</sup> I have used the term *yoganiruttaratantra* here. The term *anuttarayoga* is widely used by contemporary Tibetan lineage holders but this is not the original Sanskrit term. Isaacson notes that although the term *anuttarayogatantra* is widely used in secondary literature it is not found in Sanskrit literature where instead one sees *yoganiruttaratantra* (Isaacson 1997: 5).

In his translation of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* Gray details the link between the sacred sites and places on the human body as follows: Pullīramalaya at the head; Jālandhara at the crown; Oḍḍiyāna on the right ear; Arbuda on the back of the neck; Godāvarī on the left ear; Rāmeśvarī between the eyebrows; Devīkoṭa at the eyes; Mālava on the shoulders; Kāmarūpa at the armpits; Oḍra at the breasts; Triśākuni at the navel; Kośala on the tip of the nose; Kālīṅga at the mouth; Lampāka at the throat; Kāñci at the heart; Himālaya at the perineum; Pretapuri on the penis; Gṛhadevata at the anus; Saurāṣṭra on the thighs; Suvarṇadvīpa at the calves; Nagara on the toes; Sindhu at the back of the foot; Maru on the big toes; and Kulatā at the knees (Gray 2007: 58-60).<sup>64</sup>

Gray goes on to explain the practice of the 'body *maṇḍala*'. He writes that the practitioner must visualise the deity couples and their abodes. These abodes are both sacred places and also places on the body. Through the incantation of sacred syllables the practitioner visualises the placement of the seed syllables, thereby stabilising his or her connection with the *maṇḍala* and the divinities. He states "the aim here is to completely re-envision one's body as the pure abode of the *maṇḍala* deities, an abode which is in fact co-extensive with the universe" (Gray 2007: 61-62).

Within the *Hevajra Tantra* the sacred sites are listed as: the *pīṭhas* Jālandhara, Oḍḍiyāna, Paurṇagiri, Kāmarūpa; the *upapīṭhas* Mālava, Sindhu, Nagara; the *kṣetras* Munmuni, Kāruṇyapāṭaka, Devīkoṭa, Karmārapāṭaka; the *upakṣetras* Kulatā, Arbuda, Godāvarī and Himādri; the *chandohas* Harikela, Lampāka, Kāñcika, Saurāṣṭra; the *upachandohas* Kālīṅga, the Isle of Gold, Kokaṇa; the *pīlavas* Caritra, Kośala, Vindhyākaumārāpurikā; the *upapīlavas* are near to that; the *śmaśānas* are where the

<sup>64</sup> Gray further describes the individual sacred places and aims to locate them in modern-day Asia (Gray 2007: 329-32). It would be beneficial to have access to a map of the sacred sites, however, due to the numerous possible locations for each of these sites this is a particularly problematic endeavour and beyond the scope of this thesis.

Huber includes a number of maps in his *The Holy Land Reborn*, which indicate a number of the sacred sites in India according to modern day Tibetan pilgrims (Huber 2008: 110-101).

priests meet and the ocean's shore; the *upaśmaśānas* are the garden and the shore of the lotus pond (Snellgrove 1959: 72).

Wallace has worked on the link between the *pīṭha* sites and the body in the *Kālacakra Tantra*. She lists a rather more extended version of forty-eight sacred sites: the *pīṭhas* Kāmarūpa, Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri, and Oḍḍiyāna; the *upapīṭhas* Godāvarī, Rāmeśa, Devikoṭṭa and Mālava; the *kṣetra* Arbuda, Munmunī, Oḍra, and Kāruṇyapāṭaka; the *upakṣetra* Triśakuni, Karmārapāṭaka, Kośala and Lāḍadeśa; the *chandoha* Kaliṅga, Harikela, Candradvīpa, and Lampāka; the *upachandoha* Kāñcī, Koṅkaṇaka, Himālaya, and Nepāla; the *melāpaka* Māṭṛgrha, Prayāga, Kollagiri, and Gṛhadevata; the *upamelāpaka* Saurāṣṭra, Kāśmīra, Suvarṇadvīpa, and Siṃhala; the *śmaśāna* Nagara, Mahendraśaila, Sindhudeśa, and Kirātaka; the *upaśmaśāna* Marudeśa, Gahvara, Kulatā, and Samala; the *pīlava/ veśma* of Caritra, Harikela, Vindhya, and Kaumārikapurī; and the *upapīlava / upaveśma* at Virajā; Koṅka; Tripurī and Śrīhaṭṭaka (Wallace 2001: 78-82).

Wallace explains the relationship between the sacred sites and body in the *Kālacakra Tantra* in more detail. She writes that the *Kālacakra Tantra* relates the twelve categories of pilgrimage site to the twelve links of dependent origination, the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the twelve *bodhisattva bhūmis* (Wallace 2001: 77). She says that "in the context of the *Kālacakratantra* practice the sequential attainment of the twelve *bodhisattva bhūmis* is an internal pilgrimage to spiritual awakening" (Wallace 2001: 80). Later Wallace links the twelve categories of sacred site in the *Kālacakra Tantra*, when subdivided into thirty-six sites as related to the dwellings of the thirty-six *yoginī* families. This link allows practitioners to purify their *samaya* (tantric pledges) by means of viewing their body as the abode of the participants of a *gaṇacakra* (tantric feast), which results in purification. Also, during sexual *yoga* the participants must view their body as the abode of the sacred sites in order to "sanctify

the sexual act, which becomes a kind of bliss-generating pilgrimage" (Wallace 2001: 83-84). This purification is similar to that described by Shaw as occurring in the Pīṭheśvarī texts (Shaw 1994: 106-107).

As we can see these lists differ somewhat, although many of the place names are repeated between lists: a fact that many scholars have discussed. Davidson states that in the *Yoginī Tantras* there exist differing lists of the sites: he goes on to write that within these lists "[t]he major similarity is that they are unified by the number twenty-four" (Davidson 2002: 210), although as we have seen with the *Kālacakra Tantra* this is not always the case. However, our texts do appear to follow the number twenty-four. With regard to the identification of the sacred sites with the internal body of the *yogi*, Snellgrove makes a similar point:

[b]y the very nature of the case the cross-identifications [of sacred places and the internal body] are arbitrary, for it is the overall identification that matters and not the details (Snellgrove 2002 [1987]: 296).

This may go some way to explaining the differences between traditions.

### 3.5.2. The *Pīṭha* Sites in the Pīṭheśvarī Literature

In three of our six Pīṭheśvarī texts we can identify a link between Pīṭheśvarī as the central deity of the *maṇḍala*, the twenty-four goddesses that surround her, and the twenty-four pilgrimage sites. Besides this, lists of these *yoginīs* are given in Texts PI, PII, PIII, PIV, and PVI. No list of *yoginīs* is found in Texts PVII and PVIII and no body-*maṇḍala* is described there. We will now move on to examine these lists one by one, and discuss the place of the *pīṭha* in the Pīṭheśvarī tradition. If a link can be established between the sites and body parts listed in the Pīṭheśvarī literature and another tantra then the cross-identification would not be a preconception as Snellgrove first presumed, as it might indicate a true link between these lineages.

### Text PI

Text PI describes the "body ritual" and includes a list of twenty-one body places. This list is followed by the eight goddesses of place - the Su-ra-ti/ Su-ra-ta (alcohol offering goddesses). They wield the skull and *kaṭvāṅga*, bell and drum. As for the twelve goddesses they are half red and half green. They are adorned with a garland of skulls and all the ornaments. Their hair hangs down loose and their faces grimace. They brandish the skull, *kaṭvāṅga*, wheel, and *vajra*.

The four goddesses who guard the doors each have one face and stand with their left leg drawn in and their right leg extended and trample on the four *Māras*. They are the colours of the four directions. They brandish the skull, *kaṭvāṅga*, curved knife, and a severed head and are adorned with all the ornaments, and are associated with the charnel grounds.

Table 3.1: The relationship between goddess, colour, and body part of the body in the 'Phags ma gnas kyi dbang phyug ma'i sgrub pa'i thabs

| Goddess     | Colour                                        | Place on the body             |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Shwa-ri-ti  | White                                         | Cranium ( <i>mtshog-kha</i> ) |
| Sonta-ri    | Green                                         | Crown                         |
| Tsandra     | Blue                                          | Right ear                     |
| Ma-li-ni    | Yellow                                        | Back of the neck              |
| Bha-kṣi     | Green                                         | Left ear                      |
| Ka-mi-ni    | White                                         | Between the eyebrows          |
| U-gra       | Red                                           | Eyes                          |
| Utta-ma     | Yellow                                        | Roots of the shoulders        |
| Shi-khi     |                                               | Two armpits                   |
| Dhi-ma      |                                               | Two breasts                   |
| Shi-khi-nda |                                               | Tip of the nose               |
| Ka-ra-li    |                                               | Navel                         |
| Dza-ti-li   |                                               | Mouth                         |
| U-ṭi-ji     |                                               | Throat                        |
| Tsanḍi      |                                               | Thighs                        |
| Monḍam      |                                               | Sole of the foot              |
| Ba-ka-ḍu    |                                               | Mouth                         |
| Utka-ti     |                                               | Crotch                        |
| Ki-rī-ḍi    |                                               | Genitals                      |
| Nar-ti-ki   |                                               | Anus                          |
| Kaṃ-bu-ci   | Colour of one of the four cardinal directions | Knees                         |
| Pukka-si    | Colour of one of the four cardinal directions |                               |
| Do-mbi      | Colour of one of the four cardinal directions |                               |
| Ma-taṃ-gi   | Colour of one of the four cardinal directions |                               |

### *Text PII*

Text PII describes Pīṭheśvarī as surrounded by eight Su-ra-ti/ Su-ra-ta goddesses on the petals of the lotus. The colours of these goddesses vary from Text PI. In their right hands they hold the drum and skull-cup and in their left hands they brandish the bell and *kaṭvāṅga*. Their faces frown and they are adorned with a garland of skulls and all the ornaments.

Outside the lotus on the twelve spokes of the wheel are the *yoginīs*. Their left half is red and their right half is green. They hold the wheel and *vajra* in their right hands and the skull-cup and *kaṭvāṅga* on their left. They grimace wrathfully and are adorned with all the ornaments. Their hair flows down loosely and they stand dancing in the *pratyālīḍha* stance.

On the outside of this circle are the four door guardian goddesses. In their right hands they brandish the hooked knife<sup>65</sup> and skull-cup and in their left hands a severed head and *kaṭvāṅga*. Their faces each have one fang and they are adorned with serpent ornaments. They each stand on a sun seat with their left leg drawn in and their right leg extended. They circle clockwise and are of various colours.

Following the details concerning the goddesses, the twenty-four places on the body are listed, followed by a list of twenty-four sacred places. One may presume that the list of body places and the list of sacred places are connected, as described in the *yoganiruttara-tantras*.

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<sup>65</sup> The hooked-/ curved-knife (*gri-gug*) is known as the knife of the *dākinīs* and is usually held in their right hand. Along with the skull-cup and the *kaṭvāṅga* it forms one of the three main implements of the *yoginīs* in *tantras* and it is used by them to overcome negative influences. The hooked-knife represents the feminine wisdom which cuts through emotional defilements (Beer 2003: 112-14).



Table 3.2: The relationship between goddess, colour, body part, and sacred site in the *dPal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa*

| Goddess        | Colour     | Place on the Body             | Sacred Site         |
|----------------|------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Shwa-ri        | White      | Cranium ( <i>mtshog-kha</i> ) | Pu-llī-ra-ma-la-yam |
| Sonta-ra       | Green      | Crown                         | Dzā-lamdha-ram      |
| Tsandra        | Blue       | Left ear                      | O-nya-lan           |
| Ma-li-ni       | Yellow     | Back                          | A-rbu-dam           |
| Bha-kṣi        | White      | Shoulder blades               | Go-dā-wa-rī         |
| Ka-mi-ni       | Red        | Right ear                     | Rā-me-shwa-ra       |
| U-gra          | Blue       | Between eye-brows             | De-wī-ko-ṭi         |
| Utta-ma        | Yellow     | Eyes                          | Mā-la-wa            |
| Shi-khi bhi-ma | Red/ Green | Shoulders                     | Kā-mā-rū-pa         |
| Shi-khaṇḍī     | Red/ Green | Armpits                       | O-tre               |
| Ka-rā-lī       | Red/ Green | Breasts                       | Tri-sha-ku-ne       |
| Dzaṭ-lī        | Red/ Green | Navel                         | Ko-sa-lam           |
| Ra-u-dra       | Red/ Green | Tip of nose                   | Ka-li-ga            |
| Dzo-trī        | Red/ Green | Mouth                         | Lam-bā-kam          |
| Tsandra        | Red/ Green | Heart                         | Kānytsi             |
| Ma-u-dhi       | Red/ Green | Under the navel               | Hi-mā-la-yam        |
| Pi-ka-ta       | Red/ Green | Genitals                      | Bre-ta-pu-ri        |
| U-ta-ka-ta     | Red/ Green | Anus                          | Grī-ha-de-ba-ta     |
| Ki-ri-ṭi       | Red/ Green | Thighs                        | So-rāṣṭam           |
| Na-rta-ki      | Red/ Green | Shins                         | Su-wa-rṇa-dwī-pa    |
| Kam-pu-tsi     |            | Heels of the feet             | Na-ga-ram           |
| Pu-kkra-sī     |            | Under the feet [Soles]        | Sindhu              |
| Dom-bi-nī      |            | Toes of the feet              | Ma-ru-di-sham       |
| Ma-tam-gī      |            | Knees                         | Ku-lu-tā            |

### Text PIII

Text PIII lists various *mantras* which are composed from the names of the goddesses. These names relate closely to those mentioned above in Text PII as the goddesses surrounding Pīṭheśvarī in her *maṇḍala*. As this text is very short it will be provided in its entirety as follows (rDo-rje *kha*):

(137) In Sanskrit, *O-rgyan tā-re kra-ma* [*Oḍḍiyānatārākrama*].

In Tibetan, *The Stages [of Practice] of Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā*.<sup>66</sup>

I prostrate to Tārā. As for having just meditated on all the gods - [Tārā is] the principal deity of the thirteen, nine, or five [deities].

<sup>66</sup> A Tibetan transliteration of this text is found in Appendix 3.4.

As for the *mantras*, recite these:

*oṃ tāre tuttāre ture hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ su-ra-te shwa-ri hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ su-ra-ta sonta-re hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ su-ra-ta tsandra hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ-su-ra-ta ka-mi-ni hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ su-ra-ta u-gra hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ su-ra-ta uttam hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ shi-khi hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ bhi-ma hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ shi-khandi hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ kā-rā-li hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ dzā-ṭi-li hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ ra-u-tri hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ dzi-ṭi hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ ma-u-ntri hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ bhe-ka-ṭa hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ u-ta-sha-ṭa hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ ka-re-ṭi hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ na-rte-ki hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ dzaḥ kaṃ-bu-tsi hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ hūṃ pukka-sī hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ maṃ ḍo-mī-ni hūṃ phaṭ.*

*oṃ ho ma-taṃ-gi hūṃ phaṭ.*

Authentically recite these secret *mantras*.

The Principal Lady is at the centre of [your] heart. Meditate that there are twenty-four goddesses on the places: the cranium (*mtshog-kha*) and so forth. May all the gods definitely bless the student.

This completes [the practice which is] more secret than *The Secret Stages [of Practice] of Uḍḍiyāna Tārā*.

This was translated by Paṇḍi-ta Saṃ-gha-shrī and Lo-tsā-ba (Translator) 'Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje.

*oṃ tāre tuttāre ture hūṃ phaṭ. oṃ su ra te sha ri hūṃ phaṭ* and so forth.

*oṃ a sha pu tsa hūṃ phaṭ. oṃ hūṃ* and so forth.

*oṃ tāre tuttāre da ha da ha. pa tsa pa tsa. ma tha ma tha. i maṃ bi laṃ grīhṇa grīhṇa ma ma sarba ka ru ni. sra da ya. sra da ya. hūṃ phaṭ swā hā.*

This is the *gtor-ma mantra*.

Ḍa-ki-ni rDo-rje ldan-ma (Vajravatī), Paṇḍi-ta Pa-ra-he-ta, the *Siddha* Wa-ni-ta-bha-dra, Kha-che'i Paṇḍi-ta Saṃ-gha ma-he bha-dra, [and] 'Jam-dpal gsar-ma (138) des-sa-phug-pa are the *Siddhas*.

As one can see this text (from the *sDe dge Tenjur*) only lists the names of 22 of the attendant goddesses: it omits Mālinī and Bhakṣī from the eight goddesses on the lotus. This is also the case when one refers to the *Co ne* and *sNar thang*

versions. The *Golden Tenjur*, however, lists 23 goddesses with Raudrī appearing twice as Ra-u-tri and Ra-uṃ-tri.

Moreover, the list of the twelve goddesses varies slightly. The practitioner is instructed to "Meditate that there are twenty-four goddesses in the places: the cranium (*mtshog-kha*) and so forth". However, the text presumes prior knowledge of the body places and they are not directly identified with *pīṭha* sites.

#### *Text PIV*

Text PIV enumerates a list very similar to that of Texts PI and PIII. It cites eight Surate goddesses, who are named Shra-ri, Santo-ri, Tsan-dra, Ma-li-ni, Bha-kṣi, Ka-mi-ni, U-gra, and Uttam. They are all wrathful and adorned with a garland of skulls. They brandish a skull-cup, *kaṭvāṅga*, bell, and drum.

The twelve goddesses are then listed as Kir-ti-ti, Na-rta-ki, Moṇḍi, U-dra, Dzi-trā, Ke-ra-li, Dza-hra-lī, U-dra, Dzi-trā, Shi-ksho, Bhi-ma, and Shi-kha-nḍi. They are half red and half green. They are ornamented with all the ornaments, their hair hangs down loose, and their mouths gape. They are crowned with Vairocana and grasp the skull-cup, *kaṭvāṅga*, wheel, and *vajra*.

The four door guardian goddesses are of various colours. They are Kaṃ-bu-dza, Pukka-si, Ḍo-mbi-ni, and Ma-taṃ-gi. Their right legs are extended, whilst their left legs are drawn in. They wear their hair in a top-knot and hold the skull-cup, *kaṭvāṅga*, hooked knife, and a human head. They are adorned with serpents and trample the four *Māras*.

### *Text PVI*

Text PVI is more detailed and directly identifies most of the goddesses with places on the body. The eight *yoginīs* of the places and subsidiary places have four hands, one face, and three eyes. They brandish the skull, *kaṭvāṅga*, bell, and drum, and wear a garland of skulls. The twelve *yoginīs* hold the skull, *kaṭvāṅga*, wheel, and *vajra*. They wear garlands of heads and their hair flames upwards. This text only lists eleven goddess names and places despite describing them as the twelve goddesses (Gṛhadevatā is missing from the place names). This is true of all versions of the text in the various *Tenjur* editions. It is not known why Gṛhadevatā is missing from the list, scribal error is one possibility although this seems unlikely given the fact that it is missing in all versions of the text.

The guardian goddesses of the four directions have four arms which hold skulls, *kaṭvāṅgas*, curved-knives, and human heads. They sit with their right leg extended and are of various colours. They have majestic faces and terrifying bodies, with one face and three eyes. They live in the charnel grounds and subsidiary charnel grounds, and sit on a sun-*maṇḍala* on a seat of the four *Māras*. The names, colours, and sites of the goddesses are listed in the following table:

Table 3.3: The relationship between goddess, colour, body part, and sacred site in the *Zhing gi dbang phyug ma'i bstod pa*

| Goddess            | Colour | Place on the Body             | Sacred Site                            |
|--------------------|--------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Pu-llī-ra-ma-la-pa | White  | Cranium ( <i>mtshog-kha</i> ) | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Dzā-lan-dhara      | Green  | Crown                         | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Uḍḍiyāna           |        |                               | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Ar-bu              | White  |                               | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Go-dā-ba-rī        | Yellow | Right ear                     | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Rā-me-shwa-ri      | White  | Between the eyes              | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Ḍe-bī-ko-ṭi        | Red    | Eyes                          | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Mā-la              | Green  |                               | Place and subsidiary place             |
| Kā-ma rū-pa        |        | Armpits                       |                                        |
| O-tre              |        | Breasts                       |                                        |
| Tri-sha-ku-ne-ru   |        | Navel                         |                                        |
| Ko-sa-la           |        | Tip of the nose               |                                        |
| Ka-ling-ka         |        | Mouth                         |                                        |
| La-pā-ka           |        | Throat                        |                                        |
| Kānyini            |        | Heart                         |                                        |
| Lidhi hi-mā-la     |        |                               |                                        |
| Pre-ta-pu-ri       |        | Genitals                      |                                        |
| So-so-rā-ṣwa       |        | Thighs                        |                                        |
| Suvarna-dvipa      |        | Calves                        |                                        |
| Kaṃ-bu-dzi         |        | Upper feet                    | Charnel and subsidiary charnel grounds |
| Pukka-sī           |        | Soles of the feet             | Charnel and subsidiary charnel grounds |
| Sin-dhu            |        | Knees                         | Charnel and subsidiary charnel grounds |
| Ma-taṃ-gi          |        | Knees                         | Charnel and subsidiary charnel grounds |

If we analyse the information above we can draw a few conclusions. First of all we must examine the goddesses listed within these texts. The iconography of these goddesses is typical of the *yoginītantra* level of practice, with their skulls, *kaṭvāngas*, and tiger skin skirts. The lists of goddesses provided in Texts PI, PII, PIII, and PIV are very similar. In all four cases despite a few variations in spelling the eight goddesses and the four door guardian goddesses are identical. As for the twelve

goddesses we can see a link despite variations between lists and the fact that only eleven goddesses are mentioned in Text PVI.

The names of the four Door Goddesses: Kāmbōji,<sup>67</sup> Ḍombī,<sup>68</sup> Pukkasī,<sup>69</sup> and Mātaṅgī<sup>70</sup> all relate directly to low-caste groups. Furthermore, Ḍombinī, Caṇḍālī, and Pukkasī are mentioned as three of the eight *Ḍākinīs* of the *Hevajra Tantra*, another *Yoginī Tantra* (Snellgrove 1959: 111-12). When we examine the *Śākta* (Goddess) *Pīṭha* sites of Hindu tradition we find mention of Mālinī, Ugrā, Caṇḍī, Sundarī, Īśvarī, Bhīmā, Raudrī, and Mātaṅgī (Sircar 1988 [1973]). This seems to draw a link between the goddesses chosen for inclusion in the Pīṭheśvarī literature and the Indian *Śakti* cult with its related sacred sites. Alongside this, three of the goddesses are found in the Mahāvidyā group of Hindu goddesses, namely Kāmīnī, Sundarī, and Mātaṅgī. For more information on the individual goddesses, their place in the *Śakti* cult and the Mahāvidyā goddess group see Appendix 3.1.

As for the sacred sites themselves, Text PII provides the most information for the link between sacred sites, the body, and the goddesses in the literature pertaining

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<sup>67</sup> The *Kāmbuja* are natives of the Kambuja region. Originally a *Kṣatriya* tribe they lost their status as they did not perform the necessary rites (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Kāmbōji therefore refers to a female from the *Kāmbuja* tribe.

<sup>68</sup> The *Dom/ Domba* are an outcaste group alongside the *Caṇḍāla* (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Therefore, Ḍombī is a female from the *Dom* group. Ḍombinī is listed as one of eight *Ḍākinīs* in the *Hevajra Tantra* (Snellgrove 1959: 111-12).

<sup>69</sup> *Pukkasa* is described by Gray as a Prakrit word possibly derived from *pulkasa*, designating an outcaste group (Gray 2007: 77). The *Pulkasa* are "a despised mixed-tribe" (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Thus it appears that Pukkasī refers to females of the *Pukkasa* group. Pukkasī is also listed as one of eight *Ḍākinīs* in the *Hevajra Tantra* (Snellgrove 1959: 111-12).

<sup>70</sup> Mātaṅgī/ Mātaṅgi has a variety of meanings. In keeping with Ḍombī, Pukkasī, and Kāmbuja Mātaṅgī also refers to a woman from the outcaste *Caṇḍāla* or *Kirāta* people. In the village festivals of South India women who become possessed by the goddess are known as Mātaṅgi. These women are unmarried and hold their office for life. However, in some cases the name refers to a form of Durgā as one of the ten Mahāvidyā goddesses as found in the *Pīṭhanirṇaya*. In this form Mātaṅgi is a peaceful, black goddess with her eyes rolling in intoxication. Kinsley mentions that Mātaṅgī is rarely mentioned as a goddess outside of the Mahāvidyā group. She is regarded as a low-caste goddess and is associated with left-over polluting food. Kinsley writes that her name literally means "she whose limbs are intoxicated with passion". This goddess is particularly associated with the ability to gain control over others. It seems that the inclusion of Mātaṅgī here alongside three other low-caste names indicates that in this case the low-caste aspect is highlighted (Foulton and Abbot 2009: 144; Kingsley 1997: 2, 14, 44, 213-18; 1998 [1986]: 163, 207-208; Monier Williams 2005 [1899]; Sircar 1988 [1973] 29, 48, 60, 63).

to Pīṭheśvarī. The text lists not only the names of the goddesses, but also the places on the body and the sacred sites. Text PVI is unique within this group of works, as the goddesses' names are not mentioned here. Instead we find simply a list of the sacred sites. However, one item is again omitted with only twenty-three mentioned.

The list of sacred sites found within Text PII is identical with that described by Gray in his study of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*: it is even in the same order, although here the body parts are not identical and the order in which they are listed differs. Despite this we can establish that nine of the sites and body parts tally exactly with Gray's findings. Text PVI also seems closely related to the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, but the links are not as strong here. The eight places are identical, as would be the twelve if it was not the case that only eleven are cited here: Gṛhadevatā is missing (see discussion of this fact above). Thirteen of the places are linked to the same sites as they are in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*. The four door guardian goddesses are rather confused in Text PVI where we find the name of three goddesses given and just one place name. None of the other goddesses' names are listed at all in Text PVI. It is interesting to note that Texts PVII and PVIII although lacking a body-*maṇḍala* practice, make a direct reference to Cakrasaṃvara practice when they state that the *maṇḍala* should be blessed in accordance with Cakrasaṃvara *sādhana* practice.<sup>71</sup> For more information concerning the link between Texts PII and PVI and the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* see Table 3.4. below.

It appears that the most coherent description of not only the goddess names, but also their location on the body and their correlating sacred site, is found in Text PII. There is clearly a link between the tradition of Pīṭheśvarī practice and that of Cakrasaṃvara in their approach to the body-*maṇḍala* ritual. The sacred sites in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* are further linked back to the Śaivite Tantras (Beer 1999: 251;

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<sup>71</sup> *gtor ma bde mchog ltar byin gyis brlabs* (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810kha: 601).



English 2002). Willson and Brauen state that the Pīṭheśvarī sacred sites relate to those listed in the *Hevajra Tantra* (Willson and Brauen 2000: 272). However, following our close examination of the body of literature to which we have had access this does not in fact appear to be the case.

Furthermore, this use of the body-*maṇḍala* in the tradition of Pīṭheśvarī appears to suggest that the Pīṭheśvarī practices are of the *yoganiruttara* class of *tantra*, specifically the *yoginītantras*, as it is within this level of *tantra* that one finds the explicit link between the body and the sacred sites. The epithets of the goddess, both Pīṭheśvarī and Uḍḍiyāna-Tārā, allude to the cult of pilgrimage - Uḍḍiyāna was a famous site of pilgrimage and the name Pīṭheśvarī links the goddess with the *pīṭha* sites. It should therefore come as no surprise that within the textual traditions of her cult we find a strong link to the sacred sites of the Indian Buddhist world.

Table 3.4: The relationship between the sacred sites and body parts in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, Text PII, and Text PVI.

| <i>Cakrasaṃvara Tantra</i> |                  | Text PII            |                               | Text PVI           |                               |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sacred place               | Body part        | Sacred place        | Body part                     | Sacred place       | Body part                     |
| Pullīramalaya              | Head             | Pu-llā-ra-ma-la-yam | Cranium ( <i>mtshog-kha</i> ) | Pu-llī-ra-ma-la-pa | Cranium ( <i>mtshog-kha</i> ) |
| Jālandhara                 | Crown            | Dzā-lamdha-ram      | Crown                         | Dzā-lan-dhara      | Crown                         |
| Oḍiyāna                    | Right ear        | O-nya-lan           | Left ear                      | Uḍḍiyāna           |                               |
| Arbuda                     | Back of neck     | A-rbu-daṃ           | Back                          | Arbu               |                               |
| Godāvarī                   | Left ear         | Go-dā-wa-rī         | Shoulder blades               | Go-dā-ba-rī        | Right ear                     |
| Rāmeśvarī                  | Between eyebrows | Rā-me-shwa-ra       | Ears                          | Rā-me-shwa-ri      | Between eyes                  |
| Devīkoṭa                   | Eyes             | De-wī-ko-ṭi         | Between eyebrows              | De-bī-ko-ṭi        | Eyes                          |
| Mālava                     | Shoulders        | Mā-la-wa            | Eyes                          | Mā-la              |                               |
| Kāmarūpa                   | Armpits          | Kā-mā-rū-pa         | Shoulders                     | Kā-ma rū-pa        | Armpits                       |
| Oḍra                       | Breasts          | O-tre               | Armpits                       | O-tre              | Breasts                       |
| Triśākuni                  | Navel            | Tri-sha-ku-ne       | Breasts                       | Tri-sha-ku-ne-ru   | Navel                         |
| Kośala                     | Tip of nose      | Ko-sa-lam           | Navel                         | Ko-sa-la           | Tip of nose                   |
| Kaliṅga                    | Mouth            | Ka-li-ga            | Tip of nose                   | Ka-ling-ka         | Mouth                         |
| Lampāka                    | Throat           | Laṃ-bā-kam          | Mouth                         | La-pā-ka           | Throat                        |
| Kāñci                      | Heart            | Kānytsi             | Heart                         | Kānyini            | Heart                         |
| Himālaya                   | Perineum         | Hi-mā-la-yam        | Under navel                   | Lidhi hi-mā-la     |                               |
| Pretapuri                  | Penis            | Bre-ta-pu-ri        | Genitals                      | Pre-ta-pu-ri       | Genitals                      |
| Gṛhadevata                 | Anus             | Grī-ha-de-ba-ta     | Anus                          |                    |                               |
| Saurāṣṭra                  | Thighs           | So-rāṣṭaṃ           | Thighs                        | So-so-rā-ṣwa       | Thighs                        |
| Suvarṇadvīpa               | Calves           | Su-wa-rṇa-dwī-pa    | Shins                         | Survana-dvipa      | Calves                        |
| Nagara                     | Toes             | Na-ga-ram           | Heels                         | Kaṃ-bu-dzi         | Upper feet                    |
| Sindhu                     | Back of feet     | Sindhu              | Under feet                    | Sindhu             |                               |
| Maru                       | Big toes         | Ma-ru-di-shaṃ       | Toes                          | Pukka-sī           | Soles of feet                 |
| Kulatā                     | Knees            | Ku-lu-ta            | Knees                         | Ma-taṃ-gi          | Knees                         |

We will now move on from our discussion of the link between Pīṭheśvarī and the sacred sites to the place of female practitioners in the lineage of Pīṭheśvarī.

### 3.6. Was the Pīṭheśvarī Tradition Intended for a Female Audience?

Miranda Shaw expresses the conviction that Vajravatī's teachings were intended for the women of Uḍḍiyāna (Shaw 1994: 87, 104):

Vajravatī addresses her teachings to "yoginis" and "yoginis and their good friends" presumably indicating that a man might join the feast if he were a "good friend" of one of the yoginis (Shaw 1994: 104).

She also alludes to this when describing Vajravatī's desire after having achieved enlightenment to teach the methods for achieving enlightenment to the other women of her locality and class. However, as we have seen, a story concerning her life simply states, "Thus [she] stayed and led [to liberation] even all those others [who were] stained by the belief in Self" (Lakṣmīṅkarā: 22). This quote does not give any indication of the gender of her students.

According to Shaw, Vajravatī specifies the type of woman who is a suitable vessel for her teachings, stating that she must "aspire to perform the two virtuous activities, express her power of compassion by giving many gifts, and accomplish the four pure merits". Vajravatī then further emphasises the gender requirements of her audience, when she states that her teachings are not suitable for 'sons', but that they are designed for the 'daughters' of her caste, who have attained adamant speech (Shaw 1994: 104). It may well be that this is the case. However, it may also be that Shaw reads this into the texts whilst trying to find evidence to prove her feminist thesis by emphasising the important role of women in early Vajrayāna Buddhism, especially considering her selective use of the primary material.

Shaw does in fact admit within her footnotes that the case for the Pīṭheśvarī practice taught by Vajravatī being solely intended for female practitioners - an assertion made consistently through out *Passionate Enlightenment* - is less than certain, even within the two sources she chose to translate from the corpus. She writes, "Whether the practice was restricted to women is unclear in part because one canonical version of the practice specifies women as its practitioners (sDe-dge 1711) [Text PIV], whereas the other does not (sDe-dge 1706) [Text PI]" (Shaw 1994: 229).

However, my reading of the texts does not agree with Shaws. As she states, Text I makes no mention of the gender of the recipient, stating only that whoever practises the meditation will become a very famous *bodhisattva*. Text PIV states:

This [practice] is appropriate for those beings who act wisely. It is not for those no faith, [or those who do] unwholesome deeds, [those who are] passionate and [those who are] wrathful, [nor for their spiritual] sons [or] students. This *sādhana* was bestowed by the Master to others. [It] came from the northern land of Uḍḍiyāna, to within the Brahman country, and has accomplished the *vajra* words of the assembly of *yoginīs* of the Lady of the [Sacred] Realms (Vajravatī and rGyal-mtshan: 148).<sup>72</sup>

As we can see from the text it simply states that the practice is not intended for the 'spiritual sons' of those who are passionate or wrathful. It at no point states that it should not be bestowed upon men.

Another issue that Shaw seems to consistently overlook, through both her use of only two of the six texts concerning Pīṭheśvarī in the sDe-dge *Tenjur* and also her concentration on Vajravatī as the author of the works whilst disregarding the later lineage, is that the colophons of each of these texts mention numerous male practitioners. Therefore, Shaw's argument that Vajravatī intended her teachings to be solely for use by women is not backed up by the lineage. We can see quite clearly that the practice was taken up by male masters at a later date, and was translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan by such men. In fact, its inclusion in the Tibetan canon was due to these same men, who ensured its continuity into later times. Shaw appears to ignore completely the fact that aside from Vajravatī (rDo-rje ldan-ma) all others mentioned in the colophon are male. Her insistence that it may not have survived in Tibet due to the monastic bias of their practice therefore seems questionable to say the least (Shaw 1994: 105). As we can see it was in fact men who ensured its survival until at least the inclusion of Pīṭheśvarī illustrations in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* compilation of 1810.

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<sup>72</sup> *sems can ye shes thab byed gang yin 'di/ ma dad pa'am sbyin bya ba ngan pa dang/ chags can khro ba can min slob min bu la min/ sdug bsngal blo can la min slob dpon gyis/ gzhan la sgrub thabs 'di sbyin byang phyogs kyi/ u rgyan nas 'ong bram ze'i gnas kyi nang/ zhing gi bu mo'i rnal 'byor ma tshogs rdo rje'i tshigs de grub/*

### 3.7. The Pīṭheśvarī Tradition and its Place in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism

From even a cursory examination of the lineage masters listed in the various colophons one can easily identify the period of translation and early dissemination of the Pīṭheśvarī practices as the *phyi-dar* (later diffusion) of Buddhism in Tibet during the tenth to twelfth centuries. This period followed the *bod sil-bu'i dus-skabs* (The Period of Fragmentation in Tibet) which lasted from roughly 846 to 978. Following the fragmentation the *Vinaya* had been lost and monks travelled East to re-import the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* to Central Tibet.

The *phyi-dar* period is remarkable for its translation activity, with numerous young men travelling to India, Kashmir, and Nepal to learn Sanskrit, receive teachings, and translate material, predominantly of a tantric nature, to be disseminated within Tibet. The era is therefore also known as the *gsar-'gyur* (new translation) period. Renowned translators of the period include Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055), 'Brog-mi Shākya ye-shes (993-1064), and Rin-chen lo-tsā-ba rDo-rje grags (b. 1016). Furthermore, it is also during this period that we see the invitation of Indian masters, such as Atiśa, who himself died in Tibet.

This period was also characterised by the formation of the *gSar-ma* schools of Tibetan Buddhism: the *bKa'-gdams-pa*, *bKa'-brgyud-pa*, and *Sa-skyapa*. The *bKa'-brgyud-pa* school was formed by disciples of sGam-po-pa bSod-nam rin-chen (1079-1153), who himself was taught by Mi-la ras-pa (1052-1135), the disciple of Mar-pa Chos-kyi blo-gros (1012-96). As for the *Sa-skyapa* school, the 'Khon family rose to prominence during the *phyi-dar* and have retained control to this day. 'Khon dKon-mchog rgyal-po (1034-1102) founded *Sa-skyapa* monastery in 1073. The *bKa'-gdams-pa* tradition spread the teachings of Atiśa by his disciple 'Brom-ston-pa (1005-1064). However, Martin has also worked on the predominantly lay movements of the era, many of which did not belong to the *gSar-ma* schools. Furthermore, during the late

eleventh to early twelfth centuries the *gter-ma* phenomenon began to emerge, this is discussed in detail in Chapter Six (Davidson 2005; Kapstein 2000, 2006*a*, 2006*b*: 84-126; Martin 1996; Snellgrove 2002 [1987]: 474-507; Snellgrove and Richardson 2003 [1968]).

As for the practice of Pīṭheśvarī, it seems that despite the inclusion of these teachings in the *Tenjur* section of the Tibetan Buddhist canon there is no evidence to suggest that the practice has continued into the modern era. According to Shaw, "It is possible that the system has survived outside the monasteries, for the transmission of practices is not confined to the monasteries in Tibet, although survival in the monastic context assures greater historical visibility" (Shaw 1994: 228-29).

Shaw's assumption that the lineage died out due to a monastic bias in Tibetan Buddhism is made on the basis of her theory that the lineage of Pīṭheśvarī was intended solely for an audience of females and their selected male companions, an assertion she makes in order to support her larger, feminist theory concerning the previously unstudied importance of female Buddhist practitioners. In this way she concludes that in all likelihood the practice has died out due to the monastic bias of Tibetan Buddhism. However, it is clear that the only reason the lineage reached Tibet was due to its translation by numerous male scholars and their participation in the practice lineage. Therefore, it is questionable to imply that upon its arrival in Tibet the practice lineage would somehow become, once again, the exclusive province of female practitioners - an assertion that even at the outset of the practice remains doubtful.

It seems prudent to note that the task of translation was one undertaken by males, as it would be unfitting for a female to cross into Nepal and India to engage in such work. However, Martin's investigation into women of the *phyi-dar* period finds that although there is less known about females than males at the time a number of

female practitioners were certainly active, especially the disciples of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas (eleventh century), he also found also evidence of nuns during this time. Probably the best known female practitioner of this era is Ma-gcig lab-sgron (1055-1153) famed for her *gCod* practice lineage (Martin 2005). It appears that if indeed the practice was intended for females, an argument that we have been unable to find with the texts themselves, that it later lost this focus. Perhaps there were female practitioners of Pīṭheśvarī at the time, but that their involvement was not noted in the colophons, a phenomenon discussed by Gross (Gross 1993: 91).

The inclusion of an image of Pīṭheśvarī in the depictions of the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* of the Seventh Paṇ-chen bla-ma, dated to 1810, indicates that the goddess was known at that time. Although this fact does not allow the definite conclusion that Pīṭheśvarī was still practised at this relatively recent period, it seems possible that the practice of Pīṭheśvarī found in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* is included there because, although dying out, it was actively practised at the time. As we can see this is a very recent date, and it might rather be likely that the practice has been lost since the Cultural Revolution in Tibet.

Despite this, there are only two clear conclusions that can be drawn from this discussion: that the Pīṭheśvarī literature was translated into Tibetan from the Sanskrit in the eleventh century *phyi-dar* period and that the cult continued to the time of the composition of the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* in 1810. Aside from this no other definite conclusions can be drawn: it is not possible at this point to ascertain whether the lineage does indeed continue in secret to the present day, or whether it died out a few centuries ago, or at some more recent date.

### 3.8. Some Concluding Remarks on the Cult of Pīṭheśvarī

The cult of Pīṭheśvarī appears to belong to the *yoginītantras* in the *yoganiruttara* class of *tantra*. This is indicated by the focus on the body-*maṇḍala* where the sacred sites and *yoginīs* are linked to places on the practitioner's body as a purificatory process. As we have seen it is also implied by the iconography of the twenty-four goddesses. Based on the information presented above this practice also appears to be related to the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* and the tradition of *Śākta Pīṭhas*. Despite Miranda Shaw's assertion that the lineage was intended for practice by women, an argument for which we could find no basis, we can see from our examination of the names listed in the colophons that in fact the continuity of the lineage was instead ensured by the later male translators and practitioners. It was these very men who brought the lineage to Tibet by including it in the canonical literature and guaranteed its survival.

The masters listed in the various colophons indicate that the practice of Pīṭheśvarī was brought to Tibet during the early *phyi-dar* era by members of the *bKa'-gdams-pa* school, namely Nga-tsho Lo-tsā-ba and Parāhita, both close associates of Atiśa. It appears from the inclusion of Pīṭheśvarī in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* of the Seventh Panchen Lama that the practice continued within that same school, as it went on to become the modern day *dGe-lugs-pa* lineage. As we have seen, the lineage also passed into the '*Brug-pa bka'-brgyud* and *Sa-skyapa* schools with practitioners such as Ye-shes rdo-rje, mNgon-pa dbang-phyug, and Saṃghaśrībhadrā. After 1810 we have no further information regarding the lineage. Without further information or access to a modern-day lineage holder it is not possible to discern whether Pīṭheśvarī is currently practised.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Any future research conducted into the continuation of the cult will be presented in a subsequent article.



As for the subjugating function of Pīṭheśvarī, the variant iconography of Text PV finds her holding the standard subjugating implements of the iron hook and noose. Her red body and the sites at which her practice is to be performed are also indicative of her subjugating role. Although the texts themselves do not specifically mention subjugation, unlike other forms of Red Tārā examined in the proceeding chapters, it appears that the body-*maṇḍala* practice typical of the *yoganiruttara* class of Buddhist tantras has been employed in order to enact the subjugating function. In fact Text PVI briefly mentions adaptations to be made in the performance of the practice in order to perform any one of the Four Actions. Furthermore, the Pīṭheśvarī texts do not indicate any link between these wrathful Red Tārās and Kurukullā.

Unlike some of the *rNying-ma-pa* texts discussed in later chapters of the thesis the practice of Pīṭheśvarī has direct links to Buddhist India, specifically the area of Uḍḍiyāna. Furthermore, through the connection to Atiśa the lineage is placed at the origin of the Tibetan practice of the cult of Tārā. Despite this, as we will see in our later chapters Pīṭheśvarī is quite different from other forms of Red Tārā. For example her iconography, wrathful form, and her body-*maṇḍala* practices differ greatly from the other Red Tārā traditions. These differences will be discussed in more detail in the Conclusion.



## Chapter Four

### The *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Fig. 4.1: Red Tārā in the *Sa-skyapa* tradition  
sGrol-ma dmar-mo sa-lugs  
(Chandra 1986: 251)

Chapter Four begins with an examination of the *Sa-skya-pa* school cycle of teachings relating to Red Tārā as found within the *sGrub thabs kun bstus* (*The Collection of All Sādhana*s, hereafter GK) compiled by 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820-92) and his student 'Jam-dbyang blo-gter dbang-po (1847-1914) in the nineteenth century ('Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po and 'Jam-dbyang blo-gter dbang-po (eds) 1902).<sup>74</sup> It also investigates an associated text found within the *Tenjur*.

Following this initial section, Chapter Four moves on to examine the later textual lineage of teachings pertaining to the *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā.

The chapter begins with a list of the individual titles found within the *Sa-skya-pa* cycle, followed by a detailed examination of the lineage masters found therein and the *Tenjur* text. An examination of the various iconographic forms of Red Tārā found within the cycle will be followed by a translation selected from the cycle. After this discussion of the early dissemination of the *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā teachings the concluding sections of this chapter examine later textual lineages relating to the *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā texts composed by Tāranātha, the Panchen Lama bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma, and 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (1844-1904).

#### **4.1. The Contents of the *sGrub thabs kun bstus* Cycle of Red Tārā Texts**

Section 4.1. begins with an outline of the texts found in the *sGrub thabs kun bstus* cycle of *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā teachings. Section 4.1.1. provides the title of the *Tenjur* text.

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<sup>74</sup> The GK can be found in the TBRC archives at W23681, Core Collection 1.

*rJe btsun sa skya'i man ngag dbang gi sgrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs*

*rjes gnang las tshogs dang bcas pa'i skor rnams bzhugs so*

**[The Pith Instructions of the Noble Sa-skyapa Cycle of the Subjugating**

**Red Tārā, with the Yogic-applications, Empowerment, and Sādhana]**

(sGrub thabs kun btus 1902ga)

*Text SI*

*Dam tshig sgrol ma'i gsang sgrub [The Secret Sādhana of Samaya Tārā]*

(Vāgīśvarakīrti 1902: 1b-2b)

These instructions from Ngag-gi dbang-phyug form a short subjugation *sādhana*, which involves use of an effigy and *stūpa*. A wheel (*'khor-lo*) is drawn and attached to the left shoulder of the practitioner.

*Text SII*

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i'<sup>75</sup> 'gro ba dbang du sdud pa'i 'khor lo dang bcas pa bzhugs so*

*[Red Tārā's Wheel for Subjugating Sentient Beings]* (rDo-rje gdan-pa 1902: 2b-3b)

The deeds of rDo-rje gdan-pa, translated by Don-yod rdo-rje and Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba.

Again a wheel is drawn with *mantras* and bound. This is then placed inside a *stūpa* and later fumigated. Light rays emanate to subjugate the object.

*Text SIII*

*Ngag dbang grags pa las brgyud pa'i sgrol ma dmar mo'i dbang sdud sa skya pa'i*

*man ngag bzhugs so [The Sa-skyapa Pith Instructions of the Subjugation by Red*

*Tārā: The Lineage from Vāgīśvarakīrti]* (Simhadhvajabhadra: 3b-5a)

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<sup>75</sup> This is found as *sGrol ma dmar mos* in the *Tenjur* version of the text. Here I have translated this as 'by' for clarity in English.

This is the instruction of Ngag-gi dbang-phyug, the uncommon instructions of the Great Sa-skya-pa *Guru*,<sup>76</sup> handwritten clearly by Sim-ha-dhwa-dza-bha-dra (Simhadvajrabhadra) from Yar-lung. Here an effigy and wheel are employed in order to subjugate the object.

*Text SIV*

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang gi sbyin sreg gi man ngag bzhugs so* [*The Pith Instructions of the Subjugating Fire Pūja of Red Tārā*] (*sGrub thabs kun btus* 1902ka: 5a-6b)

This text is a subjugating fire-*pūja*; no author is mentioned.

*Text SV*

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i 'gro ba dbang du sdud pa'i man ngag bzhugs so* [*The Pith Instructions of the Subjugation of Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*] (Avadhūti-pa 1902: 6b-8b)

Composed (*yi ger bkod pa*) by Avadhūti-pa based on the teachings of rDo-rje gdan-pa's tradition. Here a *maṇḍala* is drawn and a *stūpa* is built on top. Tārā arises and light rays emanate. The wheel is placed under the armpit of the practitioner and pills are also made. This text contains less information concerning subjugation.

*Text SVI*

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs rjes gnang dang bcas pa'i cho ga kham gsum 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu zhes bya ba bzhugs so* [*The Rites of Red Tārā Sādhana together with*

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<sup>76</sup> *bla ma sa skya pa chen po*: Sa-chen is short for Sa-skya chen-po, the Great Sa-skya-pa. The name probably refers to Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po (Stearns 2002: xiv, 305).

*the Authorisation Empowerment: The Iron hook Summoning the Three Realms*] (rDo-rje gdan-pa and dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams 1902: 8b-10b)

This text is the Indian scripture of rDo-rje gdan-pa, it was written down by dPal-ldan don-grub at E-wam Chos-'khor-rtse, chanted from the written deeds of dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams to fulfill the request of dGe-bshes Rin-chen 'od-zer. This is a general *pūja* text where the deity is generated. It also includes information about how to perform the requisite empowerment.

#### *Text SVII*

*rJe btsun ma sgrol ma dmar mo'i bsnyen sgrub las kyi man ngag bung ba myos pa'i 'gram chang zhes bya ba bzhugs so* [*The Pith Instructions of the Actions of Approach and Accomplishment of Venerable Red Tārā: The Intoxicated Bee's Saliva*] (rDo-rje gdan-pa et al 1902: 10b-16b)

This text is based on the Indian Scriptures of rDo-rje gdan-pa and Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa. It is in accordance with the two Indian root texts and the old books of Wa-gindra-su-siddha (Vāgindrasusiddha). It was written down in the protector chapel at rNam-rgyal-rtse in the East of mDo-khams. This is a longer text written in a more poetic style. It describes the construction of a *stūpa*, wheel, shrine, and effigy for use in subjugation. Tārā is described in more detail and information is given concerning the front visualisation and how to behave between meditation sessions. The *gtor-ma* are also described. The wheel is placed in a copper or leather *ga'u* (amulet box) under the practitioner's left armpit or on his neck.

### *Text SVIII*

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang gi sbyin sreg gi yig chung rakta mukti ka'i brang rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so* [*Notes on the Subjugating Fire Pūja of Red Tārā: The Necklace of Red Pearls (rakta muktika)*] (*sGrub thabs kun btus* 1902kha: 16b-18b)

This short fire-*pūja* was written in the rNam-rgyal Chapel, based on the illegible author's colophon from the old text by Wa-gindra-siddha (Vāgindrasiddha).

### *Text SIX*

*dBang gi sgrol ma dmar mo'i brgyud 'debs srid zhi'i dge legs char 'bebs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* [*A Rain Shower of the Virtue and Goodness of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa: The Lineage Supplication of Subjugating Red Tārā*] (*sGrub thabs kun btus* 1902nga: 18b-19a)

This is a lineage supplication prayer.

#### **4.1.1. The *Tenjur* Text**

*sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs rdo rje gdan pas mdzad pa bzhugs so, sGrol ma dmar mos 'gro ba dbang du bsdu ba'i 'khor lo cho ga*  
[*Raktatārājagadrasaṃkaracakravādhī-nāma, The Sādhana of Red Tārā, The Composition of rDo-rje gdan-pa: The Ritual of the Wheel for Subjugating Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*] (*rDo-rje gdan-pa* 1988 [1731-41])

As we can see this text claims to be the work of rDo-rje gdan-pa.



## 4.2. The Texts and the Lineage

Section 4.2. investigates the the socio-cultural setting of the cycle itself and the authors and translators involved in the composition and dissemination of these teachings.

### 4.2.1. The Place of the Cycle in the Tibetan Tradition

The beginning of Chapter Four discusses two works. Firstly, the *The Pith Instructions of the Noble Sa-skya-pa Cycle of the Subjugating Red Tārā, with the Yogic-applications, Empowerment, and Sādhana*. This cycle relating to numerous forms of Red Tārā was compiled in the nineteenth century from various *Sa-skya-pa* texts and is found in 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po and 'Jam-dbyangs blo-gter dbang-po's *sGrub thabs kun bstus* ('Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po and 'Jam-dbyangs blo-gter dbang-po (eds) 1902).<sup>77</sup>

The second text, *The Ritual of the Wheel of the Subjugation of Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*, is found within the *rGyud-'grel* section of various *Tenjurs*. Having examined both the contents of the cycle and the *Tenjur* text in detail it is possible to state that the *Tenjur* work is nearly identical to Text SII of the above collection. Both belong to rDo-rje gdan-pa's lineage and the wording is almost exactly the same. However, some differences are found within the *mantras*, spellings within the text, and the placing of sentence breaks. Furthermore, the last sentence of Text SII is not found in the *Tenjur* version. For the sake of this study a translation of the *Tenjur* text is provided below. As lineage masters in the *Sa-skya-pa* tradition adhere closely to the secrecy of texts and practice, this text was chosen due to the accessibility and the absence of secrecy concerning the *Tenjur* as a collection.

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<sup>77</sup> The *GK* can be found in the TBRC archives as W23681, Core Collection 1.

#### 4.2.2. The Lineage Masters in the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā Tradition

Following the above examination of the individual texts in the lineage it is now necessary to examine the historical personages associated with this original lineage of teachings on the goddess. The lineages masters are accordingly presented here, with brief information concerning their lives and times. This information is presented in historical order as far as dates are known.

I have not been able to trace Vāgindrasiddha and little information can be found on Siṃhadhvajabhadra. However, *The Blue Annals* includes one Siṃhadhvaja as an Indian *paṇḍita* and finds him in the ordination lineage of Sākyaśrībhadra, an important master for the *Sa-skyapa* school, as discussed Section 3.2.2.5 (Roerich 2007 [1949]).

##### 4.2.2.1. Avadhūti-pa

Avadhūti-pa, the author of Text SV, is well known to all *Sa-skyapa Lam-'bras* practitioners from their lineage prayers, although little is known about his history or dates. The *Lam-'bras* teachings were transmitted from Virūpa to Kṛṣṇācārya,<sup>78</sup> through Ḍamarupa and on to Avadhūti-pa, then down to Gayādhara (mKhas sprin-'dzin, 994-1043) who later propagated them in Tibet. The *Lam-'bras* forms the pinnacle of *Sa-skyapa* practice (Stearns 2006).<sup>79</sup>

'Avadhūti' appears to be a nickname and Trichen elaborates that "[h]e was nicknamed Avadhutipa because he was often seen surrounded by children and his own actions were themselves guileless, like those of a child" (Trichen Rinpoche 1983: 12). However, Davidson discusses the meeting of Gayādhara and Avadhūti, stating that they met on the banks of the Lohita River in India, where Avadhūti was

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<sup>78</sup> Virūpa (Bi-ru-pa/ Bir-wa-pa/ mThis-stobs dbang-phyug) and Kṛṣṇācārya (Kāṇha/ Nag-po spyod-pa) were both *Mahāsiddhas*.

<sup>79</sup> For more information on the *Lam-'bras* teachings see *Taking the Result as the Path* (Stearns 2006).

practising naked asceticism (*avadhūtācārya*) hence the appellation (Davidson 2005: 180). Stearns believes that the *Lam-'bras* Avadhūti-pa in question, who held the secret name Mi-mnyam rdo-rje may have been later misidentified by dPa'-bo gtsug-lag phreng-ba with Maitrīpa (1007-1078?), who also went by the name Avadhūti (Stearns 2002: 189). One might argue that as Avadhūti-pa taught Gayādhara (994-1043) the *Lam-'bras* he must be dated to the late tenth century.

#### 4.2.2.2. Ngag-gi dbang-phyug / Ngag-dbang grags-pa / dBang-phyug grags-pa

It appears from the information available that the author of Text SI, Ngag-gi dbang-phyug/ dBang-phyug grags-pa whose Indian scripture is relied on by Text SVII; and Ngag-dbang grags-pa who translated Text SVII, and on whose lineage Text SIII is based, are one and the same person: the eleventh-century teacher Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa (Vāgiśvarakīrti) (TBRC 2006); a thesis backed up by bibliographic information in *The Blue Annals*. Here Ngag-gi dbang-phyug is identified as Nāropa's (1012-97) younger brother Vāgiśvara, who taught Nāropa's system to Marpa, dating him to the eleventh century (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 384). He also taught Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas (11th century) (*ibid.*: 869) and bestowed precepts upon Ma-chig lab-sgron (1055-1149) (*ibid.*: 985).

Ngag-gi dbang-phyug/ Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa is mentioned as one of the four gatekeepers of Vikramaśīla, at the Southern gate (*Ibid.* 206).<sup>80</sup> Under listings for Ngag-dbang grags-pa one finds a more detailed description of the life of Vāgiśvarakīrti (Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa, Pham-mthing-pa) which states that he

<sup>80</sup> Vikramaśīla was a Tantric University in India (modern-day Bihar), some scholars at which were known as "gatekeeper *paṇḍitas*" (*dvārapāla*). *The Blue Annals* records six gate-keepers: Śānti-pa at the East; Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa (Vāgiśvarakīrti) at the South; Shes-rab 'byung-gnas blo-gros (Prajñākaramati) at the West; Nāro-pa pang-chen at the North; with Rin-chen rdo-rje (Ratnavajra) and Jñānaśrī in the centre (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 206).

was a scholar of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, and that his remains are located in Kan-su where he passed away on pilgrimage to Wu-t'ai-shan (*Ibid.* 227).

Consequently, the available evidence indicates that the scholar Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa goes by the Tibetan names of Ngag-gi dbang-phyug, Ngag-gi dbang grags-pa, and dBang-phyug grags-pa, and the Indian name Vāgīśvarakīrti. He also fits within the Red Tārā lineage, as the TBRC states that he was a teacher of Amoghavajra/ Don-yod rdo-rje, another master mentioned in the cycle (TBRC 2006).

#### **4.2.2.3. rDo-rje gdan-pa and Don-yod rdo-rje**

Other members of the lineage include rDo-rje gdan-pa (Texts SII, SVI, SVII, and *Tenjur*) and Don-yod rdo-rje who translated Text SII alongside Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba discussed below. The TBRC cites rDo-rje gdan-pa as an Indian master whose teachers included Slob-dpon Ngag-gi dbang-phyug grags-pa above, rDo-rje gdan-pa che-ba, and rDo-rje gdan-pa chung-ba.<sup>81</sup> Meanwhile, his primary students included Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba, 'Brog-mi, Don-yod rdo-rje, Ye-shes 'byung-nas and A-rya-pa-la (TBRC 2006).

We can see within this list there is a problem of identification arising from lack of historical information pertaining to rDo-rje gdan-pa che-ba (10th century), rDo-rje gdan-pa chung-ba, and Don-yod rdo-rje. This issue is clarified somewhat in *The Blue Annals* and Davidson's study of the life story of Ba-ri (Davidson 2005; Roerich 2007 [1949]). In *The Blue Annals* rDo-rje gdan-pa che-ba is identified with Don-yod rdo-rje (Amoghavajra), who is known to have taught Ba-ri the *Sādhana* of Amoghapaśa (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 1020). Davidson identifies two main teachers of Ba-ri during his visit to India and uses their Indian names: Vajrāsana and Amoghavajra. Roerich also states that the senior is known as Don-yod rdo-rje/

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<sup>81</sup> Alongside De-ba a-kara tsandra, Rwa-pa chos-grags, 'Jam-dpal bshes-gnyen, Grub-chen la-li-ta, and dGa'-rab rdo-rje.

Amoghavajra. Davidson further identifies rDo-rje gdan-pa chung-ba as Vajrāsana, who is believed to have been Ba-ri's main master at the time, under whom he studied the *Avataṃsaka*, *Ratnakūṭa*, and *Samāsdhirāja Sūtras*, and also rituals for destruction of enemies and turning back harm by non-Buddhists (Davidson 2005: 297-98).

Therefore, we can clarify the lineage of Text SII as descending from Vajrāsana (rDo-rje gdan-pa chung-ba) and translated by Amoghavajra (rDo-rje gdan-pa che-ba/ Don-yod rdo-rje) and Ba-ri lo-tsa-wa. The lineage of Vajrāsana is also central to Texts SVI and SVII. Of the six texts in which an author or translator is identified rDo-rje gdan-pa is mentioned in three. He is also mentioned in the title of the *Tenjur* text. It is clear that he was an important master in this lineage.

#### **4.2.2.4. Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba**

Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba (1040-1111/2), the translator of Text SII, was born in Gling-kha, Khams, in the same year as Milarepa (1040-1123), to the Ba-ri clan. He received the name Rin-chen grags-pa at his ordination (Davidson 2005: 297; Stearns 2002; Thaye 2003; TBRC 2006). Ba-ri's main students included Kun-dga' snying-po, dKon-mchog rgyal-po, Khyung-ston-grags, lCags-thar-ba, and Rin-chen nam-mkha' rdo-rje (TBRC 2006). Ba-ri is a very important figure to the early lineage of the *Sa-skyapa* school as the second throne holder at Sa-skyapa from 1102-1110, earning him the title Sakya Trizin (Sa-skyapa khri-'dzin), the only Sakya Trizin in history who did not belong to the 'Khon family. He built the g.Yu 'Khar-mo Tārā temple at Sa-skyapa (Stearns 2002: 244; TBRC 2006).

Ba-ri travelled to India from the age of thirty-three to forty-two to receive teachings, becoming a ritual expert and eminent translator of *sādhana* texts. While in Nepal, he first studied cycles including Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrayoginī with *Paṇḍita Ānanda*. Later in India he received the Vajravārāhī teachings from Guru Mahāyogin.

His main teachers, Vajrāsana and Amoghavajra, chose 108 texts from a collection of 1,008 to be translated into Tibetan by him, later known as the famous *Hundred Sādhana of Bari* (*Ba ri brgya rtsa*) (Davidson 2005: 297-98). As we can see Ba-ri was a notable translator from the *Phyi-dar* period discussed in Chapter Three.

Meanwhile, at Sa-skyā after the death of 'Khon dKon-mchog rgyal-po his son Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po was too young and uneducated to take on the role of Sakya Trizin. Thus, Ba-ri was invited to take the title and commence teaching the eleven-year-old Sa-chen, whose mother realised that studying with a translator would enhance her son's prestige (Davidson 2005: 297; Stearns 2002).

Ba-ri transmitted to Sa-chen the Mañjuśrī mantra "*a ra pa tsa na dhīḥ*" which led to the twelve year old receiving the key *Sa-skyā-pa* teachings on the *Parting from the Four Attachments*<sup>82</sup> from an appearance of Mañjuśrī himself (Davidson 2005; Trichen Rinpoche 1983: 7). Shortly before leaving Sa-skyā Ba-ri imparted the Avataṃsaka, Ratnakūṭa, Samādhirāja and Gzungs-dra-lnga to Sa-chen and also taught him the *Guhyasamāja*, *Yamāntaka*, the *Hevajra Tantra* Trilogy, and the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* Trilogy (Stearns 2002: 246). After eight years as Sakya Trizin Ba-ri lo-tṣā-ba returned Sa-skyā monastery to Sa-chen's control (Davidson 2005: 299).

Text SII is not included in *The Hundred Sādhana of Bari*, which are also found in the *GK* but is an individual text. However, Thaye states:

Perhaps his outstanding legacy has been the famous collection of deity meditations known as 'The One Hundred Sadhanas of Bari' (Bari Gyatsa) which has been preserved into modern times where it still forms a vital part of contemporary vajrayana practice (Thaye 2003).

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<sup>82</sup> The *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen-pa bzhi-bral*): "If one is attached to this life, he is not religious. If one is attached to existence, there is no dissociation [from it]. If one is attached to one's own benefit, there is no *bodhicitta*. If there is taking (a position), there is not correct vision" (Davidson 2005: 296).

Ba-ri also disseminated the important *Thirteen Golden Dharma* cycle which includes Kurukullā practices (Thaye 2003).

It is thought that within the *Sa-skyapa* tradition this Red Tārā is not associated with Kurukullā, and it therefore differs greatly from A-paṃ gter-ston's *rNying-ma-pa* Red Tārā, who is considered a peaceful form of Kurukullā. Evidence for this is found in the iconographic differences between the two deities. Red Tārā in the *rNying-ma-pa gter-ma* tradition wields the flower bow and arrow of Kurukullā on her lotus (Khadro 2003). This information pertains to the thesis that Kurukullā is not the only form of Red Tārā.

#### **4.2.2.5. dPal-ldan don-grub and dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams**

dPal-ldan don-grub (sGrub-khang-pa/ Ngor mkhen-chen, 1563-1636) wrote down Text SVI at E-waṃ Chos-'khor-rtse following the request of dGe-bshes Rin-chen 'od-zer, based upon an Indian scripture of rDo-rje gdan-pa, from the written deeds of dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams.

No information can be found on the life of dPal-ldan don-grub in the *Blue Annals*; however the TBRC lists him as the fifteenth throne holder of Ngor E-waṃ Chos-ldan, and cites the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs rjes gnang* as a text in his one-volume collected works (TBRC 2006). As such we can see that this cycle became important to the Ngor subschool of the *Sa-skyapa* tradition. Ngor E-waṃ chos-ldan was founded by Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po in 1429. Our text places dPal-ldan don-grub at E-waṃ Chos-'khor-rtse for the composition of Text SVI. This text therefore dates from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. E-waṃ Chos-

'khor-rtse may be another name for Ngor E-waṃ Chos-ldan,<sup>83</sup> suggesting that the text was composed at dPal-ldan don-grub's seat.

