The Carefree Dzogchen Yogi of Dolpo, Tadru Orgyan Tenzin (1657-1737)

A Partial Translation and Study of The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin (sprang rgaṅ o rgyan bstan 'dzin pa'i rnam thar bsdus pa)

In memory of a brilliant hidden yogi, the bodhisattva Thomas Barr (1943-2022), whose enthusiasm for this project inspired its completion.

Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation Textual Interpretation and Philology
Kathmandu University Centre for Buddhist Studies at Rangjung Yeshe Institute

August 28, 2023

Michael D. Smith
Abstract

This paper offers a contextual study of *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin* (*sprang rgyan bstan ’dzin pa’i rnam thar bsdus pa*), one of two biographical works available about Tadru Orgyan Tenzin (*lta gru o rgyan bstan ’dzin*, 1657-1737). Orgyan Tenzin was well-known in his time. He was a prolific teacher of Vajrayāna practice and Dzogchen and mahāmudrā meditation active in all areas of Dolpo from the 1680s until his death. Previously, his life has been briefly introduced by Ehrhard (2013) and Schaeffer (2004).

Chapter 1 of this paper discusses academic literature relevant to this study and provides an overview of the methodology of this thesis. Chapter 2 introduces the place, time period, and circumstances of his life; and provides an overview of Orgyan Tenzin’s travels and activities. Chapter 3 summarizes what is known about his numerous teachers and the primary textual transmissions Orgyan Tenzin received. Chapter 4 describes the genre of Tibetan spiritual biography and Chapter 5 explores the inter-textual aspects of Orgyan Tenzin’s biographical writings, with attention given to the unique textual relationship between Orgyan Tenzin’s shorter length autobiography, translated here, and his longer collection of songs, *The Melodies from Mountain Retreat, by the Lord of Yogis Orgyan Tenzin* (*rnal ’byor gyi dbang phyug o rgyan bstan ’dzin zhes bya ba’i ri khrod kyi nyams dbyangs*). Other inter-textual characteristics of the autobiography are examined, which are detailed in the footnotes to the translation, along with relevant translations of passages from *The Melodies*. Comprehensive catalogues of the 220 songs indentified in the two biographies are included as appendices.
Acknowledgements

Over the course of two decades I have had the fortune to learn under many skillful teachers, all of whom deserve credit for providing me the tools to conduct this research and translation. Primary among them are my classical Tibetan teachers: Anne Klein at Rice University, Catherine Dalton, Diane Denis, Gerd Kintschar and David Teasdale at the Rangjung Yeshe Institute. Also, my spoken Tibetan teachers: Khamlung Rinpoche, and Tinley Dondrup and Tseten Chonjor. I have also had the fortune to explore religious studies under David Gray, William Parsons and Jeffrey Kripal at Rice; Hubert DeCleer; and Philippe Turenne and Daniel McNamara at RYI, who helped mold my over-ambitious ideas into this paper. I am also grateful to Klaus Dieter Mathes who kindly served as an external reviewer for this MA thesis.

Khanyam Rinpoche and Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche provided valuable assistance identifying this topic of study and clarifying key questions. Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok kindly sat with me to check the translation for errors, discuss Dolpo history, and identify places in Dolpo. His enthusiasm motivated me greatly, along with our friend Thomas Barr, who showed enormous interest in this project but passed away soon after work began. I have dedicated this study to him.

As this is ultimately a project with the dharma in heart, it would not have any life without my Buddhist teachers with whom I have studied, primarily His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tsikey Chokling Rinpoche, Choky Nyima Rinpoche, Phakchok Rinpoche, Adzom Paylo Rinpoche, Chamtrul Rinpoche, and the numerous druplas and lopöns at Rangjung Yeshe Institute.

I would also like to offer sincere thanks to the Tsadra Foundation for its generous scholarships to study at RYI, which made this project possible. I am also indebted to my most kind parents, who have supported us in so many ways through the years. Finally, without the patience, support and advice of my wife Pema Chime Gurung and her native knowledge of the Dolpo dialect and Himalayan Buddhist heritage, this project would never have come to fruition.
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Introduction

While enjoying a lunch in the fall of 2021 in Boudha, Kathmandu with Khanyam Rinpoche and his family from Saldang, Dolpo, I mentioned my interest in Dolpo history. He gifted me a copy of Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok’s anthology of fourteen biographies of Dolpo lamas, which includes the shorter length biography of Tadru Orgyan Tenzin (*lta gru o rgyan bstan 'dzin*, 1657-1737), *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin* (hereafter referred to as *The Condensed Life*).¹ I looked up his longer collection of songs, *The Melodies from Mountain Retreat* (hereafter referred to as *The Melodies*). Upon looking through both texts, I was struck by the remarkable breadth of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs, as well as their beauty and profundity. I decided to attempt to translate some of them, in order to better understand Orgyan Tenzin’s teachings (to benefit my own mind), and to make some of the obscure literature of Dolpo available for a wider audience (to benefit others’ minds). This audience includes the growing English-literate population young people from Dolpo. The present work is the first phase of this project, which also aims to add to the growing knowledge about the spiritual transmission of the people of Dolpo and the Himalayas.

While reading *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*, a number of questions emerged: What do these texts tell us about the complex interrelated religious transmissions in Dolpo in the seventeenth and eighteenth century? Who were the teachers of Orgyan Tenzin, and what textual and practice transmissions informed his teachings? Since both texts are biographies of Orgyan Tenzin, what are the relationships between the condensed biography (*The Condensed Life*) and his longer collection of songs (*The Melodies*)? Like many students of Buddhism, I have been encouraged to read spiritual biographies by my own teachers, which have been deeply inspiring.

¹ Orgyan Tenzin refers to himself as the “old beggar” (*sprang rgyan*), following the example of Jetsün Milarepa and many yogins after him, such as Orgyan Tenzin’s teacher Thupten Wangpo and his contemporaries Chökyong Palzang and Shakya Palzang, who refer to themselves as “beggars” (*sprang po*).
In the present context, what can we learn about the genre of spiritual biography from Orygan Tenzin’s biographies? How did other texts influence the content of his biography? Finally, what is the make-up and nature of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs, and what were the primary messages he wished to convey to future practitioners?

This study is an attempt to shed light on these questions. It begins with an introductory presentation of the scholarly sources and methodologies that have informed this analysis of Orgyan Tenzin’s writings (Chapter 1). It then proceeds to a discussion of the characteristics of the religious culture in which The Condensed Life was composed, along with a summary of Orgyan Tenzin’s life (Chapter 2). It then provides an overview of the lives and primary transmissions of his main teachers (Chapter 3). Next, it examines some of the characteristics of the genre of Tibetan language spiritual biography (Chapter 4) based on some examples from spiritual biographies of Orgyan Tenzin’s contemporaries, among the dozens of spiritual biographies preserved from Dolpo. Finally this paper explores the texts attributed to Orgyan Tenzin and their relationships with The Condensed Life, with a discussion of their inter-textual features (Chapter 5).
Chapter 1: Literature Review and Methodology

A presentation of local literature provides a far more intimate description of the ways of life and of thought of these people of Dolpo, than I could ever achieve myself by direct analytical means... to give a realistic description of the religious life and the strange beliefs of these people.2

-David Snellgrove, *Four Lamas of Dolpo*

The Purpose of Translating Tibetan Language Biographies

Since Evans-Wentz published his translation of Milarepa's biography in 1928,3 dozens of life stories of Tibeto-Himalayan persons and their songs have been translated (and retranslated) into European languages, providing their readership gateways into Tibetan Buddhist and Bön culture and ideas. Many explicitly state that they are intended to encourage or support their readers in spiritual practice,4 and in the post-World War Two era translations were also produced to “be the ambassadors of goodwill between East and West.”5 For example, Chögyam Trungpa states in his introduction to the translation of Marpa Lotsawa’s biography that he hoped it “will be of some use to those who are practicing Buddhism, as well as to those who are purely interested in how Buddhism comes from one culture to another[...] to cross the cultural gap and enlighten people.”6

Not all translations of Tibetan language biographies are based on textual sources—for example recent translations have been constructed from interviews with teachers and/or their disciples.7 Other modern Himalayan biographies have been written, in Tibetan as well as English, to describe the contemporary culture and situation of people in Tibet and the Himalayas,

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3 Edwin Arnold published his psuedo-translation of the life story of the Buddha, based on Sanskrit sources, as *The Light of Asia* in 1879. Translations from Sanskrit and Pāli literature are beyond the scope of this study.
4 Barron, 2003 and Akester, 2012 are but a few of numerous examples.
5 Jivaka, 1962, p. vi (editor’s note).
6 Trungpa, 1982, p. xv.
7 Such as Urgyan, 2005; Smith, 2007; and Terrone, 2010.
including Dolpo. Nonetheless, the vast majority of biographies about Tibetan and Himalayan persons are spiritual accounts of past adepts, with the intention to propagate Buddhist information and ideas through presenting “worthy role models who can serve as a sacred pattern for our lives.” Many of these are meticulously researched, containing rich information in footnotes and appendices, produced for an audience of general readers with a background in Buddhism as well as for academic scholars. Matthew Kapstein remarks that such annotated translations provide a “record of many dimensions of Tibetan life... [that] contribute to our understanding of and receptiveness to a now vanished world,” that are “a major contribution to Tibetan Studies.” This paper contributes to our understanding of religious transmission in Dolpo in the same way, by presenting Orgyan Tenzin’s inspiring stories and compelling songs.

Previous Work on Dolpo History and Biography

Studies of Himalayan spiritual biographies or histories have often been introduced with surveys of Tibetan Buddhist history and concepts, along with personal stories of epic adventures to remote locales, a tendency common among foreign travelers to Dolpo. Despite a growing corpus of attractive photography books and traveler accounts to Dolpo and the Himalayas, few in-depth historical and textual studies of the region are being produced. Schaeffer points out that in comparison to Tibet and other Himalayan areas such as upper Mustang (glo) and Khumbu, specific academic work related to Dolpo has been scarce. This remains the case—primarily due to a lack of available source material due to the degradations of time, but also a lack of significant attention to what remains. Some important exceptions include Snellgrove’s accounts

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8 See Bhandari, 2011; Gurung, 2013; and Dolma, 2018.
10 Ricard, 2001, p. x.
11 Such as Matthiessen, 1978; Valli & Summers, 1987; Corneille & Stein, 1998; Doyle, 2003; Gerda, 2015; and most recently Hinze, 2021 (German language).
13 Charles Ramble, personal communication, 9/8/22.
of his travels in Dolpo\footnote{Snellgrove, 1961.} and early translations of the life stories of Dolpo lamas,\footnote{Snellgrove, 1967.} which provided a foundation for the study of the northwest Nepali Himalayas, along with Corneille Jests' anthropological articles on Dolpo.\footnote{Jest, 1974, 1975, 1981 & 1998.} Other notable contributions include Franz-Karl Ehrhard’s surveys of Himalayan sites and key historical figures that provide an overview of the religious landscape and significant textual transmissions;\footnote{Ehrhard, 1999 & 2013.} and Klaus Dieter Mathes’ essays on the histories of Nasar Gompa, Lang Gompa,\footnote{Mathes, 2003.} and Shelri Pukdra. The latter paper represents a significant contribution, as he demonstrates through textual investigation how the legend of the founding of a holy site may morph over time as it borrows from other texts and spoken tales.\footnote{Mathes, 2001, pp. 167-194.}

Historical information regarding the Nepali Himalayas are primarily contained in spiritual biographies (\textit{rnam thar}), song collections (\textit{mgur ’bum}), monastery registries (\textit{dkar chag}) and inscriptions, with additional information in guidebooks (\textit{gnas yig}) written by travelers to Dolpo as well as annals (\textit{deb thar}). The information on people, places, and events in this study are primarily sourced from local biographies and interviews with scholars from Dolpo and adjacent areas. Of particular note is Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok’s recent Tibetan language history of Dolpo, which provides an overview of religious and political trends, an outline of dozens of historical personages and their respective contributions, and charts (\textit{re’u mig}) of significant historical events and monasteries.\footnote{Phuntsok, 2021.} The text represents one of the only attempts to compose a broad narrative of Dolpo history, constructed from both textual and oral sources.

Only five biographies from Dolpo (out of dozens available) have been fully translated into English. These include the eponymous \textit{Four Lamas of Dolpo} in Snellgrove’s classic study:
Margom Sonam Lodro (*dmar sgom bsod nams blo gros*, 1516-1581), Chökyab Palzang (*chos skyabs dpal bzang*, 1536-1625), Paldan Lodro (*dpal ldan blo gros*, 1527-1596), and Sonam Wangchuk (*bsod nams dbang phyug*, 1660-1731).\(^{21}\) The fifth is that of Orgyan Chökyi (*o rgyan chos skyid*, 1675-1729), translated in Kurtis Schaeffer’s *Himalayan Hermitess*.\(^ {22}\) Each of these provides a collection of snapshots of a religious life in particular times and places in the Himalayas and Tibet, much more than a condensed overview of a biography could accomplish. The present translation provides another such rich and detailed account.

In addition to these full-length translations, a number of summaries of the lives of masters active in Dolpo have been made available in English. The most exhaustive of these is Cyrus Stearn’s examination of the life of Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292-1361) in *The Buddha from Dolpo*.\(^ {23}\) Others include Schaeffer’s overview of Tenzin Repa (*bstan ’dzin ras pa*, 1646-1723);\(^ {24}\) Nyima Drandul and Charles Ramble’s account of the life of Kunzang Longyang (*kun bzang klong yangs*, 1644-1696);\(^ {25}\) Klaus Dieter Mathes’ overviews of Druptob Seng Yeshe (*grub thob seng ge ye shes*, 1181-1255);\(^ {26}\) Karma Lobsang (*karma blo bzang*, 1592/3-c.1670);\(^ {27}\) and Orgyan Lhundrub Gyatso (*o rgyan lhun grub rgyam tsho*, b. 1658);\(^ {28}\) and Franz-Karl Ehrhard’s summaries of the lives of Ngawang Namgyal (*ngag dbang rnam rgyal*, b. 1628),\(^ {29}\) Namdrol Zangpo (*rnam grol bzang po*, 1504-1573),\(^ {30}\) Karma Lobsang,\(^ {31}\) Orgyan Palzang (*o rgyan dpal bzang*, 1617-1677),\(^ {32}\) Kunzang Longyang,\(^ {33}\) and

\(^{24}\) Schaeffer, 2004, pp. 26-34.
\(^{25}\) Drandul, Harrison, Luczanits & Ramble, 2018, pp. 103-116.
\(^{26}\) Mathes, 1999, pp. 61-77.
\(^{29}\) Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 314-324.
\(^{30}\) ibid, pp. 324-328.
\(^{31}\) ibid, pp. 229-236.
Orgyan Tenzin, the subject of this present study, whose life has been briefly summarized by both Ehrhard\textsuperscript{34} and Schaeffer.\textsuperscript{35} These previous works have served as indispensable sources for the present study.