The TBRC lists a possible candidate for dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams, one *Sa-skyapa* Bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375) who lived prior to dPal-ldan don-grub's time (TBRC 2006). No further information has come to light regarding these two lineage holders.

From the information we have gleaned concerning the lineage masters mentioned in the cycle we can identify that the earliest texts in the collection were written down in the eleventh century, often based upon Indian sources. Furthermore, later lineage holders composed related texts as late as the seventeenth century. These lineage holders include many luminaries from history of the *Sa-skyapa* school. The inclusion of Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba in the lineage places the translation of this text to the *phyi-dar* period of Tibetan history, when many texts were being translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, and the same period of the translation of the Pīṭheśvarī tradition discussed in Chapter Three. Although the tradition began with the Indian masters Avadhūti-pa, Vajrasāna, Amoghavajra, Siṃhadvajra, and Vāgiśvara it appears likely that it was the move to Tibet through the translation work of Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba that led to it becoming identified as a specifically *Sa-skyapa* practice.

### **4.3. Translation from the Early *Sa-skyapa* Lineage**

Having outlined the variant Red Tārās found within the *Sa-skyapa* cycle Section 4.3. presents a translation of the *Tenjur* text. As described above, this text was chosen as

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<sup>83</sup> In a personal communication Lama Jampa Thaye stated that the two places might be identical (Thaye 2010).



an example of the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā literature due to the availability of the *Tenjur* collection and also due to the absence of secrecy concerning the texts found within the *Tenjur*.<sup>84</sup> Due to the similarity between this text and Text SII it also provides a flavour of the various texts found within the cycle of teachings.

***The Sādhana of Red Tārā: The Composition of rDo-rje gdan-pa***

(rDo-rje gdan pa 1988 [1731-41])<sup>85</sup>

(429) In Sanskrit [it is called] *staṃ tārā wa śaṃ bidhi na tsakra nā ma*.

In Tibetan it is entitled *The Ritual of the Wheel for Subjugating Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*. I prostrate to Venerable Noble Tārā. At first, for the time being, the yogin draws a thirty-two petalled *utpala* on [a piece of] birchbark with camphor, saffron, musk and sandalwood.

[Then,] these *mantras* are written on each petal on the eighth day of the month. [One] in the centre: (mantra removed). Regarding (mantra removed): it is [written] on the edge. [Thus,] there are three levels [of *mantra* written] by yourself: above, below [and] on the petals. To consecrate these bind [the piece of birchbark] up tightly with twisted red thread. Place it inside a one-cubit tall earthen *stūpa*. Sprinkle vermillion and so forth on the earthen *maṇḍala* [which has] a parasol not touching the *maṇḍala*. Build a *stūpa* on [top of] that [*maṇḍala*]. If you do not have *aśoka* flowers and so on, or the flower with an iron hook, [then] make a pure triple offering of whichever red flower is suitable. Recite excellently 108 times the aforementioned *mantra* with the name of the person [to be subjugated included]. Like that, (430) if you have performed the practice

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<sup>84</sup> Here I have relied on the *bsTan 'gyur gser gyi lag bris ma* version of the text as it is not found in the *sDe dge bstan 'gyur*.

<sup>85</sup> The transliterated Tibetan version of this text is found in Appendix 4.1.

for up to twenty-one days, then even if the wheel turns it hardly needs to be said that [the object] is actually brought under your power. In the eventuality that no change is accomplished undoubtedly this will change to [the] accomplishment [of your goal] if you fumigate the wheel in a fire of red teak. [This is] *The Ritual of the Wheel of the Subjugation of Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*.

As the *sādhana* says, first practise the Two Accumulations [of wisdom and merit]. Afterwards, on a red lotus and red moon, generate Red Tārā [with] one face, two arms, [and] three eyes from a red *hrīḥ* which ornaments a red *utpala* in full bloom [missing word. She grasps] in the right [hand] an iron hook, in the other [hand] a noose ornamented with an *utpala*. [The goddess is] aged sixteen, [she] possesses the costume of a heroine,<sup>86</sup> [she is] adorned with various adornments. Imagine her seated in the *bodhisattva*-pose, with a crown of immeasurable light. Say (mantra removed). Emanate red-coloured light rays from your heart like an iron hook and a noose into the heart of the person you wish to overpower and so on. Grab them with the iron hook. Reel them in, bound by the neck with the *utpala*-noose. Having melted them into light, imagine them dissolving into your heart. Recite the mantra. [Perform the] recitation [of the] *sādhana*. [This is] *The Ritual of the Wheel of the Subjugation of Sentient Beings by Red Tārā*, written by the ascetic rDo-rje gdan-pa. May it be virtuous!

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<sup>86</sup> The *Golden bsTan 'gyur* text includes this phrase twice: dpa' mo'i cha byad dang ldan pa/ dpa' ma'i cha byad dang ldan pa/. Whilst the *sNar thang bstan 'gyur* simply states dpa' ma'i cha byad dang ldan pa/.

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Fig. 4.2: **Red Tārā in the *Sa-skya-pa* Tradition**  
**sGrol-ma dmar-mo sa-lugs**  
(Willson and Brauen 2006: 76, No. 139)

#### **4.4. The Iconography of Red Tārā in the *Sa-skya-pa* Cycle of Teachings**

Having discussed the lineage masters involved in this cycle, which has led to identification of a historical period for the composition and dissemination of these texts, we can now move on to discuss what the texts themselves tell us about the cult of these Red Tārās and her role as a subjugating deity. The iconography of Red Tārā found in these texts differs from that of other Tārās in the Tibetan pantheon, and in fact differs between the texts found within this *Sa-skya-pa* collection. The following list of iconographic features aims to clarify the differences:

##### *Text SI*

Tārā is red with one face and two hands, seated in the *bodhisattva* posture. She wields an iron hook in her right hand and a red *utpala* flower in her left and is adorned with the precious ornaments.

*Text SII*

Tārā is red with one face, two hands, and three eyes. In her right hand is an iron hook, and in her left an *utpala* [flower] ornamented with a noose. She is sixteen years old, sits cross-legged, and wears adornments including a tiara of immeasurable light.

*Text SIII*

The goddess is red, cross-legged, and wears precious adornments. She holds an iron hook on her right and a light-emitting red lotus on her left.

*Text SIV*

This fire-*pūja* ritual contains no iconographic description of the goddess, stating simply that one must perform the visualisation of Tārā.

*Text SV*

Tārā is red with one face, two arms, and three eyes. On her right is the iron hook and her left a noose ornamented with an *utpala*. She wears adornments and silk scarves, and sits cross-legged or with her left foot extended.

*Text SVI*

The goddess is red like a ruby-lotus with one face, two arms, and three eyes. The iron hook is again grasped in her right hand, whilst her left wields a noose ornamented with an *utpala*. She wears the clothes of a heroine and sits in the cross-legged-*bodhisattva* pose adorned with ornaments and silk ribbons.

### *Text SVII*

Tārā is red like a ruby-lotus with the lustre of a 100,000 suns, with one face, and two hands. She grasps an iron hook of red *utpala* petals on her right, and a red *utpala* ornamented with a noose on her left. She has three eyes and is smiling. She is adorned with ornaments. Half her hair is up, with half of it down loose.

As we can see there are many similarities across the texts in this cycle, such as Tārā's red body, one face, and two arms. Sometimes she is described as having three eyes, while in other cases the number is not mentioned. In all texts she wears precious adornments, with her right hand wielding an iron hook. However, it is only in Text SVII that we find this ornamented with red *utpala* petals, similar to that held by Kurukullā. Her left hand most often holds a noose ornamented with an *utpala* (Texts SII, SV, SVI, and SVII), whereas in Text SI she bears a red lotus, and in Text SIII she is grasping a light-emitting red lotus. The goddess Kurukullā holds a bow, arrow, noose, and iron hook all ornamented with flowers. Here we see Red Tārā with an iron hook and *utpala* the root of which forms a noose. These implements are similar to those held by Kurukullā but not identical.

Text SVII is the most descriptive, a fact indicative of the more poetic style which permeates this *sādhana*. She has the lustre of a 100,000 suns, is passionate and beautiful, and her smile fascinates the world. The text even goes so far as to describe her breasts and hair, details lacking in other texts in the collection.

The differing iconography is indicative of the individual lineages of each text, exemplified by the varying authors. The texts descending from rDo-rje gdan-pa (Texts SII, SVI, and SVII) appear to be more consistent in their iconography. Each describes the goddess as red, with one face, two hands, and three eyes. All three find her with a noose ornamented with an *utpala* on her left, and an iron hook on her right,

although in Text SVII this is made from red *utpala* petals. In Texts SII and SVI and the *Tenjur* text she is seated cross-legged. In fact, the main difference in the Texts SI and SIII appears to be the red lotus held in the left hand, and Text SV, although attributed to Avadhūti-pa, appears to follow the iconography found in rDo-rje gdan-pa's lineage.

One reference to *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā in secondary literature is found in *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism*, see Figure 4.2. (Willson and Brauen 2000). The goddess here is described as holding a hook above her right knee, and on her left a red *utpala* whose root forms a noose, seated in the *bodhisattva* pose, adorned with silks and ornaments. She has three eyes and is crowned with Amitābha (Willson and Brauen 2000: 76, 273).<sup>87</sup>

As we have seen in previous chapters Tārā's red body is indicative of her role as a subjugating deity and her *utpala* is the typical emblem of all Tārās. However, the particular symbols of these Red Tārās, the iron hook and the noose ornamented with an *utpala*, must be discussed in more detail. Beer states that the iron hook and noose traditionally depict subjugation and are often depicted together. The hook is often held in the right hand and is used to pierce the enemy's heart whilst the noose binds their neck. The hook represents the hooking of negativities and the pulling of beings away from *sāṃsara* towards liberation. Held in the left hand the noose symbolises the snaring, binding, and strangling of the ego. Beer states that the *utpala* flower root noose is symbolic of a peaceful deity (Beer 2003: 146-48). As we can see from Beer's description both the iron hook and root-noose are emblems of the subjugating function. We will now move on to discuss what the texts themselves have to tell us about subjugation.

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<sup>87</sup> The Red Tārā described here has the Praise "Goddess of purified desire, Vast goddess of subjugation, Stirrer of the triple world, Tārā – to her I devoutly bow" (Willson and Brauen 2000: 273).

#### 4.5. Subjugation in the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā Cycle

The texts in this cycle tell us something about the objects to be used in the performance of subjugating practices. The practitioner should wear red clothes and sit on a red seat. They should use tools of copper or brass. In the case of a fire-*pūja* the fire-pit should be semi-circular and the flame brought from the house of a king or prostitute. The semi-circle is indicative of subjugation in the same way that a circle indicates pacification, a square increase, and a triangle destruction. The fire wood should have a sour taste and red colour such as minature rhododendron (*ba-lu*), *tsam-pa-ka*,<sup>88</sup> rose-, peach-, juniper-, *mdzo-mo*-<sup>89</sup> wood, or red sandalwood. Dyes and incense should be produced from '*Bri-mog*,<sup>90</sup> red sandalwood, red saffron, red juniper, or vermillion and the practitioner should use a red sandalwood rosary. Text SVII requires the use of:

Ink [made] from the naturally-occurring blood of a twelve year old girl, the blood from the ring finger of a sixteen year old boy, camphor, saffron, red sandalwood, musk, lac-dye, and *sindūraḥ* (rDo-rje gdan-pa et al 1902: 11b).<sup>91</sup>

As we can see from this list the predominant link between these items is that they should be red, the colour of subjugation. Fire-*pūjas* of each of the Four Actions are traditionally performed, and as such the list above is common to all subjugating fire-*pūjas*, not just that of Red Tārā. However, this information has shed further light on this little-studied aspect of Tibetan Buddhist practice. As we have seen above many of these texts involve construction of a *stūpa* and effigy. A wheel is also drawn and kept

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<sup>88</sup> *Tsam-pa-ka* is a medicinal tree: *Magnolia michelia champaka* (Pellegrini 2006).

<sup>89</sup> *mdzo-mo shing*: the *Caragana tibetica* a shrub whose wood resembles red sandalwood is usually imported from China to Tibet (Das 2004 [1902]; Pellegrini 2006). Skorupski elaborates that bitter trees such as red juniper or *mdzo-mo* should be used for subjugation (Skorupski 1995: 25).

<sup>90</sup> '*Bri-mog* is a medicinal herb the root of which is used as a purple dye for *gtor-ma* etc (Das 2004 [1902]).

<sup>91</sup> *bu mo lo bcu gnyis ma'i rang byung gi khrag dang/ khye'u lo bcu drug pa'i srin lag g.yon pa'i khrag dang/ ga bur dang/ gur gum dang/ tsandan dmar po dang/ gla rtsi dang/ rgya skyegs dang/ sindhu ra sbyar ba'i snag tsha byas la/*

under the left shoulder of the practitioner. We shall now move on to detail further the particular methodology employed in these subjugating rituals:

### *Text SI*

This text describes the methods employed to subjugate a local chief, or women to whom you are attracted, be they one or many. The *utpala* noose binds the left side of their neck whilst the iron hook strikes their heart. Light rays in the form of hooks emanate from the practitioner's heart and pierce the consciousness and nine orifices of the object so that they turn red inside and out. This light continues to turn all phenomena red: the gods, *nagas*, *gnod-sbyin*,<sup>92</sup> eight divinities,<sup>93</sup> and sentient beings. After which all the resources of the world, grain, cattle and so forth fill the practitioners house and gather under their feet. The text goes on to state that this practice might be performed in order to subjugate the fortunate, ministers, or the king. When performing the practice to entice the woman of one's desires the iron hook grasps her by the genitals and pulls violently. The subjugation of the object should be achieved within ten days (Vāgiśvarakīrti 1902: 2a-2b).

### *Text SII*

In this text the object is subjugated by light rays like iron hooks and nooses emanating from the heart of the practitioner. They are grabbed by the hook and reeled in by the

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<sup>92</sup> The *gnod-sbyin* (Skt: *yakṣa*) are one of the eight classes of deity in the *gsar-ma* schools (Pellegrini 2006).

<sup>93</sup> The *sde-brgyad* are the eight kinds of demon, of which Das cites three sets:

- 'gong-po; the'u-brang; nga-yam; sa-bdag; yul-lha; sman; btsan; and klu
- srog-bdag; ma-mo; gshin-rje; bdud; gsnod-sbyin; dmu; dgra-lha; and 'gong-po
- gza'-mchog-'bri-'tri-pa-tra; ljang-sngon-drag-po; du-ba-mngug-ring; 'bar-ba-ra-tsa; sgra-gcan-'dzin; byi-nu-ra-tsa; ra'-hu-la; and khyab-mjug-chen-po (Das 2004 [1902]).

Edition Two of the *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* takes the *lHa srin sde brgyad* as a special focus (Achar 2003). Furthermore, one well known ritual concerning the *sDe-brgyad* is the *sDe brgyad gser skyems* (*Libation Offering to the Eight Classes of Demon*) of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (Sangs-rgyas ye-shes 1978).



noose which binds their neck. They dissolve into light and then into the practitioner's heart (rDo-rje gdan-pa 1902: 3b).

#### *Text SIII*

In this text the king or a local official is struck with the iron hook in their back and heart whilst the noose seizes their neck. He falls on his back in front of the practitioner and iron beam light rays emanate from the practitioner's heart striking the object's consciousness, his orifices, body, speech, and mind. Light beams shine all around and all phenomenon, even the beings in the Buddha-realms, turn red. As such the object is gathered under the practitioner's foot. Here again women are seized by their genitals with the iron hook and pulled violently. If one does not wish to subjugate a certain person then the light rays should not be gathered near them. Again, the goal is achieved within ten days (Simhadhvajabhadra 1902: 4a-4b).

#### *Text SV*

This text involves subjugation of the object through the emanation of numberless Tārās who seize the object with iron hooks: the Guru is seized by the tongue, important people by the neck, and women by the genitals. The noose catches their neck and they are suppressed under-foot. Everything turns red (Avadhūti-pa 1902: 7b-8a).

#### *Text SVI*

This text states that it is performed to bring the three realms under one's power. Here the compassion and blessings of the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* are magnetised in the form of red light rays bringing the wealth of all sentient beings to the practitioner.

They all fall under the practitioner's power (rDo-rje gdan-pa and dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams 1902: 9a-9b).

#### *Text SVII*

Red light rays like iron hooks emanate subjugating all sentient beings and gathering them around the practitioner like bees to a flower. Their consciousness dissolves into the seed-syllable at the practitioner's heart. Later in the practice innumerable Red Tārās with iron hooks and nooses emanate from the heart of the Red Tārā in front; they enter the objects house and bind him by the neck with the noose. Men are pulled by their heart, women by their genitals. They are pressed beneath the practitioner's feet. If the practitioner has possession of an item of clothing or dust from the object's footprint then this is stamped beneath their boot. The object's goodness is absorbed and they are visualised as emaciated and inanimate within an empty house. Once the practice has been performed correctly for fourteen days then the practitioner will experience various signs in their dreams, either indicating success or that a certain adjustment is needed in their practice (rDo-rje gdan-pa et al. 1902: 13b-14a, 15a).

The information provided in these texts concerning the ritual of subjugation will be discussed in more detail in the Conclusion, Chapter Nine.

#### **4.6. The Later Lineage of *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā**

From here we move on to examine the later textual lineage of *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā: one which originated with Tāranātha, continued through the Seventh Panchen Lama, and culminated with the twentieth-century commentary presented by 'Ba'-mda' dGe-

legs. Although the tradition emerged within the *Sa-skyapa* school it was then taken up by eminent *Jo-nang-pa* and *dGe-lugs-pa* scholars indicating that the influence of the practice spread through at least three schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The texts examined in Sections 4.1. to 4.5. are very closely related to this later tradition and compositions continued up until the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century.

This lineage is interesting as it moved through the *Sa-skyapa*, *Jo-nang-pa*, and *dGe-lugs-pa* schools. Here I shall examine the three texts in question, followed by a look at the authors, after which the full translation the Panchen Lama's texts is presented and a discussion of the lineage is offered. These texts deserve to be treated separately from those presented earlier due to their coherent lineage progression.

#### **4.6.1. Tāranātha and Red Tārā**

The *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs* [*Sa-skyapa Red Tārā*] composed by Tāranātha is found in his *Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs Rin chen 'byung gnas* (*Rin 'byung brgya rtsa*) collection, published in two volumes<sup>94</sup> and composed by him in 1606-08 using Sanskrit *sādhana*s as a source. English translates the title as "*The Mine of Jewels, Sādhana*s of the Ocean of Yidam Deities" (English 2002: 36; Willson and Brauen 2000). This collection forms Volume Fifteen (*Ba*) of Tāranātha's *gSung 'bum* (Tāranātha 1974-76 [1606-08] *kha*). Contained within the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* itself are twenty-three chapters: Chapters Two to Sixteen detail *yi-dam* deities from peaceful, through increasing to wrathful in nature, all arranged in logical groups (Willson and Brauen 2000: 231).

Willson and Brauen discuss the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* and explain that it contains over three-hundred practices compiled by Tāranātha himself. They state:

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<sup>94</sup> The *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* is found on the TBRC database as W12422.

Having received the transmissions of these practices from many different teachers, he arranged them in a cycle to encourage the continuation of their lineages, many of which were rare and in danger of dying out (Willson and Brauen 2000: 225).

The version used in this thesis was published in Delhi in 1974-6 (Tāranātha 1974-6 [1606-08] *ka*). Within the work Section G, comprising pages 285-309 of Volume One, focuses on fourteen forms of the goddess Tārā.

As we can see from the above quotation it appears that the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā practice may have been in danger of being lost. This indicates that the lineage must have declined since its inclusion in the *Tenjur*. However, it would appear that Tāranātha deemed the practice important enough to be saved and thus included it in his compilation of rare works. From here the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* cycle went on to be expanded by the eighteenth to nineteenth century Panchen Lama bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma.

#### **4.6.2. Paṇ-chen bla-ma bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma and Red Tārā**

The Seventh Panchen Lama bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1781-1852/4) is the author of the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs* [*Sa-skyapa Red Tārā*] (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810 *ka*). This text is found within the *sGrub thabs rin 'byung gi lhan thabs rin 'byung don gsal* (also known as the *Rin lhan*) collection of practices, which forms one part of his *gSung 'bum* (Collected Works) (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810 *kha*). The Panchen Lama's collection is based on Tāranātha's *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa*, discussed above. The Panchen Lama composed this text in 1810 at the time of his visit to Mongolia in order to bestow the cycle of initiations. Following this a series of prints was commissioned for a further collection entitled *Rin 'byung snar thang brgya rtsa rdor 'phreng bris sku mthong ba don ldan bzhuks so*. Stein reports that bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma "enjoyed great prestige at the Chinese court" (Stein 1972: 89). Once again English provides us with a translated title: *The Clear Meaning of the Jewel Mine, an*

*Expansion of "The Mine of Jewels, Sādhana of the Ocean of Yidam Deities"* (English 2002: 36; Willson and Brauen 2000).

This collection of prints includes the various deities found within the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa*, *sNar thang brgya rtsa*,<sup>95</sup> and *rDor 'phreng ba (Vajrāvalī)*<sup>96</sup> pantheons. Willson and Brauen discuss this work in their *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism* which presents colour depictions of each deity, followed by short translations of relevant material. They state that the Panchen Lama's text provides more information than that found in Tāranātha's *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa*, as he presents the *sādhana* text for each deity, alongside an initiation rite (*rjes-gnang*) in full allowing a qualified *bla-ma* to confer the requisite initiation upon his students (Willson and Brauen 2000: 231-32). Lokesh Chandra's *Buddhist Iconography of Tibet* also presents a version of the *Rin lhan* where the deities are illustrated with black and white line-drawings (Chandra 1986).

Willson and Brauen discuss the differences between the source text, as composed by Tāranātha, and the later edition by the Panchen Lama. When discussing their translations they state:

Although the translation was made using the *Rin-lhan* alone, it later became possible to compare it with the original source by Tāranātha. This comparison makes clear what the Panchen Lama was seeking to do, namely to create a performing edition. Both texts present the same *sādhana*s in the same order – though one or two variants mentioned only briefly by Tāranātha are expanded into full *sādhana*s in the *Rin-lhan* (Willson and Brauen 2000: 233).

They go on to comment that the Panchen Lama adds any necessary *mantras*, recitations, and praises to the existing texts composed by Tāranātha. In fact the

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<sup>95</sup> The *sNar thang brgya rtsa* was compiled in the thirteenth century by mChims nam-mkha'-grags, the abbot of sNar-thang monastery from 1251-88. It contains thirty-three *sādhana* texts based on both Indian texts and oral instructions he received (Willson and Brauen 2000: 225, 379).

<sup>96</sup> The *rDor 'phreng ba (Vajrāvalī)* pantheon is based on the main deities found in the *maṇḍalas* described by Abhayākara-gupta (d. 1125), an Indian master. The pantheon is composed from a trilogy of texts, the *Vajrāvalī* itself, the *Niṣpanna-yogavali* (both available in Sanskrit), and the *Jyotir-maṇjarī*. The *rDor 'phreng ba* contains descriptions of the *maṇḍalas* of various deities, with the main deity of each *maṇḍala* depicted (Willson and Brauen 2000: 225).

Panchen Lama's version is more than twice the size of Tāranātha's original work (Willson and Brauen 2000: 233).

One version of the Panchen Lama's *Rin lhan* was published by Lokesh Chandra under the title *The Sādhana-mālā of the Paṇchen Lama*. Bühnemann posits that the source of the *Rin lhan* is in fact the *Sādhanaśataka*, dating to the early twelfth century, whereas Chandra traces it to the *Sādhanasāgara* (Bühnemann 1996: 14-15; Chandra 1974 cited in English 2002: 395).<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.6.3. 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs's and Red Tārā

A commentarial text on the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā composed by 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs can be found within his Collected Works, *'Ba' mda' dge legs gsung 'bum* ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 199?). As we can see from the reference cited here, the exact date of publication of this Collected Works is unknown. The text in question, the *rJe btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma dmar mo'i sa lugs bsnyen pa'i khrid yig utpal dmar po'i phreng ba* [*The Text Explaining the Approaching to the Sa-skyapa Venerable Noble Red Tara [entitled] The Garland of Red Utpala*] is found in Volume Sixteen of the twenty-two volume collection, pp. 529-49. The collection was printed in 'Dzam-thang, close to 'Ba'-mda', the birthplace of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs. His Collected Works also includes material on Buddhist philosophy, alongside commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (*The Ornament of Clear Realisation*, *mNgon rtogs rgyan*) and *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Sher phyin*) texts. Explanatory texts relating to the *Kālacakra Tantra* and other tantric rituals are also included (TBRC 2006). Kapstein provides the *dKar-chag* (Contents) for the Collected Works of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs in his 1997 article (Kapstein 1997: 467-75).

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<sup>97</sup> Since I have no access to the work of Bühnemann or Chandra I have relied on information presented by English.

#### **4.6.4. The *sGrol-ma dmar-mo sa-lugs* and the Schools of Tibetan Buddhism**

It is interesting to note the progression of this practice lineage through various Tibetan Buddhists sects. Although the practice originated in the *Sa-skyapa* school, it was included in the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* compiled by Tāranātha, the famed seventeenth-century master of the *Jo-nang-pa* school. In the eighteenth-century the *dGe-lugs-pa* Seventh Panchen Lama expanded Tāranātha's collection in his *Rin lhan*, once again including the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā. In the final stage the lineage once again found itself back within the *Jo-nang-pa* school when the nineteenth-century 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs composed a commentary on the practice. One must presume that 'Ba'-mda' received initiation into the practice lineage of Red Tārā, qualifying him to practise the goddess and provide a commentary on the textual tradition. It may also be assumed that this lineage of Red Tārā was strengthened by his commentary to continue not only within the *Sa-skyapa* school, but possibly also within the *Jo-nang-pa* tradition. It is interesting to note however, that no commentary on the practice is known from the *Sa-skyapas* themselves. We will now move on to discuss the three main personalities involved in the later lineage of *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā teachings.

#### **4.7. Authors of the *sGrol-ma dmar-mo sa-lugs***

Section 4.7. briefly examines the various personages in the lineage of the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs*. It begins with a brief discussion of the lesser-known *Jo-nang-pa* school, followed by a look at 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs. This provides a context in order to discuss the texts themselves and the lineages within which they proliferated.

Tāranātha and the Seventh Panchen Lama were discussed in Sections 3.2.2.7. and 3.2.2.8.

#### 4.7.1. The *Jo-nang-pa* School

The *Jo-nang-pa* school is known, among other matters, for its controversial beliefs and history. Despite this, few authors have provided an overview of the school and this discussion will therefore be brief. The school was founded by Kun-spangs Thugs-rje brtson-'grus (1243-1313) who lived in the valley of Jo-mo-nang and thus his tradition became known as the *Jo-nang* and its followers are called the *Jo-nang-pas*. The *Kālacakra Tantra* has been a key teaching and focus of practice throughout the school's history, specifically the 'Bro lineage of the *Kālacakra*. Dol-po-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1292-1361) was a *Jo-nang-pa* practitioner well versed in the *Kālacakra Tantra* and retranslated it alongside its commentarial texts.

It was during the composition of these new translations that Dol-po-pa came to develop the *gzhan-stong* view characteristic of the *Jo-nang-pa* school's philosophy. The *gzhan-stong* view holds that "one's own enlightened essence is empty of everything other than the absolute nature of reality" (Sheehy: 4).<sup>98</sup> Dol-po-pa was convinced that his view was in line with that of the Buddha, a thesis he defends in his *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning*. He believed that he lived in a degenerate age, and that the current thoughts on the Buddha's teachings were due to this degeneration. This allowed him to deduce that his *gzhan-stong* philosophy was the correct view. Following Dol-po-pa's death the *gzhan-stong* approach was widely taught within the *Jo-nang-pa* school (Kapstein 1997; Stearns 1999).

The next famous master of the *Jo-nang-pa* school was Tāranātha (1575-1635) who interpreted the teachings set out by Dol-po-pa. Tāranātha is well known for his historical works, including the *History of Buddhism in India*, his work on the history of the *Tārā Tantra*, and an arrangement of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. After Tāranātha's

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<sup>98</sup> For more information on the *Jo-nang-pa* *gzhan-stong* view and the work of Dol-po-pa see Stearns' *The Buddha from Dolpo* (Stearns 1999).



time the fortunes of the *Jo-nang-pa* school declined and in the seventeenth century the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682) laid waste to many of the *Jo-nang-pa* monasteries, forcibly converted the occupants to the *dGe-lugs-pa* school and banned the dissemination of the *gzhan-stong* teachings. Kapstein writes, "Following the ban, though it is not yet clear exactly when this occurred, the writings of both Dol-po-pa and Tāranātha were placed under seal, and the "extrinsic emptiness" teaching was effectively anathematized" (Kapstein 1997: 462). Stearns states that the conversion of rTag-brtan dam-chos-gling monastery to the *dGe-lugs-pa* institution of dGa'-ldan rtag-brtan Phun-tshogs-gling in 1658 can be seen as the point at which the *Jo-nang-pa gzhan-stong* views were banned. Kapstein also notes that *Jo-nang-pa* adherents were heavily criticised at Bla-brang monastery, in particular by 'Jam-dbyangs bzhad-pa, although no real suppression of their presence in A-mdo took place. In fact 'Dzam-thang became the centre of the *Jo-nang-pa* school in the sixteenth century (Kapstein 1997: 462; Stearns 1999: 70, 73-74).

As we have seen above, after this clampdown the *Jo-nang-pa* school made a home in Eastern Tibet, especially in A-mdo in the regions of mGo-log, rNga-ba, and 'Dzam-thang. Due to this relocation the teachings of the *Jo-nang-pa* have survived to this day thanks to the non-sectarian *Ris-med* movement in the nineteenth century. The main *Ris-med* masters such as 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-99), 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820-92), Mi-pham rGya-mtsho (1846-1912), and later 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi blo-gros (1896-1959) were all sympathetic to the *gzhan-stong* philosophical view. 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs was a key figure in the later history of the *Jo-nang-pa* sect in the region. Kapstein informs us that even *Karma bKa'-brgyud* and *rNying-ma* groups in the area of Khams which surrounds sDe-dge had been converted to the *gzhan-stong* philosophy (Kapstein 1997: 462; Stearns 1999: 76-77).

Pertinent to our study, Stearns has commented on the links between the *Sa-skyapa* and *Jo-nang-pa* school, stating that as for their practices the two schools remained close. Stearns states that both Sha-kya mchog-ldan (1428-1507) and Kun-dga' grol-mchog (1507-1566) wrote that fifteenth and sixteenth century scholars from both schools had been influenced by Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419), which led to a perceived corruption of the *Sa-skyapa* school, especially with regard to the *Lam 'bras* teachings for which the school is best known. Stearns believes the links between the two schools may have been a reaction to this *dGe-lugs-pa* influence. Stearns goes on to describes the situation during the time of the *Sa-skyapa* Tshar-chen Blo-gsal rgya-mtsho (1502-1567) and the *Jo-nang-pa* Kun-dga' grol-mchog when practice lineages were transmitted between the two groups. The famous *Sa-skyapa bla-ma* 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-phyug (1524-1568) is known to have studied under both masters (Stearns 1999: 65-67).

#### **4.7.2. 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (a.k.a. Thub-bstan dge-legs rgya-mtsho)<sup>99</sup>**

Who was 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs? Information on the scholar-monk 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs is scarce. However, one main source of information regarding him is found in a short three-and-a-half page section of the *bsDus grwa'i spyi don rin chen sgron me* ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993: 568-71). The TBRC also includes a brief listing (TBRC 2006). Alongside these two sources the work of Matthew Kapstein has drawn light on the life and scholarship of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (Kapstein 1997; 2001). Kapstein mentions

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<sup>99</sup> Thanks to the endeavours of Kapstein light has been shed on the work of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs. Kapstein received a copy of the collected works of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs from A-khu Thogs-med, a 'Dzam-thang monk, in the 1990s. He used this alongside works composed by Dol-po-pa and Tāranātha in his research (Kapstein 1997: 457).

that a full *rnam-thar* of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs was in circulation prior to 1959 and that it has yet to resurface (Kapstein 1997: 463).<sup>100</sup>

'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (1844-1904) was a renowned *Jo-nang-pa* scholar born in 'Ba'-mda' near 'Dzam-thang and the Dar-thang Monastery in the mGo-log region of A-mdo (TBRC 2006). He was the fifth child of dGra-lha lcags-lo and sKyid-ko-ma. From even a brief glance at this information on the location and era of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs activities we can see that it fits very closely alongside some of the other Red Tārā traditions examined in Chapter Two, that of 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho (1860-1948), 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje (18th century), and Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho (1839-1905) all of whom composed Red Tārā texts, and who hailed from Bla-brang monastery in A-mdo. Thus Red Tārā practice appears to have fourished in A-mdo during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.

It is stated<sup>101</sup> that 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs was voluntarily reborn as an incarnation of Kun-dga' grol-mchog<sup>102</sup> and sGrol-ba'i mgon-po (Tāranātha), both important *Jo-nang-pa* scholars. As such his link with the *Jo-nang-pa* school was clear from an early age. It is therefore interesting that he chose to compose a commentary on the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā. This may be explained by the fact that, alongside his career within the *Jo-nang-pa* school, he also received teachings from *Sa-skyapa* and *rNying-ma-pa* masters of the time and studied the *bKa'-rgyud-pa Mahāmudrā* teachings. From the age of eighteen he studied at rDzogs-chen Monastery, close to sDe-dge in Khams, under such nineteenth-century luminaries as the abbots Ratna Kirti and A-dkon. He

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<sup>100</sup> Kapstein writes that in mKhan-po Blo-gros grags-pa's work one finds the life story of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs (Blo-gros grags-pa 1992). I have had no access to this text and therefore have been unable to include a translation of the information contained in this work (Kapstein 1997).

<sup>101</sup> The majority of the information given here was taken from the *bsDus grwa'i spyi don rin chen sgron me*, composed by 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs himself in the Tibetan language and translated by myself for the purposes of this thesis. Other information was taken from the two works which deal with 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs in detail translated by Matthew Kapstein (Kapstein 1997: 2001; 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993).

<sup>102</sup> Kun-dga' grol-mchog (1507-1565/6) was the predecessor of Tāranātha and his seat was *Jo-mo-nang* monastery (Kapstein 1997: 465; TBRC 2006).

studied often under the famous rDza dPal-sprul rin-po-che (1808-87),<sup>103</sup> author of *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*), a famous explanatory text on the *sNgon-'gro* (Preliminary) practices of the *Klong-chen snying-thig* tradition of the *rNying-ma* school. With this master he also studied Śāntideva's (*Zhi-ba-lha*) *Bodhisattvacāryāvatāra* and Tsong-kha-pa's *Lam-rim* ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993). He studied the *Six Yogas of Naropa* under Kong-sprul<sup>104</sup> and later established a retreat centre focusing on this practice, as prophesised by rDo-grub-dbang Rin-po-che. The *Six Yogas* practice appears to have been important throughout 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs life. After the age of twenty-one he received *Sa-skyapa* transmissions from Ngag-dbang chos-dpal rgya-mtsho.<sup>105</sup>

'Ba'-mda' received initiation into the main tantric deity cycles, including Green and White Tārā from various masters of the time. His biography states that "He attained the superior realisation of the *Vajrayāna* vehicle, direct insight experience of each of those paths, the special signs of created phenomenon and so forth" ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993). He was especially well known for his profound understanding of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Kapstein adds that it was "during precisely this period [of 'Ba'-mda dge-legs study] in which the activity of the so-called Ris-med masters was at its height. Among those with whom he studied were two of the most influential of these luminaries, rDza dPal-sprul rin-po-che and Kong-sprul Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho (1813-99)" (Kapstein 1997: 463). Kapstein relates that Mi-pham Rin-po-che said of 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs " "'Ba'-mda Bla-ma Mi-pham-las mkhas" ["the lama from Bamda was more learned than Mipham"]" (Kapstein 1997: 463).

<sup>103</sup> rDza dPal-sprul rin-po-che (O-rgyan 'jigs-med chos-kyi dbang-po) was one of the foremost nineteenth-century *Ris-med* scholars. He was believed to be a reincarnation of 'Jigs-med gling-pa.

<sup>104</sup> 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas (1813-99).

<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to locate any information concerning a *Sa-skyapa* Ngag-dbang chos-dpal rgya-mtsho from this era.

Kapstein tells us that 'Ba'-mda's non-tantric works closely adhere to the *dGe-lugs-pa* traditions of Bla-brang monastery (Kapstein 1997: 464). As we have seen above 'Ba'-mda' was working in the same period and region as the three Bla-brang Masters known to have composed Red Tārā texts. This may back up Kapstein's thesis that 'Ba'-mda' had links with Bla-brang. However, Kapstein states that it is uncertain where 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs gained such a high level education in the *dGe-lugs-pa* school. He relates that 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs believed himself to be an emanation of 'Jam-dbyangs bZhad-pa, and had numerous visions of Thu'u-bkwan Rin-po-che (Kapstein 1997: 466).

'Ba'-mda' is said to have found writing very easy and was diligent in the task. He composed a hundred leaves of footnotes on "the Tārā text", although which Tārā text in particular is not mentioned. In his life he recited approximately thirty-thousand-million *mantras*, including six-million of the Mañjuśrī *mantra* ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993). The TBRC list his main students as Tshogs-gnyis rgya-mtsho (1880-1940), Ngag-dbang bsod-nams bzang-po (1875-1945), 'Dzong-bo skyabs-mgon (1847-1930), Ngag-dbang bstan-pa rab-rgyas (1875-1950), Kun-dga' ngag-dbang dpal-bzang (1873-1936), and Kun-dga' mnyam-nyid (1859-1918) (TBRC 2006). When he passed away on the twenty-fifth of the tenth month of the Male Wood Dragon year, 1904, he assumed the seven-point posture of Vairocana at which point he exhibited the signs of the Buddha and recited a prayer to the spiritual fathers, preparing for the ritual of transference. With his dying breath he uttered the sound *phaṭ* and dissolved into the *dharmadhātu* ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 1993).

#### 4.8. Translation of the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs*

Section 4.7. provided an overview of the authors pertinent to the later commentarial tradition of *Sa-skyā* Red Tārā. Having provided a background to the history and lineage of these authors Section 4.8. provides a translation of the Panchen Lama's *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs*. This text was chosen from the three as it is of medium length and expands upon Tāranātha's work. Due to constraints of space, translations of Tāranātha and 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs's works are not provided here as 'Ba'-mda's text alone runs to twenty-one folios.

#### *The Sa-skyā-pa Tradition Red Tārā*

(bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810 *ka*)<sup>106</sup>

(610) In the *Sa-skyā-pa* tradition Red Tārā [practice] first begin by saying the Refuge and *Bodhicitta* [Prayers] and the Four Immeasurables. Purify [all phenomena] into emptiness with [the] *shūnyatā* [*mantra*: *om śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmako 'ham*]. From within emptiness your mind [becomes an] *a*, from which arises a red moon, on top of which [is a] *taṃ*. An *utpala* [flower arises from this *taṃ*, itself] marked with a *taṃ* syllable. [From this] having emitted and gathered in light [rays] you yourself rise up as Red Tārā. She has a passionate expression. [In her] right [hand] she holds an iron hook on top of her knee. [In her] left [hand] she holds at her heart the stem of a red *utpala* which blooms fully beside her ear, the root of which has the form of a noose. She sits in the *bodhisattva* cross-legged posture. She is adorned with silks and precious

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<sup>106</sup> The transliterated Tibetan version is found in Appendix 4.2. The requisite *mantras* have been removed from this translation and the transliteration in order to preserve the secrecy of the tradition, thereby removing the possibility for those without initiation performing the practice.

gems. She has three eyes. At her heart, on a moon is *hrīḥ*. At her forehead an *oṃ*, at her throat an *āḥ*, and at her heart a *hūṃ*.

The wisdom beings [are invoked with] *badzra samādzah dzaḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ*. The empowerment deities proclaim "*oṃ badzri bhāwa abhiṣintsa hūṃ*", and in saying this, they bestow empowerment [upon you]. The [empowerment water] fills your whole body and purifies it of stains. Meditate that the excess [empowerment] water overflows [and becomes] Amitābha adorning the crown of your head.

Imagine the seed syllable [together with the] *mantra* garland at your heart on an *utpala* and moon.

Recite [*mantra* removed] as much as you are able.<sup>107</sup>

At the end of the session dedicate the merit [generated through this practice].

Arrange the offerings of white *gtor-ma*, red flowers and so forth. The blessing of the offerings should be performed according to the general method.

Bless the *gtor-ma* in accordance with the *kriyā-tantra*.

Light rays emanate from your heart. Tārā, together with her retinue, (611) are [invited to be seated to receive the *gtor-ma*] with the *mantra*: *badzra samādzah padma ka ma la ye staṃ*.

Offer [the *gtor-ma*] by attaching the the heart *mantra*. Offer [the *gtor-ma*] seven times [with the extension] *idaṃ ba le ta kha kha khā hi khā hiḥ*.

Offer *arghaṃ* and so forth.

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<sup>107</sup> At this point in Tāranātha's text we find extra lines which have been omitted in the Panchen Lama's version: "This is the recitation by means of one and a half million [recitations]. Then, recite the action *mantra* one hundred thousand [times. *Mantra* removed]. This completes the recitation." *[b]zla zhing 'bum phrag bco lngas bsnyen pa'o/ de nas [mantra removed]/ zhes las sngags 'bum phrag gcig bzlas te/ bsnyen pa rdzogs pa yin no/*

For the Praises [recite] "I pay homage with devotion to this Tārā, the goddess of pure desire, the subjugating goddess, the glorious lady, the lady who moves the three worlds."

"Receive this offering *gtor-ma*! I request my aims [to be fulfilled]!"

[Perform] the hundred syllable *mantra* [of Vajrasattva], the request for forgiveness [for errors made in the recitation] and the request for the deity to depart. These are as in the general [practices].

To perform the permission [to practise] this [deity]:

Arrange red grains and the offering *gtor-ma* at the centre of an eight petalled red lotus. Preceding the self-generation bless the offerings in the general manner. Purify the front-generation. Purify [it] into emptiness with [the] *shūnyatā* [*mantra*].

A red moon [emerges] from within emptiness, on top of which is a *taṃ*, from which [arises] an *utpala* marked with *taṃ*. Light [rays] emanate and gather in [from the *taṃ*]. From where it says "Red Tārā" [in the text the ritual] is [performed] as before up until "crown". Then, perform the offerings and praises as before.

You will achieve whatever [you desire through performance of the] recitation [of the *mantra* which includes the name of the] object to the front-generation.

Bless the tormā, and having made the offerings practise as you did above until the invocation of the aims.

As for being the pupil:



Offer the *maṇḍala*. State this request. Finish [by reciting] the request to the buddhas of the three times and so forth, three times.

In order to purify the mind in preparation go for refuge in front of the deity of the front-generation, and the buddhas (612) and *bodhisattvas*. Repeat this after me [whilst] thinking the thought that I will hold the *bodhicitta* [-mind] and so forth. Say "I take refuge in the Triple Gem" and so forth, [recite] the Daily Confession three times, and in particular [say] "Please grant me the permission [to perform] Tārā". Say again the recitation of this aspirational thought. Having made the request [recite] three times "Teacher, please pay heed! Please grant me the permission [to perform] Tārā without leaving anything out".

Then, to beg for the four establishments of the permission to practise, likewise request to perform this visualisation. [*mantra* removed].

All the inner and outer things are brought to the state of non-conceptual emptiness from which [arises an] *ā*, [from which arises] a red moon [marked] on top with *taṃ*. [This *taṃ* is] the essence of your mind itself. Having emanated and gathered in light from the *utpala* marked with a *taṃ*, you yourself bloom as Venerable Red Tārā. She has a passionate expression. She holds an iron hook on her right [side] on top of her knee. On her left are the petals of a red *utpala* blossoming at her ear, the root [of which is] in the aspect of a noose held at her heart. She sits in the *bodhisattva* cross-legged posture. She is adorned with silks and precious gems. She has three eyes. Imagine that her heart becomes marked with a *hrīḥ* [syllable] on a moon, at her forehead [is an] *om*, at her throat an *āḥ*, at her heart a *hūṃ*. (613) Then, [visualise that] the grain in front and also

the Master are actually Venerable Tārā. With respectful thoughts [such as these], light rays emanate from the heart of the Master. Invoke the deity of the front visualisation. Light rays emanate from their heart. By invoking all the *bodhisattvas* and the buddhas of the ten directions innumerable large and small bodies of Venerable Tārā descend from the heart of the Master, the deity of the front visualisation, all the *bodhisattvas*, and the buddhas of the ten directions.

In particular, visualise them [falling] like rain from the pores of those [mentioned above] melting and dissolving [into you].

[*mantra* removed. These innumerable Tārās] dissolve nondually. As for these, they are the [mark of] establishing the four permissions.

The three oral transmissions [*lung*] are within the actual permission [to practise, *rjes-gnang*].

As for the 'oral transmission [received in order to have permission] to recite [the requisite *mantras*]. It is performed] after the first [permission to practise as follows:]

From a red *taṃ* on top of a moon-*maṇḍala* at the heart of the Master arises the *mantra*-garland. [The syllables of the *mantra*] emerge through the Master's mouth. They enter through your mouth [and] dissolve into a red *taṃ* residing on top of a moon [disk] at your heart. At that moment all the power, wisdom, and compassion of buddhas of the ten directions and *bodhisattvas* in the aspect of light rays, together with the *mantra*-garland, enter through [your] mouth. You must imagine [they] dissolve into the *taṃ* [at your] heart. Say the heart *mantra* [*mantra* removed] three times.

(614) Having said the *mantra* repeat [*mantra* removed] three times. It is

blessed with the first [recitation]. It is written indivisibly with the second [recitation]. With the third [recitation] you must imagine that [the presence of the *mantra*-garland at your heart] is made stable.

Second, as for the 'blessing oral transmission':

You must repeat this [sentence] as if [you are] scattering flowers to the Master: "*Bhagavān*, I am truly adhering [to you], please stick to me".

Say this three times. Accordingly, [you] are consecrated again by the offering flowers themselves. The Master scatters the flowers. [You] should imagine that [they] are offered to your crown. May the blessings without remainder of the body, speech and mind of Venerable Tārā enter these knowledge holders and this *Bhagavān* and so forth.

Third, for the sake of the 'commitment oral transmission':

Adhere to the *yi-dam* [meditation deity] as the *Bhagavāni* Venerable Tārā until enlightenment is attained. Your mind must not forsake [this vision]. Mentally repeat this [sentence]: "I the knowledge-holder [*vidyādhara*] named [insert your name], I shall consider the *Bhagavāni* Venerable Tārā, together with her retinue, as the *yi-dam* deity until I attain supreme enlightenment. I take the vow to recite this many [repetitions of the secret-*mantra*] each day". (615) Say this three times.

Therefore, these are the three actual oral transmissions.

The concluding actions [of the ritual] are [performed] as [per] the general method.

#### 4.9. Analysis of the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs* Lineage

Following the translation presented above this last section of Chapter Four analyses the progression of the lineage over time and discusses how it relates to the earlier *Sa-skyapa* lineage of Red Tārā.

##### 4.9.1. The Progression of the Lineage

If we track the progress of the works of Tāranātha, the Seventh Panchen Lama, and 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs it becomes clear that with each author the texts increase in length. Tāranātha's three folio work is by far the shortest, the text composed by the Panchen Lama numbers six folios, and 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs commentary stands at 21 folios.

Tāranātha composed his *Rin 'byung brgya tsa* in order to preserve works in danger of being lost, and one can therefore assume that the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā tradition was itself fading out of popular religious practice in Tibet during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our second text, the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs* of the Seventh Panchen Lama, is included in his *Rin lhan* cycle, composed in 1810 at the time of his visit to Mongolia. Typically of his collection, he expanded the works found in Tāranātha's *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* and included more details such as the appropriate *mantras* and praises, and complete instructions for the correct bestowal of the requisite initiations. Due to the expanded nature of this work it was chosen for the translation presented within the present thesis.

'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs *rJe btsun 'phags ma sgrol dmar mo'i sa lugs bsnyen pa'i khrid yig utpa la dmar po'i phreng ba bzugs so* is, as we can see from the title, an explanatory text relating to Red Tārā of the *Sa-skyapa* school. The commentary explains that it relates to the Red Tārā text found in the *sGrub thabs rin 'byung*,<sup>108</sup> compiled by the Seventh Panchen Lama. As we have seen the textual tradition travelled from its

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<sup>108</sup> The *sGrub thabs rin 'byung* is another title for the *Rin-lhan*.

original *Sa-skyapa* lineage to be included in the works of Tāranātha, the famed *Jo-nang-pa* scholar. From there it found its way into the works of the *dGe-lugs-pa* Panchen Lama, then later back to the *Jo-nang-pa* lineage with the commentary by 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs. One wonders why 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs decided to compose a commentary on this text in particular. Did he have the same motivation as Tāranātha, to keep the lineage from dying out? Or rather, had the practice increased in popularity, therefore requiring further clarification? This may be the case, as the text ends by stating that it was composed in response to a request made by one Ngag-dbang chos-'byor (1846-1910), a student of 'Ba'-mda'. As we saw in Section 4.7.4. it may also be the case that 'Ba'-mda' had contact with masters at Bla-brang who were engaged in the composition of Red Tārā texts.

When I directly compared the texts composed by Tāranātha and the Panchen Lama I identified some identical passages at the beginning of the two works. These include the preliminary practices, the generation of the goddess, the *mantra* recitation and so forth. In Tāranātha's text this is followed by some more information on the necessary *mantras*, after which he discusses the work of Ngag-dbang grags-pa and how it differs from other texts. He then outlines the various initiations one would need in order to perform the practice. The Panchen Lama's work begins in a similar way to that of Tāranātha with the generation of the deity, *gtor-ma* offerings, recitation, and so on. After this point the Panchen Lama's work is more elaborate than Tāranātha's: he includes information on the method of obtaining the permission to perform the practise, how to act as the Disciple, the *rjes-gnang* (permission to practise) itself, and the oral transmission (*lung*).

In 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs' commentary all this is taken much further and it is much longer and more detailed in nature. He begins by stating that "I will write the essential points of the visualisation stages [to] approach the *Sa-skyapa* tradition Red

Tārā arising from the 'Hundred *Sādhana*s' [*sGrub-thabs rin-'byung*]" ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 199?: 530). He then explains that the practice is divided into three main sections: the preliminary practices, the main body of the practice, and the subsequent practices. He goes on to describe each in great detail, providing further sub-divisions at each point. He relates much of the practice to the concept of suffering within *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and provides detailed commentaries on the object of refuge, actual refuge, mind generation, and contemplation of the Four Immeasurables. This is followed by discussion of the recitation- and deity-*yogas*. The method for generating the deity is outlined, at which point 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs follows the visualisation provided in the source text but goes on to provide a great deal of elaboration, relating each of the goddess' body parts to Buddhist philosophical concepts. Finally the consecration and recitation are explained, with each type of recitation being broken down and discussed.

#### **4.9.2. The Relationship Between the Later Textual Tradition and the Earlier Cycle and *Tenjur* Text**

Of the three texts examined above only Tāranātha's refers back directly to the lineage masters discussed in the beginning of this chapter. In his text we find the names Ngag-dbang grags-pa, rDo-rje gdan-pa, bSod-nams 'byung-gnas, and gNyen lo-tsās-ba. If we examine the iconography of the goddess as she is described in these texts we may be able to come to a conclusion regarding the source text from the collection presented in Chapter Four. If we examine Tāranātha's tradition, as the basis of all three texts, we see Tārā with a blazing red-coloured body, described as a magnetising/subjugating goddess. Her right hand holds a red iron hook on top of her knee, used to magnetise all prosperity and goodness of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. In her left hand is a red *utpala* flower, seen with a full bloom, petals, and stem. "The tip of the stem is a

binding noose [and it is] held with the *mudrā* of the three jewels at [her] heart". She sits in the lotus posture with jewellery and silks, the usual adornments of a goddess. She has three eyes and the three syllables (*om*, *āḥ*, *hūṃ*) adorn her forehead, throat, and heart ('Ba'-mda' dGe-legs 199?).

This iconography closely relates to the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā found in the *Sa-skyapa* Cycle (*sGrub thabs kun btus* 1902*kha*).<sup>109</sup> Unfortunately 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs does not specify the particular text from which his version originates. Through a comparison with the texts in the Cycle we can see that Text SII, the fire ritual Text SV, Text SVI, and the *Tenjur* text employ similar iconography to that found in the later tradition. All three describe the goddess as red with three eyes and seated cross-legged. She is seen wielding an iron hook and an *utpala* flower adorned with a noose. Text SVII is also very similar. However, in this text the iron hook is ornamented with red flowers, not depicted in the later tradition.

The texts in question were composed by numerous authors. Text SII was translated by Don-yon rdo-rje and Ba-ri lo-tsa-ba. Text SV by Avadhūtī-pa and Text SVI states that it is based on the Indian scripture of rDo-rje gdan-pa from the work of dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa bsod-nams, written by dPal-ldan don-grub at the request of dGe-shes Rin-chen 'od-zer. According to Tāranātha his work is based on that of rDo-rje gdan-pa, Ngag-dbang grags-pa, and gNyan lo-tsa-ba Dar-ma-grags (11<sup>th</sup> century). rDo-rje gdan-pa is indeed mentioned in Text SII and SVI. However, the iconography does not seem to relate to those texts composed by Ngag-dbang grags-pa, while gNyen lo-tsa-ba is not mentioned in any of the earlier texts at all. In Text SIII of the cycle from the lineage of Ngag-dbang grags-pa the iconography differs from the later tradition, with Tārā depicted holding a light-emitting red lotus on her left. Text SVII,

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<sup>109</sup> The Tibetan text of the *sGrub thabs kun btus* can be found in the TBRC archives at W23681, Core Collection 1.

in which the iconography is very similar, does however belong to the tradition of both Ngag-dbang grags-pa and rDo-rje gdan-pa.

According to Tāranātha's work and his own stated lineage it is possible that the source text may be Text SVI, where the iconography is identical, and where rDo-rje gdan-pa is listed. However, it may be that the root text is in fact Text SVII and that the iconography had slightly altered by the time Tāranātha composed his work. Due to the variant iconography and lineages found between the Cycle and the later tradition it is not possible to make a final judgement regarding which of these texts may be the original source used by Tāranātha in his composition of the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs*. Within his work he does not provide us with the name of the text upon which he relied. However, as this point we have shed light on two likely candidates.

#### **4.10. Some Concluding Remarks on the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā**

As we have seen the tradition of *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā has two distinct periods. The original cycle (Anonymous 1902*kha*) contains nine individual texts derived from the Indian teachers Avadhūti-pa, Vajrasāna, Amoghavajra, Siṃhadvajra and Vāgiśvara. The iconography of the goddesses does not indicate a direct link to Kurukullā, further demonstrating the thesis that not all Red Tārās are Kurukullā. Furthermore, the iron hook and *utpala* root noose held by these deities are simply indicative of her subjugating function. Our examination of the methods for subjugation laid out in these texts describes their function: snaring and hooking. In fact the *Sa-skyapa* Cycle provides the most and clearest detail on the actual methods for subjugation found within any lineage discussed within this dissertation. Here we see kings, local ministers, fortunate people, and women subjugated in practices employing wheels,



*stūpas* and effigies through both standard *sādhana* rituals and also the more specific method of fire-*pūja*.

The cycle's translation by Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba dates it to the *phyi-dar* period of Tibetan Buddhism. This indicates that during the *phyi-dar* both *Sa-skya-pa* and Pīṭheśvarī Red Tārā practices were translated from Sanskrit and disseminated in Tibet. Furthermore, with the later commentary by 'Ba'-mda' dGe-legs we see another period of the proliferation of Red Tārās by 'Ba'-mda' and leaders from Bla-brang monastery, all working in A-mdo. In fact, A-pam gter-ston, the focus of Chapter Six, also lived in A-mdo where he discovered his Red Tārā *gter-ma* cycle in the early twentieth century.

As for *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā practice at the present day Lama Jampa Thaye (David Stott), an eminent British *Sa-skya-pa* master, bestowed the initiation of Text SVI of the *Sa-skya-pa* Red Tārā cycle in Bristol on 10th July 2010 and again at the Yeshe Nyingpo centre in Los Angeles on 23rd April 2011. He stated that the initiation had been offered by Ka-rma 'phrin-las in Bristol eleven years previously. As we can see it is clear that this practice lineage has continued into the modern day. However, it is not widely practiced by Thaye's Dechen Community.

Having discussed the two *phyi-dar* period lineages of Red Tārās - *Sa-skya-pa* and Pīṭheśvarī - Chapter Five moves on to analyse the iconography and function of the various Red Tārās found within the Twenty-one Tārā group of goddesses.



Chapter Five  
Red Tārās in the Twenty-one Tārās



Fig. 5.1: sGrol-ma myur-ma dpa'-mo.  
Photo received at the initiation of Sūryagupta's Twenty-one Tārās.  
Nov. 2006, Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharamsala, India  
(Author's collection)

Who are the Twenty-one Tārās? What are their religious functions? How do the various lineages of this goddess group differ? How does the practice of Red Tārā fit within the greater practice of the Twenty-one Tārās? This chapter sets out to consider these questions and more through an examination of the numerous forms of the goddess Red Tārā as they appear within the various commentarial lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās. The chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the root text, *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*, and move on to discuss the main iconographic lineages of the goddesses.

Within these various lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās we will find a number of individual Red Tārās, and as such their particular iconography and function will be highlighted in more detail. Following this the chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of a Twenty-one Tārā initiation performed in the present day, with special attention paid to the red goddess sGrol-ma myur-ma dpa'-mo.

## **5.1. Red Tārās in the Twenty-one Tārās**

*The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* is the basis for all lineages of the Twenty-one Tārā (sGrol ma nyi shu rtsa gcig/ sGrol ma nyer gcig) group of goddesses. I shall begin with a brief discussion of this important prayer, followed by an introduction to the commentarial lineages based upon *The Praise*.

### **5.1.1. *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* and the History of the Twenty-one Tārā Group of Goddesses**

The *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* is an important prayer in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as such a number of Western authors have discussed the *Praise* and have provided their own translations of the text (Beyer 2001 [1973]; Bokar Rinpoche 2001;

Chodron 2005; Lopez Jr 1997; Sherab and Dongyal 2007; Tai Situpa 2009; Urgyen Rinpoche and Adeu Rinpoche 2007; Wayman 1959; Willson 1986). However, many of these works are aimed at Tārā practitioners rather than the academic community. Perhaps the most comprehensive translation was made by Willson who relied on both the original Sanskrit and Tibetan texts as a basis for his rendition (Willson 1986: 117-66). Since prior research has been conducted into the *Praise* by a large number of scholars I shall not attempt to advance the current discussion of the prayer itself in this chapter. Rather, my intention is to provide the reader with the necessary background information in order to contextualise the later discussion of the individual Red Tārās found in the Twenty-one Tārā lineages.

What is the origin of *The Praise*? *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* (*sGrol ma la phyag 'tshal ba nyi shu gcig gis bstod pa*) originated as a Sanskrit text, *The Bhagavatyaṛyatārādevyā namaskāraikaviṃśati-stotraṃ guṇa-hita-sahitam*. *The Praise* is found within the third chapter of the 35-chapter Tibetan translation of the *Sarvatathāgatamāṭṭṛtārāviśvakarma-bhavatantra-nāma* (*De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi yum sgrol ma las sna tshogs 'byung ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud*, *The Tantra that is the Source of All Rites to Tārā, The Mother of All Tathāgatas*) (Dharmāśrīmitra and Chos-kyi bzang-po).

It is believed that *The Praise* was taught by the Buddha Vairocana (Chodron 2005: 59; Lopez Jr 1997: 549; Rhie and Thurman 1991: 124; Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 232; Wayman 1959). This link with Vairocana as the original source of the Tārā *Praise* is interesting as Vairocana is the central deity of the *kriyātantras*, the class of Tantric texts to which the majority of Tārā practices belong. Bokar Rinpoche (1940-2004) however provides a variant of this information. He states that the original text is found in the *sGrol ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po rtog pa bdun brgya ba* (*The Seven Hundred Instructions, The King of the Tārā Tantra*) (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 94).

Furthermore, earlier in the Tibetan tradition the First Dalai Lama (dGe-'dun grub-pa, 1391-1474) believed the *Four-fold Maṇḍala Offering to Tārā* (*sGrol ma maṇḍal gzhi mchog*) to be the basis for the practice of reciting *The Praise* (Mullin 2003: 78).

Although *The Praise* may be considered as a prayer to the various forms of the goddess it may also be treated as a *dhāraṇī* of the transcribed Sanskrit, as explained by the First Dalai Lama, who believed that great blessing is received when one recites *The Praise* (Mullin 2003: 76-77; Wayman 1959: 37). With the move of the Tārā cult from India to Tibet *The Praise* was translated into Tibetan and included in the canon, within the *Kanjur*. The only version of these translations to have survived to the modern day is that of gNyan lo-tsā-ba Dar-ma-grags (11<sup>th</sup> century). This translation was later revised by rJe-bstun Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216), who composed a number of commentaries on the text (Day 1990:93; rJe-btsun grags-pa rgyal-mtshan 1968*kha, ga, nga*; Willson 1986: 109).<sup>110</sup>

With regards to Western scholarship, Wayman posits that *The Praise* is "a syncretism of Śaivism and Buddhism". He observes that in addition to Buddhist terminology *The Praise* employs Śaiva terms such as *śakti* which he feels is rare. Thus, he concludes that as such the work is a combination of the two traditions (Wayman 1959). This may be due to the fact that Wayman follows the argument that the Buddhist Tārā originated before the Hindu form of the goddess. However, it seems equally plausible that instead of a combination of the two traditions the *Praise* rather incorporates Hindu terminology into the prayer in much the same way that elements of Hindu iconography are found in depictions of tantric Buddhist deities.

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<sup>110</sup> rJe-bstun Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was one of the five *Sa-skya* patriarchs (*Sa-skya gong-ma lnga*). He was the son of Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po (1092-1158) and the brother of bSod-nams rtse-mo (1142-1182), the first and second *Sa-skya* patriarchs (Stearns 2002: 175; Trichen Rinpoche 1983). He is the author of three texts concerning the Twenty-one Tārās: the *Phyag 'tshal nyer gcig gi bstod pa sa bcad*; the *bsTod pa'i rnam bshad gsal ba'i 'od zer*; and the *Nyi ma sbas pas mdzad pa'i rgya gzhung gi las tshogs kyi bsdus don* (rGyal mtshan 1968*kha, ga, and nga*).

The *sGrol ma la phyag 'tshal ba nyi shu gcig gis bstod pa* as a separate text may be found in the various *Kanjurs* (*bKa' 'gyur ka*).

The eight-syllable metre of *The Praise* is unique in the Tibetan language (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 211). Meanwhile, the Sanskrit original adopts the *anuṣṭubh* metre, composed of eight-syllable *pādas* (half-lines) (Willson 1986: 108). *The Praise* consists of twenty-one verses, each of four lines. Mullin elaborates that the first, third, fourth, and seventh syllables of each line are emphasised when reciting the text (Mullin 2003: 76-78). Each four-line verse is dedicated to a particular aspect of the goddess Tārā. In the later Tibetan commentaries, to be discussed below, the iconography and function of these individual goddesses differ among the various lineages. The twenty-one verses are then followed by a verse listing the benefits of reciting *The Praise*; however, this last section is not always recited by practitioners.

A number of authors have attempted to classify verses of *The Praise* into coherent groups. Rhie and Thurman write that the first seven verses refer to the legend of the goddess, the second seven to the fierce forms of Tārā, and the final seven to her enlightened activities (Rhie and Thurman 1991: 124). The First Dalai Lama further splits *The Praise* into defined groups:

|               |                                          |
|---------------|------------------------------------------|
| Verse 1       | Tārā's story                             |
| Verses 2-15   | Tārā's aspects                           |
| (Verses 2-14) | <i>Sam̐bhogakāya</i> aspects             |
| (Verses 2-7)  | Peaceful forms                           |
| (Verses 8-14) | Wrathful forms                           |
| Verse 15      | <i>Dharmakāya</i> aspect                 |
| Verses 16-21  | Tārā's activities (Chodron 2005: 65-67). |

The colours of the individual goddesses: white, yellow, red, and black/blue correspond to the four actions (*'phrin las bzhi*) of pacification, increase, subjugation, and destruction as discussed in Section 2.1. Each Tārā is distinguished by her own function, iconography, and *mantra* which vary according to the commentarial tradition one practises. However, the *mantra* of Green Tārā *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture*

*svāhā* may be used in general, or for the group as a whole, as most often Green Tārā is the central deity of the *maṇḍala*. However, as we will see this is not always the case.