Of the works described so far, Schaeffer’s *Himalayan Hermitess* provides particularly valuable insight into Orgyan Tenzin as he plays a significant role in the life of his student, Orgyan Chökyi (the eponymous hermitess). A partial picture of Orgyan Tenzin’s personality emerges, showing him as a harsh yet skilled mentor, encouraging Orgyan Chökyi to serve others as well as to strive for her personal liberation. Schaeffer’s study contextualizes the cultural and political context of seventeenth century Dolpo, focusing on her difficult experience as a woman in Dolpo, and her uniqueness as a female author of an autobiography, using Buddhist perspectives on gender as a lens. He concludes with a literary analysis of the role of sorrow in Orgyan Chökyi’s songs of lament (*skyo glu*) and the joys she experiences in solitude, applying the pervasive tropes of sadness and tears in Orgyan Chökyi’s story to Orgyan Tenzin’s songs.\textsuperscript{36} In this way, Schaeffer’s study serves as a stepping stone into this study’s exporation of the nature of Orgyan Tenzin’s autobiographical writings.

**Academic Literature on Tibetan Language Spiritual Biographies**

Tibetan and Himalayan biographies have primarily been relied upon by academic writers as tools to tell the history of a particular place, treating them as a type of retrospective anthropological lens into the past.\textsuperscript{37} In addition to providing support for Buddhist practitioners and historical data for researchers, these old tales and lyrics have more recently become avenues

\textsuperscript{32} Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 219-225.
\textsuperscript{33} ibid., pp. 207-210.
\textsuperscript{34} ibid., pp. 332-335.
\textsuperscript{36} Schaeffer, 2004, pp. 21-23. Schaeffer also discusses the role of sorrow in the life story of Orgyan Tenzin’s aforesaid contemporary, Tenzin Repa.
\textsuperscript{37} Such as Snellgrove, 1967; Mathes, 1999 & 2001; and Ehrhard, 2001.
of research into Tibetan and Himalayan culture, politics, literature, gender, identity, and self-expression. Janet Gyatso's 1998 groundbreaking analysis of Jigme Lingpa's secret autobiographies represents an inflection point in the study of Tibetan religious biography and spiritual song.\textsuperscript{38} Gyatso observes that up the point of her writing, “Tibetan autobiography has rarely been studied by modern scholars at all; the few academic discussions of this kind of writing are concerned largely with names and dates that it happens to supply.”\textsuperscript{39} Her study contributed a fresh perspective on the genre of Tibetan autobiography that highlights the complexities of their authorship and their utility for cross-cultural reflections about literary constructions in autobiography.\textsuperscript{40}

In the years since Gyatso’s work was published, numerous scholars have produced studies of Tibetan biographies and song that investigate theoretical questions for an academic audience.\textsuperscript{41} Following Gyatso, some of these have taken a literary approach to interpreting the voices and tropes that appear in spiritual biographies (Tiso, 2010).\textsuperscript{42}Others have investigated biographical materials to follow the history and development of an idea, such as Cyrus Stearns’ work on shentong (gzhan stong) in Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen’s writings.\textsuperscript{43} Others have examined the evolution of a biography or biographies of a single saint over time, (Roberts, 2007; Quintman, 2010; Ducher, 2017), illuminated the prerogatives or politics of religious communities behind the creation and propagation of biographies and song collections (Schaeffer, 2005; Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, 2014; Ary, 2015), revealed the process of lineage construction as

\textsuperscript{38} Despite some earlier articles on the analysis of autobiography, such as Robinson, 1996 and Ehrhard, 1998, Gyatso’s in-depth treatment redefined the field of study of Tibetan spiritual biographies.

\textsuperscript{39} Gyatso, 1998a, p. xi. A notable exception may be found in Tsultrim Allione’s introduction to Women of Wisdom (1984), her translations of the spiritual biographies of female masters

\textsuperscript{40} Gyatso, 1998b.

\textsuperscript{41} That fact may not preclude the intention to inspire practitioners as well, as many of these scholars are Buddhist practitioners with Buddhist practitioners in mind as part of their audiences.

\textsuperscript{42} Tiso, 2010.

\textsuperscript{43} Stearns, 1999.
both a precursor to and product of their composition (Stearns, 1996; Zangpo, 2003; Templeman, 2007), and illustrated unique aspects of seemingly heterodox Buddhist behaviors such as that of the mad yogin (Stearns, 2007; DiValerio, 2015; DiValerio, 2016). Notable studies have also been written that challenge paradigms about gender-based power dynamics and describe the feminine principle in Tibetan Buddhism (Changchub & Nyingpo, 1999; Schaeffer, 2004; Chonam & Khandro, 2015), or to discuss hermeneutical trends in the interpretation of religious literature (McClintock, 2017).44

Studying Hagiography: History, Genre, and Textual Production

James Robinson argues that Buddhist spiritual biography can be read as history, hagiography and myth in a mutually inclusive manner.45 In this same vein, Schaeffer presents the life story of Orgyan Chökyi as hagiography, referring to it as a “the story of a saint” or in her case, “a saint in the making.”46 He relies on Patrick Geary’s three part schema of analysis, which he used to understand medieval European hagiographies: genre, the textual production of the author and the subject of the biography, and the historical circumstances of the work.47 This paper follows this three-part schema to analyze The Condensed Life. Historical circumstances are looked at through a description of seventeenth century Dolpo, Orgyan Tenzin’s life, and the lives of his primary teachers in Chapters 2 and 3. The genres of Tibetan language spiritual biography and songs of experience are considered along with Orgyan Tenzin’s textual production and their textual relationships in Chapters 4 and 5.

44 McClintock uses stories to turn away from any of these methodologies in favor of a hermeneutic of transformation, referring to this method as ethical reading (2017, pp. 90-92). This method appears more aligned with that of the authors’ original intent of these narratives or songs.
46 2004, pp. 5-6.
47 ibid., p. 7.
The above mentioned academic sources on historical figures from Dolpo provide this study the bases for describing the circumstances of Orgyan Tenzin’s life. After several decades of anthropological and textual study in Mustang, Franz-Karl Ehrhard wrote, “one must first understand the textual traditions of Mang-yul Gung-thang in order to be able to fully comprehend the cultural history of areas like Dolpo, Mustang and Manang,”48 because it is “clear that literary traditions can be used to guide us in identifying certain concepts of religious geography and thus to widen our knowledge still more about the history of settlements and cultural landscape.”49 As teachers and pilgrims came and went from remote areas such as Dolpo, they exchanged ideas and practices related to texts that can be traced from along their journeys from origins as far off as Kham, Amdo, Sikkim, or Bhutan.50

In order to clarify obscure points, I have relied on a small number of key informants to from Dolpo and surrounding areas. As Francis Tiso points out in his study of the early biographies of Milarepa, “our literary analysis of the texts of those religions that make use of texts will be flawed to the extent that we fail to ally anthropological data with text-based hermeneutics.”51 Because Dolpo society has (until recently) been very conservative and maintains a strong oral tradition, historical information is possible to gather in interviews. However, that information should be cross-checked with other sources, since re-interpretation or “errors” (such as mistaken or conflated memories) are possible. In this way, I have supplemented the textual and literary analysis with the voices of contemporary users of the living tradition to which Orgyan Tenzin belonged, primarily contained in footnotes to the translation.

48 Ehrhard, 2001, p. 101
50 Orgyan Chökyi reports that “many nomads from Amdo and Kham” stayed at Nyima Puk, one of Orgyan Tenzin’s hermitages (Schaeffer, 2004, pp. 33 & 160), and that monks from their community also traveled on pilgrimage to Sikkim (pp. 81 & 158-15)
In order to understand Orgyan Tenzin’s textual production, this study examines some of the inter-textual characteristics of *The Condensed Life* (Chapter 5). As is the case with Buddhist literature in general, *The Condensed Life* does not exist in a literary vacuum but arose within a richly interrelated complex of textual transmission. Both in narrative and song, other texts are paraphrased or quoted, with or without citation, under the apparent assumption that the intended reader would be familiar with them. In *The Condensed Life*, so-called “micro-textual units (microforms)” take two shapes: specific references to Orgyan Tenzin's autobiographical “collected songs,” later known as *The Melodies*, and those that allude to or were borrowed from other texts without citation, including his “collected songs.” The special relationship between *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies* is examined, as *The Melodies* provides invaluable context and content for understanding *The Condensed Life*. I have also included relevant supporting quotations and references from *The Melodies* in the footnotes to the translation.