As stated above, within Tibet there exist a number of lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās. Wayman explains that the *Tenjur* contains several works based on *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*. He argues that these works are not commentaries as such, but rather deal with the twenty-one individual goddesses discussed in *The Praise*. Wayman identifies two main lineages: Sūryagupta and Candragōmin (Wayman 1959: 37). Beyer further defines three commentarial lineages: Sūryagupta, Nāgārjuna via Atiśa, and Klong-chen-pa (in the *Klong chen snying thig*) (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 469-70) and it is indeed these three which are the best known. However the insightful work of Jeff Watt at the Himalayan Art Resources has unearthed a total of five systems: Sūryagupta, Atiśa, *Sādhana-samuccaya*, 'Jigs-med gling-pa based on the *Klong chen snying thig* (which descends from Klong-chen-pa), and mChog-gyur gling-pa (Watt c). These five lineages will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

Sherab and Dongyal examine the reasons behind the existence of the twenty-one emanations. They state that on a basic level the Buddha taught twenty-one methods for enlightenment. Furthermore, in the tantric tradition the body is thought to be composed of twenty-one knots, located in pairs which block the body's channels. Through the practice of the twenty-one Tārās one can unblock these knots, achieve realisations, and ultimately attain buddhahood. Alongside this, the *dharmakāya* is endowed with twenty-one inherent qualities which arise in the form of the Twenty-one Tārās. Thus, Sherab and Dongyal relate the practice of the Twenty-one Tārās to the *trikāya* (Three Bodies of the Buddha) doctrine (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 24-25).

Within Tibet the function of the prayer is to free one from fear, provide protection on long journeys, assist with the conception of children, protect after birth,



and for success with a new business or home (Day 1990: 101; Lopez Jr 1997: 549-50; Mullin 2003: 62). *The Praise* is known throughout the Tibetan cultural region and is learned by Tibetans as children when they recite it daily at the beginning of the school day.<sup>111</sup> It is recited by monastics and laity alike, morning and evening, and whilst Beyer describes it as the most important praise to Tārā Willson goes further and believes that it may be the most popular hymn to any deity in Tibet (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 211; Willson 1986: 107). Beyer states:

Everyone in K'am knows this entire hymn, and anyone who might admit that he had not memorized it all is considered to be as laughably foolish as one who has never learned his OM MANI PADME HUM (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 232).

Although the benefits of recitation appear to be on the whole mundane, as we have seen above in Sherab and Dongyal's discussion of the *trikāya* doctrine the ultimate goal of Tārā practice is soteriological, nothing less than the attainment of enlightenment. Within the final section of *The Praise* the benefits of recitation are clarified. Chodron elaborates that through recitation of the prayer one may receive the four requisites with which one is able to practice the *Dharma*: food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. A lama might also gain a student. She goes on to write that practitioners will gain common and supreme attainments such as the Eight *Siddhis*, or even Buddhahood. When a practitioner recites *The Praise* in the morning he or she focuses on the peaceful aspects of Tārā, and in the evening on her wrathful aspects. This provides an interesting parallel to one form of the goddess: Tārā Peaceful by Day and Wrathful by Night (sGrol-ma nyin-zhi mtshan-khro). Whether seeking good rebirth, liberation, or Buddhahood this recitation is a method of purifying obstacles to one's goal (Chodron 2005: 99-102).

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<sup>111</sup> This was my personal observation both in the Tibetan exile community at Darjeeling, at the Central School for Tibetans, and also inside the Tibetan region of Khams during a two month stay at rGyal-bstan slob-grwa (school), dKar-mdzas Province, Khams.

Having examined the historical and literary background to *The Praise* we will now move on to examine the individual iconographic lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās as they descend from Sūryagupta, Atiśa, and the *rNying-ma* school. The lineages are presented in chronological order of their origin.

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Fig. 5.2: **The Twenty-one Tārās in the Lineage of Sūryagupta**  
(Too 2007b)

### 5.1.2. The Sūryagupta Lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās (*sBas-lugs*)

The Sūryagupta (Ravigupta, Kha-che Nyi-ma sbas-pa, 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās details the most complex iconography and as such is the most widely studied by Western scholars, it is also the earliest tradition of the five. Little is known about the *Mahāsiddha* Sūryagupta, yet the inclusion of *Kha-che* in his name indicates that he hailed from Kashmir. He was the master of Sarvajña-mitra, another renowned Tārā practitioner (TBRC 2006; Watt *c*).

Within the Sūryagupta system each Tārā adopts an individual posture, colour, mood, and emblem. Some of the Tārās are wrathful whereas others are peaceful (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 469-70; Bokar Rinpoche 2001; Watt *c*). Despite involving the most complex iconography of all the lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās it appears that the Sūryagupta tradition has fallen out of favour with the Tibetan Buddhist world, and most *sādhanas* are accordingly based on one of the other traditions (Willson 1986: 118). Beyer concurs with this conclusion:

Very few artists nowadays, for example, depict the Twenty-one Tārās according to the canonical school of Sūryagupta but rather they follow the school attributed (without canonical warrant) to Nāgārjuna, which is claimed, again, to have been transmitted by Atiśa; and many artists follow a Nyingma or "ancient" tradition embodied in the "hidden text" *Heart Drops of the Great Long*, which makes no claim at all to canonical authenticity (Beyer 2001 [1973]: xiii).

Bokar Rinpoche states that whereas in the other traditions the Twenty-one Tārās are usually depicted together in one painting, Sūryagupta's goddesses are commonly depicted on individual *thang-gas* (Bokar Rinpoche 2001: 145). Despite the decline in favour of the Sūryagupta lineage, as we will see later in this chapter, ritual initiation into the Sūryagupta tradition is still offered at the present time.

This tradition known as the *sBas-lugs* originated in the mid-ninth century (Willson 1986: 109-110), and the story of the origin of the lineage is found in *The Blue Annals*. Here it states that Sūryagupta had fallen ill with leprosy and resided for three months at the Rang-byung lha-Inga Temple. At this site there was a famous

image of Tārā known as the Ta'u Tārā, renowned for curing the leprosy of those who practised there. Whilst in residence Sūryagupta received a vision of Tārā, who cured his leprosy, except for the symptoms of the disease on his forehead. The Goddess stated that his forehead remained affected due to the bad *karma* accrued from his past deeds. During this vision Tārā bestowed a *sādhana* (practice) and *stotra* (praise) upon Sūryagupta, after which he composed his commentaries on *The Praise*. The subsequent lineage is given as follows: Candragarbha, Jetāri, Vāgīśvara (Vāgīśvarakīrti, Ngag-gi dbang-phyug), Śraddhākara, Tathāgatarakṣita, Dānaśīla, and Mal-gyo lo-tsā-ba who translated the text (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 1050-52; Willson 1986: 109-110).

The lineage of another version of the text, translated by Khro-phu lo-tsā-ba, containing the magical rites following each praise passed from Tārā to Ānanda (Kun-dga'-bo), Madhyāntika (Nyi-ma gung-pa), Sānavāsin (Shā-na'i gos-can), Kṛṣṇavāsin (Kṛṣṇa'i gos-can), Ravigupta (Sūryagupta, Kha-che Nyi-ma sbas-pa 7/8th century), Rāhulaśrī, Vindaśrī, Pañchen Śākyaśrībhadra (1125-1225), Khro-phu lo-tsā-ba (1173-1225), Bla-chen bSod-nams dbang-phyug (13th century), Rin-po-che-pa, Tshad-ma'i skyes-bu bsod-nams mgon (13th century), Bu Rin-po-che, Mal-gyo (11th century), Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po (1092-1158), bSod-nams rtse-mo (1142-1182), rJe-btsun Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216), 'Chims Chos-seng (13th century), 'Jam-gsar Shes-rab 'od-zer (12th century), Rong-pa Shes-rab seng-ge (1251-1315), dPal-ldan seng-ge (13th century), Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375), rGod-phrug Grags-pa 'byung-gnas (14th century), to the author of *The Blue Annals* 'Gos lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal (1392-1481) (Roerich 2007 [1949]: 1051-52).

In all, Sūryagupta composed five commentaries on *The Praise*. Although *The Praise* itself falls within the *kriyātantra* section his commentaries are of the Highest

*Yoga Tantra (yoganiruttaratantra)* class. The iconography of the goddesses differ somewhat between these texts (Willson 1986: 109-110), which are as follows:

1. *The Practice of the Twenty-one-fold Praise of Tārā* (Toh. 1685)<sup>112</sup>  
*Tārādevi-stotra-ekaviṃśatika-sādhana-nāma*  
*lHa mo sgrol ma'i bstod pa nyi shu rtsa gcig pa'i sgrub thabs* (Sūryagupta  
*cha*)
2. *The Summary of the Practice of the Venerable Ārya-Tārā, with the Twenty-one Branches of Ritual* (Toh. 1686)  
No Sanskrit title  
*rJe btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs nyi shu rtsa gcig pa'i las kyi yan*  
*lag dang bcas pa mdo bsdus pa* (Sūryagupta *ga*)
3. *The Method of Instruction on the Accomplishment of Tārā* (Toh. 1687)  
*Tārā-sādhana-upadeśa-krama*  
*sGrol ma'i sgrub thabs man ngag gi rim pa* (Sūryagupta *ka*)
4. *An Approach to the Twenty-one-fold Praise of the Lady Tārā* (Toh. 1688)  
*Bhagavati-tārādevī-ekaviṃśati-stotrôpāyika*  
*bCom ldan 'das ma sgrol ma'i bstod pa nyi shu rtsa gcig pa'i sgrub thabs*  
(Sūryagupta *kha*)
5. *The Praise of the Twenty-one Tārās, Called the Pure Head-Jewel* (Toh. 1689)  
*Devī-tārā-ekaviṃśati-visuddha-cūḍāmaṇi-nāma*

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<sup>112</sup> The 'Toh' number refers to the place of the individual text in the sDe-dge *Tenjur*.

*Lha mo sgrol ma nyi shu rtsa gcig la bstod pa rnam dag tsug gi nor bu*  
(Sūryagupta *ca*)

Within Tibet the *Sa-skya-pa* rJe-bstun Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216) became the lineage holder of Sūryagupta's Tārā teachings and he himself composed twelve commentaries on the tradition (rJe-btsun grags-pa rgyal-mtshan 1968*kha, ga, nga*; Willson 1986:111). Beyer writes that rNam-rgyal rgyal-mtshan's *Mi tra brgya rtsa'i snang gi grub chen nyi ma sbas pa'i lugs kyi sgrol ma nyi shu rtsa gcig gi mngon par rtogs pa* also employs visualisations of the twenty-one goddesses in accordance with Sūryagupta's iconography yet attributes them to Mitrayogin (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 469-70). This is evidenced by the presence of *Mi tra brgya rtsa* in the title. The *Mi tra brgya rtsa* is a collection of initiations into deity practices compiled by Mitrayogin.<sup>113</sup>

Within the Sūryagupta tradition there are five White Tārās, seven Gold, six Red, and three Black: each of these colours symbolises one of the Four Actions. A detailed description of each goddess is provided in Table 5.1. below. For iconographic examples of the Twenty-one Tārās as found in the Sūryagupta tradition see Chandra, Kreijger, Tanaka, and Tucci. Clark's *Two Lamaist Pantheons* includes some interesting depictions of Sūryagupta's Twenty-one Tārās from the Pao-hsiang Lou Pantheon. Meanwhile, beautiful colour illustrations of the Sūryagupta lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās can be found in Willson and Brauen, Nos. 275-299 (Chandra 1987: Nos. 784-805; Clark 1937: 274-81; Kreijger 2001: No. 15; Tanaka 1998-2001: No. 74; Tucci 1989: 158-60; Willson and Brauen 2000: 122-30, 316-19).

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<sup>113</sup> For more information concerning the *Mi tra brgya rtsa* see Section 2.3.2.3.

Table 5.1: **The Sūryagupta Lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās**  
(Bokar Rinpoche 2001; Chodron 2005; Willson 1986; Willson and Brauen 2000)

| No. | Name (Tib)                      | Name (Skt)                                                      | Name (Eng)                    | Colour | Iconography                                                                                                 | Implements                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Power                                                  | Crown     |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1   | Rab-tu dpa'-ba'i sgrol-ma       | Pravīra-tārā                                                    | Tārā Swift and Heroic         | Red    | 8 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated on a yellow/ gold lotus                                                          | RL1 <sup>114</sup> proclaims the <i>Dharma</i> with the <i>mudrā</i> of Great Joy with <i>vajra</i> (R) and bell (L) at her crown<br>RL2 bow and arrow<br>R3 wheel<br>R4 wisdom-sword<br>L3 conch<br>L4 noose | Turns back the power of others<br>Overcomes all demons | Vairocana |
| 2   | dKar-mo zla-mdangs-kyi sgrol-ma | Candra-kānti-<br>[gaurī-]<br>tārā/<br>Candrajaḥ- sukla-<br>tārā | Tārā White as the Autumn Moon | White  | 12 arms (the 12 links of dependant origination) <sup>115</sup><br>3 faces (the <i>trikāyā</i> )<br>Standing | RL1 <i>mudrā</i> of contemplation<br>R2 <i>khatvāṅga</i><br>R3 wheel<br>R4 jewel/ wisdom-sword<br>R5 <i>vajra</i><br>R6 flower garland<br>L2 bottle (washes away defilements)<br>L3 <i>utpala</i>             | Calms infectious disease<br>Pacifies                   | Amitābha  |

<sup>114</sup> For the purposes of describing the iconographic tradition of the Tārās I have adopted the following convention for conveying the implements held in the arms of each goddess. RL refers to the right and left arms together. R1, L1 and so forth pertains to the right or left arm and the number of the arm on that side of the body, with 1 as the uppermost arm. This system was employed by Willson in his discussion of the goddesses. F refers to the face (Willson 1986).

<sup>115</sup> Information provided in brackets relates to the symbolism of the implement in question.

|   |                                                  |                                               |                                                                                     |                 |                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |
|---|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|   |                                                  |                                               |                                                                                     |                 |                                                                                                                                                | L4 bell<br>L5 pot of treasure<br>L6 small book<br>RF blue<br>CF white<br>LF gold                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |
| 3 | gSer-mdog<br>can-gyi<br>sgrol-ma                 | Kanakāvarṇa-tārā                              | Golden-coloured<br>Tārā/ Tārā of the<br>Perfections                                 | Gold            | 10 arms (10 <i>pāramitās</i> /<br>perfections)<br>1 face<br>Seated in <i>vajraparyāṅka</i><br>on a lotus sun/ moon<br>seat                     | R1 rosary at her heart<br>R2 wisdom-sword<br>R3 arrow (pacifies<br>defilements)<br>R4 <i>vajra</i><br>R5 small staff<br>L1 silk scarf<br>L2 noose<br>L3 lotus<br>L4 bell<br>L5 bow (of compassion) | Prolongs life<br>Increases<br>resources,<br>wisdom, and<br>positive potential                                                                                                                                               | Ratnasambhava |
| 4 | gTsug-gtor<br>rnam-par<br>rgyal-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma | Uṣṇīṣavijaya-tārā                             | Tārā the Victorious<br><i>Uṣṇīṣa</i> of the<br><i>Tathāgatas</i>                    | Gold            | 4 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a<br>yellow lotus and moon<br>seat (uncontaminated<br>virtue and non-<br>attachment) | R1 <i>mudrā</i> of granting<br>boons (Skt: <i>varada</i> )<br>R2 rosary<br>L1 bottle/ perfume<br>L2 staff/bottle                                                                                   | Neutralises lethal<br>poisons<br>Increases life<br>Counteracts<br>premature death<br>She symbolises<br>the forces which<br>subdue negative<br>events in this life<br>and therefore<br>brings happiness<br>in <i>saṃsāra</i> | Amoghasiddhi  |
| 5 | Hūṃ-sgra<br>sgrog-pa'i<br>sgrol-ma               | Hūṃsvara-nādinī-<br>tārā/<br>Hūṃ-śabdinī-tārā | Tārā Proclaiming<br>the Sound of <i>Hūṃ</i> /<br>Tārā Summoning<br>the Three Worlds | Gold/<br>Yellow | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in <i>vajraparyāṅka</i><br>on a moon seat<br>Semi-wrathful                                                          | R gives refuge<br>L holds a golden lotus in<br>the <i>mudrā</i> of the Three<br>Jewels<br><i>hūṃ</i> at heart surrounded<br>by her <i>mantra</i>                                                   | Subjugates<br>Suppresses<br>adverse forces                                                                                                                                                                                  | Amitābha      |
| 6 | 'Jig-rten                                        | Trailokya-vijaya-                             | Tārā Victorious over                                                                | Ruby-red        | 4 arms                                                                                                                                         | R1 <i>vajra</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    | Purifies                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Amitābha      |



|    |                                                |                                                                                |                                                                                |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |
|----|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|    | gsum-las<br>rnam-par<br>rgyal-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma | tārā                                                                           | the Three Worlds/<br>Sins                                                      |          | 1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a red<br>lotus and sun seat<br>Looks at sentient beings                                                                                                                                      | R2 sword<br>L1 threatening forefinger<br>gesture (Skt: <i>tarjana</i> )<br>L2 noose                                                                                                                 | obscurations and<br>negativities                                                                                                                                                       |                |
| 7  | sGrol-ba<br>'joms-pa'i<br>sgrol-ma             | Vādi-pramardaka-<br>tārā/<br>Vādi-pramardini-<br>tārā                          | Tārā Crushing<br>Adversaries/<br>Disputants                                    | Black    | 4 arms<br>1 face<br>Standing in <i>pratyālīḍha</i><br>stance on a yellow/<br>orange lotus and sun<br>seat amidst fire<br>Wrathful<br>Hair bristles upwards<br>Adorned with snakes,<br>jewelled tiara with<br>bangles on her arms and<br>legs | R1 wheel<br>R2 sword<br>L1 noose above <i>yonī</i><br>L2 raised and extended<br>threatening gesture                                                                                                 | 'Pho-ba ritual<br>Destroys<br>opponents and<br>negative forces                                                                                                                         | Ratna-sambhava |
| 8  | dBang-<br>mchog ster-<br>ba'i sgrol-<br>ma     | Māra-sūdanā<br>vaśitōttama-da-tārā<br>(Text 5 substitutes<br>Khadiravaṇī Tārā) | Tārā Who Crushes<br>all <i>Māras</i> and<br>Bestows Supreme<br>Powers          | Gold     | 4 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>ardhaparyāṅka</i> on a<br>white/red lotus, a<br>sun/moon and a<br>crocodile seat<br>Wrathful frown                                                                                                       | R1 <i>aśoka</i> branch<br>R2 jewel held with the<br>boon granting <i>mudrā</i><br>L1 lotus (not enwrapped<br>in defilements and faults)<br>L2 pot (bestows supreme<br>powers on sentient<br>beings) | Completion stage<br>ritual<br>Destroys the four<br><i>māras</i> ( <i>bDud-<br/>bzhi</i> ) <sup>116</sup> of death,<br>the five<br>aggregates, the<br>afflictions and<br>the son of god | Amogasiddhi    |
| 9  | mChog<br>stsol-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma                | Vara-da tārā                                                                   | Tārā Granter of<br>Boons/ Tārā Wheel-<br>governing and<br>Granting All Desires | Ruby-red | 4 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated on a red lotus and<br>moon<br>Adorned with all the<br>ornaments                                                                                                                                                   | RL1 <i>mudrā</i> of Great Joy<br>with <i>vajra</i> (R) and bell<br>(L) at crown (method<br>and wisdom)<br>R2 dancing <i>mudrā</i><br>L2 <i>aśoka</i> branch                                         | Consecration<br>(Skt: <i>pratiṣṭhā</i> )<br>ritual                                                                                                                                     | Amogasiddhi    |
| 10 | Mya-ngan                                       | Śoka-vinodana-tārā                                                             | Tārā Dispelling All                                                            | Coral-/  | 4 arms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | RL1 gesture of Great Joy                                                                                                                                                                            | Ritual to enter                                                                                                                                                                        | Amoghasiddhi   |

<sup>116</sup> The four *māras* (*bDud-bzhi*) are the four hinderances to spiritual realisation: the demon of the lord of Death (*'chi-bdag-bdud*); the demon of the son of gods (*lha-bu-bdud*); the demon of the aggregates (*phung-bo-bdud*, Skt: *skandhamāra*); the demon of emotional disturbances (*nyon-mongs-bdud*, Skt: *kleśāmāra*) (Pellegrini 2009).

|    |                                                |                                                                                        |                                                                   |          |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                |
|----|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|    | sel-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma                           |                                                                                        | Sorrows                                                           | Ruby-red | 1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>ardhaparyaṅka</i> on a red<br>lotus (non-attachment)<br>and moon seat                                                      | at crown/ palms joined<br>R2 sword<br>L2 <i>aśoka</i> branch                                                                                                                     | the <i>maṇḍala</i><br>Destroys the<br><i>māras</i><br>Controls the<br>world of sentient<br>beings<br>Fulfils all<br>wholesome<br>wishes |                |
| 11 | 'Gro-ba<br>gugs-pa'i<br>sgrol-ma               | Jagad-vaśī vipa-<br>nirbarhaṇa-tārā/<br>Jagad-ākarṣaṇa-<br>tārā/ Āpadā-nāśani-<br>tārā | Tārā Summoner of<br>All Beings,<br>Dispeller of All<br>Misfortune | Black    | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>Standing with right leg<br>extended on a lotus and<br>sun seat                                                                   | R Summons the eight<br>great planets with a hook<br>L magic hook/ magic<br>noose                                                                                                 | Increases<br>enjoyments and<br>wealth<br>Eliminates<br>poverty                                                                          | Ratna-sambhava |
| 12 | bKra-shis<br>snang-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma            | Kalyāna-da-tārā/<br>Maṅgalāloka-tārā/<br>Svasti-bhāsure-tārā                           | Tārā Giver of All<br>Prosperity/<br>Tārā of Auspicious<br>Light   | Gold     | 8 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in <i>vajraparyaṅka</i><br>on a variegated lotus and<br>moon seat<br>Adorned with a crescent<br>moon<br>Amitābha at crown | R1 trident<br>R2 hook (of compassion)<br>R3 <i>vajra</i> (crushes the<br>host of Māra)<br>R4 wisdom-sword<br>L1 jewel at heart<br>L2 hook<br>L3 staff<br>L4 pot of money/ bottle | Fire offering<br>ritual ( <i>homa</i> )<br>Increases<br>lifespan, positive<br>potential, and<br>good qualities                          | Vairocana      |
| 13 | Yongs-su<br>smin-par<br>mdzad-pa'i<br>sgrol-ma | Paripācana-tārā                                                                        | Tārā the Ripener                                                  | Ruby-red | 4 arms<br>1 face<br>Frowning<br>Eyebrows shake up and<br>down<br>Standing on a red lotus<br>amidst fire<br>Hair flames upwards<br>Three eyes         | R1 sword<br>R2 arrow (pierces<br>defilements)<br>L1 wheel<br>L2 bow                                                                                                              | Subdues<br>hindrances<br>Protects from<br>fear and danger                                                                               | Amitābha       |
| 14 | Khro-gnyer<br>g.yo-ba'i<br>sgrol-ma            | Bhṛkuṭi-tārā/<br>Calad- bhṛkuṭi-tārā                                                   | Tārā the Wrathful<br>Summoner/<br>Shaking, Frowning<br>Tārā       | Black    | 6 arms<br>3 faces: 2 wrathful each<br>with three red, angry,<br>staring eyes                                                                         | R1 sword<br>R2 hook<br>R3 small staff<br>L1 skull brimming with                                                                                                                  | Protective circle<br>ritual<br>Destroys<br>interference to                                                                              | Amoghasiddhi   |

|    |                              |                                          |                                                            |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                              |              |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
|    |                              |                                          |                                                            |                                       | Frowning<br>Necklace of skulls and heads<br>Skull tiara<br>Tiger-skin loincloth<br>Adorned with eight snakes<br>Devours human entrails<br>Stands, dancing on a human corpse with her right leg outstretched | blood<br>L2 noose<br>L3 head (of Brahmā)<br>RF white<br>CF black<br>LF red                                                                                                     | the spread of the <i>Dharma</i> and the happiness and well-being of sentient beings                                          |              |
| 15 | Zhi-chen-mo'i sgrol-ma       | Mahā-śānti-tārā/<br>Kalyāna-da-tārā      | Tārā the Great Peaceful One/<br>Virtuous, Peaceful Tārā    | White like the moon/<br>jasmine white | 6 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in <i>vajraparyāṅka</i> on a white lotus and moon                                                                                                                                | R1 rosary at heart<br>R2 boon granting <i>mudrā</i> /<br>auspicious <i>mudrā</i><br>R3 small staff<br>L1 lotus<br>L2 bottle<br>L3 <i>utpala</i> with a book (teaches the path) | External bathing ritual<br>Pacifies negative <i>karma</i>                                                                    | Amitābha     |
| 16 | Chags-pa 'joms-pa'i sgrol-ma | Rāga-niśūdana-tārā/<br>Saṅga-nāśani-tārā | Tārā Destroyer of All Attachment/<br>Enemies               | Coral-red                             | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>3 eyes<br>Seated in <i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a red/orange lotus and sun                                                                                                                 | R trident at her heart (which pierces the body enemy's body)<br>L tree with fruit held with the threatening <i>mudrā</i>                                                       | Mind-increasing<br>Increases the power of <i>mantras</i><br>Cuts negative thoughts to impede the increase of negative energy | Akṣobhya     |
| 17 | sGrol-ma bde-sgrub-ma        | Sukha-sādhana-tārā/<br>Sukha-siddhi-tārā | Tārā Accomplisher of All Bliss/<br>Tārā Endowed with Bliss | Orange                                | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in <i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a white lotus and moon/sun<br>Adorned with many jewels                                                                                               | RL moon at heart                                                                                                                                                               | Binds thieves<br>Eliminates the power of black magic <i>mantras</i>                                                          | Amoghasiddhi |
| 18 | sGrol-ma                     | [Sita-]vijaya-tārā/                      | Tārā the Victorious                                        | White                                 | 4 arms                                                                                                                                                                                                      | RL1 both hold hooks at                                                                                                                                                         | Cures <i>nāga</i>                                                                                                            | Amitābha     |

|    |                                                     |                          |                                   |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                  |               |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|    | rnam-rgyal-<br>ma/ Rab-tu<br>rgyas-pa'i<br>sgrol-ma | Prapuṣṭi-tārā            |                                   |                                    | 1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a<br>white lotus and moon,<br>on a goose                                                                                                                                  | the crown in the <i>mudrā</i><br>of Great Joy<br>R2 boon granting <i>mudrā</i><br>L2 blue lotus with a book | diseases such as<br>leprosy, tumours<br>and boils<br>Pacifies diseases<br>caused by poison       |               |
| 19 | sGrol-ma<br>sdug-bsngal<br>bsreg-ma                 | Duḥka-dahana-tārā        | Tārā Consumer of<br>All Suffering | White<br>like<br>conch/<br>jasmine | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a<br>white lotus and sun/<br>moon<br>Adorned with variegated<br>white and red light rays<br>(eliminates the<br>defilements of sentient<br>beings)               | RL triangular brazier at<br>heart (consumes<br>suffering)                                                   | Frees from<br>prison<br>Dispels<br>conflicts, bad<br>thoughts, and<br>nightmares                 | Vairocana     |
| 20 | sGrol-ma<br>dngos-grub<br>'byung-ma                 | Siddhi-sambhava-<br>tārā | Tārā Source of All<br>Attainments | Orange/<br>Copper-<br>gold         | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>Seated in<br><i>sattvaparyāṅka</i> on a<br>red/white lotus and<br>moon<br>Right eye is like the sun<br>(wrathful), left eye is<br>like the moon (peaceful)<br>Wrathful and peaceful<br><i>mantras</i> | RL golden pot at heart<br>(subdues disease and<br>grants all attainments)                                   | Invisibility ritual<br>Cures horrible<br>diseases, fever<br>and epidemics                        | Amoghasiddhi  |
| 21 | sGrol-ma<br>yongs-<br>rdzogs<br>byed-ma             | Paripūraṇa-tārā          | Tārā the Perfecter                | White                              | 2 arms<br>1 face<br>3 eyes (3 doors of<br>deliverance)<br>Seated in<br><i>ardhaparyāṅka</i> on lotus,<br>moon and a<br>miraculously born bull<br>Wrathful                                                                 | R string of pearls<br>L three-pronged lance<br>(pierces the 3 poisons<br>which cause <i>saṃsāra</i> )       | Sky-going ritual<br>to reach Akaniṣṭha<br>in this life<br>Subdues evil<br>spirits and<br>zombies | Ratnasambhava |

|  |  |  |  |  |                                            |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  | Tiger-skin loincloth (to<br>purify hatred) |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------|--|--|--|

### 5.1.3. The Atiśa Lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās (*Jo-bo-lugs*)

The iconography of the Twenty-one Tārās as it descends from Atiśa dīpaṃkara-śrījñāna (rJo-bo rjes 984-1054), known as the *Jo-bo-lugs*, differs greatly from the lineage of Sūryagupta. In the case of the Atiśa lineage all the Tārās have an identical seated posture of the *ardhaparyāṅka*, similar to that of Green Tārā. They each hold a lotus in their left hand and a vase in their right filled with nectar which represents enlightened activity. Each of the Tārās takes one of five colours: white, yellow, red, and black for the Four Actions, or green which represents a combination of all Four Actions. The central Tārā is usually of a green or yellow hue (Beyer 2001 [1973]; Mullin 2003: 62-75). Each goddess also has her own *mantra* which may be recited in order to enact her specific function (Shaw 2006).

This system is attributed either to Atiśa or posthumously to Nāgārjuna (c.150-250) (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 470). As Atiśa was the inspiration for the *bKa'-gdams-pa* tradition there is no surprise that when his lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās spread to Tibet it was adopted by all three *gSar-ma* schools: the *dGe-lugs-pa*, *Sa-skyā-pa*, and *bKa'-brgyud-pa*. The *Sa-skyā-pa* school follow Atiśa's lineage to this day (Mullin 2003: 62-75). In fact the Sakya Trizin (Sa-skyā khri-'dzin, b. 1945) bestowed this initiation in Bristol during his 2007 visit to the UK. Watt states that the system appears to be related to that found in the *Sādhana-samuccaya* (1286), although it is very rare to find paintings which depict the *Sādhana-samuccaya* tradition. However, the Atiśa system is often depicted in paintings and sculpture (Watt *c*). Due to the lack of available information concerning the *Sādhana-samuccaya* this lineage will not be discussed further in this thesis.

As for the vase held by each of the Tārās in Atiśa's lineage, Mullin writes:

The meaning is that anyone who practices the meditations and rituals associated with the Twenty-One Taras will drink deeply of the nectars of buddha karma that herald all

spiritual success on both worldly (e.g., health, prosperity, family success,) and other-worldly (i.e., personal enlightenment) levels (Mullin 2003: 64).

For depictions of the Twenty-one Tārās according to Atiśa's lineage see Béguin, Rhie and Thurman, Tanaka, and Tucci (Béguin 1995: No. 112; Rhie and Thurman 1999: No. 36; Tanaka 1998-2001: No. 23; Tucci 1980 [1949]: 388).

A number of commentarial texts have focussed on Atiśa's lineage. These include Ngag-dbang blo-bzang chos-ldan dpal-bzang-po's<sup>117</sup> *sGrol ma nyer gcig gi sgrub thabs las tshogs* and Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan's<sup>118</sup> *Jo bo lugs kyi sgrol ma nyer gcig gi sgrub thabs las tshogs dngos grub rnam gnyis kyi bdang mdzod* (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 470; Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan; Ngag-dbang blo-bzang chos-ldan dpal-bzang-po 19th century).

Given the scant information available on the Twenty-one Tārās lineage of Atiśa this is the limit of practical discussion of both the overall tradition and the individual Red Tārās for the purpose of this thesis. I shall now move on to examine the *rNying-ma-pa* system.

#### **5.1.4. The *rNying-ma-pa* System of the Twenty-one Tārās: 'Jigs-med gling-pa and mChog-gyur gling-pa**

'Jigs-med gling-pa's (1729-1798) lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās began in the fourteenth century with the textual tradition of the *Klong chen snying thig*. 'Jigs-med gling-pa mKhyen-brtse 'od-zer was considered a reincarnation of both Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan and Vimalamitra, and was in fact born on the anniversary of Klong-chen-pa's death. Under the patronage of the Queen of sDe-dge he was to publish the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, a collection of *rNying-ma-pa* texts. 'Jigs-med gling-pa had received both the *mKha' 'gri snying thig* and the *Vima snying thig* teachings, which belong to

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<sup>117</sup> Ngag-dbang blo-bzang chos-ldan dpal-bzang-po (1642-1714) was a *dGe-lugs-pa* scholar.

<sup>118</sup> Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan (1570-1662) was the First Panchen Lama.

the *rDzogs-chen* tradition, and in a vision *dākinīs* bestowed upon him the *Klong chen snying thig* teachings. His personal collected works amount to nine volumes (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 835-41; Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 198-216; Thondup 2002: 118-36).

Beyer states that Thub-bstan bshad-sgrub rgya-mtsho's (17th century) *sGrol ma phyag tshal nyer gcig rgyud kyi 'grel chung phan bde'i gter bum mchog sbyin zhes bya ba*, a literary example of the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition of the Twenty-one Tārās, traces 'Jigs-med gling-pa's lineage back to Klong-chen-pa (1308-1364) (Beyer 2001 [1973]: 470, Thub-bstan bshad-sgrub rgya-mtsho).

The Tārās in this group all adopt an identical *ardhaparyāṅka* pose, again similar to that of Green Tārā. The goddesses are of different colours and each holds in her left hand a lotus on top of which is an emblem particular to the individual Tārā. Within this system there are eight Red Tārās, five White, five Gold, and three which are either Blue-Black or Green, and each Tārā performs one of the Four Actions. More information on the individual Tārās is located in Table 5.2. below.

Watt points out that 'Jigs-med gling-pa's system of the Twenty-one Tārās, which descends from the *Klong chen snying thig*, and that of mChog-gyur gling-pa (1829-1870) are very similar. Furthermore, both were discovered as *gter-ma* within one hundred years of each other (Watt c). More information concerning this lineage follows below.

In their discussion of the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās, Sherab and Dongyal trace the lineage of the goddesses in Tibet to Rong-zom-pa, Tāranātha, and 'Jigs-med gling-pa. They list Rong-zom Chos-kyi bzang-po (1012-1088) as the "first recorded source of those of Tara's teachings that are still preserved in Tibet". Tāranātha's lineage dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, whilst Rong-zom-pa's lineage was received by 'Jigs-med gling-pa, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When he received the *Great Bliss Queen* (*bDe chen rgyal mo*) teachings on Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal 'Jigs-med gling-



pa taught that although externally the *Great Bliss Queen* practice pertains to Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, internally it is a practice of the Twenty-one Tārās (Sherab and Dongyal 2007: 15-16).

Sherab and Dongyal move on to discuss the Tantric view of the Twenty-one Tārā lineage, as it pertains to *rNying-ma-pa* tradition. They elaborate that the outer meaning is conveyed by the words of the text itself. Then follows the ground, path/ application, and fruit levels of meaning in the *Tantra*. The fruit of the Tantric path is equal to *rDzogs-chen* practice within which the *Klong chen snying thig* falls (Sherab and Dongyal 2007). For a depiction of the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage see Chandra, Nos. 2145-2165 (Chandra 1987). Table 5.2. details the twenty-one forms of the goddess in 'Jigs-med gling-pa's tradition:

Table 5.2: The Twenty-one Tārās in the *rNying-ma-pa* School  
**Lineage of 'Jigs-med gling-pa**  
(Sherab and Dongyal 2007: Tai Situpa 2009)

| No. | Name (Tib)                                                                                  | Name (Eng)                        | Colour                                                  | Eyes | Emblem on flower and meaning                                               | Power                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | sGrol-ma myur-ma<br>dpa'-mo                                                                 | Tārā Swift and Heroic             | Red/ Orange<br>( <i>dmar-ser</i> )<br><br>Semi-wrathful | 3    | White conch shell (Her sound/<br>the teachings of the Buddha)              | Her voice spreads in all 3 existences                                                                                                                                             |
| 2   | sGrol-ma blo-gter<br>dbyangs-can-ma<br>(Sarasvatī)                                          |                                   | White                                                   | 2    | Mirror with <i>hrim</i> in centre<br>(Emptiness and pure<br>consciousness) | Embodies all that is beautiful<br><br>Knowledge-giver<br><br>Dispels ignorance of all sentient beings and<br>gathers knowledge with the light radiating from<br>the mirror        |
| 3   | sGrol-ma bsod-nams<br>mchog-gter/ bSos-<br>nams stobs-chen<br>(Vasudhārā/ Nor-<br>rgyun-ma) |                                   | Gold/ Yellow                                            | 2    | Wish-fulfilling jewel                                                      | Acquires external and internal wealth                                                                                                                                             |
| 4   | gTsug-tor rnam-rgyal-<br>ma (Uṣṇīṣavijayā)                                                  | Victorious One of the Top<br>Knot | Gold                                                    | 2    | Vase of immortality<br>overflowing with nectar<br><br>(Long-life deity)    | Long life<br><br>Protects from rebirth in the low realms/<br>unfavourable situations<br><br>Both <i>bKa'-ma</i> and <i>gTer-ma</i> teachings in the<br><i>rNying-ma-pa</i> school |

|    |                                                            |                                                          |                                       |   |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5  | dBang-sdud lha-mo rig-byed-ma (Kurukullā/ Rig byed ma)     | Tārā Who Understands the Power of Magnetising            | Red<br>Semi-wrathful                  | 3 | Multicoloured bow and arrow (Unadorned in Klong-chen-pa tradition) | <i>Hūṃ</i> and <i>tuttā-ra</i> are her magnetising speech<br>Magnetises and summons everything                                                                                                  |
| 6  | sGrol-ma 'jigs-byed chen-mo                                | Great Fierce Tārā                                        | Dark red                              | 2 | Black <i>phur-ba</i><br><br>(Subjugates)                           | Protects against visible and invisible evil forces<br><br>Subjugates                                                                                                                            |
| 7  | sGrol-ma gzhan-gyis mi-tub-ma                              | Unconquerable                                            | Black/Blue-black<br><br>Wrathful face | 2 | Standing double-edged sword with a <i>vajra</i> handle             | Destroys all negativities with <i>traṭ</i> and <i>phaṭ</i><br><br>Destroys external and internal ' <i>Khrul</i> -' <i>khor</i> (magical devices)<br><br>Antidote to wars and natural disasters  |
| 8  | gZhan-mi rgyal-ma                                          | Invincible Lady                                          | Dark red<br><br>Wrathful              | 3 | Flaming <i>vajra</i> ( <i>Vajra</i> -wrath)                        | Defeats fears and tames the four <i>māras</i><br><br>Protects against troublemakers, people who criticise and harass others, people who expose your fallacy, and lawsuits                       |
| 9  | Seng-ldeng-nags sgrol-ma                                   | Tārā of the <i>Seng-ldeng</i> Forest                     | Green                                 | 2 | Eight-spoked <i>Dharma</i> wheel (Radiates wisdom/ teachings)      | The eight spokes of her wheel representing magnetising in all directions<br><br>Protects from fears                                                                                             |
| 10 | 'Jig-rten gsum-las rgyal-ma/ 'Jig-rten gsum-rgyal sgrol-ma | Tārā Who Gains Victory Over All the Three Worlds         | Red                                   | 2 | Victory banner (Victory over the Four <i>Māras</i> and delusions)  | Protects against distraction by worldly activities<br><br>Her joy and laughter overpowers the world and worldly activities<br><br>Fulfils the wishes of all sentient beings of the Three Realms |
| 11 | Phag-ma nor-gter sgrol-ma/ dBul-sel nor-gter khro-gnyer-   | Noble Tārā Who Bestows Wealth (Great Firm Earth Goddess) | Orange<br><br>Wrathful                | 3 | Treasure vase filled with jewels                                   | Her summoning power is based on love, compassion and wisdom                                                                                                                                     |

|    |                                                                                     |                                                             |                            |   |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | can                                                                                 |                                                             |                            |   |                                                                      | She controls the earth protectors (Skt: <i>bhūmipāla</i> )<br><br>She is a wealth giver who removes the suffering of poverty            |
| 12 | bKra-shis don-byed/<br>bKra-shis-pa'i sgrol-<br>ma/ bKra-shis don-<br>grub sgrol-ma | Tārā Who Actualises<br>Auspiciousness                       | Golden yellow              | 2 | Infinite knot standing upright                                       | Brings harmony and balance, health, timely<br>seasons, good harvests, healthy children and<br>prosperity                                |
| 13 | sGrol-ma g.yul-las<br>rgyal-ma/ dGra-dpung<br>'joms-ma                              | Tārā Who Grants Victory<br>Over War/ Defeater of<br>Weapons | Dark red<br><br>Wrathful   | 3 | Open-pointed <i>vajra</i> sparking<br>fire                           | Protects against obstacles related to war<br><br>Reverses the march of armies and stops war<br><br>Inwardly stops hostile emotions      |
| 14 | sGrol-ma khro-gnyer-<br>can                                                         | Wrathful, Frowning One                                      | Dark blue                  | 3 | <i>gTun-shing</i> (pestle)<br><br>(Crushes to one taste)             | Removes subtle obstacles due to misleading<br>influences                                                                                |
| 15 | sGrol-ma rab-zhi-ma                                                                 | Supremely Peaceful Tārā                                     | White                      | 2 | Vase filled with anointing<br>nectar Purification                    | Purifies                                                                                                                                |
| 16 | sGrol-ma 'bar-ba'i 'od-<br>can-ma                                                   |                                                             | Red                        | 2 | Double <i>vajra</i><br><br>(All-accomplishing wisdom)                | Stops negative intentions of others, such as<br>spells ( <i>mantra</i> ) and curses<br><br>Liberates sentient beings from their enemies |
| 17 | sGrol-ma dbag-med<br>gnon-ma                                                        | Tārā Who Stops Countless<br>Violent Activities              | Orange/ Saffron            | 2 | Golden <i>stūpa</i> (Enlightened<br>mind of the Buddha)              | Protects against obstacles associated with<br>robberies, hunters and gangsters                                                          |
| 18 | sGrol-ma rma-bya<br>chen-mo                                                         | Great Peacock Tārā                                          | White                      | 2 | Full moon marked with a<br>rabbit<br><br>(Nectar of the highest god) | Protects from poisons. both inner and outer<br><br>Protects infants and the young<br><br>Cures every aspect of sickness                 |
| 19 | sGrol-ma gdugs-dkar-<br>mo/ sGrol-ma mi-<br>pham rgyal-mo                           | White Umbrella Tārā                                         | White<br><br>Semi-wrathful | 2 | White umbrella (Shows she is<br>held in the highest respect)         | Protects from nightmares, bad omens in dreams<br>and black magic                                                                        |
| 20 | sGrol-ma ri-khrod-ma                                                                | Tārā Wearing the Leaves of                                  | Golden-red/                | 2 | <i>Za-ma-tog</i> (casket) containing                                 | Protects against contagious diseases, plagues,                                                                                          |

|    |                                             |                                   |         |   |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                   |
|----|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | lo-ma gyon-ma<br>(Parṇasavarī)              | a Tree in her Mountain<br>Retreat | Saffron |   | medicinal substances                                                                                                                    | and fevers                                                                        |
| 21 | sGrol-ma lha-mo 'od-<br>zer can-ma (Mārīcī) |                                   | White   | 2 | Pair of golden fish (Great<br>realisation and liberation from<br><i>saṃsāra</i> )<br><br>Left hand is in the protection<br><i>mudrā</i> | Protects longevity when one's life-force is<br>endangered<br><br>Protects animals |

There is little available information concerning the lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās which descends from mChog-gyur bDe-chen zhig-po gling-pa (1829-1870). The *bKa'-brgyud-pa* master mChog-gyur gling-pa was the incarnation of Prince Murub btsan-po Ye-shes rol-pa-rtsal, the son of Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, and he was born in Khams. He was a contemporary of the *Ris-med* masters 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820-1892) and 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-1899). Guru Rinpoche predicted that these masters would become the guardians of his teachings. The *gter-ma* discovered by mChog-gyur gling-pa and the related commentaries form the *mChog gling gter gsar* collection, which includes his famous Tārā text, the *sGrol ma'i zab thig* (*The Profound Essence of Tārā*), revealed when Tārā spoke the words "It is good" three times: "*legs so legs so legs so*" (Doctor 2005: 75-85, 96; Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 841-49; Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 431-35).

Despite the lack of information concerning mChog-gyur gling-pa's lineage Watt states that depictions of the mChog-gyur gling-pa system are only found on initiation cards (Watt c). Depictions of these deity cards can be viewed at the following web address: <<http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1882>>. Due to the dearth of available information mChog-gyur gling-pa's lineage will not be discussed in more detail in this thesis. Blofeld details the *mantras* of the Twenty-one Tārās and the function of each goddess as found in mChog-gyur gling-pa's lineage as follows (Blofeld 1977: 41-42):

1. *oṃ tā re tuttā re su re swā hā* (Green Tārā)
2. *oṃ badzra tā re sarba bhighnan shintaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts disasters)
3. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba laṃ laṃ bha ya shintaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts earth-born calamities)

4. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba baṃ baṃ dza la bha ya shihtaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts destruction wrought by water)
5. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba raṃ raṃ dza la bha ya shihtaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts destruction wrought by fire)
6. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba yaṃ yaṃ dza la bha ya shihtaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts destruction caused by wind)
7. *oṃ ratna tā re sarba la ka dznyā na bidyā dha ra dha ra dhi ri dhi ri hriṃ hriṃ dznyā na pustim oṃ* (increases wisdom)
8. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba e e ma hā hā na bha ya shintaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts heaven-born calamities)
9. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba tig tig tikṣṇa rakṣa rakṣa ku ru swā hā* (averts destruction caused by armies)
10. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re ma ma sarba rā dza duṣṭan khro dha shintaṃ ku ru swā hā* (averts hell-born calamities)
11. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba chōra bhandha bhandha trig ṭhwuṃ swā hā* (averts evil caused by robbers)
12. *oṃ padma tā re panta ra hrīḥ sarba lo ka wa shaṃ ku ru hoḥ* (increases power)
13. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba duṣṭan bighnan baṃ phaṭ swā hā* (averts evil caused by demons)
14. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba haṃ haṃ duṣṭan ha na ha na tra pa ya phaṭ* (averts evil affecting cattle)
15. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba he he tsa le tsa le bhandha phaṭ swā hā* (averts evil caused by wild beasts)
16. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba bi ṣa tsa la ya ha ra ha ra phaṭ swā hā* (averts evil effects of poisons)

17. *oṃ karma tā re sarba sha trun bighnan na ra se na ha ha he he ho ho*  
*haṃ haṃ bandha bandha phaṭ* (subdues demons)
18. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba dzwa ra sarba duḥ kha pra sha ma na ya*  
*phaṭ swā hā* (heals sickness)
19. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re badzra a yu she swā hā* (bestows longevity)
20. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re dzambhe mo he dha na me dhi hrīḥ swā hā*  
(bestows prosperity)
21. *oṃ tā re tuttā re tu re sarba artha siddhi siddhi ku ru swā hā* (wish-  
fulfilling).

Having contextualised the deities of the Twenty-one Tārās through our examination of *The Praise* and our discussion of the numerous commentarial traditions based on the source text we will now move on to examine the individual forms of Red Tārā found in the Sūryagupta and *rNying-ma-pa* lineages. It is hoped that this in-depth discussion will shed light on both the iconographic variations between these goddesses and also their individual function as it pertains to the activity of subjugation/ magnetisation.

## **5.2. Red Tārās within the Twenty-one Tārās**

Section 5.2. discusses the individual Red Tārās as they are found within the various iconographic lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās. However, as an aside it is interesting to note in the light of our present study that at Thiksey (Khri-gse) Monastery just outside of Leh, in Ladakh, one finds a wall-painting of the Twenty-one Tārās in which Red Tārā is the central deity. When I enquired with the local monks about this depiction none of the monks could answer any of my questions. It appears that the



information concerning the lineage of this system has been lost as they could only tell me that the painting was not from Atiśa's lineage. From my own observations I was able to deduce that the picture did not depict the *rNying-ma-pa* or Sūryagupta lineages as the Tārās were identical, with each seated in the posture of royal ease with three eyes, a lotus in their left hand and a vase in their right, a representation more in line with Atiśa's lineage. As such I have been unable to identify the lineage of this depiction. The hazy picture provided below illustrates the central Red Tārā:



**Fig. 5.3: Red Tārā, the central deity in the Twenty-one Tārā *maṇḍala* depicted on the wall of the 'Du-khang at Thiksey Monastery, Ladakh**  
(Photograph Author's collection)

As Prem Singh Jina remarks in his comprehensive work detailing the wall paintings of Thiksey monastery "In the mandala, I noted that all Dolmas have three eyes and are depicted more or less in ferocious form". He provides a line drawing of both the layout of the wall paintings in the 'Du-khang (Assembly Hall) and also the layout of the "Dolma mandala" (Jina 2007: 74, 84).

As no further information has been found concerning this rare wall painting we will now move on to examine the individual Red Tārās found within the Twenty-one Tārā lineages of Sūryagupta and the *rNying-ma-pa* school. Atiśa's lineage has been omitted from further analysis as his commentary simply identifies each Tārā by

colour, holding a coloured vase. Atiśa's tradition provides no further iconographical details which would enable us to analyse the action of subjugation further.

### 5.2.1. Red Tārās in the *rNying-ma-pa* Tradition

In the *rNying-ma-pa* school we find examples of seven Red Tārās: Nos. 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16. Below is a brief list of the individual Tārās with the emblem found on her lotus and her particular power. I have chosen to begin the discussion of the individual Red Tārās with the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage due to the simpler iconography found within this tradition. The Sūryagupta lineage with its more complex iconography will be discussed below.

Tārā 1 holds a white conch shell (*dung*) and has the power of spreading her voice in the three existences. The white right-turning conch shell symbolises the heroic gods of ancient India, with the sound proclaiming their victories in war. Within the Buddhist tradition the conch is one of the eight auspicious symbols. Beer states that when held in the hands the conch represents speech, and the proclamation of the *Buddhadharma*. As we see this appears to fit well with the description applied to this Red Tārā (Beer 2003: 9-11).

Tārā 5 has a multicoloured bow (*gzu*) and arrow (*mda'*). Her magnetising speech is symbolised by *hūṃ* and *tuttāra*. She magnetises and summons everything. As we have seen in previous chapters the bow and arrow are weapons typical of subjugating deities, the main example being Kurukullā's flower bow and arrow.

Tārā 6 displays a black dagger (*phur-ba*). She subjugates and protects against visible and invisible evil forces. The dagger is typically the emblem of Vajrakīlaya. The handle and blade represent the wisdom and means of the deity, with the three sides of the blade representing control of the three times and realms (Beer 2003: 98-101).

Tārā 8's emblem is a flaming *vajra* (*rdo-rje*). She defeats fears and tames the four *māras*. She protects one from troublemakers, criticism, harassment, lawsuits, and people who expose one's fallacies. The flaming *vajra* is a wrathful hand implement which represents the deity's skilful means (*thabs*) and their indestructible *vajra*-wrath which destroys all negativities and illusions (Beer 2003: 87-92).

Tārā 10 displays a victory banner (*rgyal-mtshan*). She protects against distraction by worldly activities with her laughter and joy, and fulfils the wishes of all sentient beings. The victory banner was an Indian symbol of warfare. Beer states that when the victory banner is held in a deity's hand it is associated with wealth or power (Beer 2003: 12-14). The subjugating function is often described as the power function, and it therefore comes as no surprise to see a Red Tārā carrying an object which alludes to her powerful nature.

Tārā 13 has an open-pointed *vajra* which emits sparks, and she protects against the obstacles related to conflict: she reverses the march of armies, and stops wars. Internally she hinders hostile emotions. As with the flaming *vajra* above, the open pointed *vajra* is a wrathful implement symbolising the skilful means and *vajra*-wrath of the deity (Beer 2003: 87-92).

Tārā 16 holds a double or crossed *vajra* (*rdo-rje rgya-gram*) and she stops the negative intentions of others, for example hostile *mantras* and curses. She has the power to liberate all sentient beings from their enemies. The double *vajra* symbolises stability and its four points represent the four actions (Beer 2003: 95-96).

As we have discussed above the red colour of all these Tārās symbolises their magnetising/ subjugating functions. As we can see from the descriptions, provided two main themes appear from this group of goddesses. One is a protecting function, found with Tārās 6, 8, 10, and 13. Furthermore, the power or emblem of Tārās 1, 10, 13, and 16 relate to enemies or conflict. As we have seen, the majority of these

goddesses display weapons, indicative of their wrathful powers. In two cases the Red Tārās in question display emblems from the Eight Auspicious Symbols (*bkra-shis rtags-brgyad*). A group of pre-Buddhist symbols which represent offerings made to the King at his investiture (Beer 2003: 1). Three of the Tārās (1, 10, and 13) are specifically employed in activities relating to warfare, either to ensure victory or to dispel related obstacles.

Here the functions of these Red Tārās shed some light on the action of subjugation. The various Tārās protect from troublemakers and lawsuits, fulfil the wishes of sentient beings, protect from evil forces, magnetise, summon, and subjugate, protect from worldly distractions, protect from war, and stop the negative intentions of others. Although brief this information adds to the knowledge of the subjugating function, which is generally described as employed to magnetise and subjugate three main classes of people: kings, consorts, and students. Here we have seen the action of subjugation taken further and applied to a greater range of goals, which mostly seem mundane in nature. It appears that a practitioner might perform the Twenty-one Tārā practices in order to secure a more worldly aim.

### **5.2.2. Red Tārās in the Sūryagupta Lineage**

Within the Sūryagupta tradition we find six Red Tārās: Nos. 1, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 16. I shall now briefly discuss the various implements held by these individual goddesses and their function with the aim of shedding some light on the action of subjugation particular to these Red Tārās.

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Fig. 5.4: **Rab-tu dpa'-ba'i sgrol-ma**  
(Willson and Brauen 2000: 112, No. 276)

Tārā 1 (Fig. 5.4) has eight arms which hold the *vajra* and bell, bow and arrow, wheel, wisdom-sword, conch, and noose. She has the ability to turn back the power of others and overcomes all demons. We have discussed the symbolism of the *vajra*, bow and arrow, and conch above. The bell (*dril-bu*) is usually held alongside the *vajra*, as we see here with Red Tārā, and together they symbolise the perfection of wisdom and skilful means. The wheel (*'khor-lo*) is one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols, and is the emblem of Vairocana who in fact sits above this Tārā's head. The wisdom sword (*ye-shes ral-gri*) severs demons and enemies and is held by wrathful deities. In some cases it bestows eight great *siddhis*. Lastly, the noose (*zhags-pa*) which catches and binds is a symbol typical of subjugating deities, as seen with Kurukullā's flower noose. It is usually paired with the iron hook which is not the case here (Beer 2003: 9-15, 92-95, 123-24, 147-48, 171).

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Fig. 5.5: 'Jigs-rten gsum-las rnam-par rgyal-ba'i sgrol ma (Willson and Brauen 2000: 124, No. 281)

Fig. 5.6: mChog-stsol-ba'i sgrol-ma (Willson and Brauen 2000: 126, No. 287)

Tārā 6 (Fig. 5.5) has four arms which display a *vajra*, sword, the *tarjana* threatening *mudrā*, and a noose. She purifies obscurations and negativities. We have examined functions of the *vajra*, sword, and noose above. The threatening *mudrā* (*sdig-mdzub*) with the forefinger raised is usually performed by wrathful deities, and more specifically subjugating deities. In most cases the threatening *mudrā* is used to hold the noose, iron hook, or a ball of wisdom-fire. Sometimes it is even called the hook gesture (Beer 2003: 229). Here Tārā simply displays the *mudrā* alone.

Tārā 9's (Fig. 5.6) four arms hold the *vajra* and bell, the dancing *mudrā*, and an *aśoka* branch. She performs the *pratiṣṭhā* (consecration) ritual. The *aśoka* branch (*mya-ngan med-pa'i shing*) is held by a number of the Twenty-one Tārās and also by Mārīcī. It is also sacred to Kāmadeva, the Vedic god of love and desire (Beer 2003: 229). As we saw in Chapter Two Kāmadeva is related to the subjugating goddess Kurukullā. Shaw further links the *aśoka* branch to female fertility and desire, stating that it blooms with red flowers. She writes that the *aśoka* branches and flowers are used in "Buddhist love magic" in order to attract a lover, often associated again with

Kurukullā (Shaw 2006: 205, 479). As we saw in Chapter Two subjugating deities are often employed in order to attract a consort or lover, and this may be the case here.

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Fig. 5.7: **Mya-ngan sel-ba'i sgrol-ma**  
(Willson and Brauen 2000: 126, No. 288)

Fig. 5.8: **Yongs-su smin-par mdzad-pa'i sgrol-ma** (Willson and Brauen 2000: 126, No. 291)

Tārā 10 (Fig. 5.7) has four arms. The upper two are joined at the crown, while the lower two hold a sword and an *asoka* branch. Her ritual is that of entering the *maṇḍala*. She destroys the *māras*, controls the world of sentient beings and fulfils all wishes.

Tārā 13's (Fig. 5.8) four arms hold a sword, arrow, wheel, and bow. She subdues hindrances, and protects from fear and danger. She is the only one of Sūryagupta's Red Tārās to have a fully wrathful face and to appear standing.

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Fig. 5.9: **Chags-pa 'joms-pa'i sgrol-ma**  
(Willson and Brauen 2000: 128, No. 294)

Lastly, Tārā 16 (Fig. 5.9) holds a trident and a fruit tree held with the threatening *mudrā*. The particular fruit tree is not described further. She has the power to increase the mind and the power of *mantra*, she also cuts negative thoughts in order to hinder the increase of negative energy. The trident (*rtse-gsum*) represents the destruction of the three poisons, the deity's victory over the three realms and times, the three *kāyas*, and the emptiness of body, speech, and mind (Beer 2003: 130-32). Here Tārā's trident pierces the body of one's enemy in order to subjugate them.

Once again the red colour of the Tārās here indicates their subjugating function. Within Sūryagupta's lineage a number of the implements held by the goddesses are also indicative of subjugating/ magnetising action: the bow and arrow, noose, *tarjana* threatening *mudrā*, and the *aśoka* branch. The particular functions of these Red Tārās include turning back another's power, overcoming demons, purifying obscurations and negativities, and controlling sentient beings. All these powers use language evocative of subjugating actions. As we have seen in a number of cases the emblems of these Red Tārās are common to Kurukullā, the best known form of Red Tārā. As we saw with the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage once again the subjugating powers employed by the various Red Tārās here are largely of a mundane nature. We do not



see the attraction of a consort or sponsor. However, we again notice the performance of actions intended for the receipt of worldly goal.

It is hoped that this in-depth discussion of the individual Red Tārās found in the various lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās has shed new light on the function of subjugation/ magnetisation, specifically in its mundane applications and the implements held to symbolise the subjugating function. We will now move on to detail the ritual initiation into the Twenty-one Tārās, a discussion which focusses on a particular Red Tārā.

### **5.3. Red Tārā Initiation and the Twenty-one Tārās**

Initiations into all three of the main commentarial lineages of the Twenty-one Tārās are still conferred in the present day. How is initiation into the Twenty-one Tārās bestowed? Can one receive initiation into just one Red Tārā from the Twenty-one Tārā group of goddesses? We will now move on to discuss these questions.

In most cases the initiation of the Twenty-one Tārās is bestowed in one session over a few hours. However, on occasion the empowerment may be performed over a number of days during which initiations into the individual Tārās are bestowed separately. A longer initiation of this sort was performed recently by Jetsun Kushog (rJe-btsun-ma sku-shog 'Chi-med klu-sdings, b. 1938) on the 26th-29th of November 2008 in Denia, Spain at the Sakya Drogon Ling meditation centre. Both Jetsunma and Klu-sdings mkhan-chen rin-po-che (b.1931), another *Sa-skya-pa* master, have offered this initiation a number of times over the years. It may be the case that initiation of this sort is specific to the Atiśa lineage of which the *Sa-skya-pa* are adherents, as I have not come across mention of a similar initiation pertaining to the other lineages in the course of my research.

On 23 and 24 October 2006 Jhado Rinpoche (b. 1954) bestowed the initiation of the Twenty-one Tārās with Red Tārā at the centre to a group of Tibetan and Western Buddhists at the FPMT Tushita Meditation Centre in Dharamsala, India. During the preliminary teachings Jhado Rinpoche explained that the central deity of the twenty-one is sGrol-ma myur-ma dpa'-mo, a red Tārā whom he described as the "Swift, Heroic Lady Saviour" (see Figures 5.1 and 5.10). Jhado Rinpoche stated that although most Tārā initiations fall within the *kriyātantra* class, the Sūryagupta initiation instead falls into the Highest *Yoga Tantra* (*yoganiruttaratantra*) class and involves both the generation and completion stage practices of Highest *Yoga Tantra* (Jhado Rinpoche 2006). As we saw in Section 5.1.2. this agrees with the argument that Sūryagupta's commentaries are attributed to the *yoganiruttaratantra* class.

Jhado Rinpoche gave two reasons for the bestowal of this initiation at the time. The participants were largely made up of a group of Western Buddhists who were residing at Tushita for a ten-day Green Tārā retreat. It had been expected that Jhado Rinpoche would bestow the initiation of Green Tārā to commence the retreat. However, the Rinpoche explained his first reason for bestowing this initiation through his translator as follows:

Rinpoche has not been able to find an initiation specifically of Green Tārā as such. Therefore, he thought that if he gave this initiation of the Twenty-one Tārās, according to the tradition of Sūryagupta within this practice there is the *maṇḍala*, there is this deity, the Green Tārā deity, and therefore in order to have a *Jenang* (*rjes-gnang*), usually translated as permission initiation, or subsequent initiation, granting permission to do practice on Tārā, in other words *Jenang*, in order to have a *Jenang*, receive a *Jenang*, you must have an actual initiation preceding it. Therefore, Rinpoche thought that it is better this time to give this Tārā initiation with the red deity Tārā in the centre according to master Sūryagupta, as within this you have Green Tārā, and there is also the significance of doing this profound practice of the two faces of Highest *Yoga Tantra* (Jhado Rinpoche).

The second reason the Rinpoche gave for bestowing the Twenty-one Tārā lineage of Sūryagupta with Red Tārā at the centre was more personal. At that time the Tibetan Master Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche (Blo-bzang 'jigs-med dam-chos dpal-bzang-po, 1926-2006) was very sick, suffering from cancer. As Jhado

Rinpoche had himself received this initiation from his teacher, Kirti Tsenshab, he believed that to bestow the initiation at that time would benefit his Master. His translator stated: "He wishes to dedicate whatever merit he would be able to accumulate through this initiation [so that it] can be dedicated for the long life of Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche. So this is from a very personal point of view that Rinpoche thought of giving this initiation" (Jhado Rinpoche 2006).



Fig. 5.10: sGrol-ma myur-ma dpa'-mo in the Sūryagupta Lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās. Himalayan Art Resource. (Watt *a*)

As we see, Red Tārā was the central deity during this particular empowerment process. Yet, far from being the norm Ringu Tulku verified that when performing the Twenty-one Tārās of Sūryagupta, Red Tārā is not always found as the central deity. Instead, Ringu Tulku believes that the central Tārā of the group is interchangeable depending on the action one wishes to perform, be it pacification, increase, subjugation, or destruction (Ringu Tulku 2010). As such, a Red Tārā would have been placed in the centre of the *maṇḍala* in this case so that the magnetising/ subjugation action (*dbang gi 'phrin las*) might be performed. However, one might also place White Tārā at the centre of the *maṇḍala* in order to perform a pacifying ceremony.

As we have seen above empowerment into the Twenty-one Tārās takes a number of forms, either initiation into the deities as a group, usually performed within one day, or into the individual goddesses, over a number of days. Initiation into the three main lineages of Sūryagupta, Atiśa, and the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition all continue into the modern day. As such the *Sādhana-samuccaya* tradition appears to have been lost over time. It is hoped that the information provided here concerning the modern-day transmission of the practice has contextualised the worship of the Twenty-one Tārās and highlighted their relevance through to the present day.

#### **5.4. Some Concluding Remarks on Red Tārās in the Twenty-one Tārās**

This chapter set out to discuss the Twenty-one Tārās and the iconography and function of the numerous Red Tārās found within this group of goddesses. Due to a combined lack of secondary information concerning the Twenty-one Tārās and also a lack of access to the primary material little new light has been shed on to the group as a whole or on the root text, *The Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās*. However, the purpose of our present study was to examine the various individual Red Tārās found within this group, and to discuss their iconography and function in order to highlight their nature as individual goddesses and shed light on the action of subjugation. This discussion has revealed new information concerning not just this action, but also the implements held by deities of this class. Furthermore, we have briefly examined the cult as it is found at the present time, through our discussion of the initiation process.

Although this work has not shed much new light on the cult of the Twenty-one Tārās as a whole, it is hoped that future researchers may use this information as a basis for further study, either through new translations of the literary material pertaining to the practice, or perhaps to the unearthing of unknown iconographic

images of the goddesses. It was also the aim of this section to highlight the worship of Red Tārā as it falls within the greater worship of the Twenty-one Tārās and as such it is fair to say that practitioners of the Twenty-one Tārās might call upon a certain Red Tārā when they require subjugating actions, as seen with the initiation performed by Jhado Rinpoche examined in Section 5.3. As we have discovered, individual Tārās may be worshiped on their own or as part of the group.

Furthermore, although the Red Tārās with their Blue, White, Yellow, and Green sisters form the Twenty-one Tārās group of goddesses they are also invoked on an individual basis in order to enact their specific personal function. Not all the Red Tārās found here relate to Kurukullā, yet some hold implements similar to hers. Furthermore, she herself is found as an individual form of Tārā in the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage. As such, this information furthers the intention of this thesis, to prove that not all Red Tārās are Kurukullā and to provide further information on the function of subjugation. It is also hoped that this chapter has shed further light on this group of goddesses, important to all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. As we have seen the Twenty-one Tārā practice is much simpler than the body-*maṇḍala* or fire-*pūja* rituals discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Despite this, the individual Red Tārās discussed in this chapter have shed new light on the implements of subjugation. The next chapter moves on to discuss A-paṃ gter-ston's more recent discovery of *gter-ma* pertaining to the cult of Red Tārā.







Fig. 6.1: *Thang-ga* of Red Tārā in the A-paṃ gter-ston tradition.  
Kathmandu, Nepal, twenty-first century.  
(Author's collection)

Chapter Six focusses on the Red Tārā *gter-ma* cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston, a twentieth-century *gter-ston* whose Red Tārā teachings have become popular in the West due to the work of Chagdud Tulku (lCags-mdud sprul-sku), as discussed in Chapter Seven. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of *gter-ma* and the role of the *gter-ston*. Following this I shall discuss the life of A-paṃ gter-ston, his treasure discoveries and in particular his Red Tārā cycle of teachings.

### 6.1. The Tibetan Tradition of *gTer-ma* Discovery

Chapter Six begins with a brief introduction to the Tibetan *gter-ma* tradition in order to contextualise the Red Tārā texts discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston and the teachings of Traktung Tulku (see Chapter Eight). For further information the reader is referred to the many authors who have worked extensively on the *gter-ma* tradition, its history, and its various taxographical systems (Davidson 2005; Doctor 2005; Gyatso 1986; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1996; 1998; Neumaier-Dargyay 1997; Thondup 1986, 1990).

The uniquely Tibetan concept<sup>119</sup> of *gter-ma* (treasure) texts and their discovery became a part of the country's literary landscape during the eleventh century and by the thirteenth century the movement was widely attested with *gTer-ma* providing a means to add to the closed canon (Doctor 2005: 17; Gyatso 1986: 7, 1992: 97, Nov. 1993: 99). *gTer-ma* texts are believed to have been hidden by Padmasambhava (Gu-ru Rin-po-che), Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, Vairocana (rNam-par

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<sup>119</sup> For a discussion of the Tibetan *gter-ma* tradition as a reformulation of scriptural revelation in India and China see Mayer who discusses an Indian form of Treasure discovery in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, and also the concept of hidden-treasure (*nidhi*) in both Indian Hinduism and Buddhism. Gyatso states that Gu-ru Chos-dbang did not consider *gter-ma* to be a Tibetan phenomenon. Instead he places the tradition within the wider Buddhist world through a devaluation of the role of Padmasambhava and an emphasis on its Buddhist roots. However, Kapstein argues that "[e]ven if the Indians occasionally used the image of texts discovered as treasure, there was actually nothing like the treasure movement per se in India" (Davidson 2005: 212; Gyatso 1994: 279-80; Mayer 1994).



snang mdzad), and Vimalamitra (Dri-med bshes-gnyen, 8th century) to be uncovered at a predestined time in the future when they will be of assistance (Doctor 2005: 17-19; Gyatso 1986: 7; Thondup 1986: 60-61, 1990: 151).

In the *rNying-ma* school literature is classified as either Spoken Transmission (*bka'-ma*), Treasure (*gter-ma*) or Pure Vision (*dag-s nang*) (Doctor 2005: 17; Gyatso 1992: 96). The process of concealment of *gter-ma* is two-fold: Earth *gTer-ma* (*sa-gter*) are yellow scrolls (*shog-ser*) concealed in the landscape which serve to awaken a Mind-mandate Transmission (*gtad-rgya*) and the related teachings, whilst Mind *gTer-ma* (*dgongs-gter*) are teachings discovered in the *gTer-ston*'s (Treasure Revealer) mind, concealed there through Mind-mandate Transmission (Thondup 1986 61, 84-85; 1990: 151). Four reasons are presented for the concealment of *gter-ma*: the revival of lost teachings; maintenance of authentic teachings; so that the blessings of the teachings do not fade; and the short lineage between Padmasambhava and the present-day *gTer-ston*. It also enables teachings suitable for the present day to be discovered (Thondup 1986: 62-63).

*gTer-ma* texts are discovered by a *gTer-ston* who is believed to be one of the original twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava, and who was issued with a prophetic blessing stating when he will become a *gter-ston* in the future (Thondup 1990: 153-54). The *gTer-ston* is considered second to Padmasambhava in the lineage of that teaching thus ensuring the short lineage specific to the *gter-ma* tradition (Doctor 2005:19; Thondup 1986: 49, 71). A 'Great *gTer-ston*' is someone who has revealed *gter-ma* from all three categories of Padmasambhava, Avalokiteśvara, and *rDzogs-chen* (Davidson 2005: 225, 228, Gyatso: 1994: 275; Thondup 1986: 71-72; 1990: 154).<sup>120</sup> In some cases a *gter-ston* dictates the text to a scribe. After the text has

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<sup>120</sup> A-pam *gter-ston* is considered a 'Great *gTer-ston*', having revealed teachings from these three categories.

been decoded and written down it may be reconcealed to be of benefit in a future time (Thondup 1986: 86-87). Gyatso relates that for a *gter-ma* to be considered authentic it is important that the *gter-ston* has proof that he is the one prophesised by Padmasambhava to unearth the treasure (Gyatso 1993:126). Ju Mi-pham's nineteenth century text *The Gem that Clears the Waters* raises the possibility that fraudulent *gter-stons* may wish to pose as genuine treasure revealers. He describes false *gter-stons*, the problems associated with their false discoveries, and how to identify them (Doctor 2005: 44-45). Gyatso states that once a *gter-ston* has received a direct transmission of the *Dharma* then they are venerated, which increases their prestige (Gyatso 1992: 99, 105).

The 'Treasure Book' (*gter-gzhung/ gzhungs-rtsa*, a.k.a., *rdo-rje tshig-rkang*, Skt: *Vajrapada*) is the central text of a *gter-ma* discovery and forms the core of the revelatory teachings. The contents of the core teachings, which are often discovered in *ḍākinī*-language, are regarded as the actual teachings of a buddha. They are easily distinguished from texts composed by the *gter-ston* by the use of a *gter-tsheg*<sup>121</sup> at the end of each line (Gyatso 1992: 100, 110). Treasure Books detail the author's name, the process of concealment of the text, and the name and time of the discovery thereby elevating the status of the discoverer and removing doubt that the text may be his own composition, as these texts refer to Padmasambhava as the author.

Within Tibet the authenticity of *gter-ma* was not widely accepted, yet Gyatso believes that historical figures such as Padmasambhava lend authenticity to *gter-ma* discovery. She describes the role of the *gter-ston* as "self-legitimation" or "self-aggrandizement", and states that the *gter-ston* must employ a number of self-legitimizing strategies, such as *nges-shes bskyas-pa* texts, included solely for the

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<sup>121</sup> *gTer-tsheg* are two small circles (◌) used at the end of each line to indicate the texts is a *gter-ma* concealed by Padmasambhava.

purpose of engendering confidence and describe the history of the *gter-ma* including the origin and transmission of the cycle (Gyatso 1993: 102-106). 'Certificates' (*byang-bu*) are also important tools of authentication and discuss the origin of the *gter-ma* or more often prophesise the discovery. They often list the name of the future *gter-ston*, giving him confidence in his role. Alongside this visions are described which may occur at the time of the discovery and hints to the location of the text (Gyatso 1993: 126-27, 130).



Fig. 6.2: A-pam gter-sten O-rgyan phrin-las gling-pa. Author's collection (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2009)<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> This *thang-ga* depicts A-pam gter-ston with his hair tied in the top-knot characteristic of a *yogi*. He wields a *phur-ba* aloft in his right hand with a threatening gesture whilst his left hand holds a treasure

## 6.2. A-paṃ gter-ston

Section 6.2 discusses the twentieth-century master A-paṃ gter-ston. There are three main sources for his life story: *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, hereafter MGRG (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005); the *Deb chung a ru ra'i dga' tshal*, hereafter DAG (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003); and the *mGo log sman rtsis rig pa'i lo rgyus ngo mtsar nor bu'i rlab phreng*, hereafter GMRL (A-bu dkar-lo 2000). Brief reference to him is also found in Thondup's *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*. Thondup was himself a disciple of A-paṃ gter-ston (Thondup 2002). A short introductory background to the *gter-ston* is also found in his 1976 Collected Works (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976).

### 6.2.1. The Life of A-paṃ gter-ston

A-paṃ gter-ston lived from 1895 to 1945 and was active in the mGo-log region of Eastern Tibet. He was known by various names:

- dPa'-bo chos-dbyings rdo-rje
- A-paṃ gter-chen
- A-paṃ gter-ston
- A-paṃ gter-ston dPa'-bo chos-dbyings rdo-rje
- A-pang gter-ston dPa'-bo chos-dbyings rdo-rje
- O-rgyan phrin-las gling-pa
- bZhad-pa-rtsal
- Apong Terton<sup>123</sup> (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976; TBRC 2006)
- O-rgyan gsang-bdag chos-dbyings rdo-rje (A-paṃ gter-ston 1985)

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casket (*gter-sgrom*). The treasure casket is the symbol of a *gter-ston* and is usually held in the left hand, adorned with a jewel on the lid. The *phur-ba*, often being held in the right hand of a *gter-ston*, stabs the obstructing demons of the ten directions (Beer 2003: 101, 202).

<sup>123</sup> Apong Terton is the name commonly used by practitioners of Red Tārā in the CGF.

- rNam-sras (A-bu dkar-lo 2000)

It appears that differences are found between the Tibetan and exile-Tibetan sources for A-paṃ gter-ston's life, especially with regard to his early years. The preface to one version of his collected works states that there is no known biography of A-paṃ gter-ston (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976). Despite this a few resources which mention this master can be found. The two main English language resources are the MGRG (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 488-91, 667-69) and *Masters of Meditation and Miracles* (Thondup 2002), while two Tibetan-language life stories published in Tibet also include information: the GMRL (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 203-14) and the longer DAG (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 85-119).

In MGRG we find a biography of A-paṃ gter-ston, known here as "Apang Terchen". Khenpo describes A-paṃ gter-ston as an "emanated tertön": although most *gTer-stons* are incarnations of one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five main disciples, an 'Emanated *gTer-ston*' is an incarnation of Padmasambhava himself (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 329-30, 623). This biography also relates the story of A-paṃ gter-ston's miraculous conception: A-paṃ gter-ston's mother became pregnant when

Traktung Dudjom Lingpa focused his enlightened intent while resting in the basic space of timeless awareness, whereupon Apang Terchen's mother experienced an intense surge of delight. This caused all ordinary concepts based on confusion to be arrested in her mind for a short time, and it was then that Apang Terchen was conceived in her womb.

After this she experienced many dreams (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 489).<sup>124</sup>

The biography goes on to state that when A-paṃ gter-ston was born in gSer-rta, light filled the house and the area was pervaded with fragrance. He was born with a tuft of feathers protruding from his crown, taken as a portent that he was the incarnation of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem, who also had a feathery protrusion.<sup>125</sup> A-paṃ

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<sup>124</sup> I again heard this story from Lama Tsering Everest who also related that after his birth a statue of a wealth deity was found outside the family's hut (Everest 2009a).

<sup>125</sup> Rig-'dzin rgod-kyi ldem-phru chen (1337-1408) was the founder of *Byang-gter* tradition of the *rNying-ma-pa* school. *rGod-ldem* means vulture feathers, and refers to the vulture feathers growing

gter-ston's uncle was distressed by the birth of this feathered, illegitimate child and berated the mother, a nun. Despite his controversial early years, as a child A-paṃ gter-ston was filled with faith in Guru Rin-po-che and was highly intelligent. He studied under Gyatsok lama damlo [*sic*],<sup>126</sup> gTer-ston bSod-rgyal (1856-1926), and Tre-hor Brag-dkar sprul-sku (Tre-hor mchog-sprul Blo-bzang bstan-'dzin, 1866-1928). A-paṃ gter-ston lived the life of a hermit, residing in caves and ravines throughout the region and experienced visions of a number of deities.

Khenpo's account differs somewhat from the two Tibetan sources, especially with regards to his birth. In both Tibetan accounts A-paṃ gter-ston is not described as the miraculous son of bDud-'joms gling-pa, instead we find the names of A-paṃ gter-ston's father and mother listed: A-pang bSod-rdor and Ma-sgron (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 203) or A-pang bSod-nams rdo-rje and rTa-shul bza'-mo sGron-gnyis (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 89). Here he was born in rTa-shul, mGo-log. Again, the uncle is mentioned, but here he is portrayed not as a jealous man but as a religious figure who undertook a *sMyung-gnas* retreat<sup>127</sup> during which he received a vision of Vaiśravaṇa (rNam-sras). The deity stated that he would be born into the uncle's family, and the child was accordingly named rNam-sras. This uncle later taught him the alphabet. Once again we see the story of the vulture feathers growing on his head. The DAG says that his father cut them off, as he was suspicious as other children did not possess such a protrusion (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 203; Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 89).

The DAG records the previous incarnations of A-paṃ gter-ston, a list which includes numerous illustrious figures from Tibet's past:

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from his crown. He was also known as dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan. Amongst his *gter-ma* was *dGong pa zang thal* (*Kun tu bzang po'i dgong pa zang thal bstan pa*, Showing Directly the Realisation of Samantabhadra) in five volumes (RangjungYesheWiki 2004a).

<sup>126</sup> I have not been able to find any information concerning Gyatsok Lama Damlo.

<sup>127</sup> The *sMyung-gnas* retreat centres on the deity Avalokiteśvara and usually involves fasting and performance of prostrations. This retreat is often conducted over the period of Sa-ga zla-ba when the enlightenment and *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha are celebrated.

As for A-pang gter-ston dPa'-bo chos-dbyings rdo-rje after taking successive incarnations as Padmapāṇi, Wrathful Tārā, [followed by] the noble *Bodhisattvas* in India [as] the *Māhāsiddha* Kṛṣṇācārya,<sup>128</sup> the householder Suchandra who was in the presence of the Buddha,<sup>129</sup> [he was reborn] in Tibet [as] Queen Bal-bza' khri-btsun,<sup>130</sup> Prince Mu-tig btsan-po,<sup>131</sup> King Khri Ral-ba,<sup>132</sup> the Lord of Secrets Gu-ru Jo-tshe,<sup>133</sup> the Scholar Rā-ga a-sye,<sup>134</sup> the *Paṇḍita* Shes-rab grags-pa,<sup>135</sup> the *Māhāsiddha* Thang-stong rgyal-po,<sup>136</sup> the Great Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem, Chos-dbying sTob-ldan-pa,<sup>137</sup> and so forth (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 203-204).<sup>138</sup>

As we have seen above he was foremost considered an incarnation of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem, indicated by the presence of vulture feathers on his head at birth. His life story states that he was recognised as the incarnation by Nyag-bla bSod-rgyal (Las-rab gling-pa, 1856-1926)<sup>139</sup> and A-kyes mkha'-spyod gling-pa, and that rDo-rje g.Yu-sgron-ma<sup>140</sup> herself appeared in person as a consort (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 207).<sup>141</sup> It appears from cursory observation that it is not possible for A-paṃ gTer-ston to be considered the incarnation of Nyag-bla bSod-rgyal as the latter only passed away in 1926, whereas A-paṃ gTer-ston was born much earlier in 1895.

<sup>128</sup> Kṛṣṇācārya (Nag-po spyod-pa) was one of the 84 Indian *Māhāsiddhas*.

<sup>129</sup> The King Suchandra (Zla-ba bzang-po) of Shambala requested teachings from the Buddha on practising the *dharma* whilst maintaining a worldly lifestyle, at which point the Buddha expounded the *Kālacakra* teachings at Amaravati.

<sup>130</sup> Queen Bal-bza' khri-btsun was the Nepalese wife of Srong-bstan sgam-po.

<sup>131</sup> Mu-tig btsan-po was Khri Song-lde-bstan's son.

<sup>132</sup> Khri-ral-ba was the forty-first King of Tibet and the grandson of Khri Song-lde-bstan.

<sup>133</sup> Gu-ru Jo-tshe was a *rNying-ma-pa gter-ston*, dates unknown.

<sup>134</sup> Rā-ga a-sye/ Karma chags-med (1613-1678) was the founder of gNas-mdo dgon-pa in the *Kam-tshang bka'-brgyud* lineage, and the teacher of Mi-'gyur rdo-rje (TBRC 2006).

<sup>135</sup> It is not possible to identify the particular Shes-rab grags-pa to which this refers as it is a widely-occurring Tibetan name.

<sup>136</sup> Thang-stong rgyal-po (1361-1485) was the famous bridge-builder and reputedly the founder of Tibetan 'opera'. Janet Gyatso has discussed his *gter-ma* discoveries (Gyatso 1992).

<sup>137</sup> Chos-dbyings stobs-ldan rdo-rje (1785-1848) was a rDzogs-chen master also known as the third A-lags rgyal-po. He was born in Reb-gong and resided there at rDzogs-chen rnam-rgyal gling monastery, of which he was the first Ko'u-sde rdzogs-chen (TBRC 2006).

<sup>138</sup> *a pang gter ston dpa' bo chos dbyings rdo rje ni/ 'phags mchog phyag na pad ma dang/ sgrol ma khro gnyer can/ 'phags pa'i yul du grub (204) chen nag po spyod pa/ thub pa'i spyang sngar khyim bdag zla ba bzang po/ bod yul du bal bza' khri btsun rgyal mo/ lha sras mu tig btsan po/ mnga' bdag khri ral ba/ gsang bdag gu ru jo tshe/ mkhas grub rA ga a sye/ paN chen shes rab grags pa/ grub chen thang stong rgyal po/ rig 'dzin rgod ldem chen/ chos dbyings stobs ldan pa sogs byang sems 'phags pa'i sku phreng rim par bzhes pa nas da lta'i sku skye byon yul ni/*

To this list the DAG adds Ngan-lam rgyal-ba mchog-dbyangs, the eighth-century disciple of Padmasambhava (TBRC 2006). gTer-chen Sangs-rgyas bla-ma, the first *gter-ston*, who lived from 1000-1080 (TBRC 2006). Yar-lung O-rgyan gling-ba was a *gter-ston* born in either 1263 or 1323 (TBRC 2006), and Byang-pa Pad-ma 'phrin-las (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003:87).

<sup>139</sup> Nyag-bla bSod-rgyal/ Las-rab gling-pa (1856-1926) was the founder of Khas-dmar dgon-pa in Padma rDzong. He was a *rNying-ma-pa Lama* (TBRC 2006).

<sup>140</sup> rDo-rje g.Yu-sgron-ma is a protector goddess.

<sup>141</sup> *nyag bla bsod rgyal dang a skyes mkha' spyod gling pas a gter nyid rig 'dzin rgod ldem gyi sprul skur lung bstan/ rdo rje g.yu sgron ma nyid las rgyar dngos su byon pa*

A-paṃ gter-ston was the founder of rTsis-mda' dGon-pa in Padma rDzong, a monastery in the Kaḥ-thog tradition. He is said to have built rTsis-mda' bkra-shis dga'-khyil thub-bstan shes-rab 'phel-rgyas gling after receiving a prophesy from sPyan-ras-gzigs and the First Buddha. The story goes on to describe that when the Vajrasattva temple was built at the site the face of the statue spontaneously appeared, and other miraculous events occurred. It is said that these events halted the decline of the doctrine and beings in Tibet (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 210; Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 111). The main subjects of the teachings at this monastery were the Preliminary Practices (*sNgon-'gro*), the *Klong-chen snying-thig*, *Khregs-chod*, and *Thod-rgyal* (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 113).<sup>142</sup>

Tulku Thondup was a disciple of A-paṃ gter-ston and as such incorporates a few short references to him in his *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*. These include stories concerning his meeting with the two Fourth rDo-grub-chen Rin-po-ches (Thondup 2002: 319-23, 326). Various stories relating to other miraculous events from his life can be found in his two Tibetan life stories (A-bu dkar-lo 2000; Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003; Thondup 2002: 319-23, 326). As these do not pertain to our current discussion they are not included here, but I hope to publish them in a future work.

### 6.2.2. The *gTer-ma* Discoveries of A-paṃ gter-ston

A-paṃ gter-ston was a famous twentieth-century *gter-ston*. Khenpo states that A-paṃ received a prophesy in a vision of Padmasambhava, after which he travelled far and wide revealing *gter-ma* at Brag-lha mgon-po in rGyal-rong, mKha'-'gro 'bum-rdzong, and rDo-rje sprel-rdzong in Brag-dkar (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 490). A-bu dkar-lo

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<sup>142</sup> The *Khregs-chod* (Cutting Through) and *Thod-rgyal* (Crossing Over) practices belong to the *rDzogs-chen* class of teachings which are important to the *rNying-ma-pa* school. The *Klong-chen snying-thig* is one example of *rDzogs-chen* teachings.



concur with this, stating:

At the time he was staying in the retreat of the ten million Seven *Vajra* Syllable Supplication [to Padmasambhava]. Having seen [a vision of] Zangs-mdog dpal-ri<sup>143</sup> in his pure perception and having attained assurance from the speech of Padmasambhava the mind-mandate thought was activated. From time to time since then the *ḍākinī* script has emerged effortlessly [to him] (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 205).<sup>144</sup>

and

He took innumerable earth-treasures from treasure-sites of the dBus-gtsang region: bSam-yas mchims-phu,<sup>145</sup> g.Ya-ma-lung,<sup>146</sup> Yar-lung shel-brag, and so forth [and] the treasure-sites of Lower mDo-khams: bSer-'bring-ri smug-po, rDo-snying ral-ba, gNyan-po g.yu-rtse, rMa-rgyal gangs-ri, gNas bkra-shis sgo-mang, rDzong-gnas-mtsho nag-ma, and so forth (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 209-10).<sup>147</sup>

The DAG elaborates that he discovered *gter-ma* all over Tibet, mDo-smad and mDo-stod (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 105). His treasures caskets were famously made from turquoise, agate, and lapis lazuli (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 210).<sup>148</sup> Thondup includes a picture of a site from which A-paṃ gter-ston discovered some *gter-ma* in his *Hidden Teachings of Tibet* (Thondup 1986: Illustration 22).

Khenpo states that A-paṃ gter-ston's *gter-ma* included "*The Hidden Treasure of Enlightened Mind: The Thirteen Red Deities*", practices which focus on the Three Roots, cycles concerning guardian deities and the principle of enlightened activity, and a large instruction manual on *rDzogs-chen* teachings (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 490). The *Thirteen Red Deities* are as follows: Amitābha, the Red *Guru*, Amitāyus, Red Mañjuśrī, Red Vajrasattva, Red Hayagrīva, the Red Wrathful *Guru* (Padmasambhava), Red Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, Red Tārā, Red Lion Faced Ḍākinī,

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<sup>143</sup> Zangs-mdog dpal-ri is the Glorious Copper Coloured Mountain, the Pure land of Padmasambhava.

<sup>144</sup> *rdo rje'i tshig bdun bye ba gcig gi sku mtshams la bzhugs skabs dag pa'i snang ngor zangs mdog dpal rir phebs bas o rgyan chen po gsung gis dbugs dbyung thob nas dgongs pa'i gtad rgya sad/ de nas bzung skabs dang skabs su mkha' 'gro'i brda byang sogs rtsol med du byung/*

<sup>145</sup> bSam-yas mchims-phu is a famous cave complex above bSam-yas monastery.

<sup>146</sup> g.Ya'-ma-lung is a hermitage near bSam-yas.

<sup>147</sup> *bsam yas mcims phu dang g.ya' ma lung/ yar lung shel brag sogs dbus gtsang phyogs kyi gter gnas rnam dang/ bser 'brong ri smug po/ rdo snying ral ba/ gnyan po g.yu rtse/ rma rgyal gangs ri/ gnas bkra shis sgo mang/ rdzong gnas mtsho nag ma sogs mdo khams smad kyi gter gnas rnam las sa gter grangs med bzhes/*

<sup>148</sup> *khong gi gter sgrom rnam ni rgyu rin po che gzi mchong beḍūrya sogs las grub pas*

mKha'-spyod-ma,<sup>149</sup> Kurukullā, and Mahādeva (Śiva) (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 94).

Once again this information concurs with that found in his Tibetan life stories.

The GMRL lists his *gter-ma* discoveries:

From the five cycles of sealed treasure-teachings [his teachings included]: The Treasury of Blessings of the Secret *Sādhana* of the Emanated *Gu-ru*; The Cycle of Teachings of the Secret *Dākinī*; The Garland of the White Lotus of Avalokiteśvara; The Six Doctrines of the Profound Great Perfection (*rDzogs-chen*) and so forth.

The many recitation manuals and explanatory texts of the *Sādhana* Cycle of the Three: the *Gu-ru*, the Great Perfection (*rDzogs-chen*), and Avalokiteśvara.

Also from the cycle of medical science: The Ten Activities of Clearing Painful Heat [Entitled] The Drop of Nectar Jewel Garland of Medicinal Compounds; The Five Actions of Beneficial Nectar; The Actions of Subjugating and Clearing Defilements; The Flower Beneficial Medicinal Prayer; The Sealed *Vajra* Essence-Extraction (*bcud-len*) of Red Tārā; The Medicinal Compounds and Hundred Protective Actions of Wrathful Padmasambhava Riding a White *Garuda*; The Protective Levels of Wrathful Padmasambhava Burning the Skeleton; The *Za-yig* Cycle of the One Hundred Thousand *Mantras* and so forth (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 211).<sup>150</sup>

Byang-chub rdo-rje, a student of A-paṃ, was the custodian of his *gter-ma*.

Exact dates for Byang-chub rdo-rje are unknown, given only as the twentieth century.

He was born into the A-skyong clan in mGo-log and was a close disciple of A-paṃ gter-ston. He received the complete cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston's *gter-ma* and later moved to exile in Bhutan and India. It was whilst in India that he transmitted A-paṃ gter-ston's teachings to his incarnation Sakya Trizin (Sa-skya khri-'dzin), and also met Chagdud Tulku to whom he taught the Red Tārā cycle at mTsho Padma (Khadro 2003: 4-5; Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 491-92). For more information on the later promulgation of the Red Tārā teachings in America by Chagdud Tulku see Chapter Seven.

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<sup>149</sup> mKha'-spyod-ma is better known as Nā-ro mKha'-spyod-ma (Skt: Khecarī) a form of Vajrayoginī who resides in Khecara, Vajrayoginī's buddhaland (Shaw 2006: 367-69). She is one of the *Sa-skya-pa* school's Thirteen Red Deities, and in particular forms one of the Three Reds (*dmar-po skor-sum*).

<sup>150</sup> *gter chos rgya can skor lnga las 'phros pa'i gu ru'i gsang sgrub byin rlabs gter mdzod sogs bla sgrub du ma dang/ mkha' 'gro gsang ba'i chos skor/ thugs rje chen po pad dkar phreng ba/ zab lam rdzogs pa chen po chos drug sogs bla rdzogs thugs gsum gyi sgrub skor khrid yig bsnyen yig du ma dang/ gso rig gi skor la yang/ sman sbyor nor bu'i phreng ba bdud rtsi'i thigs pa tsha gdung sel ba'i sbyor ba bcu ba dang/ phan byed bdud rtsi'i las tshogs lnga ba/ grib sel rnam 'joms kyi las tshogs/ sman gyi smon lam phan bde'i me tog/ sgröl ma dmar mo'i bcud len rdo rje'i rgya can/ gu drag khyung zhon dkar bo'i las tshogs srung brgya dang sman sbyor/ gu drag keng rus me 'bar gyi rim srung/ sngags 'bum za yig gi skor sogs*

### 6.2.3. The Disciples and Offspring of A-paṃ gter-ston

A-paṃ gter-ston had four children. His first son passed away at an early age.

Following him was another son, A-dzom 'Brug-sprul 'Gyur-med rdo-rje. His second son dBang-chen Nyi-ma was the rebirth of Wa-shul dpon-bla bSod-rnams 'gyur-med. His third child was a daughter, Tā-re lha-mo (1938-2003),<sup>151</sup> who was followed by Thub-bstan chos-kyi nyi-ma, a son who was recognised as the rebirth of mDo rin-po-che Khams-gsum Zil-gnon dgyes-pa rdo-rje (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 213).

With regard to A-paṃ gter-ston's teachers, the TBRC lists one 'Jigs-med chos-kyi zla-ba (1894-1958), the 7<sup>th</sup> Dar-thang gdan-rabs and the 3<sup>rd</sup> rDzong-nang. He was resident at Dar-thang monastery in mGo-log and A-paṃ gter-ston is listed as both his teacher and student (TBRC 2006). However, in A-paṃ gter-ston's life story we find Brag-dkar rin-po-che (Tre-hor brag-dkar sprul-sku) listed as his main teacher (A-bu dkar-lo 2000; Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 489). We have seen a list of his other masters above.

A-paṃ gter-ston had a large number of students, and Khenpo states that his disciples lived "from Dartsedo in the east, to Repkong in Amdo to the north, to the three regions of Golok and other areas" (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 490). They included Buddhist masters, local political leaders, monastics, villagers, and lay tantric practitioners. The list of students provided in the DAG is too long to quote here (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 113-14). He is said to have taught his own *gter-ma* and the *sNying-thig* teachings and was renowned for having dispelled disease, famine,

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<sup>151</sup> Tā-re lha-mo (1938-2003) otherwise known as Nam-mkha'i bu-mo or mKha'-'gro bDe-chen rgyal-mo, was the incarnation of Klu-shul mkhan-po mkon-mchog sgron-me (1859-1936). She is listed as a student of the fourth rDo-grub-chen Thub-bstan phrin-las dpal-bzang (b. 1927) and her husband was the *gter-ston* Nam-mkha' gling-pa (b. 1944). A-paṃ gter-ston's life stories describe her as the manifestation of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal and the result of his union with mKha'-'gro bDe-ba'i rdo-rje, who appears to be the famous Se-ra mkha'-'gro (1892/99-1940/52). Further work on Tā-re lha-mo and Nam-mkha' gling-pa has been conducted by Tulkou Péma Osel Thayé and Holly Gayley (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 213; Gayley 2009; Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 116; TBRC 2006; Thayé 2005; Thondup 2002: 236, 349).

and local unrest (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 490). His *gSung-'bum* states: "[h]is disciples include the present rDo grub-chen, Bya-bral byang-chub-rdo-rje, Sprul-sku don-grub, as well as numerous teachers left in Tibet" (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976).

The list of A-pam gter-ston's students provided in the GMRL is as follows:

From amongst his innumerable students there are four famous pillar students. The great four [are as follows:] Kun-bzang nyi-ma.<sup>152</sup> With respect to the body [students]: Thang sprul-sku 'Jigs-med ye-shes bstan-'dzin rgya-mtsho; Kaḥ-thog phyag-sprul Padma 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho,<sup>153</sup> dBang-mda'i Gyang-sprul Blo-bzang don-grub rdo-rje,<sup>154</sup> and also both rDo-grub sprul-skus [who are] the Lords of the *Dharma*.<sup>155</sup>

[His other students include] dPal-yul mchog-sprul 'Jam-dpal dgyes-pa'i rdo-rje; Brag-dkar blo-bzang bstan-'dzin snyan-grags;<sup>156</sup> Dhi-phu chos-rje sprul-sku 'Jigs-med phyogs-las rnam-rgyal;<sup>157</sup> sDe-srid dngos-srang stag-bla 'jigs-med thub-bstan rnam-rgyal;<sup>158</sup> dPal-yul gad-zhabs sprul-sku Tshang-dbyangs blo-gros;<sup>159</sup> A-skyong mi-dbang mdon-po lha-rgyal; dGe-rtse mi-dbang Tshe-ring rdo-rje; mGar-klong sprul-sku Zla-ba'i 'od-zer,<sup>160</sup> Reb-gong Ngag-dbang phun-tshogs; sPrul-sku Chos-nyid bzang-bo; Hor-bla mDo-sngags bstan-'dzin; mGo-log bla-ma 'Od-srung<sup>161</sup> and so forth. (213) It is as if his students spread in mDo-smad, in mGo-log and the Reb-gong areas, 'Dzi-ske 'dzam-thang, sDe-dge, Chab-mdo, Khyo-kho-rnga, and so forth (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 212-23).<sup>162</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Kun-bzang nyi-ma (1904-1958) was the son of bDod-'joms gling-pa. He was also known as Nus-ldan rdo-rje and rDzong-gter kun-bzang nyi-ma (TBRC 2006).

<sup>153</sup> Padma 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho was a Kaḥ-thog *bla-ma* who lived during the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He is also known as the Fourth Phyag-tsha Kun-bzang padma 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho (TBRC 2006).

<sup>154</sup> Don-grub rdo-rje (1892-1960) was also known as dBang-mda' gyang-sprul Don-grub rdo-rje (TBRC 2006).

<sup>155</sup> There were two fourth incarnations of rDo-grub-chen alive at the time: Rig-'dzin bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (1927-1961) and Thub-bstan 'phrin-las dpal-bzang (b. 1927) (Thondup 2002).

<sup>156</sup> Brag-dkar blo-bzang dpal-ldan bstan-'dzin snyan-grags lived from 1866 to 1928 at Brag-dkar monastery in the region of dKar-mdzes in Khams (TBRC 2006). He is described as the main teacher of A-pam gter-ston, and is mentioned frequently in his Tibetan language biographies (A-bu dkar-lo 2000; Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003).

<sup>157</sup> It may be that this is 'Jigs-med phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1874-1942), the fifth gTsang-pa sku-phreng (TBRC 2006).

<sup>158</sup> sTag-bla nor-bu, otherwise known as 'Jigs-med thub-bstan rgya-mtsho (1889-1958) was a Doctor from mGo-log (TBRC 2006).

<sup>159</sup> Gad-zhabs sprul-sku Tshangs-dbyangs blo-gros's (1908-1959) seat was Dar-thang dgon-pa and he died in prison at Zi-ling (TBRC 2006).

<sup>160</sup> Zla-ba'i 'od-zer (1922-1990) lived in Khams (TBRC 2006).

<sup>161</sup> The TBRC lists one 'Od-srung (1914-1959/60) who seems a likely candidate, from the mGo-log monastery of Dar-thang dgon-pa (TBRC 2006).

<sup>162</sup> *gsung skyes slob ma grangs kyis mi lang ba las gtso bor slob ma ka bzhi grags pa/ gzhi chen kun bzang nyi ma/ sku phyogs la thang sprul sku 'jigs med ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho/ kah thog phyag sprul padma 'phrin las rgya mtsho/ dbang mda'i gyang sprul blo bzang don grub rdo rje rnam dang/ gzhan yang chos kyi bdag po rdo grub sprul sku rnam gnyis/ dpal yul mchog sprul 'jam dpal dgyes pa'i rdo rje/ brag dkar blo bzang bstan 'dzin snyan grags/ dhi phu chos rje sprul sku 'jigs med phyogs las rnam rgyal/ sde srid dngos snang stag bla 'jigs med thub bstan rnam rgyal/ dpal yul gad zhabs sprul sku tshangs dbyangs blo gros/ a skyong mi dbang mdon po lha rgyal/ dge rtse mi dbang tshe ring rdo rje/ mgar klong sprul sku zla ba'i 'od zer/ reb gong ngag dbang phun tshogs/ sprul sku chos nyid bzang bo/ hor bla mdo sngags bstan 'dzin/ mgo log bla ma 'od srung sogs mdo smad (213) mgo log dang yul reb gong/ 'dzi ska 'dzam thang/ sde dge chab mdo khyo kho rnga ba sogs la slob mas ma khyab pa med pa lta bu'o//*

#### 6.2.4. The Rebirth of A-paṃ gter-ston

A-paṃ gter-ston was reborn as the 41st Sakya Trizin as prophesised in his life story:

Having bestowed the unsurpassable kindness of prolonging the great secret life heart teachings at the age of 51, in the first half of the wood-bird year, Western year 1945 he prophesied arising in [other] surroundings [in his future life. He said] "You must make cash offerings and offer a great tea party [for the monks] and after three years you will be able to recognise [my incarnation] at Sa-skyā." After saying this, his thoughts gathered in the *dharmadhātu* [(the ultimate sphere) and he passed away] (A-bu dkar-lo 2000: 212).<sup>163</sup>

The dates provided in this quote concur with those in the DAG, where it is states that A-paṃ gter-ston's son dBang-chen nyi-ma grwa-'khor met with his father's incarnation who recognised him as his son, after which he made the necessary donations to Se-ra, 'Bras-spungs, dGa'-ldan, and Sa-skyā monasteries (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 115).

Dezhung Rinpoche's life story includes some details about this event. It states that A-paṃ gter-ston died in Minyak [*sic*] after travelling for some time and reiterates that he had foretold his future rebirth into the Sa-skyā 'Khon family. When Dezhung Rinpoche discussed the situation with Rikhü Kusho [*sic*] the monk stated "Some say he is an excellent lama; others say he is a hoax. Well, by next year we'll know whether he is gold or brass! If no son is born to one of the two Sakya palaces he will be proven a fake!". However, here the year of his death is listed as 1944 (Jackson 2004: 129). This is the only place we find the legitimacy of A-paṃ gter-ston under discussion, and as it turned out he was in fact reborn in the 'Khon family:

The immediate rebirth of the *gter-chen* the Superior *Sa-skyā* is alive now. Ah-yu bdzra was born in the Wood-Bird year, the Western year 1945. At the time he was three years old he recognised the local people and nomad tents of his homeland together with the furniture. Again, at the time the *gter-chen* died he said "I must go to the *gtsang-grub* camp". The Supreme *gTsang-grub* having opened at the upper door of the yak-hair tent stated "A-pang gter-chen has arrived". That day the *gter-chen* died, and later in the Fire-Dog year the child incarnation was born (A-bu dkar-lo 2000:213)<sup>164</sup>

<sup>163</sup> *gsang chen snying po'i bstan pa'i srog mthud pa'i bka' drin bla na med pa btsal nas dgung grangs nga gcig pa shing mo bya ste spyi lo 1945 lo'i lo stod du nye 'khor rnams la ma 'ongs 'byung 'gyur gyi lung bstan dang khyed tshos 'gyed mang ja legs po zhig thongs dang lo gsum nas nga rang sa skyar ngo shes thub pa zhig 'ong ngo/ zhes sogs gsungs nas dgongs pa chos dbyings su bsdus/*

<sup>164</sup> *gter chen gyi yang srid de ma thag pa da lta zhal bzhugs pa'i sa skyā gong ma chen po ah yu bdzra zhabs pa shing bya spyi lo 1945 la 'khrungs pa dgang lo gsum pa'i dus pha yul gyi sa cha ru sde yul mi yo byad dang bcas pa ngos bzung ba nyid dang/ yang gter chen sku gshegs khar nga rang gtsang grub*

According to the official biography of Sakya Trizin (Ngag-dbang kun-dga' theg-chen dpal-'bar 'phrin-las bsam-'phel dbang-gi rgyal-po) he was born on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1945 in rTse-gdong, near Shigatse (Trizin 2008). A number of signs indicated Sakya Trizin as the incarnation of A-paṃ gter-ston:

When His Holiness' Noble Father and mother asked him when he was a very young child where he came from, he answered that he came from far away and that his home was a tent. When he learned to talk, he spoke in Golok dialect, which was the dialect spoken by Apam Terton. Later on, Apam Terton's son came to visit the Khön family. When His Holiness' aunt asked him who this man was, His Holiness replied that this was his son. When he met a disciple of Apam Terton called Sheija, His Holiness repeated a piece of advice given to him in the same words that Apam Terton had spoken earlier. He even called him Thubten Sheija. Only Apam Terton and a few close people had known that Thubten was Sheija's first name (Pal Sakya).

For more information concerning Sakya Trizin and his role in the current lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston's teachings see Chapter Seven.

### 6.3. The Works of A-paṃ gter-ston

Will we now move on from the life story of A-paṃ gter-ston to discuss his *gter-ma* revelations in more detail. The three known Collected Works of A-paṃ gter-ston are as follows:

- *The Collected Rediscovered Teachings (gter chos) of A-paṃ gter-ston O-rgyan-phrin-las-gling-pa: Reproduced from all the surviving manuscripts in the possession of his disciples in India and Bhutan* (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976)

This is a four volume collection compiled from texts found in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

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*sgar du 'gro dgos zhes gsungs shing de nyid gtsang grub mchog gis sbra gur gyi sgo yar bkyags nas de ring a pang gter chen 'byon gin yod gsungs/ de nyin gter chen sku gshegs pa dang lo phyi ma me khyi la sprul sku bu lo 'khrungs so//*

- *The Expanded Redaction of the Collected Revelations (gter chos) of A-paṃ Gter-ston O-rgyan-phrin-las-gling-pa: Reproduced on the Basis of Rare Manuscripts Recently Received from Tibet* (A-paṃ gter-ston 1985)

This collection is based on the above but includes further rare manuscripts received from Tibet.

- *dPa' bo chos dbyings rdo rje gter chos: rGyal dbang padma'i rgyal tshab o rgyan phrin las gling pa'i zab gter nor bu'i phreng ba* (Ta-re lha-mo 200?)

This collection is believed to have been compiled by A-paṃ gter-ston's daughter Tā-re lha-mo within Tibet during the early years of the twenty-first century.

Within these works we find a number of Red Tārā texts, which are listed in Appendix 6. This thesis uses the 1976 Collected Works as a source text (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976). This was chosen as the main text for analysis here as it is the most prevalent version of A-paṃ gter-ston's teachings available. The 1985 *Expanded Redaction* is only available at one location in the UK, Cambridge University Library, and is based substantially on the 1976 edition. The 200? Tibetan Collected Works is also not often used.

The 1976 Collected Works of A-paṃ gter-ston (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976) contain teachings on various topics:

### *Volume One*

Prayers to A-paṃ gTer-ston, Thang-stong rgyal-po, *Gu-ru Yoga*; Vajrasattva; a Biography of Gu-ru Rin-po-che; Medicine Buddha; White, Yellow, Red, Blue and Black Mañjuśrī; the Five families of Mañjuśrī; and the Secret *sādhana* of the Gu-ru.

### *Volume Two*

Avalokiteśvara and White Mahākāla.

### *Volume Three*

Red Tārā; Kurukullā; Vajravārāhī: Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal; and pictures of gTor-ma.

### *Volume Four*

Demons (*dregs-byed*); Black Dzam-bha-la; and *rDzogs-chen*.

As we can see Red Tārā is by no means the main deity found in the works of A-paṃ gter-ston. However, due to the efforts of Chagdud Tulku in the twentieth-century A-paṃ gter-ston is now remembered for his cycle of Red Tārā teachings (see Chapter Seven). Lists of the various Red Tārā texts as found in the three versions of A-paṃ gter-ston's work will now follow.

#### **6.3.1. A Brief Overview of the Red Tārā Texts found in the 1976 Collected Works**

As the most widely available copy of A-paṃ gter-ston's *gSung-'bum* the *The Collected Rediscovered Teachings (gter chos) of A-paṃ gter-ston O-rgyan-phrin-las-gling-pa* (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976) has been used as a basis for examination of the Red Tārā texts discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston. As the Red Tārā practices discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston are secret and require ritual empowerment prior to practising or reading the texts full translations have not been provided and the contents are described here only in brief. The secrecy of the texts in question is emphasised in the colophon of each and due respect must be paid to the tradition.



Therefore, only the various types of ritual discovered in the cycle and the iconography of the goddesses in question is discussed. Each text listed here is found in the 1976 Collected Works, the page number of identical texts found in other versions of the Collected Works are given in brackets alongside the title.

The iconography of the Red Tārās found within this collection is examined in Section 6.4.2. and is therefore not included here.

### Volume Three (*Ga*)

#### *Text AI*

##### ***The Supplication of Venerable Tārā's Lineage*** (SL 1-6; ER 9-16; CG 1-6)<sup>165</sup>

This prayer is dedicated to Tārā in general, as opposed to Red Tārā specifically. The prayer was requested by Blo-bzang rab-'byor<sup>166</sup> and the scribe was dKon-mchog dge-legs dpal bzang-po (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*nga*).<sup>167</sup>

#### *Text AII*

##### ***The Sādhana of Red Tārā [entitled] The Lotus Adornments*** (SL 7-18; ER 17-30)

This practice adopts the usual form of a refuge prayer followed by generation of the deity. After the visualisation an invocation, prostrations, praise and approach follow, using the mantra *Oṃ tāre tuttāre mama pushaṃ kuru hūṃ svahā*. The scribe was Ngag-dbang rog-pa'i rdo-rje<sup>168</sup> and the location was south of Ya-dkyl gser-'drong mountain. This practice is used by the CGF (Chagdud Gonpa Foundation) for their Red Tārā *Tshogs* gatherings and the empowerment of this form of the goddess is given prior to Dream *Yoga* retreats (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ja*).

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<sup>165</sup> In this section the three versions of A-paṃ gter-ston's Collected Works are referred to as follows: SL (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976); ER (A-paṃ gter-ston 1985); TL (Ta-re lha-mo 200?); CG (Chagdud Tulku 2007 [1984]). For each text the page numbers in each collection are given.

<sup>166</sup> No information has been found concerning Blo-bzang rab-'byor.

<sup>167</sup> No information has been found concerning dKon-mchog dge-legs dpal bzang-po.

<sup>168</sup> No information has been found concerning Ngag-dbang rog-pa'i rdo-rje.

### *Text AIII*

#### ***The Feast Offering of Red Tārā*** (SL 19-24; ER 31-38; TL 273-78; CG 25-32)

A 'feast offering' (*Tshogs*) requires offerings to be laid out, blessed, and subsequently offered to the goddess. After this a dedication and verse of auspiciousness are recited. This text was requested by Byang-chub ljon-bzang rgyas-pa,<sup>169</sup> in the area of the protective deity Brag-lha mgon-po.<sup>170</sup> It is guarded by the demon, his consort, and his retinue (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ra*).

### *Text AIV*

#### ***The Fulfilment Rite of Red Tārā*** (SL 25-28; ER 39-46; TL 279-82; CG 33-37)

The purpose of an Fulfilment Rite (*bsKang-ba*) is to atone for one's wrong-doings. In this text Tārā is entreated to fulfil the wishes of the practitioner, as such offerings are made to her and *siddhis* requested. The teachings is said to be protected by dPal-ldan lha-mo. It was requested by Zhing-skyong rgya-mtsho and dBang-mda'i 'gyur-med<sup>171</sup> and was taught close to rTsis-mda' rdor-sems temple.<sup>172</sup> Zhing-skyong rgya-mtsho also acted as the scribe (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ya*).

### *Text AV*

#### ***The Sādhana of Red Tārā*** (SL 29-32; TL 203-206)

This short *sādhana* text which describes Tārā as a "wish-fulfilling tree *ḍākinī*" contains the mantra *Oṃ tāre tāṃ svahā* which must be recited four hundred thousand times in order to accomplish the two benefits of helping oneself and others. The

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<sup>169</sup> No information has been found concerning Byang-chub ljon-bzang rgyas-pa.

<sup>170</sup> Brag-lha mgon-po appears to relate to a protector deity, possibly of Brag-dkar. Brag-dkar is the area in which A-paṃ gter-ston's main teacher Brag-dkar Rin-po-che resided. For more information concerning Brag-dkar Rin-po-che see Sections 6.2.2. and 6.2.3.

<sup>171</sup> No information has been found concerning Zhing-skyong rgya-mtsho or dBang-mda'i 'gyur-med.

<sup>172</sup> The rTsis-mda' rdor-sems temple is the famed Vajrasattva temple at A-paṃ gter-tson's monastery of rTsis-mda' dgon-pa, discussed in Section 6.2.1.

teaching is protected by Vajrayoginī and was requested and written down by 'Gyur-med rdo-rje (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*nya*).<sup>173</sup>

*Text AVI*

***The Iron hook of the Subjugating Inner Meditation on Red Tārā*** (SL 33-34; TL 207-208)

In this text one must visualise a *hrīḥ* which turns into a dark red Tārā. During performance of the practice light rays emanate and subjugate all phenomena, resulting in the achievement of *siddhis*. One uses both the main mantra *Oṃ tare svāhā* and also a longer prayer. The teaching is said to be protected by the five classes of demons (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*za*).

*Text AVII*

***The Mirror Divination Practice of Venerable Tārā*** (SL 35-36)

This is a short *Pra* (mirror divination) text, relating to Red Tārā. *Pra* divination may involve signs and visions which appear in either a mirror, a piece of polished stone or metal, the clear sky, the surface of a lake, a fingernail, the ball of the thumb, or the blade of a sword. The practice is especially associated with dPal-ldan lha-mo and the visionary may see up to three visions in a session. The technique can be used for either mundane or religious goals (Loewe and Blacker 1981: 9, 12; Pellegrini 2009). In this text an anointed mirror is used as the basis for the divination and the astrologer must recite the given *mantra* one hundred thousand times. This *mantra* is omitted here to preserve the secrecy of the practice (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ca*).

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<sup>173</sup> The TBRC lists a number of *rNying-ma-pa* 'Gyur-med rdo-rjes active in mGo-log at the time, and as such I am not able to identify the exact 'Gyur-med rdo-rje who requested this teaching.

*Text AVIII*

***The Red Tārā Guide [entitled] The Magical Mirror*** (SL 37-48; TL 359-72)

This text is a guide to the *gter-ma* cycle of Red Tārā teachings taught by A-paṃ gter-ston. It does not include a description of the goddess. Clarification is given on the various texts and predictions are made concerning certain years in the calendar. Like all the other texts in the cycle the contents are secret to the non-initiated. The text states that it is protected by rDo-rje drag-mo (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*cha*).

*Text AIX*

***The Secret Sādhana of Red Tārā*** (SL 49-51)

In this *sādhana* text the practitioner uses the *mantra* *Oṃ tāre tuttāre mama sarba pāśham kuru bhruṃ bhruṃ svahā*. The teaching is protected by dPal-ldan lha-mo and was requested by Thub-bstan 'jam-dbyangs bzang-po (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ka*).<sup>174</sup>

*Text AX*

***The Subjugating Fire Pūja Relying on Red Tārā*** (SL 51-54; TL 297-308)

This text is a short fire-*pūja*, in which the fire offerings are performed so that one may subjugate beings, gods, demons, and men. After a standard fire-*pūja*, a butter lamp is used to magnetise powerful beings, then incense is used as a tool in the subjugation ritual. The text is said to be protected by the five deities and demons (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976'*a*).

*Text AXI*

***The Heart Essence According to the Maṇḍala Rite Relying on Venerable Red Tārā***

(SL 55-66; ER 47-60; TL 241-53; CG 3-21)

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<sup>174</sup> No information has been found concerning Thub-bstan 'jam-dbyangs bzang-po.

This 'Four-fold *Maṇḍala* Offering' is the main Red Tārā ritual practised by the CGF. In this text Tārā is identified with Rig-byed lha-mo, which is also an epithet of Kurukullā. Furthermore, she is considered a semi-wrathful form of Kurukullā. The practice of this text in the CGF will be analysed in more detail in Chapter Seven. Here the *mantra* *Oṃ tāre tāṃ svahā* must be recited one-million two-hundred thousand times. The text states that the teaching was requested by mDo-rgyud rgya-mtsho,<sup>175</sup> the *sPrul-sku* of the A-mchog mthun-nyid hermitage. It is protected by the eight haughty spirits (*rgyags ching dregs pa*) and was taught in the vicinity of the local deity bSam-gtan gang-ba bzang-po (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ma).

#### *Text AXII*

#### ***The Refined Golden Maṇḍala Rite of Red Tārā Connected with the Great Perfection [rDzogs-chen] (SL 67-70)***

This *rDzogs-chen*-level text begins with a seven-limb Prayer to Tārā and a *maṇḍala* offering. Following this a Praise elucidates the individual meaning of the *mantra* *Oṃ tāre tuttare ture svahā*. This is followed by two more Praises (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ha).

#### *Text AXIII*

#### ***The Essence of the Profound Practice of the Maṇḍala Collection of Tārā [entitled] The Eight Endowments (SL 71-74)***

This text requests the protection of Red Tārā so that one may to accomplish the four activities of pacification, increase, subjugation, and destruction. The *mantra*

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<sup>175</sup> The TBRC includes information concerning a number of late nineteenth century personalities with the name mDo-rgyud rgya-mtsho. Without further information it is not possible to identify to whom this text refers.

employed in this text is *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*, the *mantra* of Green Tārā. No description of Red Tārā is given in the text (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*kha*).

*Text AXIV*

***The Spontaneous Two Benefits [to Oneself and Others] Aspirational Prayer to Venerable Red Tārā*** (SL 75-78; ER 83-88; TL 283-88; CG Aspirational Prayer 1-4)

This text is an aspiration prayer to the goddess Tārā and requests a number of achievements. The colophon states that the text was written in the hermitage of the protective deity rGyal-rong brag mgon-po (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ga*).

*Text AXV*

***The Long-life Practice of Red Tārā*** (SL 79-88; ER 88-98; TL 229-38)

In this long-life text Tārā is visualised with Amitāyus residing in her hair. This fits within the context of a long-life ritual as Amitāyus is one of a triad of long-life deities alongside White Tārā and Uṣṇīṣavijayā. Despite this Amitābha is visualised later in the text, as is Padmasambhava. Then prayers and prostrations are offered. The deified are nourished by light and granted long life. The text states that it was taught in the 'Chi-med<sup>176</sup> sman-chu brag caves. It is protected by the Buddha and the oath-bound guardians (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*tha*).

*Text AXVI*

***The "Calling in of the Good Fortune" of Red Tārā*** (SL 89-100; ER 117-28; TL 254-66)

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<sup>176</sup> 'Chi-med means deathless or immortal so it is interesting that this long-life text was taught in the cave of 'Chi-med sman-chu brag.

This ritual is performed in order to overcome the '*Gong-po* spirits of ego-clinging and for the receipt of prosperity. The text states that teachings such as these are very rare. The text is protected by the oath-bound guardians. The text was taught in the pleasure grove of sMan-chu (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*tsa*).

*Text AXVII*

***The Iron hook of the Subjugating Fire Offering Consecration Relying on the Most Profound Red Tārā*** (SL 101-10; TL 289-96)

This text begins by describing the arrangement of ritual objects and the fire-*pūja* hearth. The fire deity is then invited and offerings are made to him. After the Praises, Tārā is invited following which prostrations, offerings, and further praises are performed. Following this any errors made in the performance of the ritual are confessed and the auspicious verses recited. This teaching was requested by sKu-mchog bde-mchog<sup>177</sup> at 'Dam-yul mtsho (lake). The text states that it is wrathfully guarded by the Subjugators (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*dza*).

*Text AXVIII*

***The Actions of Noble Red Tārā [entitled] The Garland of Jewels*** (SL 111-46; TL 329-58)

This huge text is a collection of rituals which are almost magical in their aims. The Tārās to which this text refers are not just Red, but also White, Yellow, and Green. These colours seem to correspond quite simply to the four actions of pacification, increase, subjugation, and destruction. Whereas in this case no black deity is involved in the destructive actions and has perhaps been replaced by Green Tārā in this

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<sup>177</sup> No further information has been found concerning sKu-mchog bde-mchog.

function. This will become clear from the functions of the various Tārās presented in the list below.

The texts contains 56 short rituals. Each is composed of a description of the Tārā to be invoked and a *mantra* to be appended on to the root *mantra* in order to perform the specific ritual. Some texts do not mention Tārā and instead simply refer to a *mantra* to be spoken in order to fulfil a particular goal.

The purpose of each ritual is listed below, followed by the associated Tārā in brackets:

1. Achieving Buddhahood (Green)
2. Achieving Tārā's own ordinary *siddhis*
3. Pacifying sickness, malevolent influences, and obstacles (White)
4. Pacifying harm to one's life-force (White)
5. Preventing harm to the planets (White)
6. Preventing harm from *nāgas* (White)
7. Preventing fear (White)
8. Preventing infectious disease (White)
9. Preventing fear of lightening (White)
10. Preventing excesses of the realm<sup>178</sup> (White)
  - *Mantra* to bind clouds
  - *Mantra* to suppress the wind
  - Binding the power of another who stops the rain
11. Preventing hail (White)
12. Removing the obstacles to life (White)
13. Dispelling the obstacles to the accomplishment of enlightenment (White)

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<sup>178</sup> *zhing gi lhag pa srung*



14. Summoning life extension (Yellow)
15. Increasing grain, wealth, and the enjoyments (Yellow)
16. Prosperity (Yellow)
17. Increasing luck and prosperity<sup>179</sup> (Yellow)
18. Extending the harvest (Yellow)
19. Increasing domestic cattle (Yellow)
20. Subjugating external perceptions (Red)
21. Subjugating the object [of accomplishment] (Red)
22. Magnetising food and wealth (Red)
23. Drawing the wheel [of] subjugation
24. Assembling a spiritual community [*saṃgha*]
25. Annihilating enemies and hindrances (Green)
26. Separating the hostile forces and hinderances from their [protective] deities  
(Green)
27. The upside-down wind-horse [prayer flag (*rlung-rta*)] (Green)
28. Placing [the object] into the image (Green)
29. Driving [the object] insane (Green)
30. Subjugating haughty spirits (Green)
31. Eliminating snow and rain (Green)
32. Suppressing rebellious spirits (Green)
33. Cheating death in the common yogic applications (Tārā – no colour)
34. The profound [rite] summoning the *bla* (life-force) (Tārā – no colour)
35. The profound method of lengthening life (Tārā – no colour)
36. The wheel of White Tārā for increasing wisdom (White)

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<sup>179</sup> *phyā* (more usually *phya*) is luck or fortune, whilst *g.yang* is prosperity or blessings. Jim Valby, following Samten Karmay, translates the two together, *phya-g.yang*, as quitesence (Pellegrini 2009).

37. Accomplishing invisibility (Tārā – no colour)
38. Increasing the lineage (Tārā – no colour)
39. Seeing treasure (Tārā – no colour)
40. [*Siddhi*] of the celestial realm<sup>180</sup> (Tārā – no colour)
41. Knowing the mind of others (Green)
42. Wishing to go in water without sinking (White)
43. Preserving the sharp weapon (Tārā – no colour)
44. Achieving the sword (Tārā – no colour)
45. Achieving swift-footedness<sup>181</sup> (Green)
46. Eliminating eye cataracts (Green)
47. Overcoming bodily worms
48. Applying the musk named *phur-mong* on cancer
49. Protecting [against] infectious diseases
50. Protecting [against] the King
51. Protecting [against] the eight kinds of demon
52. In case of rain [falling]
53. The method of not losing control because of [one's] wealth
54. Protecting the various head-ornaments
55. If hail falls
56. Wishing to spread wind-horses [prayer flags] (Tārā – no colour)

The sections which follow explain that these actions are performed for the benefit of oneself and others, through which one "becomes a doctor to sentient beings". There follows a list of various spirits and the actions which they can perform. For instance

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<sup>180</sup> *mkha' spyod*

<sup>181</sup> *rkang mgyogs*

spirits who oppose the stealing of teachings by those who have not received empowerment. The text was requested by Ngur-smig 'chang-ba gang<sup>182</sup> at the hermitage of dGe-bsnyen 'brong-ri (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*sa*).<sup>183</sup>

*Text AXIX*

***The Red Tārā Essence Extraction [bCud-len] with the Seal of the Vajra*** (SL 147-50)

*bCud-len* [Essence Extraction, Skt: *rasāyana*] is a highly secret practice within Tibet and derives from the Indian tradition. It is the means via which a retreatant can go for long periods without food. In general, the practitioner may eat certain precious pills in order to survive, and the methods for making these pills are contained in certain texts. *bCud-len* aids practitioners in providing life to their body and so increases the *bindhu* so that their body can gain strength, vitality, and also lengthen life (Das 2004 [1902]; Duff 2007; Pellegrini 2009).

This text is an example of such a practice. Within the text one is taught how to assemble pills for the 'essence extraction' from medicinal plants. It states that if you performs this practice until you are eighty, then you will achieve the form of a sixteen year old, and your flesh will be free from wrinkles and grey hairs. It elaborates that the teachings should be protected from improper people and those with wrong views. The text was written at dGe-bsnyen 'brong-ri (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*zha*).

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<sup>182</sup> No further information has been found concerning Ngur-smig 'chang-ba.

<sup>183</sup> There is one monastery in Ser-rta (where A-paṃ gter-ston is said to have been born) named 'Brong-ri dgon-pa, it is possible that the hermitage of dGe-bsnyen 'brong-ri may be associated with this monastery.

*Text AXX*

***The Actions of Red Tārā. The Iron hook of Subjugating the Eight Classes [of Gods and Demons entitled] The Red Heart Guide*** (SL 151-52; TL 223-24)

As we see from the title this text describes how to subjugate the eight demons using Red Tārā worship (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*da*).

*Text AXXI*

***The Profound Empowerment of Red Tārā*** (SL 153-62; TL 309-12)

This text describes the empowerment ritual for those wishing to practice Red Tārā. It contains no iconographical description of the goddess and simply describes her as surrounded by twenty other Tārās (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*la*).

*Text AXXII*

***The Life-force Cakra of Venerable Red Tārā*** (SL 163-64; TL 271-72)

This text describes how to achieve accomplishment of the state of Red Tārā through reliance on a life-force stone. It describes how to draw the wheel of life and the *mantras* employed. The text is protected by the guardians of the teachings (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*tsha*).

*Text AXXIII*

***The Subjugating Red Tārā*** (SL 165-68; TL 267-70)

This text describes how one wishing to achieve subjugation can do so by relying on Red Tārā. It was written in the sMan-chu lung-gi-phug (cave)<sup>184</sup> and is protected by the guardians of the teachings (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ta*).

*Text AXXIV*

***The Profound Actions of Red Tārā*** (SL 169-72; TL 225-28)

This text describes how to bind thieves and enemies of the teachings. In the text one must draw a picture of Red Tārā, however no description of her is provided. A number of *mantras* are listed in the next (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*na*).

*Text AXXV*

***The Actions of Red Tārā [entitled] Defeating the Army of Enemies and Hindrances***  
(SL 175-90; TL 317-28)

This text describes how a practitioner might annihilate poisonous enemies and hindrances. Tārā is described as a dark red colour. However, besides this no specific iconography is described. In the text various magical rites are described through which one may destroy enemies and hindrances. The text states that it was taught by O-rgyan 'phrin-las gling-pa or Brag-sngags sgrub-pa'i rdo-rje<sup>185</sup> at dBang-steng bkra-shis dkyil-ba, the scribe was gZhi-chen mchog-sprul.<sup>186</sup> The text is protected by those who have met the students with good *karma* (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*sha*).

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<sup>184</sup> There is one sMan-chu temple located in lCags-zam prefecture in dKar-mdzes, Khams. It is possible that this cave is located in this area and that it is related to the sites of 'Chi-med sman-chu brag (Text AXV) and sMan-chu pleasure grove (Text AXVI).