Additional textual information germane to Orgyan Tenzin's life, teachings, and songs are gleaned from the biographies of his lineage masters, teachers and contemporaries, which we know Orgyan Tenzin read. He was certainly familiar with the texts mentioned in the biography of his student and consort Orygan Chökyi, most of which he would have transmitted to her himself. In this way, this study provides a fuller picture of religious life in Dolpo by combining a cross-textual investigation with the retrospective religio-cultural anthropology described above.

By treating Orgyan Tenzin’s biographies as hagiographic literature in addition to historical documents, we are offered a window into the events and issues that Orgyan Tenzin and his community felt merited recording. While both Tibetan and Western historians have used Tibetan hagiography as historical source material for writing secular chronicles/annals (*lo rgyus*)

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52 Sernesi, 2015, p. 477.
53 These are discussed below and also provided in footnotes to the translation.
and religious histories (*chos byung*), both have also recognized the limitations of uncritically relying upon the self-purported authenticity of hagiographies or song collections. In this paper I have attempted to date certain events based on Orgyan Tenzin’s self-reported age when they occurred, as a means of organizing the narrative and connecting them to other historical events, with the caveat that unless the dates of events can be corroborated by other means, they are unconfirmed estimates.

In any case, unlike the biographies of Orgyan Palzang, Tenzin Repa and Kunzang Longyang, Orgyan Tenzin’s biography offers very little information on political developments in Dolpo and the surrounding regions, rather focusing on Buddhist teachings and the development of spiritual communities. By understanding the text as an unfolding literary narrative, it is left to the reader to interpret descriptions of fantastic or miraculous events. For example, Orgyan Tenzin records witnessing a tree flying in the air when they consecrated the Dechen Palri retreat center. “Those with faith” may understand it as a sign of the blessings of that moment of time, made possible through the power of an auspicious dependent arising (*rten 'brel*). However, this does not preclude an interpretation of this event as a metaphor for how he and his community felt about completing a significant spiritual undertaking, or as a description of an ecstatic visionary experience (or hallucination). From this hagiographic literary perspective, it is of little importance whether such an event can be verified as having “actually taken place.”

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54 For example, see Padma Karbo’s discussion of the biographies of Kagyü masters (Kragh, 2013, pp. 393-394) and August Sundin’s unpublished MA Thesis which discusses an indigenous Tibetan approach to historicity (2022, pp. 19-25). A historiographical discussion of Tibetan spiritual biographies, annals, and histories is beyond the scope of this paper.

55 In multiple instances Orgyan Tenzin’s age based dating system does not agree between *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*, further complicating their use as benchmarks for determining the dates or progression of historical events.

56 *The Condensed Life*, B156a. The epilogue of Orgyan Tenzin’s namthar draws a distinction between “those with faith” (*dad can*) and “the narrow-minded” (*blo dman*).
Analyzing Spiritual Songs

Tibetan language spiritual biographies often contain songs of experience (mnyam mgur) “embedded in structured narrative... life stories (rnam thar)... where they may acquire narrative frames that expand upon or contextualize anew their contents.”57 The alternation between narrative and song58 forms the scaffolds that structure both The Condensed Life and The Melodies. These songs often serve as potent didactic vehicles, relevant to the practice tradition of the author, with instructional songs making up the bulk of the latter half of the The Condensed Life. In his article “Poetry in Tibet,” Roger Jackson described the sub-genre of “songs of experience” (nyams mgur), differentiating them from other forms of poetry, such as ornate poetry (snyan ngag) and folk song (glu).59 He notes that in Tibetan songs of experience, there is a certain “distinctly subjective, autobiographical point of view,” which are often “positive and celebratory” in tone.60 This concept contrasts with Schaeffer’s above mentioned discussion of the “songs of sorrow” in Dolpo biographies such as Orgyan Tenzin’s. Upon closer examination, we find plentiful examples of both types of songs in Orgyan Tenzin’s The Condensed Life and The Melodies, as well as songs of instruction and advice, which make up the majority of his songs.

This study’s analysis of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs was inspired by Victoria Sujata’s study of the songs of Kalden Gyatso (skal ldan rgya mtsho, 1607-1677), in which she arranges his songs into a narrative of his life, outlining the tensions he experienced as an experienced Gelukpa scholar who preferred to practice in the solitude of mountain retreat.61 She catalogued

58 Here I refer to Orgyan Tenzin’s work as songs (mgur, glu), since they would have been sung with a melody (dbyangs), the term he uses to refer to his songs in the title of his long autobiography. Singing religious and folk songs to traditional melodies while dancing in a circle remains popular at Himalayan gatherings, oftentimes accompanied by a dramyen and lasting long into the night or morning (Pema Chime Gurung, personal communication, 10/23/22).
60 Ibid., p. 377.
61 Sujata, 2005.
his songs by type in order to gain a better appreciation of the breadth of his corpus. Chapter 5 of this study presents the categories of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs found in *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*, with detailed catalogues of his songs included in Appendices A, B, and C.

**Audience and Transformation**

We can understand *The Condensed Life* as a product of Orgyan Tenzin’s creative mind as well as the collective consciousness of his community. Orgyan Tenzin’s writings are literally, as Sernesi puts it, “two-sided, occurring between the speaker and addressee,” including “the set of references that the writer... shares with the work’s recipients, and employs... to deliver the intended meaning.” These references, explored through the anthro-historical, textual and literary methods described above, illuminate our interpretation of his narrative and songs. Many songs are addressed to a particular patron or student by name, based on a request for instruction. However, Orgyan Tenzin’s songs are for a multi-layered audience: tailored for a specific person or audience at a certain time and place, a larger audience of practitioners in his lineage for whom the written text was intended, and generally for those with faith in the teachings of the Buddha, a sentiment clearly expressed in the colophon to the text.

Narrative biographies of masters and songs of experience have provided fertile fields to cultivate our understanding of the breadth and depth of Himalayan history, ideas, and social organization throughout the centuries. These texts have also been used to tell new stories about ideas, people, or communities that peel back the layers of the original narrative, or are layered upon it. The present translation and study does not try to tell a new story but offers additional insight into a religious community of Himalayan hermits engaged in Dzogchen and mahāmudrā practice weaved from a number of lineages in the Sakya, Kagyü, and Nyingma revealed-treasure traditions. It also contextualizes Orgyan Tenzin’s life and legacy by describing its relationships

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62 Sernesi, 2015, p. 461.
with other texts, further illuminating textual traditions in the Himalayas and Tibet. Finally, this study follows Sara McClintock’s call for a “hermeneutic of transformation,” to “open oneself to the possibility of one’s own ethical transformation through the encounter with Buddhist stories.” Orgyan Tenzin’s stories and songs contain transformative power for the listener, and I have prepared it with the hope that beyond the useful information contained in the text, footnotes, and appendices, his experiences and advice will touch reader’s hearts, whoever they may be. In that way, it may facilitate an inspired transformation toward awakening that was the core motivation of Orgyan Tenzin and his followers in creating it. By retelling it, I open myself to that possibility as well.