<sup>185</sup> No information has been found concerning Brag-sngags sgrub-pa'i rdo-rje. This may be another name for A-paṃ gter-ston himself.

<sup>186</sup> The TBRC lists one possible candidate for gZhi-chen mchog-sprul, a Padma rgyal-mtshan, the third gZhi-chen bai-ro. He lived during the twentieth century and his main teacher was Ngag-dbang dpal-bzang (1879-1941), otherwise known as mKhan-po Ngag-dga' an Abbot of Kaḥ-thog monastery (TBRC 2006).

## Volume Four (*nga*)

Text AXXVI

***The Refined Golden Commentary of the Lamp of the Mind [Clarifying the Essential Points of the Background Teachings of Red Tārā, Belonging to the Thirteen Deities Red Mind gTer-ma*** (SL [4] 1-188; ER [7] 359-546).

As we can see this is a very long text. However, the inclusion of the name Red Tārā in the title is misleading. In fact the contents of the text refer to an in depth explanation of the Great Perfection (*rDzogs-chen*) practices, in which the basic concepts are broken down and explained one by one.

However the title of the text does reveal that Red Tārā is included as one of the thirteen red deities about whom A-paṃ gter-ston revealed *gter-ma*. This is confirmed in the *Deb chung a ru ra'i dga' tshal*:

The dance of the emanations of Mu-tig btsan-po [the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Trisong Detsen], fills the four continents with the activities following the legacy of Thang-stong. I respectfully prostrate to the feet of [A-paṃ gter-ston, dPa'-bo] Chos-dbyings rdo-rje, the Transmitter of the Thirteen Mind-treasures, [the deities of which are all] the colour of subjugation. Like it has been said, in the Mind Treasures [of A-paṃ gter-ston one finds]: Amitābha; the Red *Gu-ru*; Amitāyus; Red Mañjuśrī; Red Vajrasattva; Red Hayagrīva; the Red Wrathful *Gu-ru* [Padmasambhava]; Red [Ye-shes] mtsho-rgyal; Red Tārā; Red Lion Faced [Dākinī]; mKha'-spyod-ma; Kurukullā; Mahadeva [Śiva] and so forth. [These thirteen deities] are the Thirteen Mind Treasures (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 94).<sup>187</sup>

This indicates that the cycle of Red Tārā teachings in fact forms only part of a large cycle of teachings on these thirteen red deities (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976wa).

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<sup>187</sup> *mu tig btsad po'i sprul ba'i rol gar ba/ thang stong rjes bzungs 'phrin las gling bzhir khyab/ dbang mdog thugs gter bcu gsum bka' bab pa/ chos dbyings rdo rje'i zhabs la gus phyag 'tshal/ zhes gsungs pa ltar/ thugs gyi gter kha la 'od dpag med dang/ gu ru dmar po/ tshe dpag med/ 'jam dbyang dmar po/ rdor sems dmar po/ rta mgrin dmar po/ gu drag dmar po/ mtsho rgyal dmar mo/ sgrol dmar/ seng gdong dmar mo/ mkha' spyod ma/ rig byed ma/ lha chen sogs thugs kyi gter kha bcu gsum dang/*

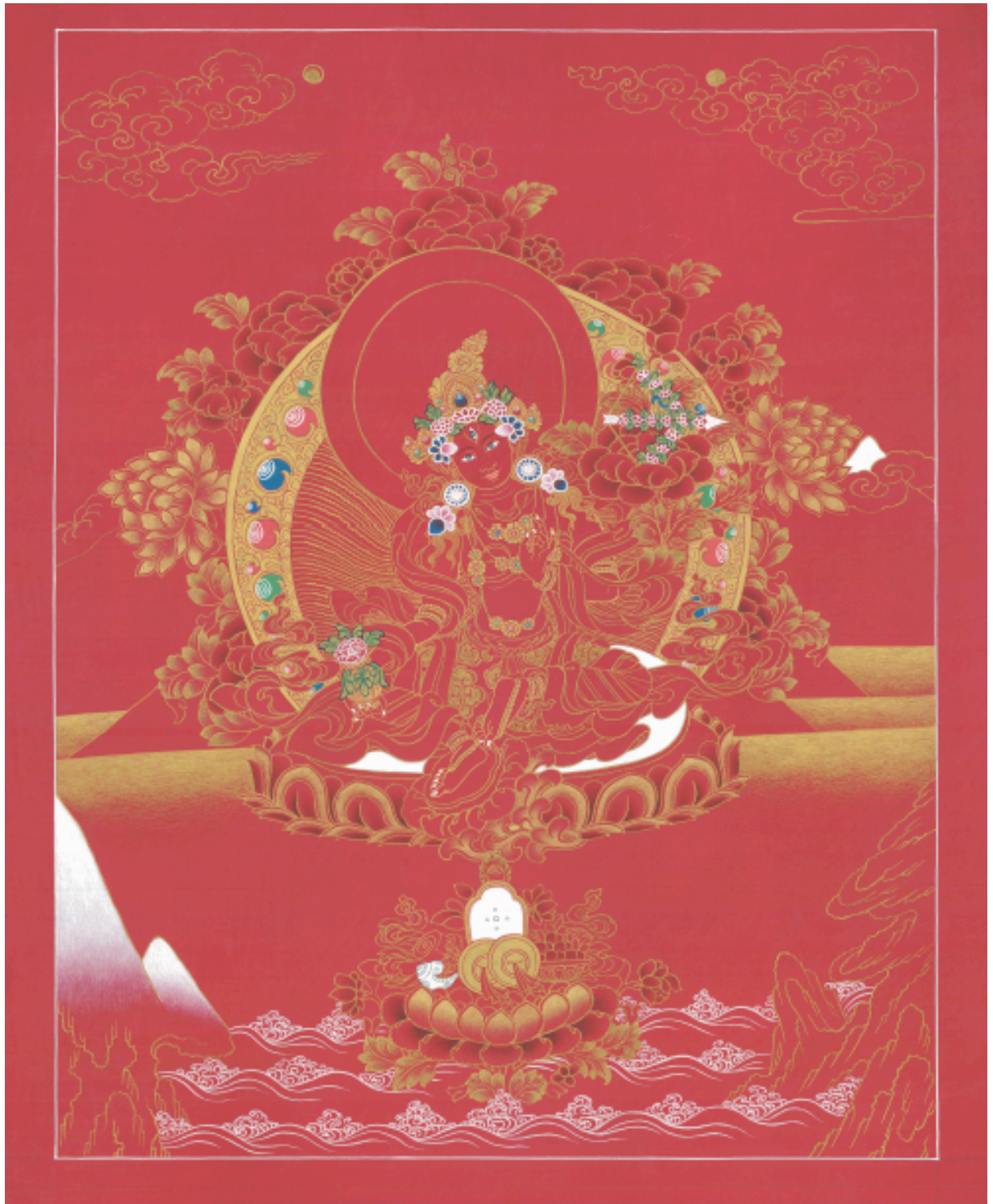


Fig. 6.3: **Red Tārā from A-paṃ gter-ston's Tradition. Author's collection**  
(Kathmandu, Nepal, twenty-first century)<sup>188</sup>

<sup>188</sup> This Red Tārā *thang-ga* is in the *mtshal-thang* style where the main colour used is vermillion. Mullin writes that this style was popularised after Chos-rgyal 'phags-pa became the Guru of Kublai Khan in the seventeenth century. He states that due to the cost involved in producing these paintings with gold usually only high lamas would commission such works (Mullin 2003: 121-22).

### 6.3.2. The Iconography of Red Tārā in A-paṃ gter-ston's Cycle

As we have seen from our above examination of the Red Tārā cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston, the iconography of the goddess is not consistent throughout the collection and in fact varies between the texts. Furthermore, in a number of cases details concerning the iconography of the goddess are not provided at all. From the information listed above we can see that within A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle of Red Tārā teaching there are in fact nine variant iconographic forms of the goddess present.

#### *Text AII*

Tārā is red with a wrathful smile. Amitābha resides in her long maroon hair, which is half up and half down. She has four arms and holds an iron hook, sunbeam noose, long-life vase filled with blood, and a mongoose vomiting jewels. She is dancing and adorned with silks and bone adornments. She is seated on a four-petalled lotus, surrounded by four goddesses and four serpent-goddesses in the intermediary directions (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ja).

#### *Text AV*

Tārā is reddish-yellow with one face and two arms. She holds a red lotus and a long-life vase, her left leg is drawn in and her right is extended. She wears precious ornaments and saffron-coloured silks. She has a peaceful smile and her eyes gaze lovingly. Amitābha resides in her tiara (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976nya).

#### *Text AVI*

Tārā is dark red with an angry smile and three eyes which gaze into space. Her maroon hair is half in a top-knot and half combed out and she is adorned with lotuses. In her right hand she holds an iron hook which summons the three realms (*kham*s-



*gsum*) and in her left a noose which binds the three worlds (*srid-gsum*). Her two legs are extended and retracted. She is adorned with silk and bones. Amitābha resides at her crown (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976za).

*Text AIX*

Tārā is ruby-red with Amitābha in her hair. She smiles peacefully whilst her right hands grasps an iron hook which conquers the minds of beings and her left a long-life vase on an *utpala* flower. She sits on a sun and moon lotus with her legs crossed in an arch, and she wears the silks and bone adornments (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ka).

*Text AXI*

Tārā has a red body with one peaceful, smiling face. In her left she holds a long-life vase filled with nectar with the *mudrā* of supreme generosity and in her right the *mudrā* of the three jewels holds an *utpala* on top of which is a lotus bow and arrow. She wears silk scarves and is ornamented with the ornaments and jewels. Her hair is half up and half down. She sits cross-legged and her back is supported by a full moon. Surrounding her is her retinue of twenty goddesses (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ma).

*Text AXV*

Tārā has a ruby-red body and wears white clothes. She has one face and two hands and has three eyes which look to the left. Amitāyus resides in her hair as a symbol of the long-life ritual. She holds a long-life vase and is adorned with silks and bone ornaments (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976tha).

*Text AXVI*

Tārā is red with one face and three eyes which gaze to the left. Her maroon hair wafts upwards in the wind. She has four arms and holds a noose and a mongoose vomiting jewels. Her two feet are dancing and she is adorned with the six bone ornaments and silk clothes. She appears as a sixteen year old girl (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*tsa*).

*Text AXVII*

The goddess is red and in the form of a sixteen year old. She has three eyes and four fangs. Her face has a passionate and slightly wrathful expression. She holds an lotus iron hook on the right and a precious noose on the left. She is adorned with the precious ornaments, silks, and beautiful human adornments and stands on a lotus and moon seat in a stance with both legs equal (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*dza*).

*Text AXXV*

The goddess is described only as having a dark red body (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*sha*).

As we can see from the this list the various forms of the goddess differ greatly from text to text. In some she is seated, whereas in others she is standing. Sometimes she is wrathful, whereas in other texts she takes a more peaceful appearance. Her ornaments differ, as do the number of her eyes, arms, and the implements she carries. It may be that these differences imply the variety of functions for which the goddess may be employed within A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle of teachings. Although in all her forms Red Tārā is a deity of the subjugation class, within this category there are a number of subtle variations of the action which may be carried out through ritual performance. This may be indicated by the variations in implements held by the goddesses.

In Text AVI we find the goddess depicted in a manner similar to the *Sa-skyapa* sGrol-ma dmar-mo discussed in Chapter Four (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976za). In the Sa-skyapa tradition Red Tārā is depicted grasping a hook and a lotus the root of which forms a noose, whereas here she is seen with simply an iron hook and noose. In Text AXVII the implements held by the goddess are the same: an iron hook and precious noose. The text elaborates that the hook summons the three realms and the noose binds the three worlds (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976dza). The difference here is that Tārā is described as wrathful, in a standing posture. She wears human (bone) ornaments, and shows her fangs. It is no surprise to see Red Tārā holding a lotus hook and noose since - as established earlier in the thesis - the iron hook (*lcags-kyu*) and noose (*zhags-pa*) are typical implements of subjugation. Beer states that the piercing iron hook is usually held in the right hand, and the binding noose in the left (Beer 2003: 146-48). This is identical with what we see here. Text AIV again shows the goddess with an iron hook in her right hand, said to conquer beings' minds. Alongside this hook she also holds a long-life vase on top of an *utpala* flower (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ya). Again, we see similarities between the iconography here and that found in the *Sa-skyapa* tradition.

The long-life vase again makes an appearance in Text AV. Here the iconography of the goddess appears quite simple: she holds just a red lotus and the long-life vase. In the long-life practice of Red Tārā, Text AXV, Tārā is described as wearing white clothes, and as we noted above the colour white is particularly associated with the pacifying practices to which long-life rituals belong. Here again the goddess holds her long-life vase (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976nya, *tha*).

In two of the texts the iconography of the goddess appears slightly more wrathful. In Text AXVI Tārā is seen with four arms: she holds both a noose, and a mongoose vomiting jewels (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976tsa). Beer describes the mongoose

vomiting jewels as an emblem of wealth deities that symbolises generosity and the granting of desires, treasures, and *siddhis* (Beer 2003: 196). Deities of this sort usually conform to the action of increasing. This iconography is taken further in Text AII, here the top two of Tārā's four arms hold the typical iron hook and noose, alongside a long-life vase filled with blood and the jewel-vomiting mongoose. The goddess is seen in a standing posture, adorned with bone ornaments, both indicative of a more wrathful aspect. She is described as an arrangement of rainbows and light rays. Text AXX very briefly elucidates a method for subjugating the eight classes of demons (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ja, da*).



Fig. 6.4: **The lotus bow and arrow held aloft an *utpala* in the left hand of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā. Author's collection.**  
(Kathmandu, Nepal, twenty-first century)

The form in which A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā is most widely know is that of Text AXI (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ma*). It is this aspect of the goddess which is practised by the CGF. Therefore, the iconography of this Red Tārā must be discussed in more detail. Chagdud Khadro writes that the goddess is red as a symbol of "discriminating awareness, love and the lotus family" (Khadro 2003: 62). The three eyes of the goddess symbolise the three *kāyas* and her long-life vase indicates that she can maintain long-life. Beer writes that the vase is used in longevity rituals and is

filled with the nectar of immortality (Beer 2003: 201). Her flower bow and arrow also represent enlightened qualities, the bow signifying skilful means and the arrow pristine awareness (Khadro 2003: 27-33). With regard to the red flowers which make up the bow and arrow Mullin believe that they "symbolize the utilization of natural processes for purposes of subduing the forces of negativity" (Mullin 2003: 122).

The lotus bow and arrow held by Tārā are also indicative of her link to Kurukullā, who also holds these implements, and as such she is called Rig-byed lhamo (Goddess Who Brings Forth Awareness) (Shaw 2006: 340). This is an interesting concept to ponder, as Kurukullā herself is regarded as a manifestation of the goddess Tārā. Here instead we see Tārā as a form of Kurukullā. Beer describes the flower bow and arrow as "originally the attributes of the Vedic god of love and desire, Kamadeva". However, as the symbol of Kurukullā in *Vajrayāna* Buddhism they represent her seductive magnetising actions which bewitch and entice beings (Beer 2003: 121-22). Kurukullā is regarded as a wrathful deity, yet here Red Tārā is deemed semi-wrathful. As we saw above A-paṃ gter-ston also discovered a cycle of texts relating to Kurukullā as an independent deity.

The various iconographic forms of Red Tārā found within A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle of teachings are indicative of her role as a subjugating/ magnetising goddess. We have seen her holding the iron hook and noose typical of deities of this class. Then, in Text AXI, the form in which she is best known, she is depicted holding a lotus on top of which are the flower bow and arrow, linking her to the best known of subjugating deities, Kurukullā, of whom she is a semi-wrathful form (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ma*). We will now move on to discuss the subjugating actions of A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle further.

### 6.3.3. Red Tārā and Subjugation in A-paṃ gter-ston's Cycle of Teachings

With regard to the specific function of this form of the goddess, a prayer included in Text AXI, as used by the CGF, sheds some light on the motivation behind subjugation rituals:

"How without relying on subjugation can [one gain] the qualities to take on disciples?  
May I subjugate all those to be tamed [both] good and evil by manifesting [in them] the  
four devotions!"<sup>189</sup> (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ma*: 63).<sup>190</sup>

As we can see here the function of subjugation/ magnetising is employed so that the practitioner can both protect their disciples and tame good and evil beings equally.

In fact, when we examine the texts themselves we find six which specifically describe subjugation: Texts AX, AXIII, AXVI, AXVII, AXX, and AXXIII (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*kha, ta, da, tsa, dza, 'a*). Text AX is a fire *pūja* and a prayer found within the text asks to subjugate sentient beings, gods, demons and men. It states that beings are subjugated like bees. In fact the title of the text refers explicitly to the function of subjugation: *The Subjugating Fire Pūja Relying on Red Tārā*.<sup>191</sup> The text specifies the use of a butter lamp and incense in order to subjugate powerful beings. The smoke which arises from the incense is described as like iron hook light rays (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*'a*).

Text AXIII is more general in that it states that through performance of the ritual one can achieve the four actions of pacification, increase, subjugation, and destruction through the approach and accomplishment of Red Tārā. Tārā is also besought to protect the practitioner from all sufferings and fears, reminiscent of Green Tārā practice. Text AXVI is performed in order to overcome the '*Gong-po* spirits of

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<sup>189</sup> The four devotions (*mos pa bzhi*): the attainment of appearance (*snang ba thob pa*), the enhancement of appearance (*snang ba mched pa*), entering the aspect of genuine reality (*de kho na'i don gyi phyogs gcig rjus su zhugs pa*), and unimpeded concentration (*bar chad med pa'i ting nge 'dzin*) (Pelligrini 2009).

<sup>190</sup> *gang zhig dbang la ma brten par/ rjes 'dzin yon tan ci ltar ste/ dkar nag gdul bya ma lus pa/ mos bzhi'i snang bas dbang bsdus shog*

<sup>191</sup> *sGrol ma dmar po la brten pa'i dbang sdud me yi las*

ego-clinging. The text describes a complex ritual performance, during which a ransom *gtor-ma* is offered in order to disperse the 'Gong-po spirits. The latter section of the text concerns the accomplishment of prosperity through jewels, a full house, cattle, grain and general prosperity. This could be classed as a magnetising action. The text ends with the statement that the practitioner will achieve perfect happiness and a life free from sickness (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*kha, tsa*).

Text AXX contains fifty-four magical spells, five of which appear to involve subjugation or magnetisation of some sort. These actions include subjugating external perceptions, subjugating the object of the practice, magnetising food and wealth, drawing the wheel of subjugation, and assembling a *saṃgha*. Within each text a *mantra* to be appended to the root *mantra* is listed which must be recited to achieve the particular goal. Each time Red Tārā is visualised she holds an iron hook in one hand and another implement in the other: a noose, a mirror, or a treasure vase (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*da*).

Text AXXIII is performed in order to subjugate all the desires of the object of the meditation. The practitioner visualises light rays piercing the object's genitals and heart so that their desires are subjugated. Later light rays emanate again to subjugate and enslave gods, *nāgas*, and humans so that they lose all their possessions. In the final text (Text AXXIV) the object of meditation is bound with iron hooks, iron shackles, and iron webs. The text describes the drawing of a ritual diagram which must be placed under one's bed in order to protect from mischief, thieves, and enemies (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ta, na*).

As we can see these texts enumerate various objects of meditation to be subjugated, from enemies and thieves, to the gods, *nāgas*, and humans. In some cases the practitioner must draw a diagram, in others he recites a *mantra*. In all but one of the cases, the establishment of a *saṃgha*, the actions appear to be performed for

mundane goals, such as the receipt of food or wealth, or for the overcoming of an enemy. However, on a deeper level these actions could be viewed as enabling the practitioner to practise the *Dharma* for which he requires ample quantities of both food and wealth.

Another aspect of the texts is the ritual use of *mantras*. These are typically recited during Tibetan Buddhist practice, and the texts concerning Red Tārā discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston contain a number of *mantras*. Some of the *mantras* contained in the teachings have not been listed here. This decision was made in order to protect the secrecy of the teachings, so as to respect the tradition. Without the inclusion of the requisite *mantra* the practice is considered to be ineffective. However, other *mantras* have been discussed herein, and these include:

- *oṃ tāre tuttāre mama pushaṃ kuru hūṃ svahā* (Text AII)
- *oṃ tāre tāṃ svahā* (Texts AV and AXI)
- *oṃ tāre svahā* (Text AVI)
- *oṃ tare tuttare mama sarba pāśham kuru bhruṃ bhruṃ svahā* (Text AIX)
- *oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svahā* (Texts AXII and AXIII)

The *mantra* used by the CGF in their Red Tārā practice is *Oṃ tāre tāṃ svahā*. This differs from the more usual *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā* of Green Tārā, as we have seen her *mantra* is used in Texts AXII and AXIII (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*kha, ha*).

However, Blofeld notes that sometimes *Oṃ tāre tāṃ svāhā* is also used:

Since, in the case of a sudden emergency, there may not be time to enunciate all ten syllables, some adepts are taught to use OM TARE TAM SVAHA! upon such occasions, TAM being the *bija*- or seed-mantra that contains Tara's essence (Blofeld 1990 [1977]: 59-60).



This *mantra* is similar in construction to that of other goddesses, for example Mārīcī – *Oṃ mārīcī māṃ svāhā*, where the goddess' name and seed-syllable form the *mantra*. Within the practice of the Twenty-one Tārās the practitioner employs a different adaptation of the root *mantra* for each individual goddess dependent on her function. Here the various *mantras* offered for each form of Red Tārā may be indicative of slight variations in her function within her role as a subjugating deity.

#### 6.4. Some Conclusions: Red Tārā in A-paṃ gter-ston's *gTer-ma* Teachings

As we can see from the titles, nineteen of the texts contained within A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā cycle describe themselves as falling within the category of Mind *gTer-ma*.<sup>192</sup> This implies that they were revealed from the consciousness of A-paṃ gter-ston's mind. As we have seen above A-paṃ gter-ston was considered an 'Emanated *gTer-ston*', that is an incarnation of Padmasambhava himself. Alongside this he was further considered a 'Great *gTer-ston*' as he revealed *gter-ma* concerning the three categories of Padmasambhava, Avalokiteśvara, and *rDzogs-chen*. The Red Tārā texts revealed by A-paṃ gter-ston themselves belong to the *rDzogs-chen* tradition and as such the *rDzogs-chen* commentary composed by A-paṃ gter-ston was entitled *The Refined Golden Commentary of the Lamp of the Mind [Clarifying the] Essential Points on the Background Teachings of Red Tārā, Belonging to the Thirteen Deities Red Mind gTer-ma*.

The *gter-ma* teachings of A-paṃ gter-ston display many of the characteristics discussed in Section 6.1. where the *gter-ma* tradition was briefly explained. As we have seen, it sometimes happens that more than one *gter-ston* is needed to recover a

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<sup>192</sup> The words 'Mind *gTer-ma*' are used in titles of Texts AII, AIII, AIV, AV, AVI, AX, AXI, AXV, AXVI, AXVII, AXVIII, AXIX, AXX, AXXI, AXXII, AXXVIII, AXXIV, AXXV, and AXXVI.

text. In six cases (Texts AI, AII, AIV, AV, AXI, and AXXV) A-paṃ gter-ston employed a scribe to write down his *gter-ma* teachings (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976 *nga, ja, nya, ma, ya, sha*). In the other texts it is not stated who originally wrote down the text. Another aspect of *gter-ma* which we discussed in Section 6.1. was the protection of *gter-ma* teachings by Protectors or *Dākinīs*. This is seen in fifteen of the Texts.<sup>193</sup> Various protectors are employed here, including the eight classes of demons, Vajrayoginī, dPal-ldan lha-mo, and the oath-bound protectors.

As we have seen, the cycle of Red Tārā teachings discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston revealed a number of different iconographic forms of the goddess. These forms, both standing and seated, hold the emblems traditionally associated with the function of subjugation which is indicated by her red colour. As we have seen in this case A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārās are explicitly linked to Kurukullā, described as a semi-wrathful form of the goddess - an interesting inversion in view of the usual description of Kurukullā as a form of Tārā. However, it appears that here Red Tārā is linked to Kurukullā as an indication of her subjugating function and the link is further defined by the lotus bow and arrow depicted above Tārās red lotus. The iconography of the various Red Tārās discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston also have features common to the Green and White forms of the goddess, including the position of her legs and right arm, her clothes and adornments. The appearance of the bow and arrow on her lotus is in common with the iconography of the Twenty-one Tārās in the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition, discussed in Chapter Five.

The texts themselves, however, follow the standard layout for *sādhana* practice. As we will see in Chapter Seven the main practice for Red Tārā is a Fourfold *Maṇḍala*, which is a popular form of Tārā worship, usually associated with Green

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<sup>193</sup> *gTer-ma* Protectors are mentioned in Texts AIII, AIV, AV, AVI, AVII, AIX, AX, AXI, AXV, AXVI, AXVII, AXVIII, AXXII, AXXIII, and AXXV.

Tārā. As such it appears that although on the one hand A-paṃ gter-ston's tradition presents new forms of the goddess Tārā, on the other, given the traditional layout of the texts and their place within the wider *gter-ma* tradition, they might best be viewed as a continuation of the cult of Tārā, adding a new dimension to the already popular practice of this well-loved deity. This could also be viewed as a reflection of the *gter-ma* tradition as a whole, which allows an outlet for innovation in a tradition usually focused on authentic lineage. Through *gter-ma* a number of new and variant deities and practices have emerged over the years, and as such A-paṃ gter-ston is continuing the innovative teaching common to all *gter-stons*.

The practices of Red Tārā as discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston as *gTer-ma* are maintained to this day in the United States and South America by the disciples of the late Chagdud Tulku. (See Chapter Seven for more information concerning this important modern day practice of Red Tārā.) As for the tradition as it continues in Asia: in Tibet Tā-re lha-mo, the daughter of A-paṃ gter-ston, herself a famous *gTer-ston*, was the custodian of A-paṃ gter-ston's teachings in mGo-log, East Tibet. In the DAG Tā-re lha-mo is predicted as the custodian of her father's teachings, alongside her consort Nam-sprul 'Jigs-med phun-tshogs. It states that the two will spread her father's teachings in the ten directions, and "the embers of the secret *mantra* teachings will rise again" (Padma 'od-gsal mtha'-yas 2003: 118).<sup>194</sup> She compiled her father's teachings into an eight-volume set of Collected Works which includes his Red Tārā teachings (Ta-re lha-mo 200?). Within India Byang-chub rdo-rje initiated A-paṃ gter-ston's reincarnation, Sakya Trizin, into his predecessor's teachings. Both Chagdud Khadro and Nyoshul Khenpo have written about this meeting (Khadro 2003: 4-5; Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 492). When A-paṃ gter-ston died he requested that Byang-chub rdo-rje transmit his teachings to his rebirth. After Byang-chub rdo-rje had fled

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<sup>194</sup> *gsang sngags bstan pa'i me ro gsar du slong:*

Tibet into exile he eventually met Sakya Trizin in Dehra Dun after a delay of some years:

A few moments after the monk spoke to Sakya Trizin, the assembly of monks in the shrine room was surprised to be dismissed and to learn that His Holiness would take initiation from the outwardly undistinguished visitor. The monk then gave the Red Tara initiation to Sakya Trizin and Sakya Trizin's remarkable sister, Jetsunma (Khadro 2003: 5).

On one occasion Sakya Trizin transmitted the Red Tārā empowerment to Chagdud Tulku and some of his close students. However, he does not do so regularly (Everest 2009a). In fact, Sakya Trizin will bestow the full cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston's teachings as he received them for the first time on 5th to 9th August 2011 at Padmasambhava Peace Institute in California, including the Red Tārā cycle (PPI 2010).

No more information will be provided here concerning this modern-day practice, as the next chapter focuses on the practice lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā *gter-ma* as spread in the West by Chagdud Tulku. This Red Tārā practice is one of the very few surviving practice lineages of the goddess known today.

**Part Three**  
**Red Tārā: Contemporary Practice Lineages**



**Chapter Seven**  
**The Practice of A-paṃ gter-ston's Lineage in the Modern Day**



**Fig. 7.1: Copper statue of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā.**  
**Patan, Nepal, Twenty-first century.**  
(Statue Author's collection)

Following on from the introduction to Tārā and the survey of Red Tārās in Part One and the examination of the extant literary traditions of Red Tārās in Part Two Part Three outlines the two main practice lineages of Red Tārā at the present time. The present chapter sets out to discuss the modern-day practice of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā lineage as it is found in the West. Unlike *The Garland of Bimba Blossoms* practice discussed below in Chapter Eight, there is no controversy surrounding the lineage or legitimacy of A-paṃ gter-ston's life and his *gter-ma* discoveries, nor the continuation of his lineage through the life and work of Chagdud Tulku. Whereas Chapter Six discussed what is known of A-paṃ gter-ston himself and the textual tradition of Red Tārā which he discovered, the current chapter concentrates on what happened to these texts after their discovery. This is not the usual story of a *gter-ma* discovery and its later dissemination: as we will see, the lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā practice has instead found its way to both North and South America through the work of Chagdud Tulku. It is Chagdud Tulku's followers, based in the Western hemisphere, who now hold the active practice lineage, and it is through their persistent practice that the lineage has survived to the present day. The chapter begins with a discussion of Chagdud Tulku's life, the establishment of the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation,<sup>195</sup> and the teaching of Red Tārā at CGF. After this, a discussion of Buddhism in America and Brazil is presented in order to place the tradition within a wider context. This thesis will present an analysis of CGF according to the work of previous Buddhist Studies scholars, highlighting some of the shortcomings in the existing literature. Finally, the practice of Red Tārā at Odsal Ling Refugio in São Paulo, Brazil, is taken as a case study of the lineage as a living tradition.

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<sup>195</sup> The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation will hereafter be referred to as the CGF.



## 7.1. Chagdud Tulku and the Transmission of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā

### Lineage

How did the Red Tārā tradition of A-paṃ gter-ston find its way to the West, and who was the main proponent of this tradition? These questions will be examined in this section, followed by a detailed examination of the practice lineages maintained by Chagdud Tulku.

#### 7.1.1. The Life of Chagdud Tulku

Who was Chagdud Tulku? How did he himself come to practice A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā? Why did he teach this practice to his Western students? The late Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche (lCags-mdud sprul-sku Padma gar-gyi dbang-phyug)<sup>196</sup> was born in 1930, the Iron Horse year according to the Tibetan calendar, in the village of Tromthar (Khrom-thar), in the Khams region of Tibet, and passed away in Brazil in 2002. Chagdud Tulku belonged to an illustrious lineage. He was born into the renowned Tromge (Khrom-dge) family of Khams and his mother Dawa Drolma (Zla-ba sgrol-ma)<sup>197</sup> was famed as a '*das-log*, one who passes into a state of death ('*das*) and visits various realms before returning (*log*) to the world of the living.<sup>198</sup> The birth of Chagdud Tulku was prophesied in a letter to Dawa Drolma from rDzogs-chen Rin-po-che, in which he wrote, "In your womb there is a great *tulku* who will be known as

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<sup>196</sup> lCags-mdud sprul-sku will hereafter continue to be spelt Chagdud Tulku, the spelling used to render his name in works in European languages.

<sup>197</sup> The life story of Chagdud Tulku's mother Delog Dawa Drolma ('Das-log Zla-ba sgrol-ma) is found in the book detailing her experiences during death (Drolma 2001).

<sup>198</sup> Once a '*das-log* has returned to life, they relate stories of what they have seen and experienced in the death state to the living, inspiring them to lead a more religiously-inclined lifestyle. Epstein and Pommaret have written the most in depth works concerning the '*das-log* phenomenon (Epstein 1982; Pommaret 1989, 1997) and in an article that relies heavily on the work of Pommaret, Bailey relates the '*das-log* tradition to that of the modern day near-death-experience (Bailey 2000). Meanwhile, Gelle has written on the *maṇi bla-mas*, travelling storytellers who perform the '*das-log* stories (Gelle 2003, forthcoming).

T'hubtan Geleg Palzang." Another letter from Kharto Tulku predicted many events in the life of the unborn child (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 13).

When he was three years old a delegation from lCags-mdud Monastery, also in Khams, recognised the boy as the incarnation of bsTan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, the previous Chagdud Tulku. The delegation had been informed that the child-incarnation had been born into the Tromge family in Tromthar. After his recognition Chagdud Tulku moved to bsTan-'phel dgon-pa, a monastery of the '*Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud* lineage, in the sDe-dge region of Khams (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 17-19).

After many years of study, receipt of teachings, and a three-year retreat Chagdud Tulku was invited to assume his throne at lCags-mdud dGon-pa in Nyag-rong. The life story of Chagdud Tulku reports that the monastery was founded in 1214 by 'Bru-tsha sgang-pa, a Kaḥ-thog bla-ma. The first lCags-mdud Rin-po-che, Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, was born in 1398 and became renowned as 'lCags-mdud' due to his ability to tie iron bars (*lcags*) into knots (*mdud*). He took charge of the newly-built lCags-mdud O-rgyan mkha'-'gro gling, founded in 1431 from the ruins of the original monastery (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 66-69). The TBRC lists lCags-mdud dGon-pa as a subsidiary of the *rNying-ma-pa* monastery of Kaḥ-thog (TBRC 2006), as evidenced by the role of 'Bru-tsha sgang-pa.

The dates relating to the founding of the monastery differ between those given by Chagdud Tulku and the account found in the *dKar mdzas khul gyi dgon shes sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*. The account is as follows:<sup>199</sup>

The history of lCags-mdud dGon-pa – the original founder of this *dGon-pa* was the master 'Bru-tsha sgang-pa brtson-'grus 'bum. As for the time of establishing [the monastery], it was established in the Western year 1291, the Tibetan Iron Rabbit year of the fifth *rab-byung*.<sup>200</sup> Later it was plundered by the '*Jang* army. Again, in the Western

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<sup>199</sup> *lcags mdud dgon gyi lo rgyus/ dgon 'di thog mar phyag 'debs pa po ni/ chos rje 'bru tsha sgang pa brtson 'grus 'bum yin/ btab pa'i dus ni bod rab byung lnga pa'i lcags yos spyi lo 1291 lor btab/ phyis 'jang dmag gis bcom/ slar rab byung brgyad pa'i lcags phag spyi lo 1491 lor lcags mdud shes rab rgyal mtshan gyis nyams gso dang rgya bskyed gnang ba zhig yin par gsal/*

<sup>200</sup> A *rab-byung* is the first year of a sixty year cycle in the Tibetan system.

year 1491, the Iron Pig year of the eighth *rab-byung*, it was clear that lCags-mdud shes-rab rgyal-mtshan was the one to expand and restore [the monastery] (Anonymous 1995: 302).

Throughout his childhood Chagdud Tulku experienced prophetic dreams, a fact which would greatly influence decisions throughout his life, and this is equally true of his relationship to the Red Tārā practice. Chagdud Tulku was born into a great lineage of Tārā practitioners and his mother was herself an emanation of White Tārā who discovered a Green Tārā practice (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 84). Chagdud Tulku received empowerment into Green Tārā practice from Zhe-chen rab-'byams,<sup>201</sup> an important master of the *rNying-ma-pa* school. Whilst in his second three-year retreat, his teacher Khrom-dge drung-pa Rin-po-che said to Chagdud Tulku, "In every generation of our family, there is one lama who fully attains the beneficial power of Tara. Your mother was the Tara *siddha* of her generation, and if you do Tara practice, I believe you will be the Tara *siddha* of yours. This would be very good". Chagdud Tulku adds that he then "chanted one hundred thousand recitations of the long praises to the twenty-one wisdom aspects of Tara. This opened the door of my Tara practice, which would become a source of continuous inspiration and blessing" (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 92).

The TBRC lists the main teachers of Chagdud Tulku as A-rig (Khrom-dge a-rig sprul-sku, 1908-88),<sup>202</sup> bKra-shis dpal-'byor (Dil-mgo mkhyen-brtse, 1910-1991), 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje (bDud-'joms Rin-po-che, 1904-1988), Padma dri-med (Zhe-chen kong-sprul padma dri-med, 1901-1960), and sPo-lu mkhan-po rdo-rje (dates unknown) (TBRC 2006). This list of masters includes some of the main *rNying-ma-*

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<sup>201</sup> Zhe-chen rab-'byams was an important master from Zhe-chen dgon-pa in the sDe-dge region of Khams. Better known to Westerners as 'Shechen', the exile monastery associated with the tradition is located in Boudhanath, Kathmandu. The title Zhe-chen rab-'byams is passed down from one master to another, and it seems likely that the incumbent from whom Chagdud Tulku received this Tārā teaching was the fifth Zhe-chen rab-'byams sNang-mdzad grub-pa'i rdo-rje, who lived from 1911 to 1959 (TBRC 2006).

<sup>202</sup> A-rig was a relation of Chagdud Tulku who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

pa teachers of the last century. After moving into exile in India Chagdud Tulku was often called to work in service to Dudjom Rinpoche (bDud-'joms rin-po-che 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje), this is reflected in the numerous practice lineages from the bDud-'joms tradition currently used by CGF followers. After many years in exile Chagdud Tulku was sent by the Dalai Lama and Dudjom Rinpoche to teach at the latter's centre, Yeshe Nyingpo, he arrived in America on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1979 (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 207; Faber 2005: 40).

### 7.1.2. The Lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā Teachings

The lineage of A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā teachings is discussed by Chagdud Khadro in her short book on the topic (Khadro 2003). She states that the practice originated in the mind of the Buddha Amitābha, from whom it was passed to Avalokiteśvara, and thence to a Tārā emanation. From this Tārā it was passed to Nāgārjuna, and then on to Padmasambhava. After Padmasambhava had arrived in Tibet he taught the practices to the son of Khri Srong-ldu-btsan and to Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, who hid the teachings for discovery at a later time. These teachings were 'discovered and codified' by A-paṃ gter-ston in the twentieth century (Khadro 2003: 3). The exact date of their discovery is not known.<sup>203</sup>

In his later life A-paṃ gter-ston taught the Red Tārā cycle to Byang-chub rdo-rje,<sup>204</sup> a monk-student of his, and asked that it be retransmitted to his next incarnation. He told Byang-chub rdo-rje "I am dying – I ask that you do something for me. When I

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<sup>203</sup> Tulku Thondup, a disciple of A-paṃ gter-ston, includes a photograph of one of the sites at which A-paṃ gter-ston discovered a *gter-ma* in his *Hidden Teachings of Tibet* (Thondup Rinpoche 1986: Image 21).

<sup>204</sup> Byang-chub rdo-rje (20<sup>th</sup> century) was the disciple of A-paṃ gter-ston, and received from him complete transmission of the teachings. He was born in the Gyakor house of the Akyong clan in mGo-log and later travelled to Central Tibet, after which he fled to Bhutan and later India. Byang-chub rdo-rje had received teaching from Kun-bzang nyi-ma (the speech incarnation of bDud-'joms gling-pa), 'Jam-dbyangs chos-kyi blo-gros, and bDud-'joms Rin-po-che amongst others (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 491-92, 666).

am seventeen years old in my next incarnation, come to me and give me the initiation and oral transmission of the complete Red Tara treasure" (Khadro 2003: 4). In his next life, A-paṃ gter-ston took incarnation as the current Sakya Trizin. Unfortunately, due to the Chinese presence in Tibet Byang-chub rdo-rje was exiled from the country and delayed in Bhutan at the time of Sakya Trizin's seventeenth birthday. Because of these circumstances he was unable to fulfil his promise and transmit the teachings at the required time. However, some years later he managed to reach Dehra Dun and comply with his promise to retransmit the lineage to Sakya Trizin and also to his sister rJe-btsun-ma sku-shogs 'chi-med klu-sdings who was present at the meeting.<sup>205</sup>

*En route* to meet Sakya Trizin in Dehra Dun Byang-chub rdo-rje happened to meet Chagdud Tulku at mTsho Padma in Himachal Pradesh, a lake sacred to Padmasambhava and a popular pilgrimage site. There the monk initiated Chagdud Tulku into the Red Tārā cycle, after which Chagdud Tulku completed a Red Tārā retreat (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 175-78; Khadro 2003: 4-6). In his autobiography Chagdud Tulku describes the event: "I returned to Tso Pema, and now my dreams were splendid and full of promise that I would receive a practice by which I would benefit many people" (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 175). Chagdud Tulku had received many initiations of Tārā and also other red deities of the *Padma* (Lotus) Family, but this was his first Red Tārā initiation. He believed that this auspicious event was the fulfilment of his prophetic dream, and he describes his retreat on the goddess following the initiation:

This retreat allowed me to accomplish a practice that would be of profound significance to me, to the Tibetans I served as a lama and to my future students. Red Tara revealed herself to me in her full, fathomless compassion and wisdom, resplendent with qualities.

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<sup>205</sup> In another account, found within MGRG, rJe-btsun-ma sku-shogs 'Chi-med klu-sdings relates that Byang-chub rdo-rje arrived at Sa-skyā when Sakya Trizin was five years old, following instructions he had received from A-paṃ gter-ston to visit Sa-skyā. When the monk approached Sakya Trizin recognised him and shouted to him to approach, calling the monk by an old nickname A-paṃ gter-ston has used. At which point, realising this was indeed his Master's incarnation Byang-chub rdo-rje burst into tears (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 666).

I had many visionary experiences and dreams, some involving crystals. Two decades later I would remember these crystals and open the practice of crystal healing through Tara meditation. In the West, thousands of people would receive the blessing of Red Tara and begin to rely on Tara practice as their central Vajrayana meditation (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 177).

Chagdud Tulku was believed to be the Tārā *siddha* of his generation of the Tromge family, following in the footsteps of his mother. His son, Jigme Tromge Rinpoche ('Jigs-med khrom-dge Rin-po-che), himself an important lama,<sup>206</sup> has spoken of his father's own *Pure Vision* (*dag-srang*) discoveries, which he believes to be *gter-ma* revelations. He explains the difference between *gter-ma* hidden by previous masters, such as Padmasambhava, and *Pure Vision* revelations which are dependent on the realisation of the master concerned:

he [Chagdud Tulku] has many visions and terma concerning Tara, including one very elaborate Green Tara sadhana. Also H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche used to tell me that my father is a siddha who mastered Vajrakilaya. Basically, if you are a master of view then everything else follows, but at the same time individuals do have connections with specific practices (Ati Ling 2007a).

However, Chagdud Tulku informed his son that he did not feel that the present time was suitable to practise and pass on these teachings (Ati Ling 2007a). In this way, one can see that the practice of Tārā was of central importance to not only Chagdud Tulku himself, but also to his family heritage, and it is therefore no surprise that it was one of the main teachings he bestowed upon his Western students.

### 7.1.3. The Red Tārā Tradition Travels West

Although Rinpoche became renowned for his miraculous activities as a Tara practitioner, he did not teach the practice widely until he came to the United States fifteen years later. In 1980 he began teaching Red Tara to some students in Oregon, guiding their development in the steps of visualisation and offerings (Khadro 2003: 6).

Chagdud Tulku arrived in America on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1979 and was reunited with his American wife Jane Tromge, otherwise known as Chagdud Khadro (Chagdud

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<sup>206</sup> 'Jigs-med khrom-dge Rin-po-che is recognised as an incarnation of Tshe-dbang nor-bu, the son of the first mChog-gyur gling-pa, and also of gYu-sgra snying-po, one of the twenty-five main disciples of Padmasambhava. He currently resides at the Padmasambhava Peace Institute and Ati Ling CGF centres in Cazadero, California (Ati Ling 2007b).

Tulku 2001: 207; Khadro 2003). He states that "[h]aving first heard the name 'America' in a dream nineteen years before, shortly after I left Tibet, I was now ready to find out if I really had a karmic connection there and if I could bring about benefit" (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 207). After a short period in San Francisco, Dudjom Rinpoche advised Chagdud Tulku to reside in Eugene, Oregon, at his centre Yeshe Nyingpo in order to teach Tibetan Medicine (Chagdud Tulku 2001: xii).

After some years CGF was established in response to requests by his students: 1988 saw the founding of Rigdzin Ling Gonpa in California which subsequently became the main CGF centre (Chagdud Tulku 2001: xii). The immigration of Chagdud Tulku to the West seems to follow a similar pattern to that of others lamas, whereby Buddhist masters are brought over to the West by followers who they have met earlier in either India or Nepal (Samuel 2005: 302).

## **7.2. Buddhism in America and Brazil**

In recent decades Buddhism has experienced a resurgence in the Western world, Tibetan Buddhism in particular has flourished since the Tibetan people found themselves in exile in 1959, and the religion has slowly found a place in Western culture. Numerous scholars have turned their attention to this modern day phenomenon. In order to contextualise our study this section begins with a brief examination of the conclusions reached by these authors. This will be followed by a discussion of the CGF and specifically its centres in Brazil.

### **7.2.1. The Study of American Buddhism**

There is an emerging movement within Buddhist Studies which defines itself as the study of 'Global Buddhism', 'Western Buddhism', or 'New Buddhism'. The scholars

working in this field are dedicated to examining Western Buddhism as a separate, more specific, discipline within Buddhist Studies. In particular, the work of Charles Prebish is an example of this new discipline, whilst the on-line *Journal of Global Buddhism* exemplifies the growing scholarship and academic interest in the field.

Buddhism has the ability to adapt to its surroundings, and this has led to the various forms of Buddhism to be found at the present time, from the *Theravāda* Buddhism of Thailand through to the *Vajrayāna* Buddhism of Tibet. As Buddhism has emerged in the Western culture numerous scholars have identified a separation within the emerging 'New Buddhism' or 'Western Buddhism'. This divide is seen on the one hand with the culturally Asian communities of Buddhists who have moved to the West and established temples or centres based on their traditions, exclusively intended as a focal point of their own community's practice. On the other hand, this move has led to the emerging 'New Buddhism' of Western converts to the tradition. These converts may practise *Theravāda*, *Mahāyāna*, or *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, or indeed a combination of the three (Coleman 2001; Numrich 2006). These two clearly-defined sections of the Buddhist community in the West were identified by Thomas Tweed<sup>207</sup> in the 1990s in his examination of the phenomenon of Buddhism in America during the Victorian era. Tweed noted a divide between 'Euro-American Buddhists' and 'Asian-American Buddhists'. Numrich analyses the approach of Tweed and other scholars to the study of Western Buddhism (Numrich 2006: 208).

However, when we begin to examine the specific case of Tibetan Buddhism in the West we find a rather different situation. In India and Nepal Tibetan communities have established monasteries, temples, and monastic colleges for the use of their community. In Western countries such as the USA and the United Kingdom however, this is not the case. Outside Switzerland Tibetan communities have not established

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<sup>207</sup> As I had no access to the work of Thomas Tweed I relied on the accounts of later authors.



monasteries or temples primarily for the use of exile Tibetans and to the exclusion of local Western Buddhists. Instead Tibetan Buddhist centres in the West are used predominantly by converts to the tradition. However, when one begins to discuss the 'New Buddhism' of America and Europe in the case of Tibetan Buddhism the more prominent trend has a community of Western Buddhists practising at a temple founded and headed by an exiled Tibetan lama. This theory is backed up by the research of Lavine (Lavine 1998). The 'New Buddhism' label does appear to apply to Tibetan Buddhism in the West, with centres intended for use by Western converts to the religion whilst still accepting Asian Buddhists into their fold. However, in the case of Tibetan Buddhism the 'Asian Buddhism' described by scholars appears to be lacking outside of the Tibetan exile communities in India and Nepal. This may be due to the low numbers of Tibetan migrants to the West.

Jan Nattier is at the forefront of academic work on what constitutes 'American Buddhism' and how can this term be further defined. She discusses the issue of certain Buddhist groups in America defining themselves as the 'American Buddhists' whilst ignoring other groups. To counteract this trend Nattier moves on to define the forms of Buddhism found in the United States through an analysis of the methods through which the religion entered America. Using the language of economics, Nattier develops a three-fold division of Buddhism as 'Elite Buddhism – Transmission via Import', 'Evangelical Buddhism - Transmission via Export', and 'Ethnic Buddhism - Transmission via Baggage'. 'Elite Buddhism' is defined by the feature that its participants have actively sought out the religion and 'imported' it to their home location. Nattier defines members of this group by their access to both money and leisure time, attributes that qualify them as the 'elite' of American society (Nattier 1995).

Nattier goes on to add that although the members of 'Elite Buddhism' may be predominantly white, 'White Buddhism' is not a suitable description of the group, as it is their social class, not their racial background, which defines this category. The main concern of the Elite Buddhists is the path to enlightenment through meditation. In this way she believes key Buddhist elements such as monasticism and ethics are in the main removed from the practice of Elite Buddhists. The predominance of meditation practice comes about because those who import Buddhism to America do so with preconceived ideas about what the religious practice of Buddhism entails, and that it therefore least resembles the forms of Buddhism one finds in the East.

'Evangelical Buddhism' is the form of the religion brought over to the States by native practitioners as missionaries. The impetus for the 'export' of Buddhism in this case comes from the missionaries themselves, not from the Western converts, as is the case with 'Elite Buddhism'. The Soka Gakkai school of Japanese Buddhism is listed by Nattier as a classic example of this form of Buddhism in America. The group draws its membership from across the social classes and also across ethnic groups. The last group, 'Ethnic Buddhism', is the religion as practiced by immigrants to the United States who have taken their religious traditions with them. The membership of this group is defined primarily by ethnicity, a factor that Nattier terms 'monoethnicity', as very little diversity is found, the key concern of its members being the preservation of their native traditions.

In her later work Nattier moves on to examine American Buddhism as a 'New Religion', using the work of the sociologists Stark and Bainbridge as a basis. Stark and Bainbridge split religions into three groups: 'church', 'sect', or 'cult'. Their work was based on the church-sect typology developed by Weber, Troeltsch, and Niebuhr, adding the category of 'cult' (Stark and Bainbridge 1979). Within this tripartite split Nattier chooses to place Buddhism within the 'cult' category, which is then further

subdivided into three sections: 'audience cult', 'client cult', and 'cult movement'. Nattier acknowledges the negative connotation of the term 'cult' in popular usage, but feels that within this three-fold approach it aptly describes American Buddhism. It appears here that she is conforming to Stark and Bainbridge's use of the term 'imported cult'. She goes on to examine the predominant approach of 'Two Buddhisms', that of expatriate populations and of converts. However, she feels that these definitions are inadequate in the case of Buddhism in America and she accordingly returns to the three-fold division of Buddhism proposed in her earlier work (Nattier 1998; Stark and Bainbridge 1979). Geoffrey Samuel has also adopted her approach in order to categorise Tibetan Buddhism in the West, stating that it falls into the category of 'Elite Buddhism', because the membership of Tibetan Buddhist groups is predominantly made up of members of elite society in America, who offer financial support for the centres (Samuel 2005: 289).

Prior to examining our case study we can identify a few issues within Nattier's original work. As we have seen she chooses to focus on the method via which particular forms of Buddhism entered America. This is a highly simplified system, one can argue that this categorisation works when one applies it simply to a particular Buddhist group as it entered the country, or indeed to a particular individual practitioner. However, if one begins to analyse a group of adherents then a categorisation of this sort becomes problematic. A group may nowadays include high class local people new to Buddhism alongside ethnic immigrants. Furthermore, many Buddhist groups with centers in the United States are multinational organisations operating across a number of countries and cultures. To separate the American form of the religion and classify it according to one category ignoring completely the organisation as it exists outside of the USA seems unwise.

The application of these various schemes to the CGF is not as easy as one would first image. Nattier discusses the divide between new religions and those which are transplanted onto American soil. With the CGF it is clear that this is a case of transplantation of the religion, predominantly by Chagdud Tulku. Whilst he lived in Tibet, and later in India, Chagdud Tulku worked as a lama, teaching students who approached him the methods and practices he had learnt as a young boy in the monastery. When one examines his activities after he arrived in the West it appears that Chagdud Tulku continued in this tradition, teaching Buddhist practices to willing students. As a young boy Chagdud Tulku was recognised as the head of Chagdud Monastery in Khams, and as such when he arrived in America, and later Brazil, he set about establishing Chagdud temples. This is illustrated by the division of the CGF's website into four categories: Chagdud Gonpa Tibet, Chagdud Gonpa North America, Chagdud Gonpa Brasil, and Chagdud Gonpa Hispanoamérica (Foundation *a*). Although as an organisation the CGF was new, Chagdud Tulku employed age-old methods in its development. Even the name - Chagdud Gonpa - remains, with only the word 'Foundation' being added to the title of this new group.

Despite this continuity with the original Tibetan tradition we can note some differences. Firstly, in Tibet Chagdud Gonpa was filled with monks who had received ordination and permanently resided at the site. However, as Chagdud Gonpa moved westwards in the United States and South America we find temples (*lha-khang*) where the main practitioners are lay-people who come to the centres regularly for practice sessions, and some of them live on-site. This is also a feature of Buddhism seen in modern Asian society. Within Tibet itself lay Buddhists often only attend the temple for important calendrical events, such as '*chams* dances, *Sa-ga zla-ba* (the celebration of the Buddha's enlightenment and *parinirvāṇa*), *sgrub-chen* (a group *sādhana* retreat), and so forth. However, in the West we see lay practitioners who

may attend not only these events but also regular practice sessions, and sometimes longer retreats. So despite the CGF falling within Nattier's category of transmitted Buddhism, it does exhibit some new aspects where it has adapted to the American religious temperament. Although the religion was transmitted from Tibet it has undergone a process of change in order to appeal to the new adherents and to provide a religious system which works with their character. As we have noted above Buddhism followed a similar process in each of the countries it has travelled to, and as such one finds a rather different form of Buddhism prevalent in Thailand, to that found in Bhutan for example.

When one examines the definitions of these groups provided by Stark and Bainbridge one runs into some difficulties, and it may be that these categories are best applied to sections of the religion as a whole, rather than to individual groups. In the case of CGF, Chagdud Gonpa in Tibet falls within the 'church' category of sanctioned religion, whereas CGF in the West falls into the 'Cult Movement' classification, where participants are seen to renounce their old religion and adopt a new one. However, I suspect that if one were to ask members of the CGF they would envisage themselves as the direct descendants of Chagdud Gonpa Tibet, having received initiation into the religious practices of the mother monastery.

Once again, when we apply the classification system adopted by Nattier in her 1995 essay to the CGF, it would fall within either the category of 'Elite Buddhism' or 'Evangelical Buddhism' (Nattier 1995). The Western membership of the CGF excludes it from the 'Ethnic Buddhism' category. At the outset Chagdud Tulku was invited to America by Dudjom Rinpoche to teach at his Yeshe Nyingpo centres there, but he later moved on to form his own practice group, this time at the request of his students. It is possible also to apply the 'Evangelical Buddhism' category, as Dudjom Rinpoche invited Chagdud Tulku to the States in order to teach Buddhism, and one

can assume some desire and motivation on Chagdud Tulku's part to spread Buddhism in the West. However, even at the time of the original invitation of Chagdud Tulku to America, he was also moving there to join his wife Jane Tromge (Chagdud Khadro). Furthermore, it is clear that the survival and prosperity of the CGF has been due to its active and interested membership, leading one to place it within the 'Elite Buddhism' category.

In addition to this, there appears to be a difference between the CGF in the United States and the Foundation in South America. As we have seen, when Chagdud Tulku arrived in America the category 'Elite Buddhism' most accurately designates the situation. However, when he moved to South America it could be deemed that Chagdud Tulku was involved in missionary activity. His move was not at the request of students: he himself perceived a fit between the Brazilian people and Tibetan Buddhism. As such, the CGF as it appears in South America is best classified as 'Evangelical Buddhism'. This seems to indicate a problem with Nattier's system of classification. One might expect that a single Buddhist group should fit clearly into one of the categories she provides. It may also be the case that categories such as these are not important to Tibetan masters, who see it as natural to establish a religious community where Buddhists are seeking religious instruction. Furthermore, within the practice of the '*bodhisattva* vows' Tibetan teachers see it as their duty to teach the *Dharma*, as it is a root downfall of the 'eighteen *bodhisattva* vows' not to share the *Dharma* with others.

A number of scholars have concentrated their academic efforts on the idea of an emerging new religion, which they term 'Western Buddhism' (Goldstein 2002; Khema 1991; Kulananda 1997). These books generally move through Buddhist ideas and philosophies, presenting these topics in a style suited to a Western readership. Goldstein lists one of his aims in writing *One Dharma* as to "leave readers with a path

of practice that integrates various teachings and methods of these several traditions" (Goldstein 2002: 6). The concept is to present Western Buddhism as a new offshoot of Buddhism, combining all the teachings from the history of Buddhism. This leads to a Buddhism that is less sectarian and more of an emerging new faith. However, this is not the approach of those at the CGF, who are heavily invested in preserving the lineages of *rNying-ma-pa* Tibetan Buddhist tradition, as they have received it from Chagdud Tulku, rather than creating a new faith for their community. As we will see, although the CGF community are rather progressive in some aspects of their work - namely the appointment of Western and female lineage holders and lamas, in other ways they aim to carefully preserve the tradition from which they descend. The CGF is therefore a 'New Buddhism' in that it is developing in a society and culture that are significantly different from the Tibet of its origins. Its adherents are primarily Americans and South Americans, and its leadership is taken from these communities. Also, there is little or no mixing of Buddhist traditions at the CGF; the Buddhism taught and practised is the Tibetan *Vajrayāna* of the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition, as taught by the late Chagdud Tulku. By contrast, one example of what may be considered a 'New Buddhism', The Flaming Jewel Sangha, is examined in Chapter Eight.

In conclusion it appears that the CGF is a form of Tibetan Buddhism which originated with the Chagdud Gonpa in Tibet. Practitioners in the West adhere closely to their *rNying-ma-pa* roots. Within Buddhism the idea of a lineage which descends from the Buddha is an important aspect of the authenticity of teachings. Here, even when one takes into account the prevalence of Western and female teachers in the present day CGF, the continuity of the lineage back to Chagdud Tulku's teachings is a crucial element. However, in order to survive and progress in both the United States and South America there have been some adaptations of religious practice.

Accordingly, we see a much stronger lay emphasis in the Western CGF, and the translation of the practices into English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The CGF has not followed the path of many other groups whose Dharma centres are also used to provide services such as yoga, health treatments, and psychotherapy. Unlike groups such as the FPMT and Vajradhatu/ Shambala, which did not exist in Tibet itself, the CGF can trace itself directly back to Chagdud Gonpa in Khams. Also, by sticking to a strict lineage of authentic teachings and following a traditional Tibetan model for transmission, the CGF has remained free from the controversy felt by other groups such as the Diamond Way,<sup>208</sup> Shambala,<sup>209</sup> and the Aro gTér.<sup>210</sup> In conclusion I must agree with Seager when he states that "[i]t seems premature to settle on any schematic typology" when discussing the emerging American Buddhism (Seager 2002: 118). As such the discussion of an individual group and its practices appears to offer more to the student of Buddhist Studies at this time.

### 7.2.2. Buddhism in America

Up to the 1960s there were only twenty-one Buddhist centres in America, while at present there are over one thousand (Seager 2002: 109). Fields traces the advent of

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<sup>208</sup> The controversy surrounding the Diamond Way, led by Lama Ole Nydahl, centres on their support of the Sharmapa's (Zhwa-dmar-pa) choice for as the current incarnation of the Karmapa, Thrinlay Thaye Dorje ('Phrin-las mtha'-yas rdo-rje, b. 1983). This is opposed to Orgyan Thrinley Dorje (O-rgyan 'phrin-las rdo-rje, b. 1985), who is recognised as the 17th Karmapa by both the Dalai Lama and the majority of *Kam-tshang bKa'-brgyud* practitioners.

<sup>209</sup> The Vajradhatu International (later renamed Shambala International) community was established by Chögyam Trungpa in 1973. Trungpa himself was a controversial figure in the American Buddhist community due to his adherence to the 'crazy wisdom' lifestyle, which is said to relate to the *drubnyon* (*sgrub-smyon*) philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism. The controversy surrounding the group continued after the death of Chögyam Trungpa in 1987, when it was revealed that his appointed successor Thomas Rich (Ösel Tendzin) was carrying the AIDS virus which he had transmitted to a number of others. Furthermore, some of the Vajradhatu board members had been aware of his illness for some time and were complicit in maintaining it as a secret. Rich passed away in 1990 and Chögyam Trungpa's son Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (Sa-skyong mi-pham/ 'Od-gsal rang-grol, b. 1962) has acted as regent since his appointment was endorsed by Dilgo Khyentse in 1990 (Bell 1998; 2002: 232-34; Rawlinson 2001: 128).

<sup>210</sup> The Aro gTér claim to practice a Tibetan Buddhist *gter-ma* tradition with controversial origins. The Aro gTér and their practices are discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.



American Buddhism to two distinct events: the construction of the first Buddhist temple on American soil in 1853 in San Francisco's Chinatown, and the businessman Charles Strauss taking refuge in 1893 at the conclusion of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (Fields 1998: 196). Seager defines four main forms of Buddhism in America: Zen, Tibetan, Theravāda-inspired Insight Meditation, and Sōka Gakkai (SGI-USA). He goes on to agree with Fields that the origin of the Zen movement in America was the 1893 Chicago World Parliament of Religions (Seager 2002: 110). One influential exponent of Zen Buddhism was D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966), while another, Robert Aitken (1917-2010), founded the Diamond Sangha in the 1950s (Prebish 1999: 8-10; Seager 2002: 110). However, the height of the Zen Buddhist movement in America was seen with the 1950s the Beat Generation: a group of poets influenced by books on Buddhism which developed on the East Coast and San Francisco. Influential Beat Buddhists include Gary Snyder (b. 1930), Alan Watts (1915-1973), Philip Whalen (1923-2002), and Alan Ginsberg (1926-1997) (Fields 1998: 203; Prebish 1999: 12-13; Tonkinson 1995: ix, 2, 17). Prebish writes of the Beats, "Although they attempted to replace what they rejected of American culture with Zen culture, the Beats' accuracy remained questionable" (Prebish 1999: 13). Despite this, the boom in the public awareness of Zen Buddhism led to an increase in the number of Zen centres in the 1970s. The two main forms of Zen in America are Sōtō and Rinzai, and exponents of both forms have removed the monastic emphasis found in traditional Japanese Buddhist practice, and also reduced the necessity for traditional ceremonies and customs (Asai and Williams 1999: 20; Wallace 2002: 40-41).

Insight Meditation as it is found in the United States originated in the 1960s with backpackers to South and Southeast Asia. After acquiring *vipassanā* meditation techniques on their travels they returned to America and began teaching 'insight'

meditation, whilst de-emphasising the monastic and devotional aspects of traditional *vipassanā* practice. During the 1970s a diverse group of teachers emerged, who included Ruth Denison, Jack Kornfield, and Joseph Goldstein (Seager 2002: 112). A number of these teachers actively attempted to combine Buddhism and Western theories of psychology (Fields 1998: 202; Imamura 1998; Metcalf 2002: 354-55; Seager 2002: 112-13). Metcalf notes the large number of psychotherapists teaching meditation at Insight Meditation centres, including the IMS (Insight Meditation Society) in Barre, MA, and Sprit Rock in Woodacre, CA. He states that "[t]he founders and leading teachers of this approach have spread a form of fundamentally psychological Buddhism across America and overseas", moving on to point out that the IMS and other centres are at pains to avoid using the term *Theravāda* (Metcalf 2002: 354-55).

Sōka Gakkai Japan founded in 1928 was imported to the United States in the 1950s by Japanese immigrants, and now operates under the name Sōka Gakkai International (SGI-USA). Due to an active recruitment drive in the 1960s SGI's membership numbers drastically increased. The membership of SGI is the most diverse of all American Buddhist groups, as it contains a large number of African-American and Latino practitioners. As with the other Buddhisms found in America the members are on the whole lay practitioners (Seager 2002: 113).

As for Tibetan Buddhism in America, Charles Prebish, a key scholar in the study of Buddhism in America, states that "[t]he Tibetans were one of the latest of the Asian Buddhist communities to arrive in the United States" (Prebish 1999: 40). The Tibetan community arrived in America after moving into exile following the 1959 Lhasa Uprising. The first person to teach Tibetan Buddhism in America was, however, a Mongolian, dGe-shes Ngag-dbang dbang-rgyal. As a scholar at Columbia University his teachings led to a core group of American Buddhists who combined

personal practice with academic careers. Examples of his high-profile students are Robert Thurman and Jeffrey Hopkins (Paine 2004: 193; Prebish 1999: 40-41; Seager 2002: 111).

Other key figures in the emerging Tibetan Buddhist centres in America followed a more practice-based approach. The stories of Tibetan masters such as Lamas Yeshe (Thub-bstan ye-shes, 1935-1984) and Zopa (Thub-bstan bzod-pa, b. 1946), Deshung Rinpoche (sDe-gzhung kun-dga' bstan-pa'i nyi-ma 1906-1987), Tarthang Tulku (Dar-thang sprul-sku, b. 1935), Kalu Rinpoche (Kar-lu rin-po-che Karma Rang-byung kun-khyab, 1905-1989), and Chögyam Trungpa (Chos-kyi rgya-mtsho drung-pa, 1940-1987) have been related by various authors (Paine 204; Prebish 1999: 40-46; Seager 2002: 111). Although these stories serve as interesting illustrations of the movement of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, they are best seen as case studies of the development of particular establishments in the Western cultural sphere. In the same way, the information given above regarding the establishment of a religious community by Chagdud Tulku also serves as a case study, highlighting a larger cultural phenomenon of recent times.

The CGF does not have the large numbers of practitioners found within the FPMT or Shambala, and Chagdud Tulku did not reach the same level of fame associated with Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa, or Chögyam Trungpa. He did however establish an international network of practice centres, mainly concentrated in North America, South America, and Australia. It appears that Chagdud Tulku's intention was to transmit to willing students practices which he believed would benefit them in the current times.

### 7.2.3. Tibetan Buddhism in Brazil

Although numerous scholars discuss the emerging American Buddhism, few have taken Buddhism in Brazil as their focus. Usarski discusses this issue, stating that Ricardo Mário Gonçalves and Murillo Nunes de Azavedo were the pioneering scholars in the field. However they, like most Brazilian academics studying Buddhism, focussed on Japanese Buddhism (Usarski 2002). Alongside these scholars, Frank Usarski himself and Christina Moreira da Rocha pioneered scholarship on the nascent Buddhist movements in Brazil.

Usarski defines Tibetan Buddhist movements in Brazil as "'Globalized' Buddhist groups in Brazil", due to their international flavour and because they are not aimed at immigrant communities in their native language (Rocha 2000: 171). He adds that in 2001 the *Folha de São Paulo* reported that one million Brazilians were Buddhist. Usarski questions this number and posits three hundred thousand as a more likely figure, with three thousand of these being committed Tibetan Buddhist practitioners (Rocha 2000: 163). This is just a small percentage of the total population of Brazil. Usarski charts the main Tibetan Buddhist groups which have established themselves in the country. The first centre was founded in São Paulo by Tarthang Tulku in 1988. This was followed by Lama Gang-chen's *dGe-lugs-pa* centre in the same city, renowned for its incarnate lama, Lama Michel, who is now a well-known figure in Brazil.

In 1993 three new centres were established in São Paulo – dGe-shes blo-bzang bstan-pa's Thubten Dargye Ling; The Centro Budhista Mahabodhi founded by the controversial New Kadampa Trust (NKT),<sup>211</sup> and Chagdud Tulku's Odsal Ling. The

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<sup>211</sup> The New Kadampa Tradition: The International Kadampa Buddhist Union (NKT-IKBU) are a highly controversial Tibetan Buddhist group, based in the UK, and founded by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso in 1991. The Geshe had originally been invited to the UK to teach by the FPMT. The source of the controversy surrounding the NKT arises from their continued practice of Shugden (rDo-rje shugs-ldan/

1990s also saw the founding of one *Sa-skyapa* centre, and two *bKa'-brgyud-pa* centres under the direction of the late Kalu Rinpoche (Kar-lu Rin-po-che Karma rangbyung kun-khyab). In 2000 the renowned Brazilian reincarnate healer Lama Segyu Rinpoche established the Gelugpa Centro Je Tsongkhapa in Porto Alegre (Rocha 2000: 172-73). As we can see from this list, the large majority of Tibetan Buddhist centres in Brazil are located in São Paulo, as is Odsal Ling, a large CGF centre.

### **7.3. Origins of the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

We will now move on from our examination of the emerging American Buddhist traditions to a more focussed look at the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation. This section will begin by discussing the CGF in general and move on to the Foundation's activities in Brazil.

#### **7.3.1. The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

At the request of his Western students, he [Chagdud Tulku] established the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation, a thriving network of centers in the Nyingma lineage of Vajrayana Buddhism (Foundation *a*).

This section will briefly outline the establishment of the CGF, as detailed on its website and also briefly within Chagdud Tulku's biography (Chagdud Tulku 2001: xii-xiii; Foundation *c*). The first centre established by Chagdud Tulku in the West was River House in Cottage Grove, Oregon, later renamed Dechen Ling. Then, in late 1988 Chagdud Tulku obtained a 286-acre site in Junction City, North California, upon

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Dol-rgyal), a protector deity. This practice has been discouraged by the Dalai Lama since 1975 and as such the NKT have separated themselves from mainstream Tibetan Buddhism. The NKT define themselves by adherence to traditional *dGe-lugs-pa* Buddhism (Bluck 2006; Clarke 2006*a*; Dalai Lama; Kay 2004; Partridge 2004: 205-206). Clarke deems the NKT a controversial Tibetan Buddhist New Religious Movement, however he states that the controversy is doctrinal rather than moral (Clarke 2006*a*: 92). For an indepth discussion of the NKT see Kay's *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain*. Kay attempts to move past previous discussion of the NKT as a cult and instead discusss the movement as it relates to current trends within Tibetan Buddhism (Kay 2004). For more information concerning Shugden the reader is referred to Dreyfus' article on the subject (Dreyfus 1998).

which he founded Rigdzin Ling - this would become CGF's main centre in the West. It is both a practice centre and also the administrative hub for the numerous other CGF centres worldwide.

The CGF is an umbrella organisation which oversees the centres previously under the direction of Chagdud Tulku. At present the CGF website is divided into four distinct sections – Chagdud Gonpa Tibet; Chagdud Gonpa North America; Chagdud Gonpa Brasil; and Chagdud Gonpa Hispanoamérica. In North America there are eighteen 'Centers' with Rigdzin Ling in Junction City, California, serving as the main seat, and there are also fourteen 'Practice Groups' listed. With regard to other countries, there are currently twenty-seven practice centres in Brazil, with two more in Uruguay and Chile. Practitioners associated with CGF are also located in Australia and Switzerland (Foundation *a, b*).

Alongside Red Tārā practice CGF centres are known for maintaining various other practice lineages, many of which descend from bDud-'joms gling-pa, they include: bDud-'joms gling-pa's Vajrakīlāya (rDo-rje phur-ba); daily Protector practices; Lion-faced *Ḍākinī* (Sen-ge'i gdong-ma, Skt: *Siṃhamukhā*);<sup>212</sup> Rigs-'dzin klong-gsal snying-po's '*Pho-ba*;<sup>213</sup> bDud-'joms gTer-gsar *sNgon-'gro* (Preliminary Practices); bDud-'joms gling-pa's *gCod* practice relying on the Wrathful Black *Ḍākinī* (Khro-ma nag-mo);<sup>214</sup> and White and Red *Vajrasattva* (rDo-rje sems-dpa'). The large

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<sup>212</sup> The practice of the Lion-faced *Ḍākinī* (Skt: *Siṃhamukhā*) originated when the buddhas of the ten directions manifested the goddess in order to subdue the Lion-faced demoness. Her practice is said to remove ignorance and dispel obstacles. It is said that the Buddha taught the Lion-faced *Ḍākinī* practice, which was then concealed by Vajrapāṇi. However, during Padmasambhava's time the power of the Hindus was increasing, and Padmasambhava therefore revealed the practice in order to conquer them. The practice was then re-hidden by Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, herself an emanation of the Lion-faced *Ḍākinī*. The text was revealed again by bDud-'joms gling-pa, who kept it secret for forty-four years before making his discovery public (Ati Ling 2007b). Shaw includes a chapter on the goddess in her *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Shaw 2006: 418-31).

<sup>213</sup> Klong-gsal rdo-rje snying-po (Kaḥ-thog-pa Byang-chub rgya-mtsho, 1625-1692) was a famed *gter-ston* of his era. He was known to have restored the Kaḥ-thog monastery, which had fallen into disrepair (TBRC 2006).

<sup>214</sup> The Wrathful Black *Ḍākinī* (Khro-ma nag-mo) is a representation of wisdom. The *gCod* practice used at Chagdud Gonpa Foundation relies on this goddess to eliminate the dualistic mind. The practice

number of these practices which descend from bDud-'joms gling-pa should come as no surprise when one considers the length of the period for which Chagdud Tulku served as bDud-'joms Rin-po-che's<sup>215</sup> assistant in exile, as well as his *rNying-ma-pa* heritage. In some cases the practices are chanted in the Tibetan language with a translation into the students' native language, while in other cases the practice is recited in the students' native language, from a text developed by Chagdud Tulku specifically for this purpose.<sup>216</sup>

The CGF is now run predominantly by Western practitioners, who were given the title Lama by Chagdud Tulku before he passed away in 2002. Since the death of Chagdud Tulku Lama Drimed Norbu has acted as the 'Spiritual Director' of the CGF, based at Rigdzin Ling. He was named as Chagdud Tulku's successor in 1995. In 2009 the CGF confirmed a new position of Head Lama, undertaken by Lama Padma Gyatso, of the Amrita Centre in Seattle. Other teachers include Chagdud Tulku's widow Chagdud Khadro (Jane Tromge), his translator Lama Tsering Everest, Lama Inge Zangmo and Lama Shenpen Drolma, to name a few. Another important figure within CGF is the Rinpoche's son Tulku Jigme Tromge Rinpoche who resides at Ati Ling and PPI in California. The CGF website states that these lamas "work to carry out Chagdud Rinpoche's intention to provide guidance for students on the spiritual path" (Foundation c). The appointment of Lama Drimed Norbu as spiritual heir by Chagdud Tulku until the recognition of his incarnation is consistent with the actions

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was bestowed upon Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal by Padmasambhava, and was hidden by her to be discovered by one of Padmasambhavas twenty-five main disciples (*rje-'bangs nyer-lnga*), Khye'u-chung lo-tsa-ba. This translator was reincarnated as bDud-'dul rdo-rje and then as bDud-'joms gling-pa. bDud-'joms gling-pa received the practice of Khro-ma nag-mo from Ma-gcig lab-sgron, Saraha (mDa-'dzin), and Pha-dam-pa seng-ge in a series of visions. The practice is employed to eliminate obstacles, heal and accumulate merit (Ati Ling 2007b).

<sup>215</sup> bDud-'joms Rin-po-che (1904-1987) was the incarnation of bDud-'joms gling-pa (1835-1904).

<sup>216</sup> As we will see the CGF uses two main forms of Red Tārā practice, one in Tibetan and another in either English, Spanish or Portuguese.

of many other Tibetan lamas; as we have seen the same process was undertaken by Chögyam Trungpa.

Alongside the administrative role pursued at Rigdzin Ling, it is also the site of Padma Publishing, the publishing wing of CGF, and Tibetan Treasures, the CGF store. Padma Publishing aims to preserve the teachings of the *rNying-ma-pa* masters and the *Vajrayāna* Buddhist tradition. One of the main purposes of Padma Publishing is a long-term translation project to translate the *Seven Treasures* of Klong-chen-pa. In addition to this, Tibetan Treasures sells a variety of the religious paraphernalia needed to practise *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, as well as photos of the lamas and deities, the written and audio works of Chagdud Tulku, Chagdud Khadro, and Lama Tsering Everest, and also the religious texts printed by Padma Publishing. In 1982 the Rinpoche also founded the Mahakaruna Foundation at Rigdzin Ling, a charitable organisation dedicated to serving "the old, sick, undernourished and undereducated peoples of Buddhist Asia" and preserving Tibetan culture and Buddhism (Foundation c).

The development and organisation of CGF follows the general pattern of the establishment of Tibetan Buddhist centres in the West as described by Samuel:

The characteristic context, I would suggest, of Tibetan Buddhism in the West is that of a national or international network, generally centred around the teachings of a single individual lama (Samuel 2005: 303).

As we can see this is appropriate for the CGF, where the main teacher was Chagdud Tulku, and the students practise the texts developed by him specifically for use by CGF practitioners in the West. In later years the group moved from a national presence in America to an international organisation with groups in North America, South America, Switzerland and Australia. However, the CGF has not yet reached the size or influence of large-scale Western Buddhist groups such as the FPMT, Rigpa, or Shambala.



### 7.3.2. The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation in Brazil

Having been based in Junction City, America, for many years, in 1996 Chagdud Rinpoche moved the centre of his emerging Tibetan Buddhist movement to Brazil (Usarski 2002: 172). In 1994 Chagdud Rinpoche founded Chagdud Gonpa Brasil and began construction of Khandro Ling, the main South American centre, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, South Brazil (Foundation *a, b*). When Chagdud Tulku passed away in 2002 there were over twenty CGF centres in South America, located in Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile (Foundation *a, b*). By 2007 the main seat at Khadro Ling had roughly sixty residents, of both Brazilian and other nationalities (Savarese 2007). The CGF centres form a large percentage of the one hundred and sixty Buddhist institutions in Brazil reported by Usarski in 2001 (Rocha 2000: 164).

Regarding his motivation for establishing a Buddhist community in South America CGF's website details Chagdud Tulku's thoughts:

Asked why, at the age of 64, he re-settled in South America rather than remaining comfortably in the United States, he answered, "I saw the faith of the Brazilians and their interest in Buddhism, and I wanted to teach them" (Foundation *c*).

In a comment on the move the Rinpoche's wife, Chagdud Khadro, states that he "fell in love with Brazil" whilst in exile from Tibet, and that the faith of the Brazilian people influenced his decision to move. She states:

Brazilians are more persistent and are very receptive when they connect to a master such as Rinpoche. In the United States there is more questioning of faith. It is not that the Brazilians are less materialistic... but their basic nature is pure (Savarese 2007).

Another of the CGF leaders Lama Tsering Everest, who heads the Odsal Ling Refugio centre outside of São Paulo, was quoted in the Brazilian *Elle* magazine as saying, "[i]t is the right moment for Buddhism in Brazil . . . the involvement of Brazilians with Buddhism is karmic" (Rocha 2000).

Talk of the emerging Tibetan Buddhism in Brazil reached the popular woman's magazine *Elle*<sup>217</sup> quoted above, when it featured an article on the American Lama Tsering Everest, alongside Chagdud Tulku. The article described the two monasteries Chagdud Tulku intended to build - one in Três Coroas, Rio Grande do Sul state, with an intended capacity of 400 people during retreat periods, and another in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais state. The *Elle* article quoted the number of Buddhist practitioners in Brazil at the time as 500,000, from all schools of Buddhism (Rocha 2000).

#### **7.4. Western and Female Teachers at Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation and its associated centres differ from the average Tibetan Buddhist centre in the West in one key feature - the number of Western teachers appointed in its ranks. Samuel noted as recently as 2005 that "[e]ven today, more than thirty years after significant numbers of lamas began teaching in the West, a very high proportion of lamas are still Tibetan" (Samuel 2005: 320). However, if one examines the CGF then one sees a distinctly higher number of Western lamas than Tibetan. Since the passing away of Chagdud Tulku in 2002 the main Tibetan Rinpoches associated with the Foundation are Jigme Tromge Rinpoche, the son of Chagdud Tulku, who is based at Ati Ling and PPI in California, and Lama Chödak Gyatso based at T'hondup Ling, Los Angeles.

Amy Lavine feels similarly to Samuel, describing the structure of 'American Vajrayana' as led by *dGe-shes* and *sPrul-skus* from Tibet (Lavine 1998: 104). This appears to be an oversimplification of the issue: although at the time of its inception

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<sup>217</sup> The article *Ondo Zen* appeared in the June 1998 edition of *Elle* magazine in Brazil. As I have had no access to the magazine article itself I have relied on Rocha's account.

the CGF was headed by Chagdud Tulku, he ordained numerous Westerners as lamas, and since his passing the CGF is no longer led by a single Tibetan, or group of Tibetans. These days the main leaders at CGF are the Western lamas recognised by Chagdud Tulku, authorised to teach and to transmit tantric initiations, for example his wife Chagdud Khadro.<sup>218</sup> However, as of the Tibetan New Year, 14 February 2010, the reincarnation of Chagdud Tulku, Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche Yangsi (*yang-srid*), has been recognised in Tibet. As he is still a young boy it is unlikely he will have a major role at the CGF in the near future. He remains in Tibet undergoing his Buddhist education. Despite this, it will be interesting to see the role he plays at CGF in the future.

#### **7.4.1. Western Teachers of Tibetan Buddhism at Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

Daniel Cozort is of the opinion that the main obstacle to the expansion of Buddhism in the West is the lack of Western teachers (Cozort 2003: 221). In his work Cozort examines the place of 'Western *Bla-mas*' in the emerging Tibetan Buddhism of the Western world. It seems clear that one aspect of the continual success of the CGF, especially in North America, is the large number of Western teachers at their centres.

Cozort reasons that of the organisations within which the lama has perceived the necessity of training Westerners to teach Buddhism the FPMT and the NKT have been the most successful. He writes that both these groups have set up formal teacher training programmes in order to accomplish this goal (Cozort 2003: 222). However, within the CGF no such formal training is provided. Instead, a Western practitioner who has conducted an extensive retreat, normally of three years may have been recognised as a lama by Chagdud Tulku, given the authoritative permission to begin

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<sup>218</sup> In a meeting with Lama Tsering Everest she described Chagdud Khadro as the leader of the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation (Everest 2009c).

teaching and in some cases bestow initiations of a particular deity. In particular, Lama Tsering Everest and Lama Inge Zangmo are known to bestow the initiation of Red Tārā, and Chagdud Khadro to bestow the *'Pho-ba* and *sNgon-'gro* initiations.

This approach differs fundamentally from that of the NKT, where future teachers are required to study on the 'Teacher Training Programme', the successful completion of which enables them not only to teach at NKT centres, but also to bestow tantric initiations (Cozort 2003: 234). Within the CGF however, it appears that the qualification of a Western lama is based on experience of Buddhist practice as determined by the Rinpoche, rather than completion of a formal period of study.

Cozort also discussed the phenomenon of Western Dharma groups applying to their teachers and leaders various titles which have no Buddhist connotation. "Hence, these organisations are creating designations for senior Western teachers to allow them an exemption from some criteria that otherwise apply to teachers" (Cozort 2003: 242). The CGF chooses to use the more broad term 'Lama', as it is applied to those who have conducted a three-year retreat. Cozort states that alongside CGF, the Rigpa Fellowship and the Dzogchen Foundation are also applying this term to their Western teachers (Cozort 2003: 243). Lavine concurs that Kalu Rinpoche used the term 'Lama' to describe his students after they had completed a three-year retreat. She writes that Kalu Rinpoche:

also encouraged them to become teachers in their own right, not as the incarnations of any special persons but rather as people whose own intensive meditation experiences had led them to insights which made them worthy of teaching others (Lavine 1998: 106).

Prebish believes that one defining aspect of American Buddhism, as opposed to its Asian counterparts, is the lack of monasticism, especially at the leadership level: American Buddhism is more lay in nature (Prebish 1999: 70-75). However, it is no surprise that within a *rNying-ma-pa* Buddhist organisation, such as CGF, the focus is on the laity rather than a monastic elite. Throughout the history of the *rNying-ma* sect

monastic practitioners, the laity, and the *sNgags-pa* lineages have coexisted. The *sNgags-pa* are practitioners who have taken a set of vows restricting their conduct, but yet remain married and within the community, often serving as religious teachers, or spending extended time in retreats.

In some organisations the recognition of Westerners as leaders or incarnations of Tibetan religious leaders has not gone as smoothly as at the CGF. An illustration of this is the recognition of the fourteen-month old Spanish boy, Osel Hita Torres (b. 1985) as the incarnation of Lama Yeshe, the head of the FPMT. At the age of eight Osel moved to Sera monastery, South India, where he was trained in a traditional Tibetan monastic setting. However, at the age of eighteen Osel abandoned his training unfinished in order to pursue studies in Canada and Switzerland. At present he is working in audio-visual media and has little influence within the FPMT, which is currently led by Lama Zopa (FPMT 2009; Fuchs 2009; Mackenzie 1995; Pontones 2010; Rawlinson 2001: 129).

#### **7.4.2. Female Teachers at Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

Simmer-Brown noted that almost half the *vipassanā* teachers in America were women (Simmer-Brown 2002: 316). However, this is not true of Tibetan Buddhist leaders. As such, one noticeable difference between CGF and other Western Tibetan Buddhist centres is the large number of female teachers leading its practice centres. The two main centres in Brazil are both run by women: Chagdud Khadro at Khadro Ling and Lama Tsering Everest at Odsal Ling. Alongside these women, four other centres are led by female-Western lamas. With regards to the CGF centres run by men, one is led by Chagdud Tulku's son, another two by Tibetan lamas, with the remaining five headed by male-Western lamas (Foundation *b*). This is not only a substantial number of female lamas, but also a high number of Western leaders authorised by the

Rinpoche to teach and give initiations. Other Western Buddhist groups may be established and run by Westerners but few have the authority to bestow tantric initiations.<sup>219</sup>

This re-evaluation of the traditional Buddhist gender roles is a key feature of the Buddhism seen currently in America and this fact has been discussed by a number of scholars. As Coleman writes:

The most important transformation Buddhism has undergone, and the one that seems most likely to be a permanent fixture in the West, has been the growing power of women and the trend towards full gender equality (Coleman 2001: 182).

Prebish understands this prominence of female teachers emerging in American Buddhism as characteristic of the 'democratization' of the religion in the United States. "As a result of this democratization, American Buddhism has been able to move away from the hierarchical pattern of Asian Buddhism and toward an egalitarian approach that is more consistent with American democratic trends" (Prebish 1999: 70). The feminist Rita Gross identifies this trend as a 'postpatriarchal' move to 'androgynous Buddhism', and that this move to 'postpatriarchy' is the key issue for female practitioners of Western Buddhism, whereby female-feminist leaders are included in the ranks (Gross 1993: 252-55; 1998: 251). However, after her 1987 interviews with the key female Buddhist teachers in America Lenore Friedman discovered that most of the teachers she worked with do not call themselves feminist. She believes that this is due to their understanding of the concept of non-duality (Friedman 1987: 26). Gross also states that for her a key issue is the movement from unnatural to natural hierarchies. Her end goal is a situation where accomplished leaders are established within a circular hierarchical structure (Gross 1998: 247-49).

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<sup>219</sup> One example of a Western practitioner authorised to give empowerments in the *Sa-skyapa* and *bKa'-brgyud-pa* lineages in the UK is Lama Jampa Thaye (David Stott) in his Dechen community (Rawlinson 2001: 128).

Whether or not the female lamas at CGF consider themselves feminist is not a point that will be considered in this thesis. However, whether this increase in the power of women within the tradition as it adapts and reflects American culture is indeed a 'democratization', or a symptom of a 'postpatriarchal' Buddhism, one can see that it remains a defining feature of American Buddhism, and especially of the emerging leadership of the CGF. Within the CGF many of the main leaders and teachers at the present time are indeed female, but whether they define themselves as feminists is unclear. Regardless, both Chagdud Khadro and Lama Tsering Everest retain great influence in the CGF. Prebish writes that the majority of Western female teachers are, or have been, nuns (Prebish 1999: 78). However, this is not the case with the CGF, within which the leadership has been chosen from those who have completed lengthy retreats or were very close disciples of Chagdud Tulku. It may be that this is due to the CGF's *rNying-ma-pa* background, within which monasticism is emphasised less than in other Buddhist traditions.

It may be that the emphasis on the importance of women in modern-day, American Buddhism understates the role of women in the traditional Tibetan Buddhist world. Hildegard Diemberger's work on Chokyi Dronma (Chos-kyi sgron-ma, 1434-1467/8) underlines the important role she, and others like her, played in the Tibetan religious milieu. Chokyi Dronma is known to have received full monastic initiation, a rite not believed to have been available to women in Tibet. She was considered an incarnation of Vajravārāhī, and as such was the third in a succession of female incarnations of the goddess. She played an important role as a local religious teacher and her incarnations are important leaders of Samding (bSam-sdings) monastery (Diemberger 2007). Meanwhile, other Western feminist authors have attempted to retrospectively interpret a more important role for female Buddhists

through the history of the tradition with less successful results, for example Miranda Shaw, as discussed in Chapter Three (Gross 1993, 1998; Shaw 1994).

Boucher has defined two generations of female Buddhist teachers in America. The first generation is described as having received more than two decades of Buddhist training and study with Asian Buddhist teachers, whereas the second generation follows on from the first, carrying on its work, and teaching American women (Boucher 1997: 42-44). It appears that in general the women teachers of CGF would fall into the first generation, as they were taught directly by Chagdud Tulku, and have carried on his teachings after he appointed them lamas. As time passes it will be interesting to see the shift in power at the CGF centres - will it be returned to the newly recognised incarnation of Chagdud Tulku? Furthermore, who will replace the present leaders - it may be that more lama titles will be bestowed at a future date, or will the present Western lamas' closest disciples take over the leadership? It appears that in recent years Lama Drimed Norbu, the 'Spiritual Director' of CGF has indeed continued to recognise lamas, such as Lama Chöyang (Allison Rader) on 5 December 2009. Furthermore, on the Tibetan New Year, 14 February 2010, he identified Lama Senge Khadro (Lihi Eliaz) as the Lineage Holder of the *rDzogs-chen* teachings he himself received from Chagdud Tulku. Lama Drimed Norbu confirmed that she is the first female lineage holder in their *rDzogs-chen* lineage (Anonymous 2010a).

It appears that by examining the CGF in detail one finds a reflection of a greater trend within American Buddhism, that of the narrowing of the gap between gender roles, and the increasing presence of female Buddhist teachers. Lavine writes that the American Shambala movement founded by Chögyam Trungpa has recognised nine Westerners as 'Acharyas' - authorised to teach within the Shambala organisation - two of these nine teachers are female. Lavine writes that this is "a welcome addition



to the usually all-male Tibetan Lamaist hierarchy" (Lavine 1998: 107). As we can see this move is not restricted to the CGF, and can be seen on a larger scale within other Tibetan Buddhist organisations in the West as well.

### **7.5. The Short and Extensive Practices of Red Tārā at Chagdud Gonpa**

Although the Red Tārā practices used by Chagdud Tulku's students are based on the cycle of teachings by A-paṃ gter-ston they are by no means identical. Like many Rinpoches called upon to provide practice texts which would be used by their Western students Chagdud Tulku used A-paṃ gter-ston's text as a basis upon which to develop a practice text suitable for use by Westerns. The following section will briefly examine the two Red Tārā practice texts used by the CGF groups, both extensive and concise cycles.

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

**Fig. 7.2: Red Tārā prayer flag depicting the central image of Red Tārā from A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle surrounded by the *Jetsun Prayer*, recieved by Chagdud Tulku in a vision of Tārā (Tibetan Treasures, Chagdud Gonpa Foundation).**

### 7.5.1. The Extensive Practice Cycle of Red Tārā at Chagdud Gonpa

The extensive practice cycle used by Chagdud Gonpa practitioners is entitled *The Wish-fulfilling Essence: A Mandala Offering Ritual Relying on the Jetsun Red Tara* (Lingpa 2003 [1989]). The practice is largely based on A-paṃ gter-ston's revelations, but also includes prayers to the Twenty-one Tārās composed by Khenpo Ngaga (Kaḥ-thog mkhan-po ngag-dga' Padma las-'brel rtsal/ dPal-yul mkhan-rabs Ngag-dbang dpal-bzang, 1879-1941), a *rNying-ma-pa* master from the same era and area as A-paṃ gter-ston (Khadro 2003: 7). Other prayers and similar matter were added by Chagdud Tulku himself. The extensive practice is used daily at the main CGF centres, for example Odsal Ling in São Paulo and PPI in California. The text may be used in concise form for daily practice, or in its extended form for events such as *Tshogs* (tantric feasts) gatherings on the first and third quarter days of the Tibetan month which are important Red Tārā practice days, in particular the tenth of the Tibetan month. The original Tibetan text was translated into English by Richard Barron, together with Chagdud Tulku. It was first published in 1989, with the 2003 print currently in circulation, and it may be purchased with English, Portuguese, or Spanish translation.

This practice takes the form of a four-fold *maṇḍala* offering, similar to the popular *Fourfold Maṇḍala Offering to Green Tārā* (*sGrol ma maṇḍal gzhi mchog*).<sup>220</sup> It comprises Lineage Prayers (Text AI), various *Maṇḍala* Rituals (Text AXI), a *Tshogs* Offering (Text AIII), Fulfilment Ritual (Text AIV), Prayer to the Protectors of Kurukullā, Seven-line Prayer, Extensive Offerings, Offering Prayers, Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās, Prayer of Aspiration (Text AXIV), and Stabilising Presence (A-

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<sup>220</sup> Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche and Trulshik Adeu Rinpoche provide some brief information on the *Fourfold Maṇḍala Offering to Tārā* in their *Skillful Grace*. They state that the practice is pervasive across Tibetan regions (Ugyen Rinpoche and Adeu Rinpoche 2007: 127-29). Shaw also includes a very short introduction to the practice (Shaw 2006: 347).

paṃ gter-ston 1976ga, nga, ma, ya, ra). The main *mantra* used in this practice is that revealed by A-paṃ gter-ston: *Oṃ tāre tāṃ svāhā*.

Within this text the sections taken from works of those other than A-paṃ gter-ston are as follows: The Lineage Prayer is taken from the *Supplication in Seven Chapters* of Tulku Zangpo Dragpa (sPrul-sku bZang-po grags-pa); The Offerings to the Protectors of the Goddess Kurukullā are taken from the *Dharma Cycle of Secret Instructions*; The Extensive Offerings were compiled by Chagdud Tulku in 1981, and revised in October 1989; The *Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* used in this text was composed by Khenpo Ngaga in response to a request from Lama Sangs-rgyas.

In order to read or practise the Extensive Cycle practitioners must receive initiation from a qualified lineage holder in the tradition, such as Lama Tsering Everest, Chagdud Khadro, or 'Jigs-med Rin-po-che. Initiations such as these are given regularly at CGF centres and are usually combined with teachings and instructions on the practice. Practitioners usually receive the initiation of the seated Red Tārā. However the initiation of a standing Red Tārā is also given, which originated from Text AII in the Red Tārā cycle of A-paṃ gter-ston: the *sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub pa padma'i rgyan can bzhugs so* (*The Lotus Adorned One: The Accomplishment of Red Tārā*) (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ja). This practice is used at CGF centres on Red Tārā *Tshogs* evenings.

### **7.5.2. The Concise Practice Cycle of Red Tārā at Chagdud Gonpa**

A condensed version of the practice is available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese as *Red Tara: An Open Door to Bliss and Ultimate Awareness*, composed by Chagdud Tulku in 1984 (Chagdud Tulku 2007 [1984]). This concise practice follows the usual layout of a Tibetan Buddhist practice text. It begins with a Seven-line Prayer to Guru

Rinpoche (as is usual with the *rNying-ma-pa* school), followed by Refuge and *Bodhicitta* prayers.

The condensed practice composed by Chagdud Tulku is suitable for both those who have received the requisite initiation into the lineage, and also those who have not. For both groups the goddess is visualised in front, whilst reciting what is known as the "Jetsun (*rje-btsun*) Prayer" and also the *mantra* discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston discussed above. Those who have received the appropriate permission through initiation may then proceed to visualise themselves as Red Tārā, a stage which the non-initiated must omit. The "Jetsun Prayer" was received by Chagdud Tulku in a vision of the goddess (Chagdud Tulku 2007 [1984]).

After these visualisations the practice concludes with some prayers, such as the Request for the Benefits and Qualities (*'Dod don gsol ba*) composed by Khenpo Ngaga to the Twenty-one Tārās. Then the Request for Enlightened Activity to Accomplish Goals (*Phrin las 'dod don gsol ba 'debs*) taken directly from A-paṃ gter-ston's revealed text, followed by the Dedication of Merit. The 2007 booklet also contains a number additional prayers added to later editions by Chagdud Tulku at the request of his students. These include a prayer for the rebirth of Chagdud Tulku, a *Tshogs* Offering Prayer, Prayer for the Dead, and a longer prayer to Padmasambhava composed by mChog-gyur bde-chen gling-pa.

### **7.5.3. Accompanying Material Produced by Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

The Chagdud Gonpa Foundation has produced a range of materials which accompany the Concise Practice text. These include a short book by Chagdud Khadro (a.k.a. Jane Tromge) which provides a commentary to the practice (Khadro 2003), an audio recording of the practice and this commentary available in cassette tape and CD formats (Khadro 2003).

Aside from these two items, practitioners can also purchase another CD, on which Chagdud Tulku recites the practice and provides an oral teaching which explains how to practice the concise Red Tārā text (Chagdud Tulku *a*). On the CD Chagdud Tulku provides a teaching in English, mediated by his translator Lama Tsering Everest. Unfortunately the CD does not indicate the original date or location of these teachings.

This commentary is very useful for practitioners, as it clarifies some aspects of the teaching. The Rinpoche states that even though the text is short, it is a complete *Vajrayāna* path, and was composed by himself as a short practice. In this teaching Chagdud Tulku describes the link between Red Tārā and Kurukullā. This Red Tārā is also known as Rig-byed-ma and she is a peaceful form of Kurukullā.<sup>221</sup> She is the goddess of swift ultimate happiness, who bestows the direct awareness which overcomes delusion. He also describes the *maṇḍala* of goddesses which surround Red Tārā with twenty other Tārās. To the East (in front of Red Tārā) are five white goddesses with Sarasvati in the centre, who bestow intelligence. To the South are five yellow goddesses, with rNam-rgyal-ma in the centre, who bestow long life and wealth. To the West are five red goddesses, with Nyi-ma padma at the centre, who fulfil wishes. To the North are five green and black Tārās, with Kurukullā at the centre. These divinities bestow the wisdom of accomplishing activity and protection from the Eight Great Fears.<sup>222</sup> In one depiction of the Twenty-one Tārās according to this tradition, in a *thang-ga* on display at Odsal Ling temple in Brazil the *maṇḍala* of goddesses are surrounded by lineage masters above and protector deities below. Another version of this *thang-ga* is seen at Rigdzin Ling in California.

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<sup>221</sup> The name Rig-byed-ma is also an epithet of Kurukullā.

<sup>222</sup> The Eight Great Fears were discussed in Chapter One.

There is a method of the outer, inner, and secret level of yoga and meditation for each of the Twenty-one Tārās. It is interesting to note that although Red Tārā in this tradition is seen as a form of Kurukullā, yet Kurukullā herself is seen in the *maṇḍala* of Red Tārā, located to her North at the centre of four other Tārās. This is likely because Kurukullā is traditionally found within the *rNying-ma* lineage of the Twenty-one Tārās with which this practice accords. This ritual is also said to comprise a complete *rDzogs-chen* practice, and the practice of these *yogas* will lead to the inseparability of wisdom and awareness.

The commentary included on this CD also describes the time at which Tārā appeared to Chagdud Tulku and taught him a prayer in her honour which is used for the blessing to remove obstacles and create wish fulfilment, known as the "Jetsun Prayer". Recitation of the prayer leads to conducive conditions and beneficial occurrences, which the Rinpoche credits to Tārā. The prayer is as follows "*rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma khyed mkhyen no/ 'gal rkyen kun sel bsam don myur 'grub mdzod*" ("Illutrious Tara please be aware of me, remove my obstacles and quickly grant my aspirations"). Chagdud Tulku goes on to explain the meaning of this prayer syllable by syllable. In the first line of the prayer *rje* is the highest realisation of buddha nature, and *btsun* is the *bodhisattva* which closes the door to non-virtuous activity and opens the door to virtuous activity. *'Phags-ma* is the realisation, which constantly emanates to liberate sentient beings. *sGrol-ma* (Tārā) is the mother of liberation. These syllables together form the extraordinary name of Tārā.

The second line of the prayer includes the words *'gal rkyen kun sel* which beseech Tārā to help us overcome obstacles, such as the poisons of the mind, ignorance, attachment, and so forth. With *bsam don* all wishes for the path to enlightenment and its realisation are fulfilled. *Myur 'grub mdzod* asks that this request might be fulfilled quickly. As one chants this prayer light rays are seen to stream from

the forehead, throat, and heart of Tārā into the practitioner (Chagdud Tulku *a*: CD 4, Track 7).

Both on these CDs (Chagdud Tulku *a*: CD 4, Track 7) and also during tantric initiations into the Red Tārā cycle the shortness of the lineage is emphasised.<sup>223</sup> This teaching was discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston in the twentieth century and was then passed via the monk Byang-chub rdo-rje on to Chagdud Tulku. From there the teaching was further transmitted by Chagdud Tulku to his Western students. Since Chagdud Tulku passed away the transmission of the authorisation to practise the goddess is passed from the lamas of Chagdud Gonpa Foundation to initiates. The short lineage of the teachings is a key aspect of all *gter-ma* teachings, as discussed in Chapter Six.

Chagdud Gonpa Brasil have also published a short book within which the key Tibetan terms found within A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā practice are presented in transliterated-English, English, transliterated-Portuguese, and Portuguese. This book, *A Essência Que Realiza Desejos: A sadhana de Tara Vermelha de Apong Tertön em três línguas*, is presented in the order of the practice text used by Chagdud Gonpa practitioners so that they may follow along with their practice and look up any Tibetan terms which they do not understand (Chagdud Tulku and McClellan 2007).

Alongside the Red Tārā practices discovered by A-paṃ gter-ston, Chagdud Tulku himself revealed a Seven-eyed Red Tārā practice when his first wife was experiencing some physical difficulties. The ritual initiation of this lineage is conferred on occasion by Chagdud Tulku's son, Jigme Tromge Rinpoche, who was about ten years old at the time of the revelation. However, the initiation is not often

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<sup>223</sup> During the Red Tārā tantric initiation ceremony held at Tara House, Ithaca NY, on 9 December 2007 Lama Tsering Everest related this lineage. She particularly emphasised the few short 'steps' from A-paṃ gter-ston to the recipients in attendance (Everest 2007). This is a key aspect of all *gter-ma* literature.

bestowed and neither is the practice widely performed by CGF members. Jigmed Tromge, Chagdud Tulku's son related that the Seven-eyed Red Tārā practice was revealed in a vision of the goddess as a Mind *gTer-ma*.

In this case the goddess is depicted as red with seven eyes: two on her feet, two on her hands, and three on her face. She sits in the *vajra* posture on top of a lotus and moon disk, and is adorned with silks and jewels. Her right hand is in the gesture of supreme generosity and holds an *utpala* adorned with a long-life vase. Her left hand holds an *utpala* with a lotus bow and arrow. She resides in Tārā's pure-land, g.Yu-lo-bkod. Her *mantra* is *Oṃ kurukulle badzra ayukhe hrīḥ svāhā*. As the practice is performed the heart syllable *hrīḥ* emits light and this light returns with the *bla*, *tshe*, and *srog* of the person, which extends their life. Jigmed Tromge stated that this practice is performed primarily for longevity yet it also employs the magnetising function, and accordingly magnetises longevity. This desire for longevity must be performed with pure motivation, in order to benefit all mother sentient beings (Tromge 2010a, 2010b). As we can see from the description of the deity, her *mantra*, and seed-syllable this form of Red Tārā appears to be linked with Kurukullā.

The figure originally located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Fig. 7.3: *Tsa-tsa* of Chagdud Tulku's Seven-eyed Red Tārā (PPI, Chagdud Gonpa Foundation).



## 7.6. A Case Study of Red Tārā Practice: Odsal Ling Refugio, São Paulo, Brazil

Odsal Ling Refugio is a Tibetan Buddhist temple of the CGF located near the small town of Cotia, outside of São Paulo, Brazil. Although the site has been used for a number of years the newly constructed temple building was consecrated on 3 December 2008 in a ceremony led by rDzong-gsar mkhyen-brtse Rin-po-che (b. 1961) with other high *rNying-ma-pa Rin-po-ches* present.

Lama Tsering Everest is the resident lama at Odsal Ling Refugio accompanied by her husband Lama Norbu (David Everest). She is well known as the oral translator of the late Chagdud Tulku, taking his broken English and turning it into a fluent Dharma teaching. In 1979 she received the name Tsering at the first initiation into Tibetan Buddhism she attended, presided over by Dudjom Rinpoche. At the same event she also met Chagdud Tulku and went on to become his translator in 1981, the capacity in which she worked for the next eleven years (Everest; Friedman 1987: 270-71).<sup>224</sup>

Lama Tsering Everest completed a three-year retreat in 1995 and the same year was ordained as a lama by Chagdud Tulku (Everest). Her website states that:

In her ordination, [Chagdud Tulku] Rinpoche recognized her as an emanation of Tara, a realization holder of the Red Tara lineage, and fully capable of conveying the transmission of his teachings (Everest).

Along with this recognition she received permission to initiate students into A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā practice lineage. In 1995 Lama Tsering was requested to teach in Brazil and later relocated to São Paulo in order to lead the Odsal Ling centre. Since this time she has continued to teach and bestow initiations both in Brazil and the United States (Everest).

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<sup>224</sup> In an interview conducted by Lenore Friedman, Lama Tsering Everest talked about her experiences of translating the words of Chagdud Tulku (Friedman 1987).

In his biography Chagdud Tulku wrote of his meeting Lama Tsering Everest in her last lifetime. At the time the Rinpoche was visiting the area around the Shel-brag cave in Yar-lung, renowned as a site where Padmasambahava has practised. In a Tārā shrine at Khra-'brug<sup>225</sup> monastery Chagdud Tulku was accosted by an elderly nun, who pointed west and proclaimed "I am going there and I'll meet you", again stating "I'll meet you there". Chagdud Tulku would remember this meeting twenty-five years later when he met his student and future interpreter, Lama Tsering Everest (Chagdud Tulku 2001: 114-15).

In 1993 Chagdud Tulku first established a centre in São Paulo known as Odsal Ling City Center, led by Lama Tsering and Lama Norbu. Then, in 2001 Odsal Ling Refugio was established in Cotia, fifteen miles outside of São Paulo. The centre has accommodation for twenty to thirty people, staff accommodation, a *stūpa* shrine house containing relics from Chagdud Tulku, and a large temple building. It is stated that:

Odsal Ling's objective is to create supportive conditions for the teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism, for training in philosophy, and for the meditation practices that are at the heart of the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism (Everest).

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 the new temple at Odsal Ling was consecrated by rDzong-gsar mkhyen-brtse Rin-po-che and a group of other *rNying-ma-pa* lamas.

The practitioners at Odsal Ling maintain a routine of daily practices that were set in place by Chagdud Tulku and is similar in structure to the practices held at other permanent CGF centres. The horarium is as follows:

#### Odsal Ling early morning session - weekdays

*gCod*

Extensive Red Tārā

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<sup>225</sup> Khra-'brug is famous for being the first of the twelve temples built by Srong-btsan sgam-po in the seventh century.

*Ri-bo'i bsang-mchod*<sup>226</sup>

Concluding Prayers

Odsal Ling early morning session- weekends

Concise Red Tārā

Odsal Ling early evening session

Vajrakīlāya (rDo-rje phur-ba) including Protector practices

Lion-faced *Dākinī*

*gCod*

*gSur* Offerings<sup>227</sup>

Concluding Prayers

Odsal Ling late evening session

In this session practitioners undertake personal meditations and practices.

City Centre, São Paulo- weekdays

Early morning Extensive Red Tārā Practice

Alongside the daily practices maintained by residents at Odsal Ling temple many special teachings and retreats are offered. Commenting on the use of retreats at American *Dharma* centres Lavine states that "[c]ontinuity in American Vajrayana is created in part by the nonmonastic intensive retreat, particularly in the Nyingmapa and Kagyu lineages" (Lavine 1998: 109). Although Lavine is writing in particular

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<sup>226</sup> *Ri-bo'i bsang-mchod* is 'The Mountain of Burnt Offerings'.

<sup>227</sup> *gSur* Offerings are burnt offerings made to those in the *bar-do* realm and to the *yi-dwags* (*preta*, hungry ghosts) made in order to nourish them in a practice centred on Avalokiteśvara.

about the three-year retreat that is central to Tibetan Buddhist practice, it appears true that most Western Dharma organisations have incorporated shorter retreats into the practices available to Western Buddhists at their centres. Shambhala uses retreat to introduce Westerners to Buddhism (Lavine 1998: 109), and the FMPT, a *dGe-lugs-pa* organisation, are also well-known for their retreat programmes, which range from weekend intensives, thorough ten-day introductory courses, to three-month tantric retreats.

The main form of retreat available to practitioners at Chagdud Gonpa is that of the Red Tārā Dream Yoga, conducted at CGF centres in America or Brazil. These retreats are usually led by Lama Tsering Everest, who first taught Dream Yoga over twenty years ago. They begin with an initiation into Red Tārā practice, a necessary prerequisite for anyone wishing to engage in Red Tārā Dream Yoga practice. Due to the highly secretive nature of Dream Yoga practice it is not appropriate to comment on the practices employed during these occasions.<sup>228</sup> However, the retreats are very popular: a four-day Dream Yoga retreat held at Odsal Ling from Saturday 18 April to Tuesday 21 April 2009 was attended by over one hundred practitioners. Some of these participants were new to the tradition, whereas other were long-term practitioners at Chagdud Gonpa. The large majority were local Brazilians, with some students travelling from the United States just to attend this event. Such a large number of participants is evidence not only of the huge popularity of the Red Tārā practice in Brazil and the United States, but also of the vitality of the tradition in the Western context. During the retreat Lama Tsering Everest commented that it was her wish that Odsal Ling Refugio become a centre renowned for its Dream Yoga practice

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<sup>228</sup> Those interested in Tibetan traditions of Dream Yoga are referred to Norbu (Gyatrul Rinpoche 2002; Norbu 2002; Wangyal Rinpoche 1998).

and retreats (Everest 2009b). In fact Odsal Ling will hold a longer ten-day Dream Yoga retreat from 2-11 October 2010.

The standing form of Red Tārā, found in Text AII of A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle is also performed at Chagdud Gonpa centres on *Ḍākinī* Day *Tshogs*,<sup>229</sup> held once monthly on the twenty-fifth day of the Tibetan calendar. In this way the community gather to share in the feast and thus the practice of Red Tārā continues to flourish and grow. However, Lama Tsering confirmed that Chagdud Tulku only spoke of this standing form of Red Tārā during initiations (Everest 2009c). When asked about the reason why Chagdud Tulku taught Red Tārā to his Western students, as opposed to the practice of another deity, Lama Tsering Everest commented that the Rinpoche thought that it was the best practice for Westerners. She believes that the Rinpoche picked this practice as the main one for his Western students, in the belief that they could gain a lot of merit from the *maṇḍala* offerings performed, as Westerners were perceived to be lacking in merit (Everest 2009c). Chagdud Tulku's son Jigmed Tromge, however, did not feel that Chagdud Tulku taught the practice especially for Westerners, and that in fact after practising this Red Tārā cycle in secret for many year when he arrived in the States it was the opportune time to begin disseminating the practice (Tromge 2010a).

In Chagdud Gonpa centres in the United States, Brazil, and other South American and European countries, the Red Tārā tradition first expounded by A-paṃ gter-ston and later disseminated by Chagdud Tulku is flourishing. Red Tārā initiations are held regularly by lamas authorised by Chagdud Tulku to perform these tantric ceremonies. Alongside this, through the teachings on the practice, daily session, weekly meetings, Dream Yoga retreats and *Tshogs* ceremonies the lineage has been

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<sup>229</sup> *Tshogs* (*gaṇacakra*) are gatherings at which a feast offering is performed. *Ḍākinī* Days are held on the twenty-fifth day of the lunar month at which time a *Tshogs* is held.

maintained in the Western world. Even though Chagdud Tulku himself passed away in 2002, the lineage of Red Tārā has continued to expand and grow with more and more practitioners taking initiation into the lineage. Large new temples have been built at both Khadro Ling and Odsal Ling in Brazil, alongside the North American centres, in order to accommodate the huge number of visiting and resident practitioners.

### **7.7. Concluding Remarks on the Nature of Red Tārā Practice by the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation**

This examination of the dissemination of the Red Tārā tradition of A-paṃ gter-ston has established that the key proponent responsible for the later spread of the teachings was not A-paṃ gter-ston himself, but Chagdud Tulku. Due to the changing fate of the Tibetan people Chagdud Tulku found himself in exile in India, where he received empowerment into the Red Tārā lineage at mTsho Padma. After this he moved to America and began to disseminate these teachings among his new Western students. Red Tārā in the CGF is an example of the export of Tibetan Buddhism and in particular the *gter-ma* tradition to the West. A feature of all *gter-ma* is the short lineage back to Padmasambhava, in this case just three steps. What makes this teaching lineage so interesting is the fact that it has been mostly taught by and to Westerner students in North and South America, and practised by them rather than by the Tibetan community.

This examination of the CGF has highlighted the difficulties in categorising the new offshoots of traditional religions as East meets West in the modern world. The CGF has been defined here as an example of 'New Buddhism', but Tibetan Buddhism does not fall easily within the categories of 'Asian-American Buddhism' or

'Euro-American Buddhism'. Instead, Tibetan Buddhism in America usually takes the form of a Tibetan lama leading a group of Western converts. Following the work of Jan Nattier (Nattier 1995) the CGF could be placed within either the category of 'Evangelical Buddhism' or equally 'Elite Buddhism'. Furthermore, CGF is made up of Western converts to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, who are working to maintain the Tibetan tradition as closely as possible, as it was transmitted to them through the endeavors of Chagdud Tulku. It is an example of a Western Buddhist organisation with deep roots in the Tibetan tradition. The leadership of the CGF passed from Chagdud Tulku himself, to his appointed successor, which allowed us to examine the emerging Western and female leadership within American Buddhism. It will be interesting to see the role of the newly recognised Chagdud Tulku Yangsi when he comes of age. How will his input affect the prosperous Western community of practitioners?

The CGF has served as an interesting focus for the study of American and Brazilian Buddhist movements, while also providing an example of a *gter-ma* tradition and its integration into the Western religious milieu. As we have seen, due to the ongoing situation in Tibet, the Red Tārā practice of A-paṃ gter-ston was never practiced widely by Tibetans themselves. However, it has firmly taken root in the Americas, where it has not only been maintained, but is in fact flourishing. This is due to the career of Chagdud Tulku, and the continued efforts of his students. Chapter Eight examines a controversial group, the Flaming Jewel Sangha, and their Red Tārā practice. It will highlight further issues surrounding the *gter-ma* tradition as it emerges in America, as well as wider issues of authenticity in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.





**Chapter Eight**  
**Red Tārā in the Flaming Jewel Sangha: *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms***

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Fig. 8.1: **Red Tārā as found in *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms***  
(Traktung Rinpoche c)

Chapter Eight sets out to examine a modern Red Tārā practice lineage located in America, *A Garland of Bimba*<sup>230</sup> *Blossoms*. The practice, lineage, and its founder and head Stuart Kirkpatrick (a.k.a. Traktung Tulku) are surrounded by a great deal of controversy. Although the authenticity of each of these aspects is questionable, the adoption of Red Tārā practice by this group alludes to the wider importance of Red Tārā practice in America. As such, this controversial practice has been included herein. Although many may question the academic integrity of this choice, I feel that to exclude discussion of practices deemed controversial, or inauthentic, would not do justice to the scope of modern day Western Buddhism and its influence in American culture and society, or to the influence of Red Tārā practices worldwide.

It is important to note that the majority of the research conducted for this chapter has been undertaken using web-based resources. This was necessary due to the fact that most information concerning the protagonist - Stuart Kirkpatrick - his life, teachings, and the groups and practices which he founded, are presented in this format, as is the case with many modern-day Buddhist teachings. All relevant website addresses are presented in the bibliography.

Prior to a discussion of the lineage, textual tradition, and iconography of the goddess it is necessary to include preliminary information concerning Kirkpatrick - his personal history and religious path - and also to introduce the concept of legitimacy of both *sPrul-skus* and *gTer-ma* in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Furthermore, moving into New Religious Studies, the chapter provides information concerning Kirkpatrick's organisation, the Flaming Jewel Sangha (FJS), which is here categorised as a New Religious Movement.

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<sup>230</sup> In Sanskrit *bimbā* (Latin name *momordica monadelpha*).

## **8.1. Stuart Kirkpatrick (Traktung Khepa/ Traktung Rinpoche/ Traktung Tulku)**

In order to fully understand the phenomena of this Red Tārā practice we must first answer a few questions. Who is the author of this Red Tārā text, and from which lineage does he claim his authenticity? These questions will be examined in this preliminary section in order to contextualise the later analysis of the practice text itself.

### **8.1.1. Information Sources Concerning Stuart Kirkpatrick**

We will start with a quote from Lorne Dawson, a leading researcher into religion on the internet: "The internet presents every religion, no matter how small with a quick and economical means of establishing a global presence" (Clarke 2006a: 134). In the past a new religious group would have relied on the printed word to disseminate information. However, in present times the internet has become the predominant tool (Cowan 2004: 156; 2007: 294-98). This appears to be the case with Stuart Kirkpatrick, who has his own website on the world wide web (Khepa *b*)<sup>231</sup> and it is from this source that the majority of the information available about him has been drawn. However, it is immediately obvious that as the information provided is composed and presented by Kirkpatrick himself that there is a bias in what is presented on these sites. Despite this some other websites include brief references to his Buddhist career and where possible these have also been consulted.

The RigpaWiki entry for Traktung Rinpoche (RanjungYesheWiki 2007) lists various websites as 'links'. However, when one attempts to connect to these sites they

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<sup>231</sup> Due to the fact that Kirkpatrick regularly makes changes to his websites, often shutting down a previous site, or relocating sites, the website information provided here is that used at the time of my research. There is no guarantee that these sites will still be in existence at a later date.

have invariably either been linked to his main Tsogyelgar site (Traktung Rinpoche *d*) or simply no longer exist. Those which now link to the Tsogyelgar site are as follows:

<http://www.flamingjewel.org/>  
<http://www.tsogyelgar.org/>  
<http://www.tantricbuddhism.org/>  
<http://a2aquaponics.org/>

Those which are no longer in operation are as follows:

<http://www.dakinitantra.org/>  
<http://www.rigdzin.org/>  
<http://www.dakinitsoygel.org/>  
<http://www.dzogchen-tantra.org/>  
<http://www.westernbuddhism.org/>  
<http://www.padmasambhava.info/>

There is one other website listed - <http://www.inji.net/>. This site is still in operation and is the website of a band called Inji.<sup>232</sup> One must assume that the band are connected in some way with Kirkpatrick or Tsogyelgar. Cowan describes the linking of a number of websites as a tool through which movements and counter-movements appear to present more information than they actually do. In turn this leads to a consistent message. Cowan goes on to state that "such replication often confers the semblance of authority on those believed to be the originators of the material" (Cowan 2004: 262, 267). It appears that the number of websites managed by Kirkpatrick and his followers allows them a greater internet presence than they actually possess, and this further lends them a sense of authenticity.

In recent years sociologists have developed Web Sphere Analysis as a method of investigating the use of websites for social and political action and as a medium through which to understand and document web phenomena via observable patterns. Kirsten Foot is a key proponent of this methodology. The concept of a 'web sphere' as defined by Foot is a set of websites linked by a certain theme or object (Foot 2006; Schneider and Foot 2005). However, in our case although a Web Sphere Analysis would supply us with a great deal of metadata concerning the changing landscape of

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<sup>232</sup> The term 'Inji' relates to the Tibetan term *dbyin-ji*: the foreigners.

Kirkpatrick's internet use, it would also provide us with an overabundance of information unnecessary for this thesis. It is important only to realise that Kirkpatrick has used a number of personas and websites over the years through which to disseminate information about his organisation.

Another aspect of internet use by New Religious Movements and their opponents is an attempt to control the information which is disseminated on the internet. Cowan defines this as propaganda in as much as it is a manipulation of information (Cowan 2004: 258-60). As for the FJS, the now defunct Buddhist internet forum *E-sangha* did not permit discussion of what it termed 'Aro Ter/ Flaming Jewel Sangha' (E-Sangha). Against this background we now move on to examine the figure of Kirkpatrick himself.

### **8.1.2. Kirkpatrick Meets Tibetan Buddhism**

With regard to the various names used by Stuart Kirkpatrick it appears that in recent times he has adopted the name Traktung Khepa, replacing his original Tibetan names of Traktung Tulku and Traktung Rinpoche. It is not clear why this is the case, it may be a reflection of the illegitimacy of his claim to *sprul-sku* (tulku) status in the eyes of the majority of Tibetan Buddhists, something which will be discussed in more detail below. He also goes by the name Orgyan Dorje Chang [*sic*]. Kirkpatrick's website currently entitled *Traktung Khepa- wisdom bliss freely given* offers some information on his background from his point of view. It states:

This website introduces you to the world of an enlightened being, a tantric siddha, one whose mind and ego have dissolved in wisdom bliss. He has nothing to sell, no claim of status, power, authority. He lives as Love and offers the radical teachings of the divine to any and all who seek liberation and enlightenment (Khepa *b*).

Stuart Alan Kirkpatrick was born to Evron Kirkpatrick and former United States Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick in 1959. Concerning his birth, his website states:

In 1944 an 18 year old girl in Oklahoma woke in the middle of the night to see an unbearably beautiful woman floating at the foot of her bed. This “divine apparition” spoke saying “You will bring my truth to the world.” That girl, Jean Kirkpatrick went on to become the Ambassador to the United Nations, and Cabinet Member, under Ronald Reagan. Her son, predicted in 1944 by the divine apparition of the Goddess Tara and born in 1959, became the further incarnation of the Mahasiddha Do Khyentse (Khepa *b*).

It is common for the birth stories of important Tibetan Buddhist masters to describe miraculous events surrounding their conception and birth. It seems that this story presents evidence of Kirkpatrick's own miraculous conception. As such Kirkpatrick's followers consider him to be the incarnation of mDo mkhyen-brtse ye-shes rdo-rje, and his website confirms that claim (Khepa *b*).

mDo mkhyen-brtse ye-shes rdo-rje (a.k.a. 'Ja'-lus rdo-rje/ Khrag-thung<sup>233</sup> las-kyi dpa'-bo, 1800-66) was a *gTer-ston* from mGol-log. He was considered to be the mind-emanation of 'Jigs-med gling-pa (1729-98), and one of his main teachers was 'Jigs-med phrin-las 'od-zer (1745-1821), the First rDo-grub-chen. He himself taught dPal-sprul (Patrul) Rin-po-che (1808-87), the author of the famed *Words of My Perfect Teacher*. He began life as Ye-shes rdo-rje and later became known as mDo mkhyen-brtse after residing in Dar-rtse-mdo, where he was known as "mKhyen-brtse of mDo". mKhyen-brtse was also one of the names of 'Jigs-med gling-pa, his previous incarnation. There are many stories concerning his miraculous powers (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 395-400; Rigpa Shedra 2009; Thondup 2002: 179-97).

MGRG lists the main incarnations of mDo mkhyen-brtse ye-shes rdo-rje, as Do-ring sPrul-sku (Thugs-rtse do-ring mchog-sprul Rin-po-che, 20<sup>th</sup> century) born in Minyak, Eastern Tibet, and A-lags gZan-dkar Rin-po-che (Padma dngos-grub rol-pa'i

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<sup>233</sup> Here we see the name Traktung (*Khrag-thung*, Heruka) which has been assumed by Kirkpatrick in his role as a Tibetan Buddhist teacher.

rdo-rje, 1881-1943) born in A-mdo, whose present incarnation is the Third A-lags gzan-dkar Thub-bstan nyi-ma (b. 1943) (Nyoshul Khenpo 2005: 399; TBRC 2006). A-lags gZan-dkar resided at the sKyid-lung monastery which was established by mDo mkhyen-brtse. Tulku Thondup agrees, further including mKhyen-brtse sprul-sku 'Dzam-gling dbang-rgyal, the son of bDud-'joms gling-pa (1868-1907) in this list of names (Thondup 2002: 197). RigpaWiki states that the 16<sup>th</sup> Karma-pa also considered bSod-rgyal (Sogyal) Rin-po-che as an emanation of mDo mkhyen-brtse (Rigpa Shedra 2009). As we can see from these lists nowhere do they include Traktung Khepa, despite his claims to the role. ArborWiki, a site dedicated to the city of Ann Arbor in Michigan states that the Office of the Dalai Lama has “refused to recognize Traktung Rinpoche as the reincarnation of Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje” (ArborWiki 2008), a fact that will be discussed in more detail below.

As proof of his status as an incarnation Kirkpatrick's website goes on to state that he has many memories of his past life, alongside other spiritual phenomena, of which he provides no further details. From the age of eighteen Kirkpatrick felt that he was on a quest "to rediscover his wisdom mind and give birth to the compassionate longing in his heart" (Khepa *b*). After many years pursuing his spiritual search Kirkpatrick gained a degree in Comparative Religion. His first access to Tibetan Buddhism was when he heard bDud-'joms Rin-po-che speak on a radio programme. However, he considers Thinley Norbu (Phrin-las nor-bu, b. 1931) to be his Root Lama (RangjungYesheWiki 2007*b*). Thinley Norbu is the eldest son of bDud-'joms 'jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje (bDud-'joms Rin-po-che, 1904-88), the incarnation of bDud-'joms gling-pa,<sup>234</sup> an important master of the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition. Thinley Norbu

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<sup>234</sup> bDud-'joms gling-pa was also known by the name Khrag-thung bdud-'joms rdo-rje. Here again we see the name Khrag-thung.

himself is regarded as an incarnation of bDud-'joms gling-pa's son sPrul-sku dri-med 'od-zer, and is the father of rDzongs-gsar mkhyen-rtse (b.1961).<sup>235</sup>

Kirkpatrick claims to have studied with, or sent students to, the following Tibetan teachers: "Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, Tharchin Rinpoche, Gyatrul Rinpoche, Lama Orgyan Tanzin, Kunzang Dorje Rinpoche, Lingtrul Rinpoche, Chagdud Tulku, Kusum Lingpa, Lama Yonton, Serta Lama and more" (Khepa *b*). Although his links to these teachers have not been verified, including the claimed link to Chagdud Tulku, it is interesting to find Chagdud Tulku's name included on this list. As we have seen in Chapter Eight that Chagdud Tulku is renowned for spreading the Red Tārā teachings of A-paṃ gter-ston in the West.

### 8.1.3. Kirkpatrick's Path to the *Dharma*

In 1989, at the age of 29 whilst working as a gardener, Kirkpatrick began to have visions of Guru Rin-po-che and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, after which he is said to have gained great realisations and waited for students to begin to surround him. He states:

Over the years an organic community of friends has built up around Traktung Khepa to share in his teachings and to practice the way. Centered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, they have transformed a small parcel of land outside the town into a living Buddhafield of sacred gardens and shrines ... a living example of wisdom and compassion. His teachings, direct, alive and filled with wisdom bliss offer both the non dual realization of the highest enlightenment as well as exact and careful explanation of every stage of Vajrayana -Tantric Buddhist [*sic*], path (Khepa *b*).

Kirkpatrick still resides outside of Ann Arbor, where his community, the Flaming Jewel Sangha are based at the Tsogyelgar centre founded by himself.<sup>236</sup>

It is interesting to see a reference to Kirkpatrick on the website of his European group concerning his visit to Germany and France in early 2009, on this site he claims that he does not wish to acquire any students, stating:

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<sup>235</sup> Coincidentally both bDud-'joms Rin-po-che and rDzongs-gsar mkhyen-brtse are important masters to the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation who practise the recognised lineage of Red Tārā descending from A-paṃ gter-ston, see Chapter Seven.

<sup>236</sup> See Section 8.1.4.



Traktung Rinpoche has asked to clarify:  
Rinpoche is NOT looking for students, he does not accept students. Traktung Rinpoche does not want your money, your discipleship, your concerns, your attention. Traktung Rinpoche just wants you to consider Dharma and the Great Question of birth and death. To this end he shares but he is not wanting you to become his student – be a student of Dharma (Traktung Rinpoche *d*).

Despite these claims, as we can see there seems to be some contradiction between the two previous quotes. In the latter quote Kirkpatrick claims not to desire students whereas in the first he states that he has built a community and is in fact living as its leader and giving teachings. Indeed, his actions appear indicative of a man living as Buddhist teacher surrounded by students.

In more recent times Kirkpatrick is said to have established a number of charitable organisations including Vision Builders, a non-profit education charity for children in Himalayan communities founded in 2001. Vision Builders has donated money to educational institutions in the regions of Padma-bkod and mGo-log (Chatral 2008; Ga'wang 2006; RanjungYesheWiki 2007, Vision Builders 2007). It may be that these charitable activities are innocent, yet, by associating himself with recognised Buddhists through these ventures it may be that Kirkpatrick himself gains a level of legitimacy he has previously not enjoyed.