Chapter 2. The Setting and the Main Character

Lord of supreme accomplishment who has actualized the primordial natural state,  
Your roar of dharmatā sets the fortunate ones on the bhūmis,  
A guardian leading [all beings] of the three existences, your mind is the ten bhūmis,  
Orgyan Tenzin, may your lotus feet remain steadfast!

-Balung Lama Orgyan Nyima Gyaltsen’s Long-life prayer for Orgyan Tenzin

The Religious Culture of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Dolpo

Compared with its neighbors, Dolpo enjoyed a relative absence of widespread political violence throughout its millennia of recorded history. Though often nominally controlled from the outside, mainly for the purpose of tax collection, its mountainous inaccessibility, lack of martial strategic value, and scattered settlements without large tracts of arable land or sources of

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64 gdod ma’i gnas lugs mgon ’gyur grub mchog rje/ chos nyid nga ros skal ldan sa la bkod/ srid gsun ’dren pa’i mgon po sa bcu’i sems/ o rgyan bstan ’dzin zhabs pad brtan gyur cig (The Melodies, p. 417). Translation tentative.
wealth production made it an unattractive prize for the warlords and ambitious aristocrats that dominated the politics of neighboring areas.65

Orgyan Tenzin remarks on the relative poverty of Dolpo, writing that “when observed by people from important places, it does not seem very impressive.”66 That said, due to its accessibility to Mount Kailash, its remote valleys were an attractive destination for Bön and Buddhist hermits from a variety of practice lineages seeking solitude for over a millennia.67 The biography of Orgyan Tenzin’s guru Thupten Wangpo describes Dechen Thang in southern Dolpo, near where Orgyan Tenzin was born and spent most of his life, as an “auspicious blessed region at the border of Tibet and lowlands, pleasant with a balanced climate. There the virtuous dharma, desirable attributes and the ten virtues are gathered together.”68 Many of Orgyan Tenzin’s own songs praise various holy sites in Dolpo in similar ways, highlighting their suitability for yogic practice and retreat.

From the time Drupthob Senge Yeshe (grub thob seng ge ye shes, 1181-1255) established the site of Shelri Drukdra69 at Shel Mountain (shel ri), a cultural consciousness persisted in the Himalaya and Tibet about Dolpo as a place of pilgrimage, considered by some as equal in blessings to Mount Kailash.70 Dolpopas have historically enjoyed a reputation as being dedicated and devout scholars and practitioners, possibly based on Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen’s (dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1292-1361) lasting fame (or infamy) across the Tibetan plateau. For example, after spending the majority of his teaching career in southern Tibet, Manang, Mustang,

66 Itas na yul chen mi rnams gyas/ ngo tshar che rgyu med par mthong (The Condensed Life, B3b.4-B4a.1).
67 The Drikung master Drupthob Sengé Yeshe (grub thob seng ge ye shes, 1181-1255) is a good example of an early visitor to Dolpo who remained to found a monastery at Shelri Drukdra (shel ri ’brug sgra) in Dolpo. See Mathes, 1999, pp. 61-77.
68 bkra shis shing byin chags pa dang bod rong gnyis kyi so mtsams/ tsha grangs zhung bag bro ba yul phyogs chos la dkar zhung ’dod yon dge bcu ’dzoms pa (Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 427-443).
69 shel gri ri bo ’brug sgra, the “Crystal Mountain Dragon Roar.” See Mathes, 1999, pp. 61-90.
70 Mathes, 1999, p. 61.
Dolpo and the Nar Valley, the central Tibetan master Karma Lobsang recorded in the 1660s that in comparison to the people of the Nar Valley, who showed little interest in Dharma and adhered to non-Buddhist practices, in Dolpo over one-hundred fifty monks and practitioners regularly attended his teachings, countless people attended empowerments, and that

Based on their great devotion for the Dharma, all the men and women even were very diligent in meditation practice, and cultivated mindfulness without distraction even while walking along paths or working in the fields. After each row they stopped ploughing and sat meditating [for a while].

In sum, the religious history of Dolpo can be characterized as a continuous cycle of spiritual immigrants and émigrés importing and exporting ideas and practices throughout the Himalayas and Tibet: Dolpo, Mustang and surrounding areas constituted part of the “geographical extension of the religious traditions of Mang-yul Gung-thang,” the richness and variety of which “attracted Tibetan priests and yogins to reside there throughout the 17th century.” Students and returning local pilgrims arrived from all over Tibet and the Himalayas to study there, and masters came on pilgrimage or by invitation to teach and establish new hermitages and monastic communities.

The array of practice lineages that made their way into the Himalaya are intricately linked with the development of Tibetan literature due to a millennia of near constant exchange of texts and ideas between peoples who placed great importance on textual production and

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71 Mathes, 2001, p. 173, n. 36.
73 skyes bud med thams cad chos la gos lhag par che bas sgom pa la brtson pa snying rus che ba/ lam du 'gro ba dang/ zging smos byed dus kyang dran pa yengs med byas pa/ rol mgo rol 'jug (=mjug) tu'ang thong gehol 'dzin 'phro la born as mnyams gehag la bsad pa (Mathes, p. 173, n. 37). Translation Mathes’ from the biography of Karma Lobsang (76b2-5). Schaeffer translates the beginning of this passage as “All of the women...” (2004, p. 4), but this appears to be an incorrect reading of the term skyed bud med which means “men and women” in Dolpo dialect.
preservation. Although Dolpo lacked large monastic colleges, a significant proportion of the population was engaged for nearly a millennium in a relatively decentralized system of Buddhist and Bön philosophical study and ritual practice, which required the dissemination of textual materials. Copied by hand, texts were preserved in the dozens of monasteries and temples in Dolpo, not to mention dozens more in neighboring valleys in Mugum, Mustang, Tsum, Nubri, and Jumla. Though texts were often lost due to deterioration over time due to the lack of resources of the local population, or from catastrophic events such as earthquakes, Dolpo was spared the ravages of the political upheaval in Tibet in the 1950's and its destructive aftermath. Therefore, many texts, including dozens of biographies and song collections, have been preserved.

The spiritual imagination of seventeenth century Dolpo was focused on the past while it welcomed the innovation of fresh cycles of teachings. Orgyan Tenzin contributed to the continuation and maintenance of traditional religious transmissions, such as the Ngor Sakya lineage at Hrap monastery, the Drikung Kagyü tradition at Dolpo Drikung monastery, and terma transmissions such as the Jangter (byang gter) originating with tertön Godemchen.

75 See Schaeffer, 2004, p. 16. According to Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok, an early Kadampa master named Changchup Nyingpo (10th century) and five of Milarepa’s students (12th century) were from Dolpo, though any account of their lives has been lost to antiquity (2010, p. iii). Though Dolpo or Northwest Nepali Himalayan literature and culture cannot be siloed into a separate cultural or literary sphere from the rest of Tibet, especially the central and western regions, in this paper I have made an effort to tell a story about 17th and 18th century Dolpo spiritual biography and song by relying upon literary material specifically from that time and place.

76 See Schaeffer, 2009, pp. 4-9.

77 Snellgrove remarks on the abundance of spelling mistakes in biographical manuscripts he worked with in Dolpo (1967, pp. 69-70), and Sonam Wangchuk (bsod nams dbang phug, 1660-1731) describes spending a week hand-copying the Rigdzin Nyingtik at Mindroling after receiving the transmission (Snellgrove, 1967, p. 258) so that he could have it to practice later. It does not seem there were any xylograph wood-block printing operations historically in Dolpo due to a lack of resources.

78 Phuntsok provides a list of 103 Buddhist and Bön monasteries and temples in Dolpo in gangs can (2021, pp. 184-191). Even the relatively obscure condensed biography of Orgyan Tenzin translated here has four known manuscript recensions, and likely a significant number more contained in personal collections.

79 For example, some exile Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Kathmandu, such as Shechen Monastery in Boudha, were able to supply their new libraries with texts reproduced from the Nepali Himalayas, including from Dolpo. (Khenpo Namkhai Dorje, personal communication, 8/29/22).


Ngödrup Gyaltsen (rgod ldem chen dngos grub rgyal mtshan, 1337-1409). There was also an advent of new transmission lineages in which Orgyan Tenzin and his teachers participated, including the propagation of Drukpa Kagyü practices, and more recently revealed termas, such as those of Jatsön Nyingpo (ja’ mtshon snying po, 1585-1656), Düdul Dorje (bdud ’dul rdo rje, 1615-1672), Garwang Dorje (gar dbang rdo rje, 1640-1685), and Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorje (gter bdag gling pa ’gyur med rdo rje, 1646-1714). This trend was consistent with the Tibetan revealed treasure tradition (gter lugs), which from the 11th century saw treasure revealers known as tertön discover and decode sādhana practices, esoteric instruction manuals, spiritual biographies, and other tantric literature as a means of providing innovation to traditional lineage instruction and ritual practice. Freshly revealed treasure cycles, which tradition holds were entrusted to be revealed by a particular tertön for a particular generation of the faithful, spread in part due to popular devotion to those charismatic treasure revealers, along with the novelty of the texts themselves.

Despite not being situated in the broader narrative of Tibetan national identity, Orgyan Tenzin and other masters from Dolpo understood their position as inheritors of the legendary religious traditions that were imported into Tibet from India by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and others, and developed by ancient Tibetan religious monarchs such as Tritson Detsun and translators such as Vairocana. While at Padmasambhava’s Chimpu hermitage near Samyé

82 For example, see the discussion on Thupten Wangpo below.
83 The Condensed Life, B21b. Jamgön Kongtrul also included Jatsön Nyingpo in his compilation of the biographies of one hundred tertöns (Gyamtso, 2011, pp. 162-166).
84 Snellgrove, 1979, p. 79. Jamgön Kongtrul also included Düdul Dorje in his compilation of the biographies of one hundred tertöns (Gyamtso, 2011, pp. 251-254).
85 ibid., 2013, p. 323.
86 Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 208.
87 For more on the early history and taxonomies of the Tibetan treasure tradition, see Doctor, 2005, pp. 19-22.
88 The transmissions would have all occurred before Jigme Lingpa’s revelations of the Longchen Nyingtik (Gyatso, 2008), or the practices of the Palyul Nyingma, Chokling Tersar and Dudjom Tersar were propagated to Nepal, which dominate the contemporary landscape of new treasure traditions in the Nepali Himalaya. This was also before the non-sectarian (ris med) current in practice and literature emerged in Kham.
Monastery in the Yarlung Valley, Orgyan Tenzin praises the legacy of those past gurus and kings while lamenting that such enlightened leaders were no longer present.  

Though the teachings of the Nyingma “early transmission” (snga ’gyur) remained popular across the Himalayas, including in Dolpo, the influence of the Sarma “later transmission” (phyi ’gyur) lineages was enormous. Most young men aspiring to study epistemology or to take monastic vows were drawn by the proximal influence of the Ngor Sakya, whom the royal family and the people of Lo Manthang had followed for centuries. Enough Dolpo monks attended the monastic college (shes gra) at Thupten Namgyal monastery in Tsang Tana valley for philosophical studies that there was a large dormitory (grva tshang) dedicated specifically for them, where Orgyan Tenzin would have also stayed.

Himalayan persons with the means and ability would have made exhaustive pilgrimages to Kailash in west Tibet and to the great halls of Sakya monastery, the ancient courtyard of Samyé, holy sites in Kyirong and Nyalam, and the meditation caves of Padmasambhava, Milarepa and Rechungpa in central Tibet. They also ventured far beyond to the legendary great stūpas and temples of the Kathmandu Valley, Sikkim, and Bhutan. This was done to establish a direct connection to the blessings of those holy religious sites and the masters associated with them—indeed Orgyan Tenzin sometimes uses the term “connect with holy sites” (gnas ‘brel) for pilgrimage, as well as the more common “make rounds of holy sites” (gnas skor). Notwithstanding the absence of any mention of the Gelukpa in Orgyan Tenzin’s writings, the people of Dolpo would have sought out respected lamas for empowerment, transmission, and instructions, regardless of sect. They would have made especially great effort to meet a tertön,

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89 The Condensed Life, B10b-B11b.
91 The Melodies, 309.4 (one of many examples).
92 The Melodies, pp. 7-9.
who would have been considered to be a representative of Padmasambhava in the flesh. In addition to his pilgrimages to Kailash, central Tibet, and the Kathmandu Valley, Orgyan Tenzin made multiple treks to Lo (Mustang) to study with Orgyan Palzang and Kunzang Longyang, and nearly lost his life in a blizzard in Tibet on his solitary journey to Kyimolung in the Tsum Valley of Nepal to meet and learn with the Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje.

In short, Orgyan Tenzin was raised in a rich socio-religious environment of cross-sectarianism\(^{93}\) and interwoven lineages\(^{94}\) geared toward text-based religious practice. In that context, it was not unusual to attempt arduous journeys across long distances, as far as Sikkim or Bhutan, to obtain new textual transmissions. In order to house those texts and support the practitioners of them, enormous multi-year efforts to build temples and retreat centers were undertaken by each successive generation of teachers and their communities. Before discussing Orgyan Tenzin’s teachers and lineages in more detail, the remainder of this chapter provides an overview of his life, focusing on his activities preserving and propagating the dharma.

The Life of the Dzogchen Yogi Orgyan Tenzin of Tadru

As mentioned previously, both Ehrhard\(^{95}\) and Schaeffer\(^{96}\) have provided biographical sketches of Orgyan Tenzin based on information in *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*. Ehrhard highlighted Orgyan Tenzin’s renovation work of the Sandul (sa ’dul) temple in southern Dolpo, and Schaeffer focused on some of Orgyan Tenzin’s textual production and songs as a

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\(^{93}\) See Mathes, 2003, pp. 85-86.

\(^{94}\) Despite a general tolerance between Buddhism and Bön and unique examples of shared Buddhist and Bön ritual practice in Dolpo, mention of Bön is conspicuously absent in Orgyan Tenzin’s writings, with the exception of an unnamed ascetic (*drang srong*) who performs a three year retreat in Tadru, who studied Bön with the Bönpo lama Tsubtrim Rinchen (*The Melodies*, p. 422). There is also a complete lack of mention of the Gelukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, which appears to have had no presence in Dolpo at the time, but would have been present in Lhasa and other areas in central Tibet that Orgyan Tenzin visited. Factors contributing to the absence of Gelukpa transmission into Dolpo may have included the strict Gelukpa adherence to monastic codes which was culturally incongruent with remote Himalayan life, political alienation between the Lo (Mustang) royalty and the central Tibetan political establishment, and the fifth Dalai Lama’s government’s purge of the Jonang tradition, to which the revered ancient master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen belonged.

\(^{95}\) 2013, pp. 342-352.

means of contextualizing his translation of the biography of Orgyan Tenzin’s student, Orgyan Chökyi. To provide additional background for the present translation, I have outlined the phases of Orgyan Tenzin’s life: student, pilgrim, retreatant, restorer of temples, founder of meditation retreat communities, and teacher.