Having discussed the life of Stuart Kirkpatrick according to his own presentation, we are now able to move on to look at the numerous controversial and disputed aspects of his story. When one begins to examine his life further some interesting information comes to light - not only did Stuart Kirkpatrick previously present himself as a Hindu Swami,<sup>237</sup> but he has also been discredited by the Office of Dalai Lama. We will now move on to discuss these issues.

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<sup>237</sup> Swami is a title used by yogic masters in the Hindu tradition. Carter states that within the Rajneesh Movement when men join the group they "take the title 'Swami' followed by a generic name similar to a family name, followed by a family name chosen by the Bhagwan which is said to reflect their character." In Kirkpatrick's case he was assigned the name Swami Prem Pranama (Carter 1987: 151).

#### 8.1.4. Kirkpatrick as Prem Pranama and his Move into Tibetan Buddhism

You and I don't live in even remotely similar worlds. I know the universe to be my body, time itself to be my subtle form, and the sky of deathless awareness to be my mind. My interest now is to spark this awakening in others, not to have them fixate on me. (Stuart Kirkpatrick cited in Abrams 1994).

During the 1990s Stuart Kirkpatrick was not yet a Tibetan Buddhist and was instead deeply involved with Hindu tantrism. Indeed, at the time Kirkpatrick was using the name Tantric Master Swami Prem Pranama and led the Crazy Cloud Hermitage at the same site where the Tsogyelgar centre in Ann Arbor is now found (ArborWiki 2008). However, we find no information on Kirkpatrick's websites as to his previous Hindu inclinations, nor to the previous incarnation of Tsogyelgar as a centre promoting not Buddhist but Hindu tantrism (Khepa *b*; Traktung Rinpoche *d*).

In his role as Prem Pranama we can once again see an instance of Kirkpatrick using a title such as 'Tantric Master', yet again he provides no information concerning from whom and how he received this title. This circumstance is very similar to the later years in Kirkpatrick's life, when his claim to be the reincarnation of a famous Tibetan Lama has been widely discredited.

In a 1994 interview conducted by one of his students Kirkpatrick stated that he taught 'Advaitic [non-dual] Tantrayana' (Abrams 1994). Kirkpatrick acknowledged in this interview that he began his spiritual journey within the Gurdjieff system,<sup>238</sup> which he claims is closely related to the Sufi and Tantric systems. After becoming disillusioned with Gurdjieff due to a perceived lack of a true master, he moved on to

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<sup>238</sup> George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (c. 1866-1949) was the founder of the Gurdjieff movement and the author of *The Work* in which he outlines the need for mankind to awaken themselves via a process of 'self-remembering'. He was heavily criticised in his day (Partridge 2004: 327-29). Interestingly Carter describes the Rajneesh movement of Osho as very similar to the Gurdjieff school and Partridge states that Gurdjieff influenced Osho through the use of pointless tasks and the appointment of aggressive supervisors. Carter states that "The Bhagwan and many of his followers are aware of the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky tradition and cite with admiration Gurdjieff's unpredictability and outrageousness." However, in Carter's mind there is less involvement of the master Osho as he mostly communicated via intermediaries. This seems contrary to Kirkpatrick's statement that he moved on to practice under Osho as he found a lack of master in the Gurdjieff system (Carter 1987: 152; Clarke 2006*b*: 221-23; Partridge 2004: 329).

study under the controversial Indian teacher Osho.<sup>239</sup> He states "My meeting with Osho, who was called Bhagwan at that time, awakened my heart into intense ecstasy and devotion. It also began a long period of powerful visionary experiences that centred on the Virgin Mary and the Goddess Kali." In this interview he also refers to Osho as 'Guru' (Abrams 1994).

As we can see not only Kirkpatrick, but also his master at the time, Osho, have a history of changing their name after controversy has arisen. Carter, who researched the Rajneesh Movement of Osho writes of "the changing and inconsistent nature of the Rajneesh Movement which makes no claim to consistency of ideology. Further, beliefs, practices, and goals are extremely changeable, though a few enduring patterns can be abstracted" (Carter 1987: 149). With regard to Kirkpatrick's changing beliefs, we can also note that in these earlier times he claimed to have enjoyed visionary experiences involving both the Virgin Mary and Kālī. As we will now see, as he moved towards Buddhism Kirkpatrick states that he then received visions of Guru Rin-po-che and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal.

Kirkpatrick states that after a series of visions he moved on to meditative practice. At one point during this meditative phase of his life he claims that he began to receive visions of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, including one key vision of her whilst he was studying in the University of Michigan library in which a three-hundred foot Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal appeared to him. He writes:

I found myself in a cemetery. A woman approached. She was naked, except for some bone ornaments. She was singing and dancing a tune of haunting melody, which I later discovered was the mantra of her consort Padmasambhava: Om Ah Hung Vajra Guru Padma Siddhi Hung! (Abrams 1994).

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<sup>239</sup> Osho (1931-1990), the founder of the Rajneesh Movement (now known as Osho Commune International), was born Rajneesh Chandra Mohan to a Jain family, and in 1972 became known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Osho claimed to have achieved enlightenment in 1953. An Indian religious teacher who taught amidst great controversy in both India and the United States, in 1985 he adopted the name Osho after moving back to India following his arrest in the States. His main centre, located in Pune, India was founded in 1974. Despite the controversy surrounding him Osho's written works continue to be very popular worldwide (Clarke 2006b: 432-33; Partridge 2004: 191-92).

After which,

She danced around me and then swiftly stood directly in front of me placing her genitals over my face. Her vagina was over my mouth, there was blood flowing from it, and I drank this blood deeply in an unending flow. I could feel it coursing through my body like liquid heat. Suddenly the vision disappeared (Abram 1994).

Kirkpatrick states that he began teaching several months after this 'Awakening' when a friend requested help with spiritual practice (Abrams 1994). He says that he taught 'non-dual inquiry' which he identifies with the *rDzogs-chen* teachings of the Tibetan *rNying-ma-pa* school. He goes on to claim that his connection with *Tantra* is based on the *gTer-ma* tradition of Padmasambhava and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal (Abrams 1994). He states:

Padmasambhava created what is called a Mind Mandate Seal and hid teachings on Tantra's skilful means like a timed-release capsule. When my own practice matured to the point where it was appropriate this force of wisdom opened. The force, power and bliss of it was released also, even though I had completely forgotten this connection (Abrams 1994).

It appears from this statement that Kirkpatrick is identifying himself as a *gTer-ston*. He seems to think of himself as extraordinary, stating "A wild card like me who has awakened into and embodied the heart of Tantric practice is unique in terms of the trans-cultural migration of Tantra to the West" (Abrams 1994). Kirkpatrick appears to be attempting to legitimise himself by identifying with great masters of the past such as Padmasambhava, whilst at the same time placing himself outside of the tradition:

Those who awaken to their true nature are the same one - though in their own unique appearance. As Tantra develops in this culture, many aspects of its form are going to have to change. At the same time this must be done in such a way as to not damage the teachings. This is a job of great delicacy. These changes need to be done by someone who stands outside the traditional lineages yet respects the heart drop of the teachings with extreme reverence (Abrams 1994).

It appears that Kirkpatrick considers himself to be this person.

When discussing his approach to teaching Kirkpatrick relates that his students begin with 'pre-preliminary practices', sometimes alongside therapy or the *Twelve*

*Step Program*.<sup>240</sup> After which the student follows the 'Tantric preliminaries' of prostrations, Vajrasattva practice, *maṇḍala* offering, and *Guru Yoga*. Then deity yoga, 'Advaita and Mahasanti'<sup>241</sup> are practised. He claims that he also sends students to study under other Buddhist masters, in particular Lama Tharchin, Chagdud Tulku, and Ngakpa Chogyam<sup>242</sup> (Abrams 1994). Kirkpatrick claims that he sends students to these other teachers so that they may check the authority of his own teachings:

I claim the authority to teach Tantra based on my own radical awakening into non-dual awareness and my own Mind Mandate Transmission from Padmasambhava. Such claims could easily be made by any idiot - and often are. I want my students and disciples to have a strong ground on which they can evaluate me and decide where our connection will go. I would like my students who do Tantric practice to be able to work with other masters so that they can come to a greater degree of understanding of my work when evaluated in the context of the traditional tantric practice (Abrams 1994).

### 8.1.5. Stuart Kirkpatrick and the Dalai Lama

Someone who is an incarnation of a great yogi from the past is called a *tülku*. The Dalai Lama is the fourteenth *tülku* of the previous Dalai lamas. I'm a *tülku* of Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé. *Tülku* means 'form as the state of consciousness of liberation', so it is a state of consciousness. Someone who is a *tülku* ought to be a particular state of consciousness. What incarnates is the wisdom consciousness of the lama, from lifetime to lifetime. The lama that I'm the incarnation of died in 1860. There are two other incarnations of that lama currently alive today, as well. That lama's realization was so great that his mindstream now abides in the Sambogha Khaya, the pure visionary realm of awareness, and from that he can emanate as many incarnations as he wants. So the realization of Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé is incarnated, in theory, as me." Stuart Kirkpatrick (The Spiritual Traveler 2001).

This quote from Kirkpatrick discusses his appropriation of *sprul-sku* status. This controversial claim has been widely discredited. We will now discuss the circumstances surrounding Kirkpatrick's belief that he is in fact the incarnation of mDo mkhyen-brtse and also examine the response by the Dalai Lama and others.

<sup>240</sup> The Twelve Step programme is normally used by those recovering from various addictions and is popular in the United States. It was developed by Alcoholics Anonymous (Alcoholics Anonymous 2009).

<sup>241</sup> *Advaita* is 'non-duality'. It seems that with the term 'mahasanti' Kirkpatrick may be referring to the term *sāntiḥ* (peace). In this case he seems to be talking about a concept of 'great peace'. It may be that Kirkpatrick here alludes to *mahāsandhi*, a Sanskrit reconstruction of the Tibetan term *rDzogs-chen*.

<sup>242</sup> Ngakpa Chogyam/ Ngak'chang Rinpoche [*sic*] is the head of the Aro gTér, a controversial group who align themselves with the *rNying-ma-pa* tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

We will begin with a 2002 interview posted on the website ArborWiki in which Kirkpatrick responds to a question concerning the Dalai Lama's lack of recognition of his *sprul-sku* status:

I: And what about this question of the Dalai Lama's recognition?

TR: There is simply no 'what' about it. What does the Dalai Lama have to do with it? Namkha Rinpoche, who is the holder of the family lineage of Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, recognized me. Namkha Rinpoche, who was recognized by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche as a tulku of Trak Ngak Lingpa, has also become my student and accepted me as his root Lama. End of story. Either he is right or wrong - I have to decide for myself and decide what it means to me. Frankly, I do not see how it concerns anyone else -- unless they have some connection with Do Khyentse. Namkha Rinpoche has great affection and respect for the Dalai Lama as both Lama and King. I however have nothing in particular for or against the Dalai Lama. He is not my Lama or my King, nor am I a rock star groupie (ArborWiki 2008).

This quote makes an interesting claim – it states that Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che recognised Kirkpatrick as an incarnation of mDo mkhyen-brtse, but goes further to claim that Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che then became Kirkpatrick's student. In order to truly understand the process of recognition claimed by Kirkpatrick we must first examine who Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che is.

Rigs-'dzin nam-mkha' rgya-mtsho Rin-po-che (b. 1967) is a master of the *rNying-ma-pa* school of Tibetan Buddhism. Born in Dza-chu-kha, Khams, he studied at rDzogs-chen monastery. His main practice is the *bDud-'joms gter-gsar* teachings. Since his move into exile in 1998 Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che has received teachings from not only the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, but also the main *rNying-ma-pa* masters including Padma nor-bu (Penor Rinpoche), 'Khrul-zhig (Trulshik) Rin-po-che, Bya-bral (Chatral) Rin-po-che, and also Phrin-las nor-bu (Thinley Norbu) Rin-po-che who is his Root Lama.<sup>243</sup> He is the leader of the international Rigdzin Community and currently resides in Switzerland.

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<sup>243</sup> As we have seen above, in Section 8.1.2. Kirkpatrick also considers 'Phrin-las nor-bu as his Root Lama.

With regard to the claims made by Kirkpatrick concerning Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che, if one examines Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che's own web-site one finds the following quote repudiating Kirkpatrick's claim:

Rumours have been around that a Western Lama is proclaiming that Namkha Rinpoche is one of his disciples. There is no reason for Namkha Rinpoche to have root teachers other than Dungse Trinley Norbu Rinpoche, and other Root Lamas he had in Tibet, so these rumours are hereby disconfirmed (Namkha Rinpoche).

No mention is made of the recognition of Kirkpatrick as an incarnation or root teacher by Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che. However, one may assume based on the above statement that he has made no public recognition of Kirkpatrick as the incarnation of mDo mkhyen-brtse.

The above quote is also interesting as Kirkpatrick appears to ignore consensus opinion about the Dalai Lama's authority to recognise *sprul-sku* status. It is common in Tibetan Buddhism for the close disciples of a deceased Lama to find his reincarnation, after which the candidate may be presented to the Dalai Lama for confirmation of the recognition. With regard to the question of recognition by the Dalai Lama Kirkpatrick states that "Personally, I do not approve of the idea that Nyingma matters should be settled by Gelugpa leaders. It is demeaning to the Nyingma lineage and utterly unnecessary" (Khepa *b*). This is seen as a valid point by some Tibetan practitioners as traditionally important matters have been settled within the relevant sect, however, since the move into exile of the Tibetan community in 1959 the Dalai Lama has often recognised Lamas from other schools.<sup>244</sup>

With regard to the controversy surrounding the Dalai Lama's refusal to recognise Kirkpatrick as an incarnation on the website of another controversial group, the Aro gTer, the author comments on the Dalai Lama's statement that although he has not condemned the Aro gTer leader Ngakpa Cyögyam/ Ngak'chang Rinpoche he

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<sup>244</sup> One key example of the Dalai Lama's role in confirming incarnations from other schools is that of the present Karmapa O-rgyan 'phrin-las rdo-rje. For more information concerning his life, and the controversy surrounding the other contender for the Karmapa's throne, see Brown (Brown 2004).

has in fact condemned Kirkpatrick (Chapman 2008-9). This link provides us with a quote from the Office of the Dalai Lama. The thread reads:

If the Dalai Lama has any opinion about Aro, his own staff does not know about it. I wrote to the Office of the His Holiness to ask them:

Greetings,

On the e-Sangha web forum, there is an assertion that His Holiness the Dalai Lama "has proscribed" the Aro gTer. The Aro gTer is a Nyingma lineage...

I would like to know whether this is true?

Does His Holiness have any official opinion concerning the Aro gTer, or its lineage holder, Ngakpa Chögyam? (Ngakpa Chögyam wrote an authorized biography of His Holiness, published in 1990.)

It appears that the assertion that His Holiness has proscribed the Aro gTer is based on an interpretation of an email apparently sent by Tenzin Wangden from your address a few years ago. (The full email is below.) It concerns Traktung Rinpoche (Stuart Kirkpatrick) "and his associates". Would the writer have intended to include the Aro gTer lineage within these associates?

Thank you very much indeed for your help!

David Chapman

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The email that is said to have been sent by Tenzin Wangden concerning Traktung Rinpoche / Stuart Kirkpatrick (who is not the same person as Ngakpa Chögyam) reads:

I am to inform you that regarding this person claiming to be what he is baseless [*sic*], I have already sent a letter to a person who had ealier [*sic*] inquired about this. I still wish to stress my earlier comment that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has never ratified this person as a reincarnation of any late Lama or Rinpoche. I caution you to abstain from having any links or relation with this person and his associates.

Thank you for inquiring and for the informations you have provided.

with best wishes,

Tenzin Wangden

I received this reply from the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

I appreciate that you have written to express your concerns. The letter that is quoted in your email only refers to Traktung Rinpoche / Stuart Kirkpatrick not the Aro gTer lineage. Also, I have looked at the Aro gTer's website and I am not familiar with their teaching style or lineage. It would be best if you could send your enquiries to those of the Nyingma Lineage to determine the authenticity of their teachings.

All the best,

Rinchen Dhondrub (Chapman 2008-9).

As we can see from this exchange the Office of the Dalai Lama refuses to recognise

Kirkpatrick as a reincarnation of any previous Tibetan Buddhist master, and

furthermore recommends that one should not be involved with either him or his

associates. Presumably the implication of this statement is that until an official

recognition has taken place it is best for students of Buddhism to avoid dealings with

unrecognised teachers.



In another interview conducted by one of his students Kirkpatrick discusses the Dalai Lama issue. Note that no author or date is given on this website and the interviewer is solely referred to as 'Interviewer'. However, it is clear from the discussion that the interviewer is in fact one of Kirkpatrick's own students. The interview begins with a question regarding the online controversy:

Interviewer: Rinpoche, we received an e-mail from someone today saying that there has been a lot of talk in some Buddhist chat room circles about your being a tülku.

Traktung Rinpoche: Really? Hmmm ...chat rooms are full of hell-realm beings trying to make themselves feel significant. It is very sad (Khepa *b*).

The response by Kirkpatrick is interesting. Firstly, he himself seems to presume the comments about him are negative without any further clarification from the Interviewer. Despite his claims that the use of chat rooms is “very sad” most of Kirkpatrick’s activities appear to be internet-based – from his use of numerous, ever-changing websites, to his participation on such on-line social communities as Facebook,<sup>245</sup> MySpace,<sup>246</sup> and YouTube.<sup>247</sup>

Kirkpatrick goes on to state that he does not care for recognition:

I have never sought to "be recognized" and could not care less about such recognition. I am not a whore and have no wish to become one. I serve the sublime Lotus Born and Lake Queen; what use do I have for whoring attempts to garner fame or "recognition". I am not in doubt of what I do or who I am. Like or not — that’s enough for me. I have not profited in any way from such recognition nor would I allow myself to become the whore of such profit. Not a single member of our sangha is here because "I am a tülku." And I would never accept a person for whom it made an iota of difference. Wanting to bask in the glow of another’s specialness is not the seed of authentic Dharma and I find such people very annoying. Sycophantic kiss asses do not a good sangha make. People who like such people do not make good Lamas. I enjoy people who have a passion for Dharma, who can investigate and study and ask intelligent questions and work to transform their lives. These are the people who have gathered here - not rock star groupies (Khepa *b*).

When asked specifically about mDo mkhyen-brtse it reads, “I: Are you the tülku of Do Khyentsé? TR: Yes.” (Khepa *b*).

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<sup>245</sup> On the site <www.facebook.com> Kirkpatrick is registered as 'Traktung Khepa'.

<sup>246</sup> On <www.myspace.com/traktungrinpoce> Kirkpatrick’s profile can be seen under 'Khepa, Traktung Rinpoche'.

<sup>247</sup> Kirkpatrick has a large number of videos posted on <www.youtube.com>, and even a music channel entitled *Goddess Tara Music* (Khepa *a*).

The above quotes illustrate Kirkpatrick's dismissal of the Dalai Lama's opinion concerning his recognition, stating that it is the business of the *rNying-ma-pa* masters. He even goes so far as to claim he is unconcerned about recognition at all. However, he does not mention his followers and the possibility that they might wish to follow a legitimate, recognised Buddhist master. Nevertheless, the Office of the Dalai Lama have recognised this desire in students of Tibetan Buddhism. Alongside their request that people do not associate with Kirkpatrick the website of the Office of Tibet in New York provides a list of authentic Tibetan Buddhist communities present in America - Kirkpatrick's Flaming Jewel Sangha and Tsogyelgar are absent from this list (The Office of Tibet).

It seems that despite Kirkpatrick's claims of recognition and self-belief in his *sprul-sku* status there is no information available to back up his claim. His own website provides no further details and the man he claims to have originally recognised him, Nam-mkha' Rin-po-che, personally dismisses the rumours on his website. When contemplating the situation from Kirkpatrick's own presentation one must take into account his past actions. Prior to his visions of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal he identified with the Gurdjieff and Hindu traditions, claiming visions of the Virgin Mary and Kālī, and also his association with the highly controversial teacher Osho. Section 8.1.6. examines the Tibetan Buddhist view on authenticity of *sprul-skus*.

#### **8.1.6. Legitimacy of a *gTer-ston***

This section will briefly discuss the Tibetan Buddhist view on the authenticity of *gter-ma* and the *gTer-stons* who discover them. This provides the necessary background

information for our examination of the Red Tārā text in question, *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*.<sup>248</sup>

I shall begin by examining what exactly is a *gTer-ston*. Concerning the transmission of *gter-ma* to a *gTer-ston* Thondup states that:

At the time of transmission of a particular teaching to a disciple, Guru Padmasambhava prophesied that at a specific future time the disciple would take rebirth as a Terton and would discover it. Guru Rinpoche transmitted the Terma teaching to the Terton for the benefit of the beings of a future time. He also prophesied the time and place of discovery of the Terma (Thondup 2002: 63).

As stated above, the role of *gTer-ston* is that of a 'Treasure Revealer' who reveals treasure texts hidden by Padmasambhava. The number and even the names of the *gTer-ston* are predicted in various texts, including *Wonder Ocean*, the text translated by Tulku Thondup in *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, and *The Precious Garland of Lapis Lazuli* (Thondup 1990: 189-201).

Gyatso confirms that the *gTer-stons* are predetermined and describes the process of discovery in which a *gTer-ston* begins to receive visionary signs, whether during meditation, dreams, or the waking state. In the case of Kirkpatrick the latter maintains that he received visions of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal. Gyatso states that "[w]hat is happening to the discoverer is linked to the moment in the past when the Treasure was concealed" (Gyatso Nov. 1993: 98, 109). As we have seen Kirkpatrick also claims to have received the 'mind-mandate transmission' directly from Padmasambhava and Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal.

However, there have been cases of false *gTer-stons* in the past. For Gyatso the key point is as follows:

Thus the crucial element in Buddhist Treasure discovery is that the discoverer must prove both to himself and to the world that he is indeed the previously commissioned individual. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, one of which is through signs which demonstrate the blessings of the exalted previous expounders of the Treasure, and another of which is by the discoverer's own spiritual accomplishments, which demonstrate that he or she already mastered the Treasure teachings while studying with Padmasambhava in a past lifetime (Gyatso 1996: 151).

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<sup>248</sup> For detailed information on the *gTer-ma* tradition see Section 6.1.

In the case of Kirkpatrick his life story appears to satisfy a number of these aspects. His identification with the famous *gTer-ston* mDo mkhyen-brtse appears to be key to his claim of authentic teachings, as is his belief in his Mind-mandate Transmission - yet we have seen above these claims to recognition as an incarnation have been widely discredited. Another is the subsequent claim of his website that his birth was miraculously predicted, his claims to visions of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, and so forth.

However, in Kirkpatrick's favour Gyatso goes on to state:

The discoverer himself is an autonomous, maverick figure, typically declaring his independence from received tradition and study; rather, the discoverer focuses on his own mind, his own visions, his own memory of a previous life as Padmasambhava's disciple, his own predestined revelation that he propagates to his own circle of disciples (Gyatso 1996: 154-55).

This accords with Kirkpatrick's actions, and we have seen him actively attempt to distance himself from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

As there are false *gTer-stons* so too have there been cases of false *gter-ma*. On this topic Thondup writes that “There are false Termas too, because of negative influences and aspirations and the evil karma of people”. He goes on to say,

He [the Third mDo-grub-chen, author of the *Wonder Ocean*] also advised checking whether or not a new discovered teaching is similar to the teachings of the authentic Termas. There will be differences in words and style, but if the meaning or the essence of new Terma are similar to the traditional scriptures, they should be accepted as authentic (Thondup 1990:92).

Gyatso states that the problem of fake *gter-ma* has been in existence since the time of Guru Chos-dbang in the thirteenth century (Gyatso Nov. 1993: 106).

It is not only the problem of false *gter-ma* which plagues the *rNying-ma-pa* school, but also detractors from other Buddhist groups, namely the *gSar-ma-pa* schools, as discussed above in Section 6.1. With regards to the *gTer-ston*'s role Gyatso states that “the personal struggle to develop the power to find a Treasure, the difficulty in deciphering the cryptic codes and “*ḍākinī* language” in which the Treasure is originally revealed, and the discoverer-to-be's many self-doubts are all

necessitated by the nature of the Buddhist myth of the Treasures' previous concealment" (Gyatso 1996: 151). It may be that Kirkpatrick's situation resonates with a past in which the legitimacy of all *gTer-stons* was subject to doubt by detractors from rival schools.

*The Wonder Ocean* states that "[b]y reciting and practicing those false teachings the follower will move only in the wrong direction" (Thondup 1986: 154). He states that *gTer-stons* who reveal these false treasures are evil ministers from the past who are supported by demonic spirits. These evil ministers aspired to "obstruct the enlightened activities of Guru Rinpoche" (Thondup 1986: 155).

If disciples of the profound Termas of Guru Rinpoche who have the desire to achieve supreme attainment are fooled into mistaking these false teachings for pure teachings, and if they practice them, it will cause the decline of their fortunes, their life, and so on (Thondup 1986: 153).

As we can see the tradition itself perceives dire consequences for both false *gTer-stons* and disciples who employ their practices. However, it may be that the fluidity of the recognition process for *gter-stons* lends itself in Kirkpatrick's favour.

Having established their context I shall now move on to discuss the disciples of Kirkpatrick and the place of Red Tārā practice within his teachings.

## **8.2. The Background to the Flaming Jewel Sangha**

This section aims to examine the teachings of Stuart Kirkpatrick and the centres which he founded, as it is within these centres that Red Tārā is practiced, categorising his group as a New Religious Movement.

### **8.2.1. The Flaming Jewel Sangha**

In understanding any particular new religion, it is helpful to locate it initially within its particular religious tradition and then to determine where it fits relative to the

mainstream of that tradition, and secondly to determine its relation to whatever tradition it dominant in the particular country in which the group operates (Melton 2004: 30).

The Flaming Jewel Sangha is the community led by Stuart Kirkpatrick, the main centre of which is Tsogyelgar based outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Little information is available about the centre beside their own website (Traktung Rinpoche *d*) but in their own words "The Tsogyelgar Community is a unique collection of creative spiritual practitioners who strive to practice and live the meaning spiritual awakening's joy that is the Tantric Vajrayana path" (Khepa *b*).

The Tsogyelgar centre is named after Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, the consort of Padmasambhava, whom Kirkpatrick claims to have seen in numerous visions. The centre occupies over seven acres of land outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was founded in 1990 and unveiled the largest Buddhist mural in the United States in July 2009. Once a month the centre runs teachings by either Kirkpatrick or his senior students. Alongside this, three times a month there are sessions entitled 'Spiritual Peace and Joy Through the Goddess Tara and Transformational Music', at which music is used to access Tārā's healing power (Khepa *b*; Traktung Rinpoche *b*). The centre even has a *Goddess Tara Music Channel* on YouTube (Khepa *a*). Occasional special teachings are also offered, as is a summer retreat, and weekly gardening sessions in the 'Meditation Gardens' (Traktung Rinpoche *d*).

According to his website Kirkpatrick aims to use 'artistic expression' as a means to 'wisdom bliss', and in conformity with this the community at Tsogyelgar employ music, art, yoga, and meditation as means to practice (Khepa *b*). On 20 June 2009 Katie Kirkpatrick, the wife of Stuart Kirkpatrick, performed a 'Goddess Tara Pet Blessing'. According to Kirkpatrick's website his wife does not teach Buddhism as such, but rather provides "a presence of kindness and wisdom". The group claim that

she is considered an incarnation of Dākinī Blo-gsal sgrol-ma,<sup>249</sup> from mGo-log, Tibet (Khepa *b*), and that she is also known by a number of names including Tsochen Khadro and A'dzom Rinpoche [*sic*] (The Spiritual Traveler 2001). However, as with Stuart Kirkpatrick, no background information about this recognition is provided. The website goes on to states that:

To participate in a Pet Blessing is a step toward realizing the unfathomable depth of our connection with all life... a step toward becoming fully human. Bring a pet, dog, cat, bird, turtle... let the blessing power of the Goddess Tara shower over it! (Khepa *b*).

Chapter Seven discussed the development of Buddhism in America and offered some criteria developed by previous researchers in the field. As we now move on to analyse the FJS according to these criteria then we once again fall into difficulties when applying the conventional categories. As noted in Chapter Seven, Stark and Bainbridge split religions into three distinct groups: 'church' where the religion is supported by established society, 'sect', where a breakaway movement harks back to a religious purity which the established 'church' has lost, and the new movements defined as 'cults'. With regards to the FJS the latter are neither an established religious movements, nor a breakaway movement seeking a return to fundamental values. This leaves us with the category of 'cult' (Nattier 1995: 185-86; Stark and Bainbridge 1979).

Stark and Bainbridge further classify 'cult' into three categories: 'audience cult', 'client cult', and 'cult movement'. 'Audience cults' require only occasional attendance of members and are defined by their lack of community, ritual, and catechism. As we have seen, the members of the FJS define themselves as a *Sangha* or community, and practice rituals such as Red Tārā. Therefore, it appears that the term 'audience cult' is not applicable. 'Client cults' involve direct contact with group

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<sup>249</sup> Dākinī Blo-gsal sgrol-ma (1802-1861) was an important *rNying-ma-pa* master and a student of mDo mkhyen-brtse ye-shes rdo-rje and the First rDo-grub-chen 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las 'od-zer (1745-1821) (TBRC 2006).

members and employ techniques received from a teacher. However, ongoing contact with the group is not necessary. As we can see this category appears applicable to the FJS as they teach their members methods such as the Red Tārā practice. The classification of 'cult movement' requires members to adopt a new religious identity through genuine conversion to the new religion. Although this may be the case with the FJS, at present we do not have the necessary information to make this judgment. The category of 'client cult' therefore appears to be the most appropriate classification given the current available information (Nattier 1995: 186; Stark and Bainbridge 1979).

It appears that within the boundaries of Stark and Bainbridge's theory Tibetan Buddhism in America might well be regarded as an *imported cult*, and that the FJS might be deemed a sect formed within that cult. This is an option identified by Stark and Bainbridge in their 1979 work (Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 126). The researchers also identified a fluidity in their categories as 'client cults' become 'cult movements', and 'sects' become 'churches' (Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 127). However, with Kirkpatrick at the helm of the FJS it seems unlikely that any form of societal recognition will take place, especially from the traditional Tibetan Buddhist leadership.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, Nattier feels that Stark and Bainbridge's model requires some adjustments. She argues that the Stark and Bainbridge's work concentrates on religious groups, not on the individual members, which may leave some members falling within two or more categories. Furthermore, she argues that their categories fail to identify the difference between new and transplanted religions, moving on to offer her own categories of Elite, Evangelical, and Ethnic Buddhisms (Nattier 1995: 187-89).



The FJS does not appear to be a transplanted religion: neither the specific Red Tārā practice nor the group itself originated in Asia. Although Kirkpatrick lays claims to the *rNying-ma-pa* antecedents to his tradition, Tibetan Buddhists have distanced themselves from his movement and as such it seems impossible to define the FJS as something transmitted via import, export, or baggage. Kirkpatrick's claims to a Tibetan basis for his teachings may be viewed as an attempt to garner authenticity for the practices which he promotes. Furthermore, there are no ethnically Tibetan Buddhist masters within the ranks of the leadership, and the religious practices themselves were not brought from Tibet, but were discovered as *gter-ma* or adopted from other movements, such as the use of the *Twelve Step Program*. Consequently it seems that the FJS might best be considered as a New Religious Movement in its host culture.

During the 1970s the term New Religious Movement arose as an alternative to the negatively biased term 'cult' (Melton 2004: 20). The term was defined by Melton in his paper at the 1999 CENSUR (Centre for Studies on New Religions) conference:

New Religious groups or movements are primary religious groups/movements that operate apart from the dominant religious culture (in our case, the Christian West) in which they are located but seek adherents from their new host culture (Melton 1999).

Furthermore, Clarke writes that American and European NRMs are "innovative religious and spiritual movements that have emerged since the end of World War Two" (Clarke 2006b: 411). As such, NRMs are movements of recent origin and may be entirely innovative or based in an older tradition. In fact NRMs may resemble their parent movement more than other NRMs (Melton 2004: 22).

The FJS is a new group rooted in the older tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, but operating within American society where it is not the mainstream religion. However, its membership is drawn from American society. In the *Encyclopedia of New Religions* Melton further states that NRMs often mix religious traditions, a trait we

see at the FJS with their incorporation of techniques from sources as diverse as Tibetan Buddhism, Osho, Gurdjieff, and Alcoholics Anonymous (Partridge 2004:11). As we can see the application of the term NRM to the FJS allows us to recognise their antecedents in the mainstream Tibetan Buddhist tradition, but further allows for acknowledgment of their incorporation of new ideas and approaches. It is difficult to categorise the group - insiders might consider themselves to be following an authentic Tibetan Buddhist path, whilst outsiders might regard their teachings and leader to be inauthentic. However, as the FJS are wholeheartedly populated by American adherents and combine techniques from across Buddhist and Western approaches they are defined here as a New Religious Movement.

Bromley has defined the methodology for the study of NRMs as interdisciplinary and involving research into the historical lineage, development, and socio-cultural significance (Bromley 2007: 65-66). The analysis contained within this chapter has discussed Kirkpatrick's life and teachings, the Tibetan Buddhist antecedents to the tradition, the development of the FJS from Gurdjieff, through Osho, to Buddhism, and its place within Buddhism in America. We will now move on to examine the place of Red Tārā practice within Kirkpatrick's teachings.

### **8.3. Red Tārā: *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms***

The previous sections of this chapter examined the background to Stuart Kirkpatrick, his teachings, community, and its centre in order to contextualise the following discussion and analysis of his Red Tārā teachings. The present section will examine the Red Tārā text used by his students: *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*. I shall discuss the information presented in the colophon regarding the origins of the text, alongside

an overview of some inconsistencies found in the main body of the text as a number of aspects of the text itself run contrary to standard Tibetan Buddhist practice.

*A Garland of Bimba Blossoms* is readily available at <[www.redtara.org](http://www.redtara.org)> where the visitor can hear the text sung aloud as a "recorded sadhana" and see a picture of the goddess (Figure 8.1) (Traktung Rinpoche *a*, *c*). It is a very simple website and aside from the text and picture no further information is provided about the lineage or practice. The website does however provide links to the websites of Traktung Rinpoche (Khepa *b*) and Tsogyelgar (Traktung Rinpoche *d*). The text was seemingly discovered by Kirkpatrick, although no information concerning the origin is provided.

The "recorded sadhana" is very Western in style. It is accompanied by guitar and drum music and the text is sung rather than chanted, an effect added to by the presence of the guitar and drums. It appears that music is important to the FJS as evidenced by this recording of the text, their *YouTube* music channel, and their use of the term "Transformational Music" to describe the healing power of music (Khepa *b*; Traktung Rinpoche *a*).

The full text of *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms* is provided in Appendix 8. I shall now move on to examine the main body of the text itself and the form of Red Tārā which one finds within these teachings.

### **8.3.1. The Main Body of the Text**

The practice begins with a transliterated version of the standard eight-line prayer to Gu-ru Rin-po-che (Padmasambhava) which is usually recited at the beginning of all *rNying-ma-pa* practices. After this, in what appears to be the main body of the text, the practitioner takes refuge in Tārā and recites a form of both the Refuge Prayer and *Bodhisattva* Vows. These prayers are then followed by the generation of the deity, in

this case Red Tārā. The text appears to include only a front-generation of the deity, a practice which may be employed without prior empowerment.<sup>250</sup> Therefore, one might presume that practitioners within the FJS do not receive empowerment into Red Tārā practice.

As Tārā is a deity most often viewed in a motherly role, the overtly sexual tone found in the description of the goddess might come as a shock to the reader. One can find such sentences as: "Her color red, the wine of love"; "Sensual, charming, love's adornment"; "Her hips enticing and entrancing"; and "Her breasts and bhaga [vagina] swell with passion" (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). This text appears to emphasise the sexual, rather than the spiritual, qualities of the goddess. In fact in the depiction of the goddess one of her nipples is showing. This is uncommon as usually a link on the necklace worn by Tārā retains her modesty. Tibetan texts do describe Tārā emanations using words such as passionate and flirtatious,<sup>251</sup> but this terminology is not employed in the overtly sexual manner we find here (unlike texts dealing with Vajrayoginī for instance).

In standard Tibetan Buddhist *sādhana* texts the iconography of the deities conforms to prescribed standards, and as such each element of the iconography of a deity represents a certain aspect of Buddhist philosophy or doctrine. For example, in her Green and White forms Tārā's left hand is depicted in the *mudrā* of Bestowing Refuge, in which her thumb and ring finger touch with the other three fingers extended. This *mudrā* represents the Three Jewels of Buddha, *Dharma* and *Samgha*, with the two touching fingers illustrating the relationship between wisdom and

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<sup>250</sup> This is opposed to the self-generation practices for which the practitioner is empowered in a tantric ceremony. Following the initiation practitioners may envisage themselves as the deity through self-generation practices.

<sup>251</sup> For instance the *Sa-skyapa* cycle examined in Chapter Four describes Red Tārā as "*sgeg cing rjes su chags pa*".

compassion.<sup>252</sup> However in the sentences such as those listed above the more common Buddhist iconography and its meaning are not clear.

Much of the iconography found with this Red Tārā<sup>253</sup> is similar to that seen in A-paṃ gTer-ston's text, as used by the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation. However, there are a number of differences. Firstly this Tārā is seen in a standing position, rather than the more usual seated form of the goddess where the right leg is extended and the left leg drawn in, in the posture of royal ease (Skt: *rājalīlāsana*) also common to Green Tārās. There are few instances of Red Tārā in a standing position, but within A-paṃ gTer-ston's tradition depictions of Red Tārā in a standing posture indicate a more wrathful form of the goddess. Despite this, her standing posture here is common to that found with the bDud-'joms Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal and bDud-'joms Vajrayoginī deities where the toes on her right foot curl upwards.

As we stated in Section 6.4. A-paṃ gTer-ston's Red Tārās are dressed with the usual clothes and adornments. Kirkpatrick's text simply states that "[h]er jewels and silks adorn appearance" which concurs with common representations of Tārā (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). However, no specific mention is made of her upper and lower garments, as we find in standard depictions of Tārā, such as that in A-paṃ gTer-ston's representation. Furthermore, when one consults the image of the goddess her skirt appears to be Western in style.

The text itself describes Tārā's right hand as offering flowing nectar and her left grasping a lotus topped with a bow and arrow. However, in the depiction the bow and arrow is made of lotus flowers (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). Although this iconography is very similar to that found in A-paṃ gTer-ston's lineage there remain some notable differences. In A-paṃ gTer-ston's text Tārā holds a vase filled with nectar in her right

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<sup>252</sup> See Chapter One for more information on the iconography of various forms of Tārā and the implied philosophical meanings.

<sup>253</sup> For a depiction of this Red Tārā see Fig. 8.1.

hand. In her left hand she holds a red lotus topped with a lotus bow and arrow, as seen in the picture of Red Tārā from *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*, rather than the description found in the text itself. The implements found in A-paṃ gTer-ston's text are in common with usual Buddhist iconography - the flower bow and arrow being the emblem of Kurukullā with whom A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā is connected, and the vase filled with nectar is common to Buddhist deities, especially those associated with long-life. As we have also seen the *rNying-ma-pa* Twenty-one Tārās display their emblem on top of their lotus. With regards to Tārā's right hand in Kirkpatrick's Red Tārā text the nectar is flowing directly from her hand, something unusual in the Buddhist tradition.

Kirkpatrick's text depicts Tārā with three eyes which "draw all beings into wisdom". In both A-paṃ gTer-ston's lineage and that of the *Sa-skyapa* school the goddess has three eyes. Kirkpatrick's text does not describe Tārā's crown of the five Buddhas but it is seen in the depiction. The text just states that her hair is perfumed and adorned with a crescent-moon. The presence of the crescent moon in her hair and the flowing nectar is reminiscent of the Hindu deity Śiva who is shown with a crescent moon in his hair and the Ganges flowing from his crown, or the Buddhist deity Cakrasaṃvara, yet it is not common to depictions of Tārā.

It is unusual that Kirkpatrick's text appears to lack any form of *maṇḍala* offering, common to *sādhana* practice. As discussed in Chapter Nine the *maṇḍala* offering is key to the Red Tārā practice of A-paṃ gTer-ston, as it is in fact a Four-fold *Maṇḍala* Offering, a form of practice also found in association with Green Tārā.

Despite this omission the practice does include a form of the Seven-limb Prayer:

Tara love's own invitation. Lord and refuge of our hearts, I make prostrations without number, And offer cloudbanks of delights. I confess the mind's confusions, And actions harmful from this source. I rejoice with joy enthralling. In actions of pure love and wisdom. I pray you turn the wheel of dharma, I pray, remain for precious beings. With heartfelt love and pure compassion, I dedicate the gathering merit (Traktung Rinpoche a).

The seven-limb prayer contains seven key aspects: prostration; offering; confession; rejoicing in merits accomplished; request to turn the wheel of the *Dharma*; request to remain for the sake of all sentient beings; and dedication of merit. Kirkpatrick's presentation appears to conform to these seven limbs. The difference in wording may be explained by the fact that the text is presented as a *gTer-ma* revelation. In the case of *gter-ma* often the wording of standard prayers and invocations may differ in order to represent a new lineage.

After the generation of Tārā in front of the practitioner the text moves on to a prayer to the goddess, followed by the *mantra* "OM TARE TUM SO HA". With this *mantra* we see a striking similarity to the tradition expounded by A-paṃ gTer-ston, in which the *mantra* *Om tāre tām svāhā* is recited. In the latter *mantra* one finds *tām*, the seed-syllable of Tārā common to all her forms - Green, White, Red and the Twenty-one Tārās. Conversely, TUM does not appear to be a seed-syllable and is certainly not used in typical Tārā practices. This matter is somewhat cleared up when one listens to the "recorded sadhana" found on Kirkpatrick's website (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). In this recording one can hear the syllable *tām* recited. Therefore, it might be presumed that the spelling of TUM in the text is provided to give the most accurate pronunciation by the Americans for whom the practice is intended.

A few paragraphs later any merit generated by the practice is dedicated to attaining the state of Tārā. This is then followed by another seven line prayer to Tārā. The wording of seven line prayer is itself interesting. It includes the lines "deliver me from peril", "deliver me from suffering", and "please deliver us from folly" (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). This wording is reminiscent of the Christian *Lord's Prayer* in which we find the line "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". It may be that this terminology is used as it is familiar and appealing to the Western practitioner. The

end of the practice concludes with the familiar Tārā *mantra* *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*. After the practice itself one finds a short colophon describing the origin of the text, an analysis of which follows below.

The text does not mention the particular function of the goddess and as no commentary is available the benefits of performing this practice remain unknown. One can infer that like other Red Tārās this goddess provides the subjugating/magnetising function, as indicated by her colour. However, without access to any further clarification, this must remain speculation.

Some aspects of both the contents of this text and the iconography of its central deity are unusual. For example her Western skirt, the nectar flowing from her hand, the crescent moon in her hair, and the overtly sexual tone of the text in places. However, as we have seen throughout the chapters of this thesis a variety of Red Tārās exist with diverse iconography and literature. Nonetheless, in the other lineages described here the iconography of the goddesses accords with established Buddhist norms. As we have seen this is not always the case with *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*. If the time constraints in the writing of the thesis had allowed for a deeper examination of previous literature on the numerous forms of Tārā a larger scale comparison of the iconographic features found between the Red Tārās and other forms of Tārā would have been attempted. I have made comparisons here with the numerous Red Tārā texts examined in the course of this research, however, greater comparisons with other *rNying-ma-pa* texts on Tārā in general have not been possible. It may be that future research may shed new light on the greater commonalities and differences between the many forms of Tārā.



### 8.3.2. The Colophon

The colophon of the text details the discovery of the *gter-ma*. The colophon is very cryptic, as is often the case with *gTer-ma* texts. In this instance one is informed that the text appeared in the mind of the *gTer-ston*, whilst he was walking in the woods of Blazing Jewel Mountain. However, we are not informed of the location of this mountain, nor the name of the *gTer-ston* in question. The text relates that a woman appeared and offered a red fruit to the *gTer-ston*, an encounter that led to the *sādhana* appearing in his mind (Traktung Rinpoche *a*). Gyatso writes that a female *Ḍākinī* is often involved in the revelation process, and states that this is especially the case with Mind *gTer-ma* (Gyatso Nov. 1993: 125). It is not clear from the colophon whether we are to believe that Kirkpatrick himself discovered this practice. Or does the colophon instead refer to another *gTer-ston* who is not acknowledged by name here?

What is the purpose of the colophon? The last paragraph of *Bimba Blossoms* could refer to what Gyatso calls 'the revelation account', a device used by *gTer-stons* to engender confidence in the authenticity of the *gter-ma* they have discovered, employed since the thirteenth century. According to Gyatso these accounts may include descriptions of meditative experiences, the circumstances of the transmission and the revelation of the cycle itself (Gyatso Nov. 1993: 115-16).

She states:

[T]he account of the discovery, is of particular interest, since it too is meant to legitimate, or to "engender confidence" (*nges shes bskyes pa*) in the Treasure, but it does so on entirely different grounds than do the references to Padmasambhava and his buddha predecessors. Here the reader is presented with an individualistic account of the discoverer's trials and struggles in realizing the revelatory vision. The text recounting this visionary process is often authored by the discoverer (Gyatso 1996: 160).

As such the circumstances of the revelation of a particular *gter-ma* are described to its practitioners, so that they will gain faith in its legitimacy and therefore its effectiveness.

However, with *Bimba Blossoms* some of the more usual information has been omitted from the colophon. Gyatso states that the exact date of the revelation is usually recorded, often down to the hour (Gyatso Nov. 1993: 116). However, in this case no such timings are recorded and the location remains vague. It may be that this is due to the short length of the text, it is a simple *rgyun-khyer* (daily practice). However, it remains unclear from the text and Kirkpatrick's website whether this is the only text or if there also exists a longer root text. It is usual that information such as Gyatso describes would be found in the root text and accompanying accounts. Without any information regarding the name of the *gter-ston* one cannot even be sure of the century or decade of its discovery. Due to the short nature of this daily practice and with no access to a longer root text we remain unsure about its date, *gter-ston* and site of discovery. As such the question remains as to whether the source text was discovered in English, or Tibetan.

What is clear from *Bimba Blossoms* is that the colophon of this daily practice fails to engender confidence in the text. It appears to leave many questions unanswered. We are not informed of any other individuals who may have been present at the time of discovery and only a brief description of the event is presented. Without more information, particularly with regard to the provenance of the text, it is impossible to pass judgment on the legitimacy of this practice aside from the knowledge that the claims to the status of *gter-ston* and *sprul-sku* of its key proponent, Kirkpatrick, have been widely dismissed.

#### **8.4. Some Conclusions Regarding the *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms* Practice in the Flaming Jewel Sangha**

What is clear from our discussion above is that there remain many doubts as to the authenticity of both the text of *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms* and its major proponent, Stuart Kirkpatrick. Our analysis has uncovered some discrepancies in the stories presented by Kirkpatrick concerning his own spiritual path and his claimed recognition as the rebirth of mDo mkhyen-brtse. However, the origins of *Bimba Blossoms* remain uncertain.

The form of Red Tārā found in *Bimba Blossoms* is quite different from other forms of the goddess. She is not presented as a form of Kurukullā, yet, her flower bow and arrow are similar to those held by both Kurukullā and A-paṃ gTer-ston's Red Tārā. Although much of the text shows similarities to the Red Tārā teachings found in A-paṃ gTer-ston's cycle other discrepancies stand against common Buddhist iconography and customs. As we have discussed above this study has compared the known forms of Red Tārā, yet a more in-depth analysis of the iconographic features of this deity and how she fits in with other forms of Tārā is desired. However, this was not possible due to the temporal constraints of this thesis. The reworking of a tradition in a modern, Western context necessitates a limit to the scope for adaptation, as this study has shown. Despite these reservations, *Bimba Blossoms* continues to be practised in the United States by devotees who believe themselves to be following the Tibetan Buddhist path. As this dissertation aims to catalogue extant traditions of Red Tārā, to omit *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*, currently practised in America, however dubious the lineage by traditional criteria, would not present a complete picture of contemporary Red Tārā traditions.

The research for this chapter has necessitated use of internet-based resources, as it is via this medium that Kirkpatrick predominantly works. Furthermore, as a UK-

based researcher I have not been able to employ participant observation in this case and I have had no access to members of the FJS. The problems I have encountered in using web-based research are common to all researchers - namely that the veracity of the sources are under question. Without access to Kirkpatrick himself, or Sangha members it is not possible to ascertain the origins of these teachings, or the manner in which they are disseminated. However, what we have been able to prove is that the Red Tārā teachings are central to FJS practice, as evidenced by a website dedicated to the deity, and the fact that it is the only practice mentioned by the group in its site (Khepa *b*; Traktung Rinpoche *d*). It would be interesting to know if Kirkpatrick performs ritual initiation into the deity, as would be the case with general tantric deities. However, without greater access to the group it is not possible to answer this and the other questions raised here.

In conclusion, Red Tārā as found in *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms* is a red form of the goddess Tārā who is not implicitly linked to Kurukullā. Her practice is performed by Kirkpatrick and his followers at FJS. Although we have access to the source text, we have been unable to ascertain the particular function of this form of the deity. Despite these issues the analysis of the authenticity of both Kirkpatrick and his text have allowed us to glimpse the greater issue of authenticity in Tibetan Buddhism as it moves West. Furthermore, I have briefly analysed the phenomenon of New Religious Movements within Tibetan Buddhism through the methodology of New Religious Studies. It is hoped that future researchers with greater access to Kirkpatrick and the FJS might add to the present picture.

## Conclusion

At the outset this thesis aimed to survey the literary and practice lineages of Red Tārā throughout Tibetan Buddhist history. Furthermore, it set out to identify individual forms of Red Tārā, separate from Kurukullā, thereby proving the hypothesis that not all Red Tārās are Kurukullā. The Red Tārās surveyed were all individual goddesses and none was depicted with a consort. Alongside the identification of a preliminary historical order for the lineages of Red Tārā an important theme of this research was to identify new information concerning the little-known practice of subjugation and the related iconographic details. My study reveals that these Red Tārās adopt a more worldly and powerful aspect than the more common Green or White forms of the divinity.

Part One served as an introduction to the deity Tārā in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. It followed the origin of the cult in India through to its proliferation in Tibet. This work served to highlight the lack of previous research into Red Tārā, Kurukullā, and the function of subjugation as a ritual action. B. Bhattacharyya and N. Bhattacharyya attempt to identify only goddesses with the standard Green Tārā *mantra* *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā* as aspects of Tārā, whilst deities such as Kurukullā or Bhṛkuṭī are simply related to Tārā (B. Bhattacharyya 1925; N. Bhattacharyya 1999). This research has shown this is not the case: the study of a number of deities specifically identified as Red Tārā indicate that most employ a variant *mantra* somewhat based on that of Green Tārā.

Chapter Two began with an overview of Kurukullā, the best-known form of Red Tārā, followed by an actual survey of Red Tārās, as far as identification was possible based on the available literary evidence. This survey identified four lineages of Red Tārās originating from India: Pīṭheśvarī, Cundā Tārā, Red Tārās within the Twenty-one Tārās, and the Red Tārās found within the *Sa-skyapa* Cycle of teachings.

Four masters also wrote commentarial texts on the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā. Within the *rNying-ma-pa* school five lineages of Red Tārā were discovered: that of A-paṃ gter-ston, *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*, the sMin-grol-ling practice, the eighteenth century Tshe-dbang nor-bu, and Rang-rig rdo-rje in the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, five masters from the *dGe-lugs-pa* school composed texts on Red Tārā in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries: Blo-bzang byang-chub bstan-pa'i sgron-me, 'Jam-dbyangs 'phrin-las, 'Jigs-med 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho, Ngag-dbang dge-'dun rgya-mtsho, and 'Jam-dpal grub-pa'i rdo-rje.

As we have seen the identification of these texts led to links between Red Tārā and the upper echelons of both Gya-mkhar monastery in Khan-lho prefecture and Bla-brang monasteries in the area of A-mdo. Chapter Four showed that 'Ba'-mda' dge-legs, who composed an important commentary on the practice of the *Sa-skyapa* Red Tārā, was also linked to Bla-brang monastery. In addition, A-paṃ gter-ston discovered his Red Tārā *gter-ma* cycle in A-mdo. Thus it seems that in recent centuries Red Tārā practice was prevalent in the Eastern Tibetan regions. Furthermore, alongside the nineteenth- to twentieth-century practices of A-paṃ gter-ston and the *dGe-lugs-pa* scholars, the translation of the Pīṭheśvarī and *Sa-skyapa* cycles can be dated to the *phyi-dar* period of the eleventh century.

### ***Tārā and the Feminine***

At the outset of the thesis I stated that I was not going to follow a feminist methodology. However, as this may be the intention of future researchers it deserves some mention in this conclusion. Tārā as the best known goddess of the Buddhist pantheon is an important exemplar of the feminine divine. As we have seen she is believed to be the source of numerous Buddhist goddesses and is in fact the Mother of All Buddhas. The importance of her role has led to the identification of many later

female practitioners as her embodiment. This is an important manner through which these women gain prestige and recognition within Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. As for general female practitioners they often find it easy to relate to Tārā as a peaceful, motherly goddess, whose body and feminine nature they can associate with. Many Western women have identified with Tārā's vow to reincarnate in the female form. Her function is also important to women within Tibet as she aids conception and provides protection for mothers and newborn infants. Tārā provides the function of removing fear and granting wishes to all who propitiate her, however, specifically with regards to male practitioners she provides an opportunity to transcend simplistic gender dualities through the performance of her rituals. It is worth a second note that applying a feminist hermeneutic to the study of goddesses can be problematic, as we saw in Chapter Three. Miranda Shaw's original feminist thesis led her to overlook and misread elements of the source texts. As such future researchers may find elements of this thesis that provide information for their study of the goddess. However, one should always consider the source texts themselves and what they have to offer us in a study of the Buddhist feminine.

### ***Texts and Practices***

As for the texts themselves, the Pīṭheśvarī texts number eight, *Sa-skyapa* texts number seven, and A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle comprises twenty-six texts, one of which provides *mantras* for 56 separate rituals. Pīṭheśvarī practice is at the level of the *yoginītantras* within the *yoganiruttaratantra* class of tantric literature. The practice of Pīṭheśvarī is strongly associated with both the Indian *Śākta Pīṭha* cult and also the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* literature. The *Sa-skyapa* texts are identifiable as belonging to the *yogatantra* class. A-paṃ gter-ston's *gter-ma* cycle belongs to the *rNying-ma-pa rDzog-chen* teachings, which include *khregs-chod* and *thod-rgal*. Meanwhile, *The*

*Praise to the Twenty-one Tārās* itself falls within the *kriyātantra* category, whilst the commentaries are placed within the *yoganiruttaratantra* class.

When one examines the types of practices employed in Red Tārā worship they are varied and appear to adopt standard tantric rites for the enacting of the subjugating function. For example, Pīṭheśvarī Texts PI, PII, III, PIV, and PVI all involve the body-*maṇḍala* practice where purification is achieved through the visualisation of the practitioner's body as embodying the 24 sacred *pīṭha* sites and the related goddesses. *Sa-skyapa* Texts SIV and SVII meanwhile involve subjugating fire-*pūja*, as do A-paṃ gter-ston's Texts AX and AXVII.

The *Sa-skyapa* cycle of Red Tārā teachings is magical in nature and it is hard to understand the soteriological aspect of this cycle at first glance. A number of the texts involved the use of a ritual wheel, picture, effigy, *stūpa*, shrine, pills, and *gtorma* (Texts SI, SIII, SV, SVII). In some cases the wheel is attached to the practitioner's neck, left shoulder or left under-arm (Texts SI, SV, SVII). Light rays in the form of iron hooks strike the object at their heart in the case of males, and genitals in the case of females, whilst noose light rays bind their neck (Texts SI, SII, SIII, SV, SVII). Even a Guru can be magnetised by his tongue (Text SV). The object of the practice and his belongings are gathered under the practitioner's feet and pressed down or stamped upon (Texts SI, SIII, SV, SVII).

Following receipt of the requisite ritual empowerment, the practitioner can perform the *mantra* of an individual Tārā from the Twenty-one Tārā group of goddesses in order to perform a specific function. Chapter Five discussed how Sūryagupta's Red Tārās are employed to turn back another's power, overcome demons, and control sentient beings, while the *rNying-ma-pa* goddesses are involved in protection from and victory in warfare. The negative intentions of and trouble



caused by others is stopped, gossip is turned back, everything one desires is magnetised, and fear is defeated.

A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle includes a wide range of subjugating rituals. These include a feast offering (*Tshogs*), fulfilment rite (*bsKang-ba*), mirror divination (*Pra*), fire-*pūja* (*sbyin-sreg*), four-fold *maṇḍala* offering, aspiration prayer, long-life practice, essence extraction (*bCud-len*), empowerment ritual, and *sādhana*s. Text AXVIII itself includes 56 separate rituals, although these are not specifically confined to the action of subjugation and instead involve all four actions (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976sa). Within the CGF A-paṃ gter-ston's *Tshogs* and Four-fold *Maṇḍala* Offering are used to this day. The CGF also practices a Dream *Yoga* based on A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā. The short *sādhana* used by Westerners was composed for them by Chagdud Tulku, based on A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle and is available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

### ***Links to Kurukullā***

As for the link between Red Tārās and Kurukullā this research has uncovered that in fact Pīṭheśvarī and the *Sa-skyā* Red Tārās are not related to Kurukullā. The texts themselves make no link to the goddess. The *Sa-skyā-pa* Red Tārā holds an iron hook and noose, whilst Kurukullā holds a flower bow and arrow, flower noose, and flower hook. Although at first glance it may appear that this indicates a link between these goddesses, in fact the noose and hook are standard subjugating implements.

Within the Twenty-one Tārās one finds Kurukullā herself in the Sūryagupta tradition, whilst the other Twenty-one Tārās are individual deities not related to Kurukullā, but forms of Tārā. A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle includes a form of Red Tārā who is closely linked to Kurukullā as her semi-wrathful form (Text AXI). However, the other forms of Red Tārā in this cycle do not appear to be linked to Kurukullā, and

no connection is made explicit in the texts themselves. This is further evidenced as A-paṃ gter-ston's Collected Works also involves a cycle focussing on Kurukullā herself.

It is not known whether the *Garland of Bimba Blossoms* practice claims a link to Kurukullā, as the text does not make this clear. Chapter Eight discussed the similarities between the iconography of this deity to both A-paṃ gter-ston's Red Tārā and also to Śiva. The legitimacy of this practice remains under question.

### ***Iconography of the Red Tārās***

Within the eight Pīṭheśvarī texts one can identify three distinct iconographical forms of the goddess. Texts PI, PII, PIV, PVII, and PVIII all refer to one form. Pīṭheśvarī here is red, with eight arms and four faces. She wears a tiger skin skirt and stands in a dancing posture with one leg raised and the other extended. Of Pīṭheśvarī's four faces the top is yellow and peaceful, whilst the front face is red. The right face is green and there is some discrepancy between the texts as to whether the left face is blue or black: each face has three eyes. Her left hands hold the skull-cup, *vajra*, sword, and drum and her right hands wield the wish-fulfilling jewel, staff, bell, and lotus. Text PVI describes an identical iconography, except that here her skull-cup is replaced by an alms bowl.

As Chapter Three described Text PV details a completely different form of Pīṭheśvarī with five faces and ten arms. Her main face is white, the face behind is red, the left yellow, the right blue, and the top black. Her left hands wield the jewel, lotus, bell, noose, and the book of omniscience, while her right hands hold the *vajra*, wheel, sword, iron hook, and double triangle. As we see she holds the hook and noose common with subjugating deities. Without access to a knowledgeable lineage master of the tradition, it is not possible to understand the reasons behind the variant

iconographies. It may be that the differences indicate subtle variations between the functions of these goddesses.

The *Sa-skyapa* texts appear to describe two main forms of Red Tārā. In all she is red with one face, two arms and three eyes, and is sixteen years old. She is adorned with the precious ornaments and silks, and sits in the cross-legged *bodhisattva* pose. Text SV elaborates that she might also sit with her right leg extended. Texts SI and SIII see Tārā wielding the iron hook on her right and a red *utpala* on her left. In Texts SII, SV, and SVI the iron hook is again seen, alongside an a noose ornamented with an *utpala*. In Text SVII these implements are made from *utpala* flowers. Here still the iron hook and noose are key symbols. Once again it may be that these iconographic differences indicate a slight variation in the function of the goddess.

As Chapter Five showed, the iconography of the Red Tārās found within the Twenty-one Tārās is clearly related to their function as described in the commentarial literature. The particular subjugating implements held by these goddesses include the *aśoka* branch which attracts a lover, the bow and arrow, and the noose. Within the *rNying-ma-pa* lineage some implements indicate victory in war, such as the victory banner.

Chapter Six discussed the nine variant forms of Red Tārā in A-paṃ gter-ston's work. In Texts AVI and AXVII she holds an iron hook and noose; in AXVII the hook is made of lotuses. As we can see this iconography is similar to that of *Sa-skyapa* goddess. The goddess in Text AV holds a red lotus and long-life vase, in Text AIX an iron hook and *utpala* with long-life vase on top. In Text AXI, as practised by the CGF, she holds a long-life vase and *utpala* with flower bow and arrow on top; here she is a semi-wrathful form of Kurukullā. Text AXVI sees a standing goddess with four arms holding a noose and a mongoose vomiting jewels. The most detailed

iconography is seen within Text AII, where Tārā stands adorned with bone ornaments wielding an iron hook, sunbeam noose, long-life vase filled with blood, and a mongoose vomiting jewels. As we can see again the iron hook and noose seem to be common implements held by the subjugating goddess (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976*ka, ja, nya, ma, tsa, dza, za*). Chagdud Tulku's own Red Tārā, originating from his Pure Vision, depicts another form of the goddess. She is red, seated in the lotus position, with seven eyes. Each of her hands holds a lotus, one topped with a long-life vase and the other with a bow and arrow.

Between the lineages of Pīṭheśvarī, the *Sa-skyapa* goddesses, the Red Tārās found within the Twenty-one Tārās, A-paṃ gter-ston's deities, Chagdud Tulku's *gter-ma* and the *Bimba Blossoms* text this thesis has presented twenty-nine separate iconographic forms of Red Tārā.

### ***Subjugation: The Function of Red Tārā Practice***

The basic examination of subjugation in Chapter Two identified the main functions as attraction, subjugation, magnetisation, and bewitchment of women, patrons and kings (Reynolds 2002). We examined the ten goals of and eight *siddhis* resulting from Kurukullā practice. Furthermore, we also discussed the mundane versus spiritual goals of subjugation. The research undertaken for this thesis adds to this knowledge.

Subjugating deities include the goddesses Kurukullā, Red Sarasvatī, Red Vasundhārā, Red Mārīcī, and of course Red Tārā. The gods comprise Red Avalokiteśvara, Red Gaṇapati, Red Jambhala, Red Mañjuśrī, and Red Hayagrīva, Ṭakkirāja, and Lha chen-po (Śiva). In A-paṃ gter-ston's collected works we find Red Tārā amongst his Thirteen Red Deities. The fact that Red Tārā is a subjugating deity separates her from the other aspects of the goddess, except for Kurukullā.

The main reason for the performance of a subjugation ritual is to attract support for one's *dharma* practice. This can be done through the magnetisation of a consort to aid practice, a king to sponsor one's actions, a teacher from whom one can learn, or students to whom one can spread the teachings. Ideally, the function of subjugation should be used to enhance and enable Buddhist practice along the path to enlightenment. However, it is easy to see that the idea of subjugation and control could possibly appeal to an errant practitioner who might employ these powerful methods for their mundane goals. The idea of acquiring wealth or prestige could be appealing. This is a concern that continues into modern day Buddhism. In fact the subjugating aspect of Red Tārā and Kurukullā practice is often either underplayed or held secret. This ritual initiation is not offered as commonly as other forms of the goddess, for instance Green or White Tārā. In fact when I asked Lama Tsering at the Chagdud Gonpa Foundation about the subjugating aspect of Red Tārā practice she stated that it was not of great concern. She elaborated that it was rarely mentioned or explicitly taught by Chagdud Tulku (Everest 2007). This is interesting as the text themselves clearly identify this form of Red Tārā as a subjugating deity, and her links to Kurukullā as her semi-wrathful form further highlight this aspect of her practice. It seems to be felt that Western practitioners should not be drawn to Red Tārā or Kurukullā practice in order to gain competence at subjugation.