Orgyan Tenzin was born in southern Dolpo in August 1657, and learned reading and writing from his mother and elder sister. Though he alludes to some special childhood characteristics and impressions from past lives, his parents apparently prevented him from discussing them. Upon his father’s death, his mother passionately encouraged him to dedicate his life to Buddhist practice, and he embarked on pilgrimage to central Tibet with the blessings of his guru Orgyan Palzang. After a brief stint at the Sakya monastery Tanak Thupten Namgyal in Tsang, his journey brought him and his companions to Lhasa, Samye, and Sakya Monastery. His perception of the sheer size and sanctity of those primary seats of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition left Orgyan Tenzin in awe. He marveled at what could be accomplished based on one’s past life merit, and felt disappointed at the relative poverty of his homeland.

After failing to receive novice ordination at Sakya (which he received on a subsequent trip), he made the first of multiple pilgrimages to the Kathmandu Valley, known at that time to Tibetans as “Payul” (bal yul), which is now the Tibetan term for the nation of Nepal. He was amazed at the wicked callousness of the local kings who waged what he saw as selfish wars resulting in great bloodshed on the one hand; and on the other hand the abundant offerings that

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97 The Condensed Life, B5a.
98 ibid., B7b.
100 The Condensed Life, B10b.
101 ibid., B12a.
102 ibid., B14a.
the Newars made at numerous shrines and temples, including at the great stūpas of Boudha and Swayambhū.\textsuperscript{104}

While in Kyirong, he received mahāmudrā teachings from Gyalwang Sengé, a student of the renowned Kamtshang Kagyü master Karma Lobsang, mentioned above.\textsuperscript{105} He then returned to Dolpo to perform retreats under the tutelage of the Sakya lama Palden Dorje and Drukpa Kagyü lama Thupten Wangpo. When he was twenty-five, based on prophetic dreams and a divination connecting him to Guru Rinpoche as a reincarnation of Yudra Nyingpo, Palden Dorje reluctantly sent him to the hidden valley Kyimolung to study under the Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje. He spent several months receiving teachings, primarily on the practices of a treasure cycle revealed by Garwang Dorje, the \textit{Self Luminosity of the Profound Essence Dharmadhātu}.\textsuperscript{106} This was a turning point in Orgyan Tenzin’s spiritual career. He began giving mahāmudrā and Dzogchen teachings after three years of retreat on this practice,\textsuperscript{107} becoming well known as a lineage holder of this treasure cycle, transmitting them widely across upper and lower Dolpo over the course of the next fifty years.

For someone who claimed it “best to be a yogi free of activity,”\textsuperscript{108} Orgyan Tenzin had an active and eventful career. His recurring dreams of building temples were made manifest in his extensive work renovating temples and stūpas, and establishing retreat centers and teaching programs. He dedicated himself, the resources of his patrons, and the labor of his students to the

\textsuperscript{104} The Melodies, pp. 103-105.
\textsuperscript{105} The Condensed Life, B16a-B17a.
\textsuperscript{106} zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal (The Melodies, p. 26). About this terma cycle, Jamgön Kongrul wrote, “[Garwang Dorje’s] Profound Essence, Drime Lhunpo’s Ultimate Essence, and Taksham’s Wisdom Assembly Liberating All Beings are identical in words and meaning aside from the presence or absence of their source tantra. It is therefore appropriate to regard them as three lineages combined into one. Furthermore, I have heard our lord guru remark that these three are essentially the same as Jatsön Nyingpo’s Heart Essence: The Self-Illuminating Dharmadhatu, which Jatsön never disseminated” (Gyamtso, 2011, p. 263). See also Schaeffer, 2004, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{108} rnal ’byor bya ba bral ba dga’ (The Melodies, 285.1).
founding of hermitages at Dechen Palri\textsuperscript{109} and Tadru,\textsuperscript{110} the renovation of the great Dzakha stūpa in southern Dolpo,\textsuperscript{111} and the reconstruction of bridges, such as the long bridge at Terthang Plain.\textsuperscript{112} Notable among his construction projects was his appointment in his mid-thirties by the Jumla ruler Vikram Śāh to rebuild the Sandul Temple not far from his retreat at Dechen Palri, a project that lasted six years.\textsuperscript{113}

At the age of forty, he organized the reproduction of a set of precious manuscripts of the \textit{Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras} at Kokla to replace ones that had been damaged by water, which took over a year.\textsuperscript{114} He must have seen this as an extremely important task, as he sang afterward that the textual preservation of sūtras was more important than building temples, since that is how the dharma is preserved and others are brought to liberation.\textsuperscript{115} He also established regular instructional retreats at Dechen Palri, Tadru, and Nyima Puk hermitages and gave numerous public empowerments, teachings, and drupchens at various monasteries all over Dolpo, from the age of forty until he stopped traveling in his early seventies.\textsuperscript{116}

The final portion of his life was dedicated to retreat, teaching, and meeting patrons at the remote Tadru hermitage that he and his followers established in his early sixties. By then he had become a well-known teacher, sought out by students and lamas from across the Himalayas and Tibet. Orgyan Tenzin wrote over one hundred songs of advice and instruction addressed to others, dozens of which are presented from this latter period of his life.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{de chen dpal ri (The Condensed Life, B23a-B23b).}\textsuperscript{110} \textit{gnas chen lta gru (ibid., B28b-B29a).}\textsuperscript{111} \textit{rdza kha mchod rten (ibid., B28a).}\textsuperscript{112} \textit{gter thang gyas zam (ibid., B28a-B28b).}\textsuperscript{113} \textit{The Condensed Life, B22a-B23a and The Melodies, pp. 42-44.} Ehrhard provides a detailed discussion of the political context and importance of the temple’s reconstruction, as it was situated in a border area between Jumla, Lo (Mustang), and Dolpo (Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 335-339).\textsuperscript{114} \textit{The Condensed Life, B24b and The Melodies, pp. 92-97.} For more on the traditional importance of copying and printing texts in the Tibetan literary tradition, see Schaeffer, 2009, pp. 56-57.\textsuperscript{115} \textit{The Melodies, pp. 94-96.}\textsuperscript{116} \textit{The Condensed Life, B24a-B32a.}
When he was seventy-four, he was visited by Katog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu, a broadly influential historian and teacher who traveled throughout Tibet gathering a variety of teachings from a range of lineages. Despite being politely rebuffed by Orgyan Tenzin, who replied that he was incapable of giving empowerment to such a great master, Orgyan Tenzin finally offered him the transmissions of Garwang Dorje’s treasures, fifty years after he had received them from the tertön himself. The author of Tsewang Norbu’s namthar refers to Orgyan Tenzin as “the one prophesized by the great master [Padmasambhava] as an incarnation of Yudra Nyingpo, a direct disciple of the treasure-discoverer Garwang Dorje Nyingpo, the supreme siddha Orgyan Tenzin.”

Orgyan Tenzin spent his final years in southern Dolpo teaching and completing his collection of spiritual songs and memoirs. He passed away at Tadru in March, 1737.