As stated above the analysis of the iconography of these numerous Red Tārās has led us to a more detailed understanding of the implements held to symbolise the power and action of subjugation/ magnetisation. The most common implements have been seen to be the iron hook and noose. Beer describes how the iron hook pierces the heart or genitals, and the noose binds the neck (Beer 2003; 306-308). This certainly appears to be true in the *Sa-skyapa* texts. Text SV elaborates that important people are hooked by the neck, women by the genitals, and Gurus by the tongue. A-paṃ's

Text AVI explains that the hook summons the three realms and the noose binds the three worlds (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976za).

It is not only the iconography which has been described. The Pīṭheśvarī texts detail the place to perform subjugating rituals as charnel grounds, mountain peaks, caves, brothels, riversides, the place of the worldly *dākinīs*, and so forth (Texts PI and PIV), whilst Text PII emphasises a site conducive to one's own mind.

Meanwhile the *Sa-skyapa* cycle emphasised the implements to be used by the practitioner in performance of subjugating rituals. He should wear red clothes and sit on a red seat. His tools should be copper or brass and the fire-*pūja* pit should be semi-circular with the flame taken from the house of a king or prostitute. The firewood should have a sour taste and a red colour - for example miniature rhododendron (*ba-lu*), *tsam-pa-ka*, rose-, peach-, juniper-, *mdzo-mo*- wood, red sandalwood. Dyes and incense should be produced from 'Bri-mog, red sandalwood, and red saffron, red juniper and vermillion, and the practitioner should use a red sandalwood rosary.

As we can see the colour red which is symbolic of subjugation is used for everything from the robes worn to the dyes and woods used in the practice. Moreover a number of Red Tārās are depicted holding a red *utpala*. The practices also provide details of whom one might subjugate using these methods. These include the King, local chiefs and officials, important people, a woman to whom one is attracted, or even a Guru (Texts SI, SIII, and SVI). The Twenty-one Tārās subjugate those who spread gossip, expose one's fallacies, harass, criticise, or make trouble for the practitioner. Lawsuits are also dealt with and wars ended.

In A-paṃ gter-ston's cycle other worldly demons and gods are subjugated, these include: subjugating all phenomenon, magnetising powerful beings, overcoming ego-clinging 'Gong-po spirits, subjugating external perceptions, subjugating the object of practice, magnetising food and wealth, drawing the wheel of subjugation,

gathering a *saṃgha*, subjugating the Eight Demons, binding thieves and enemies, and destroying hindrances and enemies. This list includes a number of benefits directly related to *Dharma* practice such as attracting food and wealth which sustain one's practice, and gathering a *saṃgha* in order to spread the teachings. Obstacles and hindrances to practice are also overcome. The *Sa-skyapa* practice also provides the power to magnetise a Guru, who might teach one the *Dharma* and support one's practice. Given this information it is easy to see why these practices are considered so powerful and also why they are held to be secret; they might easily be misused by an errant practitioner intent on harm.

As for the modern day application of these rituals Part Three of the thesis investigated the current practice of Red Tārā within two Western *Dharma* groups. The first is the CGF, an authentic lineage descending from Chagdud Tulku. As for the second, the FJS, the authenticity of both the teacher, Traktung Rinpoche, and the teaching, *A Garland of Bimba Blossoms*, are under question by most followers of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. This investigation incorporated the current thinking on the transplanting of religious traditions to new sociological circumstances. These later chapters identified the limitations of the work of Stark and Bainbridge and also Nattier when applied to these movements. In fact it appeared that the term New Religious Movement was a better fit in the case of the FJS. In order to make this claim, Chapter Eight employed recently-developed methodologies and frames of reference from the field of New Religious Studies.

### ***Future Research***

The thesis has been undertaken within the period allocation for doctoral work. However, if there had been more time I would have translated the material relating to the Twenty-one Tārās myself. This might have led to more information concerning

not only the iconography of these deities, but also the function of subjugation. In the future I would like to pursue more field research, something that was not possible due to time and financial constraints, and would hope to ascertain whether a lineage of Pīṭheśvarī practice continues to this day. It is not possible to confirm or deny this without interviewing lineage masters from across the schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Due to the current political situation it was not possible to conduct fieldwork in Tibet, and as such I was not able travel to Bla-brang monastery in A-mdo. In the future I hope to make this trip in order to collect any surviving Red Tārā texts and to research the continuation of these Red Tārā practice. From the information available at this time it is not possible to determine which Red Tārā this practice refers to; it may well be an entirely new iconographic form of the goddess. I hope to conduct this research in the future, and to include it in a forthcoming book or journal article on the topic.

Another interesting focus for future study is the sMin-grol-ling Red Tārā lineage outlined in Chapter Two. Its relationship to the current Dalai Lama is a particularly fascinating aspect of this cult. Despite numerous visits to the exile monastery of sMin-grol-ling, due to the death of their Head, Minling Trichen, and the closure of the monastery for the period of mourning I was not able to acquire any information or to gain access to the texts. It is hoped that this might provide an interesting future project for myself or someone with greater access to the monastery.

Miranda Shaw pointed out in her work that Kurukullā is an under-studied goddess, an argument with which I agree. Given the scope of the present thesis, it was not possible to include a detailed examination of the cult of Kurukullā. It seems that a closer investigation of the literature pertaining to Kurukullā is warranted and might serve as a suitable topic for future scholars.



This study has clearly established that not all Red Tārās are Kurukullā. In fact only two Red Tārās discussed were related to Kurukullā, that of A-paṃ gter-ston's Text AXI and Kurukullā in the *rNying-ma-pa* Twenty-one Tārās. This thesis contributes to knowledge of Tārā and the wider field of goddess studies, the study of Global Buddhism, the place of the feminine in Buddhist tradition, and knowledge pertaining to iconography and the tantric ritual of subjugation. It provides a source for Buddhist scholars, scholars of goddess traditions and also for Tārā practitioners, and has ramifications for the field of goddess studies and also the understanding of little-studied Buddhist tantric ritual subjugation.



## Appendices

### **Appendix 1.**

#### **dBang du byed pa'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs (rDo-rje myu-gu)**

(371) rgya gar skad du/ ba shya tā ra sā dha nam/ bod skad du/ dbang du byed pa'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs/ 'phags ma sgrol ma la phyag 'tshal lo// tam las skyes pa'i utpa la tam yig gi dbus su mnan pa bsams la/ de yong su gyur pa las 'phags ma sgrol ma sku mdog ljang gu phyag g.yon pa na ud pa la bsams shing g.yas pa mchog sbyin mdzad pa bzang po'i stan la bzhugs pa/ don yod grub pas dbu brgyan par bsams nas ye shes sems dpa' ngang ro cig tu byas te/ om tā re tu ttā re tu re che ge mo dbang du gyis shig swā hā/ zhes pas bsgrub bya'i ming dang bcas pas gong du bstan pa'i grangs nges ba'i bzlas ba bya'o// mda' la sogs pa'i mtshon med (372) kyang ud pa las bsgrub bya'i ske bcings te/ rang gi lus kyi 'od kyis tshogs kyi de'i lus la bkangs [bkang] te/ rang gi dbang du bya'i gnas su gzhas par bya'o// zhes so// dbang du byed ba'i sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs slob dpon rdo rje myu gus mdzad pa rdzogs so//

## **Appendix 2.**

### ***sGrub thabs rin 'byung gi lhan thabs rin 'byung don gsal***

(Chandra 1974: 638-40)

(638) 'phags ma tsundā tā ra la/ skyabs sems tshad med bzhi sngon du 'gro bas sems dmigs med du mnyam par bzhag/ de nas seng ldeng gi sdong po ya la ga lo 'dab rgyas pa'i rtsa bar pad zla la tāṃ las rang nyid sgrol ma sku mdog dmar zhing dwangs pa/ ba spu'i khung bu re re nas 'od zer dmar po'i dra ba 'gyed pa/ dbu skra grol ba mu tig dmar po'i chun po bcings pa/ phyag g.yas bi tsu ra'i zhing gi 'bras bu nang ser la kha sngo ba pus mo'i steng du 'dzin cing/ g.yon po tis mtshan pa'i utpal dmar po thugs kar 'dzin pa/ zhabs skyil krung du bzhugs pa/ mu tig gtso bor gyur pa'i dar dang rin po ches brgyan pa/ thugs kar pad zla la tāṃ yig sngags 'phreng dang bcas pa gsal btab ste/ om tā re tuttā re tu re swā hā/ zhes ci nus bzla/ mthar lha sku mi dmigs par bsam la dge ba bsngo/ slar yang rang gi snying ga'i 'od kyis mdun gyi nam mkhar rje btsun ma sgrol ma 'khor dang bcas pa badzra sa mā dzah/ dkar gtor zhig bshams la/ bya rgyud ltar byin gyis brlabs/ yi ge bcu pa'i mthar om āḥ hūṃ lan bdun gyis phul/ mchod bstod byas la gsol ba drag tu btab/ rje btsun ma rang gi spyi bor (639) thim dge ba bsngo/ /

### **Appendix 3.1.**

#### **Glossary of Tibetan words provided in the Pīṭheśvarī literature and possible Sanskrit equivalents**

The words in this glossary are ordered according to the Tibetan alphabet followed by the possible Sanskrit equivalents.

#### **The Names of Lineage Holders:**

##### **Tibetan**

Paṇḍita Pa-ra-he-ta  
Paṇḍita Saṃ-gha ma-he-bha-dra  
Paṇḍita Saṃ-gha shrī  
Ma-ha ā-tsa-rya ratna shrī  
Wa-ni-ta bha-dra  
Saṃ-gha shrī-bha-dra

##### **Sanskrit**

Paṇḍita Parahita  
Paṇḍita Saṃghamahābhadrā  
Paṇḍita Saṃghaśrī  
Mahācārya Ratnaśrī  
Vanītabhadra  
Saṃghaśrībhadra

#### **The Eight Goddess names:**

##### **Tibetan**

Su-ra-ta ka-mi-ni  
Su-ra-ta bha-kṣi  
Su-ra-ta ma-li-ni  
Su-ra-ta tsandra  
Su-ra-ta sonta-ra/ sonta-ri/ sonta-re/ santo-ri  
Su-ra-ta u-gra

##### **Sanskrit**

Suratakāminī<sup>254</sup>  
Suratabhaksī  
Suratamālīnī<sup>255</sup>  
Suratacaṇḍī<sup>256</sup>  
Suratasundarī<sup>257</sup>  
Suratogrā<sup>258</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Kāminī is another form of the goddess Śoḍaśī (a.k.a. Sundarī/ Tripura-sundarī/ Caṇḍī). She is one of the ten *Mahāvidyā* goddesses (Kinsley 1997: 11, 40, 117, 254). As we can see three of this group of eight Su-ra-ta goddesses (Kāminī, Caṇḍī, and Sundarī) appear to be linked to the *Mahāvidyā* goddess Tripura-sundarī.

<sup>255</sup> Mālīnī is listed amongst the fierce goddesses born from Kārttikeya when Indra struck him with his thunderbolt. These goddesses, known as the *Mātrkā*, steal children. They are adopted by Kārttikeya as his mothers. This story is found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva* 217 (Kinsley 1998 [1986]: 152, 241). Mālīnī is also mentioned by Sircar (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 30).

<sup>256</sup> Sircar lists the goddess Caṇḍī as the *śakti* of a number of *pīṭha* sites, depending on the text consulted. She and her consort Mahādeva are located in the North at Jālandhara/ Jālaśaila (*Hevajra* and *Kālikā Tantras*) or at Stanadvaya (*Kālikā Tantra*). With Maheśvarī she is found at Amareśa (*Brhan-Nīla* and *Prāṇatoṣaṇī Tantras*). She is also located at Gaṇḍaka alongside the Bhairava Jagnnātha (*Pīṭhanirṇaya*) (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 12, 35, 40, 81, 86).

Caṇḍī is also known as Caṇḍikā, the 'violent, impetuous one'. Kinsley describes her as depicted in the seventh-century *Kādambarī* in which Caṇḍī is an epithet used for either Durgā or Kālī. She is worshipped in forests by the Śabara hunting tribe. Coburn states that there is virtually no reference to Caṇḍī/ Caṇḍikā prior to the 5th to 6th century *Devī-māhātmya*. He also mentions that in the *Caṇḍīśataka* she is referred to as the daughter of the Himalaya and the wife of Śiva (Coburn 1984: 94-96; Kinsley 1998 [1986]: 117). Day states that Caṇḍī became known in Buddhism as the Tārā Parnaśabarī. However, this has not been corroborated by other scholars (Day 1990: 90).

<sup>257</sup> Sundarī is listed as the *devi* of the sacred site of Śrīparvata in the *Pīṭhanirṇaya* (*Mahāpīṭhanirūpaṇa*) and in the *Śivacarita*. She is also mentioned in the *Devībhāgavatā* (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 37, 40, 54, 107). Sundarī is also known as Tripura-sundarī or Śoḍaśī in the *Mahāvidyā* group of goddesses, who are strongly associated with Śiva as forms of his wife.

Sundarī is sixteen years old, as indicated by her name Śoḍaśī. She is a peaceful red deity, depicted standing on a male figure. She holds the noose, goad, bow and arrow which are also the emblems of Kurukullā. Tripura-sundarī, 'she who is lovely in the three worlds', is one of the three aspects of the goddess Tripurā in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*. She was an important independent deity in Kashmir and South India prior to the development of the *Mahāvidyā* group. For more information on this deity Kinsley's *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine* is recommended (Kinsley 197: 11, 40, 43-44, 112, 123).

Su-ra-ta utta-ma/ uttam  
Su-ra-ti shwa-ri/ shwa-ri-ti/ shra-ri

Suratottamā<sup>259</sup>  
Surateśvarī<sup>260</sup>

### The Twelve Goddess names:

#### Tibetan

ka-rā-lī/ kā-rā-li/ ke-ra-li  
ka-re-ṭi/ kir-ti-ti/ ki-ri-ṭi/ ki-ri-ḍi  
dhi-ma/ bhi-ma  
na-rta-ki/ na-rte-ki/ nar-ti-ki  
pi-ka-ta/ ba-ka-ḍu/ bhe-ka-ṭa  
ma-u-dhi/ ma-u-ntri/ monḍam/ monḍi  
tsanḍi/ tsandra/ tsanḍrī  
dza-ti-li/ dzā-ṭi-li/ dza-hra-lī/ dzaṭ-lī  
dzi-ṭi/ dzi-trā/ dzo-trī  
ra-u-tri/ ra-u-dra  
shi-khanḍi/ shi-khanḍī/ shi-khi-nḍa  
shi-khi  
shi-khi bhi-ma/ shi-ksho  
u-ta-ka-ta/ u-ta-sha-ṭa/ utka-ti/ u-dra  
u-ṭi-jī

#### Sanskrit

Karālī<sup>261</sup>  
Kirīṭī<sup>262</sup>  
Bhīmā<sup>263</sup>  
Nartakī<sup>264</sup>  
Vikaṭā<sup>265</sup>  
Maṇḍī  
Caṇḍī<sup>266</sup>  
Jaṭī  
Jaṭilī  
Raudrī<sup>267</sup>  
Śikhaṇḍī/ Śikhaṇḍinī  
Śikhī  
Śikhibhīmā  
Utkaṭā  
Uttejī

<sup>258</sup> Ugra may mean either a mixed tribe, or fierce/ wrathful (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Ugrā is mentioned in *The Śākta Pīṭhas* (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 108).

<sup>259</sup> *uttam*= best/ excellent (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]).

<sup>260</sup> *Īśvara* refers to the 'Supreme Being' or 'god', and as such *Īśvarī* is the supreme form of the Goddess in the *Devī-māhātmya*. She is mentioned in *The Śākta Pīṭhas* (Coburn 1984: 138; Monier Williams 2005 [1899]; Sircar 1988 [1973]: 29).

<sup>261</sup> Karālā is an *Asura*, *Rakṣa* or *Deva-gandharva* (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Sircar mentions an image found at Padmāvatī near Narwar in Gwalior States. The image, known as Karālā, is of the mother-goddess Cāmuṇḍa who is a form of Tārā or Kālī (Sircar 1988 [1973]).

<sup>262</sup> The *Kirāta* are a degraded mountain tribe who became *Śūdras* through their neglect of religious duties. The *Śūdras* were the lowest of the four original castes who act as servants to the higher three (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). However, we also find a listing of the term *Kirīṭa* as a *pīṭha* site in the *Pīṭhanirṇaya*, in which the tiara is listed as the body part of the goddess with Bhuvaneśī as the *śakti* and Siddhirūpa as her consort (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 36, 88).

<sup>263</sup> The *Padma Purāṇa* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* identify Bhīmā as the mother-goddess associated with the holy site of Himālaya. In this case, the holy site is linked to the *yoni* (vagina) or *stana* (breasts) of the *śakti*. Sircar also lists one goddess, Bhīmārupā, who is located alongside her consort Kapālī at the sacred site of Vibhāsa in both the *Pīṭhanirṇaya* and the *Śivacharita*. There are also a number of sacred sites listed with Bhīmā in the name. Sircar states that in the seventh century Hiuen Tsang visited the site of Bhīmādevī in Gandhārā and mentions that it was associated with the worship of Mahādeva by *Tīrthikas* and *Pāśupatas*. There is also the sacred site of Bhīmāsthāna (the site of the mother-goddess Bhīmā) near Shahbazgarhi in Peshwar (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 8-9, 28, 37, 41, 104). Monier Williams describes Bhīmā as a terrifying form of Durgā (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Bhīmā. 'the one who is formidable', is also one of the seven assembled *ḍākinīs* in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* (Grey 2007: 232). Once again, this seems to indicate a link between the Pīṭheśvarī and Cakrasaṃvara.

<sup>264</sup> The *Nartakī* are female dancers, actresses, or singers (Monier Williams 2005 [1899]).

<sup>265</sup> In the *Sādhana-mālā* version of this text the goddesses Vikaṭā and Utkaṭā are combined into Vikaṭotkaṭā. The name Vikaṭā, is from the male Vikṛtā in the *Pīṭhanirṇaya*. He is the *Bhairava* at the sacred site of Janastāna, alongside his *śakti* Bhrāmarī (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 37). Vikaṭā may be a female version of this name.

<sup>266</sup> See the footnote on Caṇḍī above.

<sup>267</sup> Raudrī is a *śakti* mentioned in the *Tripurā-Upaniṣadbhāṣya* of Bhāskara-rāya as one of three forms of the Goddess, and is a consort of Rudra (Brook 1990: 97, 100, 153, 157; Monier Williams 2005 [1899]). Raudrī is also one of the thousand names of Kamalā in the *Śākta-pramoda* (Kinsley 1997: 230). Mention of her is found in the *Brhan-Nīla* (Sircar 1988 [1973]: 38).

**The Four Door Guardian Goddess names:**

**Tibetan**

ka-pu-tsi/ kaṃ-bu-ci/ kaṃ-bu-tsi/ kaṃ-bu-dzi  
do-mbi/ ḍo-mbi-ni/ ḍom-bi-nī  
pu-kkra-sī/ pukka-si/ pukka-sī  
ma-taṃ-gī

**Sanskrit**

Kāambojī  
Ḍombī  
Pukkasī  
Mātaṅgī

**Sacred Place names:**

**Tibetan**

ka-ling-ka/ ka-liṃ-ga  
kānyini/ kānytsi  
kā-ma-rū-pa  
ku-lu-tā  
ko-sa-la/ ko-sa-laṃ  
grī-ha-de-ba-ta  
go-dā-ba-rī/ go-dā-wa-rī  
tri-sha-ku-ne/ tri-sha-ku-ne-ru  
de-wī-ko-ṭi/ ḍe-bī-ko-ti  
na-ga-raṃ  
pre-ta-pu-ri/ bre-ta-pu-ri  
pu-llī-ra-ma-la-pa/ pu-llī-ra-ma-la-yaṃ  
ma-ru-di-shaṃ  
mā-la/ mā-la-wa  
dzā-lamdha-raṃ/ dzā-lan-dhara  
rā-me-shwa-ra/ rā-me-shwa-ri  
la-pā-ka/ laṃ-bā-kaṃ  
lidhi hi-mā-la/ hi-mā-la-yaṃ/  
sindhu  
su-wa-rṇa-dwī-pa  
so-rāṣṭaṃ/ so-so-rā-ṣwa  
ar-bu/ a-rbu-daṃ  
o-nya-lan  
o-tre

**Sanskrit**

Kaliṅga  
Kāñci  
Kāmarūpa  
Kulatā  
Kośala  
Gṛhadevatā  
Godāvarī  
Triśākuni  
Devīkoṭa  
Nagara  
Pretapuri  
Pullīramalaya  
Maru  
Mālava  
Jālandhara  
Rāmeśvara  
Lampāka  
Himālaya  
Sindhu  
Suvarṇadvīpa  
Saurāṣṭra  
Arbuda  
Uḍḍiyāna  
Oḍra

### **Appendix 3.2.**

#### **IHan cig skyes grub kyi gzhung 'grel (Lakṣmīṅkarā)**

(21) rdo rje dang ldan bram ze mo/ zhes bya ba ni dpal o rgyan gyi gnas de nyid na/ bram ze mo rdo rje zhes bya ba khrus dang gtsang sgra mthar phyin pa/ khrus dang gtsang sgra de tsam gyis dag pa dang grol bar 'dzin pa zhig gnas pa las de dus gzhan zhig na 'jug ngogs na khrus byed cing/ de'i mthar rang gi sdug pa'i lha la mchod pa byed cing gnas pa las/ rnal 'byor pa dga' ba'i rdo rje zhes bya ba des bram ze mo de'i snga phyi'i lo rgyus/ tha ga pa gcig nas gcig tu brgyud pa la thos te/ bram ze mo de rjes su gzung bar bzhed de/ bram ze mo de'i 'jug ngogs su thag pa de song ba dang/ bram ze mo de yang den khrus byed pa dang phrad de/ bram ze mo de la 'di skad ces smras so/ ci bram ze mo khyod de ltar khrus byas pas phyi'i dri ma 'ba' zhig dag par lta ba'am/ 'on te nang yang dag par lta/ bram ze mos smras pa/ gnyis ka dag par ba lta ste legs ldan chen po changs pas kyang de skad ces bstan to/ rnal 'byor pa dga' ba'i rdo rjes smras pa/ bram ze mo khyod kyi phyi'i dri ma dag pa la ni kho bo mi 'gegs kyi/ gal te khyod kyi phyi'i khrus kyi nang gi bdag nyid can yang dag par 'dod ba lta na ni kho bo dag par mi 'dod de/ de yang ji skad du/ gal te khrus kyi 'dag ldan/ nya pa rnams kyang dor byas shing/ nyid dang mtshan du gnas pa yi/ nya la sogs pa smos ci dgos/ zhes gsung la/ gzhan yang sā lu'i sa bon las ni sā lu nyid (22) 'byung gi/ khre rgod ni ma yin no/ bram ze mo de bzhin du nyon mongs pa'i gzhi las nyon mongs pa nyid skyei/ rnam par byang ba ni ma yin no/ bram ze mos smras pa/ 'on gang gis nang gi bdag nyid dag par 'gyur ba'i khrus de kho mo la bstan du gsol/ rnal 'byor pas smras pa/ gang lus dang dag gi 'bad pa med pa'i khrus kyi dag par gyis shig dang/ khyod kyi phyi nang ma lus par dag par 'gyur ro/ smras bskyes bu chen po de lta bu'i khrus de kho mos mi 'tshol gyis legs par bstan du gsol zhes smras nas/ snyi ma pa me tog gis bkad ste rang nyid kyi stod g.yogs dang bcas pa phul lo/ rnal 'byor pas smras pa/ bram ze mo nam mkha' yongs su dag pa'i dbyings nas sprin dag byung nas de nyid du thim pa'am/ chu klang yongs su dag pa las nya dag byung ba ji lta ba bzhin du bram ze mo khyod kyi sems la lta bar gyis dang/ gdod sangs rgyas thams cad kyi yul la 'jugs pa'i ye shes kyi chu zhes bya bas bdag tu lta ba'i dri ma ma lus par 'dag par 'gyur ro zhes bsgo nas rang gi gnas su denges te/ bram ze mo des kyang sangs rgyas thams cad kyi yul la 'jugs pa'i ye shes kyi tshul ji lta ba bzhin du rtogs te/ bdag tu lta ba'i dri ma can gyi bram ze gzhan rnams kyang 'dren cing gnas te bram ze mo de'i tshul ni de 'dra'o//



### Appendix 3.3

#### *Chapter Three: Text PII*

#### **dPal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa zhes bya ba**

(J. rDo-rje ka)

(134) rgya gar skad du/ shrī o ḍi ya na tā re kra mā bhi sa ma ya nā ma/ bod skad du/ dpal u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rim pa zhes bya ba/ 'phags ma sgrol ma la phyag 'tshal lo/ sdug bsngal srid pa'i mun pa ni/ sel bar byed pa'i nyi 'od can/ thugs kar snying rjes brlan pa la/ rtag tu bdag ni phyag 'tshal lo/ dang por re zhig rnal 'byor pa'am rnal 'byor mas/ bsam gtan gyi khang pa yid dang mthun par 'jam ba'i stan la 'dug nas/ rang gi snying gar a las byung ba'i zla ba'i dkyil 'khor la tām yig dmar po las 'od zer gyi tshogs 'phros pas ma lus pa'i nam mkha'i 'khor khyab par bsgom par bya'o/ de nas 'od zer gyi zhal mthong bar bya ba'i ma lus ba'i bla ma dang/ yi dam gyi lha dang/ de bzhin gshegs pa rnams bltas te/ de rnams la sems kyis mchod ba byas la/ dkon mchog gsum la skyabs su 'gro ba la sogs pa brjod de/ de nas brtan ba dang g.yo ba'i 'gro ba rang bzhin gyis stong ba'i bdag nyid dang ldan bar blta'o/ sngags brjod par bya'o/ [mantra removed]/ de'i rjes su nam mkha' la padma dang nyi ma la gnas pa'i hūm yig las skyes ba'i khro bo'i rdo rjes bgegs bskrad do/ rdo rje ra ba bsgom par gnas pa'i chos 'byung gi dbus su gzhal yas khang gi nang du/ zla ba'i dbus su ham yig bltas te de nas ham yig las de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad spro bar bye ste/ bdag nyid sgrol ma'i gzugs su bsgom par bya'o/ sku mdog dmar mo zhal bzhi pa phyag brgyad pa gar byed pa/ thod pa'i phreng ba can/ rgyan thams cad kyis brgyan pa/ stag gi pags pas smad g.yogs pa/ rnal 'byor ma'i tshogs kyi dbus na gnas pa/ spyang gsum ma/ zhal khro gnyer can/ de'i dang po'i zhal dmar po g.yas gyi gnag po/ g.yon ba'i ljang ba/ steng du zhi ba ser po'i g.yas pa'i phyag rnams na/ ḍa ma ru dang/ thod pa dang/ ral gri dang/ rdo rje 'dzin pa/ g.yon ba na utpa la dang/ rin po che dang/ (135) dril bu dang/ kha ṭwām ga 'dzin ba'o/ de nas tshogs padma la lha mo brgyad/ su ra ti shwa ri dang/ su ra ta sonta ri/ su ra ta tsandra/ su ra ta ma li ni/ su ra ta bha kṣi/ su ra ta ka mi ni/ su ra ta u gra/ su ra ta utta ma/ dkar mo/ ljang gu/ sngon mo/ ser mo/ dkar mo/ dmar mo/ sngon mo/ ser mo/ ji ltar g.yas kyis ḍa ma ru dang ka pā la 'dzin pa/ g.yon pa rnams kyis dril bu dang kha ṭwām ga 'dzin pa/ khro gnyer can/ thod pa'i phreng ba can/ rgyan thams cad kyis brgyan pa/ de'i yi phyi rol du 'khor lo rtsibs bcu gnyis pa la shi khi bhi ma/ shi khaṇḍī/ ka rā lī/ dzaṭ lī/ ra u dra/ dzo trī/ tsandrī/ ma u dhi/ pi ka ta/ u ta ka ta/ ki ri ṭi/ na rta ki/ de dag thams cad g.yon phyed dmar ba/ g.yas phyed ljang gu/ g.yas na 'khor lo dang rdo rje 'dzin pa/ g.yon na thod pa dang/ kha ṭwām ga 'dzin pa/ zhal khro gnyer can/ rgyan thams cad kyis brgyan pa/ skra grol ba/ g.yas bskum g.yon brkyang dang/ g.yon bskum g.yas brkyang gi gar gyis g.yas pa/ dang po g.yon dang/ g.yas su 'gro ba/ gzhan yang de'i phyi rol du sgo bzhi ma/ kam pu tsi/ pu kkra sī/ ḍom bi nī/ ma tam gī/ g.yas na gri gug dang thod pa 'dzin pa/ g.yon pas mgo bo dang/ kha tām ga 'dzin pa/ mche ba gtsigs pa'i zhal/ sbrul gyi rgyan gyis brgyan pa/ nyi ma'i gdan la g.yon bskum g.yas brkyang bas bdud bzhi'i steng du g.yon du bskor ba/ kha dog sna tshogs bsgom bar bya'o/ de nas gnas kyi cho ga bya ste/ de la mchog kha/ spyi bo/ rna ba g.yon/ lhag pa/ sog phrag/ rna ba g.yas/ smin ma'i bar/ mig gnyis/ dbung [dpung] pa/ mchan khung/ gnyis/ nu ma gnyis/ lte ba/ sna rtse/ kha/ thugs ka/ lte ba'i 'og/ gsang gnas/ bshang lam/ brla gnyis/ ngar gdong gnyis/ rkang pa'i rting/ rkang pa'i 'og/ rkang pa'i mthe bong/ bus [pus] mo gnyis la rim pa ji lta bar/ pu dzā o a/ (136) go rā de mā/ ka o tri ko/ ka la kā hi/ pre grī so su/ na si ma ku/ pu llī ra ma la yaṃ/ dzā lamdha raṃ/ o nya lan/ a rbu dam/ gnas bzhi'o/ go dā wa rī/ rā me shwa ra/ de wī ko ṭi/ mā la wa/ nye ba'i gnas bzhi'o/ kā mā rū pa/ o tre/ zhing gnyis so/ tri sha ku ne/ ko sa lam/ nye ba'i zhing gnyis so/ ka liṃ ga/ lam bā kam/ 'du ba gnyis so/ kānytsi/ hi mā la yaṃ/ nye ba'i 'du gnyis so/ bre ta pu ri/ grī ha de ba ta/ ma la ya gnyis so/ so rāṣṭam/ su wa rṇa ḍwīpa/ nye ba'i ma la ya gnyis so/ na ga raṃ/ sindhu/

dur khrod gnyis so/ ma ru di sham/ ku lu tā/ nye ba'i dur khrod gnyis so/ mchog kha/  
 thugs ka/ lte ba/ gsang gnas/ brla gnyis/ byin pa la rim pa bzhin du/ [mantra removed]  
 zhes bya ba ni go cha'o/ de rdo rje padma 'khor lo'i dbus su [mantra removed]/ de ltar  
 ye shes/ ye shes can gyis bsgom par bya'o/ de nas dbang skur bar bya'o/ lha mo'i dbu  
 la de bzhin gshegs pa lnga/ sur ti shwa ri la sogs pa la/ dbu la rin chen 'byung ldan no/  
 shi khi la sogs pa rnams la dbu la rnam par snang mdzad/ kaṃ bu tsi la sogs pa rnams  
 la dbu la mi bskod pa'o/ de nas argham sbyin par bya'o/ de nas bdud rtsi myang bar  
 bya'o/ de la yaṃ ram las dkyil 'khor gnyis kyi steng du padma'i snod bdud rtsi lngas  
 bkang nas sha/ go ha a ma om āḥ hūṃ des byin gyis brlab po/ de nas sngags bzlas pa  
 ni/ yi ge bcu phaṭ mthar sbyang swā hā mthar spangs pa'o/ lha mo la bzlas pa byas pa  
 thams cad la om sngar ming gi yi ge mthar hūṃ phaṭ sngags bzlas so/ [mantra  
 removed] dang ldan pa sgo'i lha mo rnams la'o/ bsgom pa las langs nas lha mo'i gzugs  
 su 'dzin par bsgom par bya'o/ ji ltar nus pas mchod pa'o/ gtor ma sbyin pa'o/ de la gtor  
 ma'i sngags 'di'o/ [mantra removed]/ zhes bya ba rtag tu byas na grub ba thob po/ de la  
 the tshom ma byed cig/ bcom ldan 'das ma u (137) rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i mngon par  
 rtogs pa'i rim pa rdzogs so// thugs rje chen pos dbang lan gsum bskur ba'i grub thob  
 wi ni tabha dra'i slob ma paṇḍi ta saṃ gha shrī bha dra dang/ bod kyi lo tsā ba 'jam  
 dpal sgeg pa'i rdo rjes bsgyur ba'o//

### **Appendix 3.4.**

#### *Chapter Three: Text PIII*

#### **U-rgyan-gyi sgrol-ma rim-pa** (J. rDo-rje kha)

(137) rgya gar skad du/ o rgyan tā re kra ma/ bod skad du/ u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i rim pa/ sgrol ma la phyag 'tshal lo/ lha rnam kun nam bcu gsum mam/ dgu'am lnga yi bdag nyid can/ gtso bo 'ba' zhig bsgoms nas ni/ sngags ni 'di rnam bzlas pa bya/ om tā re tuttā re tu re hūṃ phaṭ/ om su ra te shwa ri hūṃ phaṭ / om su ra ta sonta re hūṃ phaṭ / om su ra ta tsandra hūṃ phaṭ / om su ra ta ka mi ni hūṃ phaṭ / om su ra ta u gra hūṃ phaṭ / om su ra ta uttam hūṃ phaṭ / om shi khi hūṃ phaṭ / om bhi ma hūṃ phaṭ / om shi khandi hūṃ phaṭ / om kā rā li hūṃ phaṭ / om dzā ṭi li hūṃ phaṭ / om ra u tri hūṃ phaṭ / om dzi ṭi hūṃ phaṭ / om ma u ntri hūṃ phaṭ / om bhe ka ṭa hūṃ phaṭ/ om u ta sha ṭa hūṃ phaṭ / om ka re ṭi hūṃ phaṭ / om na rte ki hūṃ phaṭ / om dzaḥ kaṃ bu tsi hūṃ phaṭ / om hūṃ pukka sī hūṃ phaṭ / om maṃ ḍo mī ni hūṃ phaṭ / om ho ma taṃ gi hūṃ phaṭ / gsang sngags 'di rnam yang dag brjod/ snying gi dbus su gtso mo ste/ mchog kha la sogs gnas rnam su/ lha mo nyi shu rtsa bzhi bsgoms/ slob ma rnam sa la nges par ni/ lha rnam kun gyis byin gyis rlob/ u rgyan gyi sgrol ma'i rim pa gsang ba las kyang ches gsang brdzogs so// paṇḍi ta saṃ gha shrī dang/ lo tsā ba 'jam dpal sgeg pa'i rdo rjes bsgyur ba'o// om tā re tuttā re tu re hūṃ phaṭ/ om su ra te sha ri hūṃ phaṭ la sogs pa'o/ om a sha pu ca hūṃ phaṭ om hūṃ la sogs pa'o/ om tā re tuttā re da ha da ha/ pa tsa pa tsa/ ma tha ma tha/ i maṃ ba liṃ grīḥṇa grīḥṇa ma ma sarba ka ru ni/ swa da ya/ swa da ya/ hūṃ phaṭ swā hā/ gtor ma'i sngags so/ ḍa ki ni rdo rje ldan ma/ paṇḍi ta pa ra he ta/ grub thob wi ni tabha dra/ kha che'i paṇḍi ta saṃ bha ma he bha dra/ 'jam dpal gsar ma (138) des sa phug pa//

#### **Appendix 4.1.**

**sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub thabs rdo rje gdan pas mdzad pa bzhug so**  
(gDan pa 1988 [1731-41])

(429) rgya gar skad du/ stam tā rā wa sham bidhi na tsakra nā ma/ bod skad du/ sgrol ma dmar mos 'gro ba dbang du bsdu ba'i 'khor lo'i cho ga zhes bya ba/ rje btsun ma 'phags ma sgrol ma la phyag 'tsal lo/ dang por re zhig rnal 'byor pas/ ga bur dang/ gur gum dang/ gla rtsi dang/ tsan dan rnams kyis gro ga la utpal 'dab ma sum cu rtsa gnyis pa bris la/ 'dab ma re re la'ang sngags 'di dag tshes brgyad la bri bar bya'o/ [mantra removed]/ zhes lte ba dang bcas par ro/ [mantra removed]/ zhes pa ni mu khyud la'o/ steng 'og gi bdag nyid kyis 'dabs ma dang bcas par sum rim mo/ de nyid rab tu gnas pa byas pa la/ dril ba sradd bu dmar pos dkris shing/ sa'i mchod rten khru gang pa'i nang du gzhug par bya'o/ gdugs kyis dkyil 'khor ma reg pa'i sa'i maṇḍal la sindhu ra'm/ mtshal la sogs pa sbags par bya'o/ der mchod rten bzhag bar bya'o/ me tog a sho ka la sogs pa'am/ me tog lcags kyu can gyis sam/ med na me tog dmar po gang rung gis dus gsum du yang dag par mchod nas/ sngon du gsungs pa'i sngags dang/ sgrub bya'i ming spel dang bcas pa brgyad lhag pa brgya rab tu bzlas so/ de ltar (430) zhag nyi shu rtsa gcig gi bar du sgrub bar byas na/ 'khor los bsgyur pa yang nges par dbang du 'du bar 'gyur na gzhan lta ci zhig smos/ gal te 'grub par ma gyur na/ seng ldeng dmar po'i me la 'khor lo bdugs na/ the tshom med par 'grub par 'gyur/ sgrol ma dmar mos 'gro ba dbang du bya ba'i 'khor lo'i cho ga'o/ de'i sgrub thabs gsungs pa/ tshogs gnyis kyis sbyor ba sngon du btang bar bya'o/ de nas padma dmar po dang zla ba dmar po'i steng du utpal dmar po'i ge sar la hrīḥ dmar pos mtshan pa yong su gyur pa las bskyed pa'i sgrol ma dmar mo zhal cig phyag gnyis ma/ spyang gsum ma/ g.yas pa lcags kyu dang/ cig bshos kyis utpa las mtshan pa'i zhags pa [word missing: 'dzin] pa/ brgyad gnyas [gnyis] lon pa'i na tshod dang ldan pa/ dpa' mo'i cha byad dang ldan pa/<sup>268</sup> dpa' ma'i cha byad dang ldan pa/ rgyan sna tshogs pas brgyan pa/ sems dpa'i skyil krung du gnas pa/ 'od dpag tu med ba'i cod paṇ can du bsam la/ [mantra removed]/ zhes kha dog dmar po dang bcas pa'i 'od zer lcags kyu dang zhags pa lta bu rang gi snying ga nas 'phros pas sgrub bya gang dbang du bya ba'i snying ga la sogs bar lcags kyus gzung ste/ utpa las zhags pas mgul pa nas bcings shing bkug pa de nyid 'od du zhu nas rang gi thugs kar thim par bsam la/ sngags bzlas par bya'o/ bzlas ba'i man ngag (431) sgrol ma dmar mos 'gro ba dbang du bsdu pa'i man ngag 'khor lo dag dang bcas pa rdo rje gdan pa bsod snyoms pas mdzad pa rdzogs so// dge'o//

<sup>268</sup> This sentence is missing in the *sNar thang bstan 'gyur* version of the text.

## Appendix 4.2.

**sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs** (bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma 1810 *kha*)<sup>269</sup>

(610) sgrol ma dmar mo sa lugs la/ **skyabs sems tshad med bzhi sngon du btang ste/ shū nya tās stong par sbyangs/ stong ba'i ngang las rang sems a las zla ba dmar po'i steng du tam las utpa la tam yig gis mtshan ba'i 'od kyi 'phro 'du las/ rang nyid sgrol ma dmar mo bzhed cing chags pa'i nyams can/ g.yas lcags kyu pus mo'i steng du 'dzin cing/ g.yon utpa la dmar po'i sdong bu snyan gyi thad kar kha bye zhing rtša ba zhags ba'i rnam pa can thugs kar 'dzin pa/ sems dpa'i skyil mo krung gis bzhugs shing/ dar dang rin po ches brgyan pa/ spyān gsum dang ldan pa'o/ snying gar zla ba la hrīḥ dpral bar om/ mgrin par āḥ thugs kar hūṃ/ ye shes sems dpa' badzras mā dzaḥ dzaḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ dbang gi lha rnam kyis om [mantra removed]/ zhes gsung zhing dbang bskur/ sku gang dri ma dag/ chu lhag ma yang lud pa las 'od dpag med kyis dbu brgyan par bsam/ snying gar utpal dang zla ba la sa bon sngags 'phreng dang bcas pa gsal btab ste/ [mantra removed]/ zhes ci 'grub bzla/ thun mtshams su dge ba bsngo/ dkar gtor dang me tog dmar po la sogs pa'i mchod pa bshams/ mchod pa byin rlabs spyi dang mthun/ gtor ma bya rgyud ltar byin gyis brlabs/ rang gi snying ga nas 'od zer 'phros/ sgrol ma 'khor bcas (611) [badzra samādzaḥ padma ka ma la ye tam]/ snying po'i mthar i dam ba le ta kha kha khā hi khā hi/ zhes btags pa lan bdun gyis dbul/ argham la sogs pas mchod/ 'dod chags rnam dag lha mo ni/ dbang gi lha mo dpal chen mo/ 'jig rten gsum rnam g.yo mdzad ma/ sgrol ma de la gus pas 'dud/ ces bstod/ mchod sbyin gtor ma 'di bzhes la sogs 'dod don gsol ba btab/ yig brgya/ bzod gsol/ gshegs gsol rnam spyi dang 'dra/ / 'di'i rjes gñang bya ba la/ padma dmar po 'dab brgyad kyi lte bar tshom bu dmar po dang/ mchod gtor rnam bshams/ bdag bskyed sngon du 'gro bas/ mchod pa spyi dang mthun par byin gis brlabs/ mdun bskyed bsangs/ shūnya tās stong bar sbyangs/ stong pa'i ngang las zla ba dmar po'i steng du tam las utpa la tam yig gis mtshan ba'i 'od kyi bphro ['phro] 'du las/ sgrol ma dmar mo zhes pa nas/ dbu brgyan gyi bar gong bzhin/ de nas mchod bstod sngar bzhin bya/ mdun bskyed la dmigs pa'i bzlas pa ci 'grub bya/ gtor ma byin gyis brlabs te dbul ba nas 'dod don gsol btab kyi bar sngar bzhin bya'o/ / slob ma'i bya ba ni/ maṇḍal phul/ gsol ba 'debs pa 'di'i rjes zlos gsungs shig/ dus gsum sangs rgyas sogs kyis gsol ba lan gsum btag/ rgyud dag par bya ba'i phyir/ mdun bskyed kyi lha dang sangs (612) rgyas byang sems rnam kyis drung du skyabs 'gro sngon du 'gro bas/ byang chub kyi sems bzung ba la sogs pa bgyid snyam pa'i bsam pas 'di'i rjes zlos mdzod/ dkon mchog gsum la bdag skyabs mchi/ zhes sogs rgyun bshags lan gsum dang/ khyad par du sgrol ma'i rjes gñang stsal du gsol/ snyam pa'i 'dun pas 'di'i rjes zlos kyang gsungs shig/ slob dpon dgongs su gsol/ bdag la rje btsun sgrol ma'i rjes gñang ma lus pa stsal du gsol/ zhes lan gsum gyis gsol ba btab nas/ da sbyor brjes gñang gi gzhi dgod pa'i slang du dmigs pa 'di bzhin du mdzad par zhu/ [mantra removed]/ phyi nang gi dngos po thams cad mi dmigs pa stong pa nyid du gyur pa'i ngang las a las zla ba dmar po'i steng du khyed rang rnam kyis sems nyid kyi ngo bo tam las utpa la tam yig gis mtshan pa'i 'od kyi 'phro 'du las/ khyed rang rnam rje btsun ma sgrol ma dmar mo bzhad cing chags pa'i nyams can/ g.yas lcags kyu pus mo'i steng du 'dzin cing/ g.yon utpa la dmar po'i sdong bu snyan gyi thad kar kha bye zhing rtša bzhags pa'i rnam pa can thugs kar 'dzin pa/ sems dpa'i skyil mo krung gis bzhugs shing/ dar dang rin po ches brgyan pa/ spyān gsum dang ldan pa'o/ snying gar zla ba la hrīḥ dpral bar om/ mgrin par āḥ thugs kar hūṃ gis mtshan par gyur pa'i (613)**

<sup>269</sup> Sentences which directly relate to those also found with the *sGrol ma dmar mo sa lugs* of Tāranātha are presented in bold.

mos pa mdzod/ de nas mdun gyi tshom bu dang slob dpon yang rje btsun ma sgrol ma  
 dngos yin snyam pa'i mos gus byas pas/ slob dpon gyi thugs ka nas 'od zer 'phros/  
 mdun bskyed kyi lha'i thugs rgyud bskul/ de'i thugs ka nas 'od zer 'phros/ phyogs bcu'i  
 sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' thams cad kyi thugs rgyud bskul bas/ slob  
 dpon dang mdun bskyed kyi lha dang/ phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas dang byang chub  
 sems dpa' thams cad kyi thugs ka nas rje btsun sgrol ma'i sku che chung dpag tu med  
 pa byon/ khyed rang rnam kyi ba spu'i bu ga rnam nas char babs ba bzhin du sib sib  
 thim par mos pa mdzod/ [mantra removed] gnyis su med par thim/ de dag ni rjes  
 gnang gi gzhi dgod ba'o/ rjes gnang dngos la/ lung gsum las/ dang po rjes su bzlas pa'i  
 lung ni/ slob dpon gyi snying gar zla ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi steng du tam dmar po/ de las  
 sngags kyi 'phreng ba byung slob dpon gyi zhal nas thon/ khyed rang rnam kyi zhal  
 du zhugs/ thugs kar zla ba'i steng du tam dmar po gnas pa la thim/ de'i dus su phyogs  
 bcu'i sangs rgyas byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyi mkhyen brtse nus mthu thams cad  
 'od zer gyi rnam par sngags 'phreng dang lhan cig zhal du zhugs/ snying ga'i tam la  
 thim ba'i mos pa mdzod byas la/ [mantra removed]/ zhes snying po lan (614) gsum  
 dang/ [mantra removed]/ zhes las sngags lan gsum rjes zlos byar gzhus/ dang pos  
 byin gyis brlabs/ gnyis pas dbyer med du 'bris/ gsum pas brtan par byas pa'i mos ba  
 mdzod/ gnyis ba byin gyis brlabs pa'i lung ni/ slob dpon la me tog 'thor bzhin du 'di'i  
 rjes zlos mdzod cig/ bcom ldan bdag gis bzung lags kyi/ bdag la 'go bar mdzad du  
 gsol/ zhes lan gsum/ de ltar bul ba'i me tog de nyid slar yang byin gyis brlabs te/  
 khyed rang gi spyi bor phul ba'i mos ba mdzod cig/ slob dpon gyis me tog gtor zhing/  
 bcom ldan 'di la sogs dang/ rig pa 'dzin pa 'di rnam la rje btsun ma sgrol ma'i sku  
 gsung thugs kyi byin rlabs ma lus pa 'jug par gyur cig/ gsum pa dam bca' ba'i lung gi  
 phyir/ bcom ldan 'das rje btsun sgrol ma 'di nyid ji srid byang chub ma thob bar gyi yi  
 dam du bzung ngo// bdag thugs kyis ma btang zhig snyam pa'i bsam pas 'di'i rjes zlos  
 gsungs shig/ slob dpon dgongs su gsol/ bdag rig ba 'dzin pa ming 'di zhes bgyi ba dus  
 'di nas bzung ste/ ji srid byang chub snying po la mchis kyi bar du/ bcom ldan 'das rje  
 btsun sgrol ma 'khor dang bcas pa yi dam gyi lhar bzung nas 'di'i gsang sngags nyi ma  
 re re bzhin 'di tsam re 'don par dam (615) 'cha' lags so/ zhes lan gsum brjod/ des dngos  
 gzhi lung gsum song/ rjes kyi bya ba rnam spyi dang 'dra'o// //

## **Appendix 6.**

### **Red Tārā in the Collected Works of A-paṃ gter-ston:**

**Red Tārā in A-paṃ gter-ston's 1976 Collected Works** (Sangs-rgyas bla-ma don-grub 1976)<sup>270</sup>

#### **Volume Three (Ga)**

**Text AI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976nga)

1-6 *rJe btsun sgrol ma'i brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs bzhugs:*<sup>271</sup>

*The Supplication of Venerable Tārā's Lineage*

**Text AII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ja)

7-18 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sgrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub pa padma'i rgyan can bzhugs so:*

*The Lotus Adornments, The Sādhana of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AIII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ra)

19-23 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshogs mchod bzhugs so:*

*The Feast Offering of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AIV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ya)

25-28 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i bskang bzhugs:*

*The Fulfilment Rite of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976nya)

29-31 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i bsgrub thabs bzhugs: From The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma. The Sādhana of Red Tārā.*

**Text AVI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976za)

33-35 *Thugs gter las: sGrol dmar nang bsgrub dbang gi lcags kyu bzhugs so:*

*The Iron hook of the Subjugating Inner Meditation on Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AVII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ca)

35-35 *rJe btsun sgrol ma'i pra sgrub:*

*The Mirror Divination Practice of Venerable Tārā.*

**Text AVIII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976cha)

37-47 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar po'i kha byang 'phrul gyi me long bzhugs so:*

*The Red Tārā Guide from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma [entitled] The Magical Mirror.*

**Text AIX** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ka)

49-50 *sGrol ma dmar mo'i gsang bsgrub bzhugs:*

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<sup>270</sup> The information is provided in the following order: Text number, Folio number, Tibetan language title, English language title.

<sup>271</sup> The : symbol used here indicates a *gter-tshag* in the original Tibetan text.

*The Secret Sādhana of Red Tārā.*

**Text AX** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976'a)

51- 54 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar po la brten pa'i dbang sdud me yi las bzhugs so:*

*The Subjugating Fire Pūja Relying on Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AXI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ma)

55-66 *Thugs mchogs gter bcud 'dus pa las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo la brtan nas mandal cho ga dbags bsam snying po bzhugs so:*

*The Heart Essence According to the Maṇḍala Rite Relying on Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AXII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ha)

67-70 *rDzogs pa chen po dang 'brel ba'i sgrol ma'i mandal cho ga gser gyi yang zhun bzhugs so:*

*The Refined Golden Maṇḍala Rites of Tārā Connected with the Great Perfection [rDzogs-chen].*

**Text AXIII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976kha)

71-74 *Chos nyid nam mkha' klong mdzod las: sGrol ma'i mandal bsdus chog zab pa'i snying po brgyad ldan zhes bya ba bzhugs so:*

*The Essence of the Profound Practice of the Collection of the Maṇḍala of Tārā [entitled] The Eight Endowments, from The Treasure of Expansive Sky Dharmatā [True Nature].*

**Text AXIV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ga)

75-77 *rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo smon lam don gnyis lhun grub ces bya ba bzhugs so:*

*The Spontaneous Two Benefits [to Oneself and Others] Aspirational Prayer to Venerable Red Tārā.*

**Text AXV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976tha)

79-87 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshe sgrub bzhugs so:*

*The Long-life Practice of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AXVI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976tsa)

89-99 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo'i g.yang sgrub bzhugs so:*

*The “Calling in of the Good Fortune” of Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

**Text AXVII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976dza)

101-109 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: Yang zab sgrol dmar la brten nas me mchod dbang gi lcags kyu bzhugs so:*

*The Iron hook of the Subjugating Fire Offering Consecration Relying on the Most Profound Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*



**Text AXVIII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976sa)

111-45 *Thugs gter las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo'i las tshogs nor bu'i phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so:*

*The Yogic Applications of Venerable Red Tārā* [entitled] *The Garland of Jewels from the Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXIX** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976zha)

147-49 *Thugs gter las: sGrol dmar bcud len rdo rje'i rgya can bzhugs so:*

*The Red Tārā Essence Extraction* [bCud-len] *with the Seal of the Vajra from the Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXX** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976da)

151-52 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i las sbyor sde brgyad dbang sdud lcags kyu snying 'dren dmar po bzhugs so:*

*The Actions of Red Tārā. The Iron hook that Subjugates the Eight Classes* [of Gods and Demons entitled] *The Red Heart Guide from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXXI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976la)

153-61 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i zab dbang bzhugs so:*

*The Profound Empowerment of Red Tārā from the Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXXII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976tsha)

163-67 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo'i srog 'khor bzhugs so:*

*The Life-force Cakra of Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXXIII** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976ta)

165-68 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i dbang sdud bzhugs so:*

*The Subjugating Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXXIV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976na)

169-74 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma'i las sbyor zab mo bzhugs:*

*The Profound Actions of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind* gTer-ma.

**Text AXXV** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976sha)

175-89 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i las sbyor dgra bgegs dpung 'joms bzhugs so:*

*The Actions of Red Tārā. Defeating the Army of Enemies and Hinderances from the Mind* gTer-ma.

#### **Volume Four (Nga)**

**Text AXXVI** (A-paṃ gter-ston 1976wa)

1-188 *Thugs gter dmar po lha bcu gsum gyi nang tshan/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i rgyab chos gnas gsang thugs kyi sgron me'i don 'grel gser gyi yang zhun/*

*The Refined Golden Commentary of the Lamp of the Mind* [Clarifying the] *Essential Points on the Background Teachings of Red Tārā Belonging to the Thirteen Deities Red Mind* gTer-ma.

**Red Tārā in A-paṃ gter-ston's 1985 Expanded Collected Works**  
(A-paṃ gter-ston 1985)<sup>272</sup>

**Volume Six (Cha)**

9-16 *rJe btsun sgrol ma'i brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs bzhugs so:*  
*The Supplication of Venerable Tārā's Lineage*

17-30 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub pa padma'i rgya can bzhugs so:*  
*The Sādhana of Red Tārā [entitled] The Lotus Adornements from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

31-38 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshogs mchod bzhugs:*  
*The Feast Offering of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

39-46 *Thugs gter las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i bskang ba bzhugs:*  
*The Fulfillment Rite of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

47-60 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo la brten nas maṇḍal cho ga dbags bsam snying po bzhugs so:*  
*The Heart Essence According to the Maṇḍala Rite Relying on Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

83-88 *rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo'i smon lam don gnyis lhun grub ces bya ba bzhugs so:*  
*The Spontaneous Two Benefits [to Oneself and Others] Aspirational Prayer to Venerable Red Tārā*

89-98 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshe sgrub bzhugs so:*  
*The Long-life Practice of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

117-28 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las: rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo'i g.yang sgrub bzhugs so:*  
*The "Calling in of the Good Fortune" of Noble Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

**Volume Seven (Ja)**

359-546 *Thugs gter dmar po lha bcu gsum gyi nang tshan/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i rgyab chos gnang gsang thugs kyi sgron me'i don 'grel gser gyi yang zhun zhes bya ba bzhugs so/*  
*The Refined Golden Commentary of the Lamp of the Mind [Clarifying the] Essential Points on the Background Teachings of Red Tārā Belonging to the Thirteen Deities Red Mind gTer-ma.*

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<sup>272</sup> Folio number, Tibetan language title, English language title

Volume Ten

203-206 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrubs thabs bzhugs/*  
*The Sādhana of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

207-208 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar nang sgrub dbang gi lcags kyu bzhugs/*  
*The Iron hook of the Subjugating Inner Meditation on Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

209-222 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i sgrub pa lha'i sgra can bzhugs so/*  
*The Sādhana of Red Tārā [entitled] The Divine Voiced One from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

223-25 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i las sbyor sde brgyad dbang sdud lcags kyu snying 'phro dmar po bzhugs so/*  
*The Actions of Red Tārā. The Iron hook that Subjugates the Eight Classes of Demons [entitled] The Red Heart Guide from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

225-38 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma'i las sbyor zab mo bzhugs/*  
*The Profound Actions of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

229-38 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshe sgrub bzhugs so/*  
*The Long-life Practice of Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

239-40 *sGrol ma dmar mo'i gsang sgrub bzhugs/*  
*The Secret Sādhana of Red Tārā.*

241-53 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ rJe btsun sgrol ma dmar mo la bstan nas maṇḍal cho ga dpag bsam snying po bzhugs so/*  
*The Heart Essence According to the Maṇḍala Rite Relying on Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

254-66 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ rJe bstun sgrol ma dmar mo'i g.yang sgrub bzhugs so/*  
*The "Calling in of the Good Fortune" of Venerable Red Tārā From The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

267-70 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dbang sdud bzhugs so/*  
*The Subjugating Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

271-72 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ rJe bstun sgrol ma dmar mo'i srog 'khor bzhugs so/*

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<sup>273</sup> Folio number, Tibetan language title, English language title

*The Life-force Cakra of Venerable Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

273-78 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i tshogs mchod bzhugs/*  
*The Feast Offering of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

279-82 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i bskang ba bzhugs/*  
*The Fulfilment Rite of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

283-88 *rJe bstun dgrol ma dmar mo'i smon lam don gnyis lhun 'grub ches bya ba*  
*bzhugs so/*  
*The Spontaneous Two Benefits [of Oneself and Others] Aspirational Prayer to*  
*Venerable Red Tārā*

289-97 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ Yang zab sgrol ma dmar mo la brten nas*  
*me mchod dbang gi lcags kyu bzhugs so/*  
*The Iron hook of the Subjugating Fire Offering Consecration According to the Most*  
*Profound Red Tārā from The Collected Essence of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

297-308 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar mo la brten pa'i dbang sdud me yi las bzhugs*  
*so/*  
*The Actions of the Fire Subjugation Relying on Red Tārā From the Mind gTer-ma.*

309-312 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i zab dbang bzhugs so/*  
*The Profound Empowerment of Red Tārā from the Mind gTer-ma.*

313-16 *rJe bstun sgrol ma'i lha tshogs bzhugs so/*  
*The Assembled Deities of Red Tārā*

317-28 *Thugs gter las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i las sbyor dgra bgegs dpung 'joms 'bar*  
*ba'i tho chen zhes bya ba bzhugs so/*  
*The Actions of Red Tārā [entitled] The Blazing Hammer Defeating the Assembly of*  
*Enemies and Hinderances, from the Mind gTer-ma.*

329-58 *Thugs gter las/ rJe bstun sgrol ma dmar mo'i las tshogs nor bu'i phreng ba*  
*zhes bya ba bzhugs so/*  
*The Yogic Applications of Noble Red Tārā [entitled] The Garland of Jewels, from the*  
*Mind gTer-ma.*

359 *Thugs mchog gter bcud 'dus pa las/ sGrol ma dmar mo'i kha byang 'phrul gyi me*  
*long bzhugs so/*  
*The Red Tārā Guide [entitled] The Magical Mirror, from the The Collected Essence*  
*of the Supreme Mind gTer-ma.*

## **Appendix 8.**

### **A Garland of Bimba Blossoms: An extremely concise Red Tara puja**

HUNG, O-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG TSAM  
PÉ-MA GÉ-SAR DONG-PO LA  
YA-TSEN CHO-GI NGO-DRUB NYÉ  
PÉ-MA JUNG-NÉ ZHÉ-SU-Drag  
KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR  
KHYE-KYI JÉ-SU DAG DRUB KYI  
JIN-GYI-LOB CHIR SHEK-SU-SOL  
GURU PÉ-MA SIDDHI HUNG

The autumn moon of pure appearance,  
Rising as unsullied nature,  
Manifests compassion's magic,  
As resplendent sublime Tara.

A garland of uncounted treasures,  
Inseparable from the Dharmakaya,  
A beauty beyond any measure  
Adorned by wisdom love's great brilliance.

In noble Tara, joyful savioress,  
Mother of victorious ones,  
In wisdom's fullness overflowing,  
I go for refuge until attainment.

Until the morning sun of unstained enlightenment dawns  
I will never waiver from this commitment of refuge. 3x

Deluded beings lost and suffering,  
Unaware of their own nature,  
Wander weary within Samsara,  
Please come quick dispel their turmoil.

For every precious sentient being,  
For those who roam confusion's labyrinth,  
Unaware of Mind as Suchness,  
For these I rouse great bodhicitta.  
Until the evening sun of baseless confusion falls below the horizon of wisdom  
I will never forsake precious parent beings. 3x

HO:  
Appearing in an orb of light,  
Appearing as a living flame,  
Appearing brilliant emptiness  
Wonderment beyond conceptions.

A maiden flush with youth's resplendence,

An invitation beyond all cares,  
Purifying mind's desiring,  
Into the aimless great affection.

Her color red, the wine of love,  
Her lips like crimson bimba fruit  
Her face a vision of sweet beauty,  
Sensual, charming, love's adornment.

Birthplace of victorious ones,  
Self luminous, illuminating,  
Pervading bliss and emptiness  
Self liberating all obstructions.

Her hair perfumed with jasmine flowers  
Her ornament the crescent moon.  
Her jewels and silks adorn appearance,  
Playful wisdom's ornament.

You draw all beings like bees to flowers,  
And wander through worlds as purest love,  
You cause conception to swoon in rapture,  
You lay to rest the subtle hindrance.

Her two legs firm in standing posture,  
Her hips enticing and entrancing.  
Her breasts and bhaga swell with passion,  
Great strength and love that liberates.

Tara lovely, all inviting,  
Refuge of those with strong desire,  
Vanquisher of all delusions,  
Sovereign queen of pure appearance.

Her right hand offers flowing nectar,  
Her left holds bow and lotus,  
Her three eyes see the triple kaya,  
And draw all beings into wisdom.

Tara love's own invitation.  
Lord and refuge of our hearts,  
I make prostrations without number,  
And offer cloudbanks of delights.  
I confess the mind's confusions,  
And actions harmful from this source.  
I rejoice with joy enthralling  
In actions of pure love and wisdom.  
I pray you turn the wheel of dharma,  
I pray, remain for precious beings.  
With heartfelt love and pure compassion,  
I dedicate the gathering merit.

Tara who is the blossoming lotus of Dharmakaya, to you I pray.  
Tara who is the shining camphor of Sambhogakaya to you I pray.  
Tara who is Nirmanakaya's impartial love to you I pray.  
Tara who entices the mind with beauty, to you I pray.  
Mother of liberation to you I pray.  
Radiant lotus to you I pray.  
Fullness of love to you I pray.  
Conquering Buddha to you I pray.  
Essence of wisdom to you I pray.  
OM TARE TUM SO HA

The outer world a bliss drenched pure realm.  
The inner world the vajra city.  
The secret world unsullied wisdom.  
The triple kayas of a Buddha.

Beyond all notions of appearance,  
Beyond the concept emptiness,  
Beyond the tedium of delusion,  
Bliss and Being and Nothingness.

Through this merit may I attain,  
Precious Red Tara's unequaled state,  
And may all beings barring none,  
Be accomplished in this way.

*Seven Line Prayer to Tara:*

Uncreated Dharmakaya's Luminous beauty manifest,  
Precious Tara joyful victor please deliver me from peril.  
Bliss bestowing, liberating, mother of all sentient beings,  
Precious Tara noble victor, please deliver all from suffering.  
You who never stray or wander, from unwavering basic space,  
Precious Tara, Supreme Mother, please deliver us from folly.  
Refuge of desirous beings you never fail to hear our prayers!  
OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA:

*One day while wandering in the woods of Blazing Jewel Mountain I met a most extraordinary manifestation of great profound affection. She said, "Here, eat this." and offered me a red fruit. Upon eating it my field of experience glowed bright and warm and the words of this sadhana appeared in my mind. May all who encounter it swiftly find unstained great joy and aimless great love. (Traktung Rinpoche).*





## **Bibliography**

Texts allocated a text number (e.g. Text PI) within the main body of the thesis are accompanied by their relevant number within the Bibliography.

Texts located in the TBRC database are followed by their TBRC work number which begins with the prefix W.

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The text numbers for the various Tibetan texts mentioned within the main body of the thesis are provided here at the start of the bibliography for the ease of the reader.

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Text PIII ('Jam-dpal sgeg-pa'i rdo-rje kha)  
Text PIV (Vajravatī and Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan)  
Text PV (Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan)  
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### ***Sa-skyā* Red Tārā Texts**

Text SI (Vāgiśvarakīrti 1902: 1b-2b)  
Text SII (rDo-rje gdan-pa 1902: 2b-3b)  
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Ye-shes-sde, Dānaśīla and Jinamitra (tr.)

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