Orgyan Tenzin’s Writings

Though we cannot be certain that all of Tadru Orgyan Tenzin’s writings have survived, he is credited with authoring the following works:

1) *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin*

2) *Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat, by the Lord of Yogis Called Orgyan Tenzin*

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119 *g.yu sgra snying po i sprul par lung gis zin cing/ gter ston gar dbang rdo rje i snying po i dngos slob chos sras dam pa grub mchog o rgyan bstan* (Ehrhard, 2013, p. 345). The source for this quotation is the biography of Tsewang Norbu completed by Chökyi Wangchuk (*chos kyi dbang phyug*, 1775-1837) in 1819.
120 See Appendices E and F for a list of known recensions of these works, along with additional texts that may have been authored by Orgyan Tenzin.
121 *sprang rgan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas [sic = pa’i] rnam thar bs dus pa bzhugs so.*
122 *rnal ’byor gyi dbang phyug o rgyan bstan ’dzin zhes bya ba ’i ri khrod kyi nyams dbyangs. Alternate titles include Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat by the Carefree Orgyan Tenzin (bya bral o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas ri khrod kyi nyams dbyangs); Melodies of Experience in Mountain Retreat: The Extensive Life of the Carefree Orgyan Tenzin; and The Collected Songs and Life of the Great Siddha Orgyan Tenzin (grub thob chen po o rgyan bstan ’dzin gyi rnam thar mgur ’bum).*
3) Instructions For Directly Seeing the Innate Mahāmudrā from the Dzogchen Teachings of the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu\textsuperscript{123}

4) All Pervading Nectar: An Incense Offering from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu\textsuperscript{124}

5) Ritual for Performing Cremation from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu\textsuperscript{125}

6) A Burnt Offering for the Glorious Protector War King from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu\textsuperscript{126}

7) Ocean of Accomplishments: A Peaceful Burnt Offering from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu\textsuperscript{127}

Additional texts located in the Nepal National Archives are written by “Orgyan Tenzin,” who may or may not be the Tadru Orgyan Tenzin that is the focus of our study,\textsuperscript{128} and oral tradition holds that Orgyan Tenzin was also the unnamed writer / editor of the spiritual biography of his student Orgyan Chökyi,\textsuperscript{129} his likely his yogic consort.\textsuperscript{130} Since a discussion of

\textsuperscript{123} bka’ ’rdzogs pa chen po zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma gcer mthong gi khrid, also known as Directly Seeing the Innate Mahāmudrā from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu (zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma gcer mthong).

\textsuperscript{124} zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las gsang spyod bdud rtsi kun khyab

\textsuperscript{125} zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las ro bsregs bya ba'i rim pa.

\textsuperscript{126} zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las dpal ldan mgon po dmag gi rgyal po'i bsregs pa.

\textsuperscript{127} zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las zhi ba'i shyin bsregs dngos grub rgya mtsho.

\textsuperscript{128} See Appendix F.

\textsuperscript{129} Orgyan Chökyi’ namthar states that she wrote her biography with the blessings of the dakini as she was dying (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 132 and Phuntsok, 2010, p. 639). However, this is contradicted by the beginning of the epilogue, in which the editor writes that she spoke her story, which was written down in a condensed manner with some prose sections set into verse (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 180 and Phuntsok, 2010, p. 688). This parallels an apparent contradiction in Orgyan Tenzin’s The Condensed Life, wherein he mentions writing the text but later the editors state that they wrote what the master said. We also see that Orgyan Tenzin similarly converted prose sections of The Melodies into verse in The Condensed Life. The unnamed editor of Orgyan Chökyi’ namthar concludes the narrative with an epilogue describing the miracles that occurred during and after her cremation and a commemorative song. Though it is impossible to determine the provenance of the narrative of her life itself, according to oral tradition Orgyan Tenzin himself was the ghost writer of her namthar (Khenpo Namkhai Dorje, personal communication, 8/29/23). The closing song of the epilogue is strikingly similar to some of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs, containing numerous phrases he uses in songs such as the one in The Condensed Life (B33b-B36b), and ends with the telling phrase “all [my] future disciples” (rjes ’jug kun) (Phuntsok, 2010, p. 692). This may partially explain why, according to Schaeffer, Orgyan Chökyi’s narrative lacks the “effusive praise of” her master Orgyan Tenzin, which is a “conventional feature of Tibetan spiritual autobiographies” (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 102). While it may have been the case that they had “a relationship of antagonism, a relationship about which she occasionally had mixed feelings.”
his entire corpus lies beyond the scope of this paper, the presentation of his songs and the discussion about genre, authorship and inter-textuality presented below in Chapters 4 and 5 of this paper concerns his two biographical texts, *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*.

**Orgyan Tenzin’s Legacy**

The epilogue of *The Condensed Life*, written by one Trenbuwa,\(^{131}\) details the miraculous events that occurred during his death and cremation, such as the production of various types of relics from his bones and ashes. Many lamas and students from all over Dolpo gathered at Tadru to perform rituals over the following weeks.\(^{132}\) The legacy of Orgyan Tenzin’s teachings and transmissions remained alive in the collective memory of the people of Dolpo, as evidenced by Kagar Rinpoche’s description of Orgyan Tenzin to Corneille Jest in Tarap in the 1960s: “he did not cut his nails, mustache, or his hair. He did not blow on the fire so as not to soil himself, and made no noise so as not to disturb the earth deities… He encouraged the religious activities of the laity, persuading numerous family leaders to become religious.”\(^{133}\)

Orgyan Tenzin was clearly one of the most important teachers in the Dolpo region in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. By the end of the seventeenth century, he was well-respected to the point where the Jumla monarch Vikram Śāh\(^{134}\) entrusted in him the responsibility of restoring the Sandul temple. Specifically, Orgyan Tenzin is notable for his role

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\(^{130}\) This claim is supported by Kagar Rinpoche’s comments to Corneille Jest in the 1960s, quoted in Schaeffer (2004, p. 23), and the terms Orgyan Tenzin uses to refer to Orgyan Chökyi, such as “ḍakinī” (mkha’ ‘gro) (*The Condensed Life*, B31a.1) and “special woman of awareness” (mtshan ldan rig ma) (*The Condensed Life*, B27a.3 and *The Melodies*, 322.5).

\(^{131}\) *phran bu ba* (*The Condensed Life*, B157a).

\(^{132}\) *The Condensed Life*, B153a-B155b.


transmitting new termas revealed by Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje, including the practice cycle *Self-Illuminated Profound Essence of the Dharmadhātu* (zab thig chos dbying rang gsel/grol), an Avalokiteśvara practice cycle called *The Self Liberation of the Afflictions* (nyon mong rang drol), the vital essence practices (*bjud len*) of the Indian master Jabhir, and others. He composed at least four ritual manuals and an extensive instructional manual for Dzogchen mahāmudrā meditation connected to the *Profound Essence*, the *Instructions for Directly Seeing the Innate Mahāmudrā*. This was known to the point that the widely traveled historian and lineage revivalist Tsewang Norbu from Kham sought him out in the late 1720s in order to receive their transmissions. In this way he participated in the Nyingma tradition’s orthodox method of innovation through the propagation of newly revealed treasures.

In addition to his work restoring and building hermitages, temples, stūpas and bridges, he was highly active in offering teachings and transmissions. He records passing the entirety of the corpus of Drikung Kagyü teachings to the Dolpo Drikung community, preserving their lineage, as well as acting as the presiding vajra master (*rdo rje slob dpon*) for countless empowerments and teachings all over Dolpo. He even reports thinking that the teachings on the Ösel Dorje Nyinchö “dark yoga practices” (*mun pa’i rnal ’byor*) he gave when he was forty-seven (circa 1704) were the first time they had been transmitted in Dolpo. He was followed closely by

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135 dzA hA bir bcud len (The Melodies, pp. 199-201).
136 The Melodies, pp. 308-309.
137 The full title of this text is *The Instructions for Directly Seeing the Innate Mahāmudrā from the Dzogchen Teachings of the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu* (bka’ rdzogs pa chen po zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma gcer mthong gi khrid). See Appendix F for a list of known recensions of this text.
139 “The monks and nuns requested the sublime Dzogchen dharma. Having [taught them], they stayed [in retreat practicing] the dark yogas of the dark instructions. This beggar thought to himself that this Dzogchen [teaching] had not been transmitted in Dolpo before” sgra btsun pho mo mams dam chos rdzogs pa chen po ’i khrid bzhus nas/thams cad nag khrid mun pa ’i rnal ’byor la bzhus pas/ sprang po ’i bsam pa la chos rdzogs pa chen po ’di ingar (sic – sngar) dol phyogs su ma dar ba yin te/ (The Melodies, 166.1-166.3). (Translation tentative). Ehrhard interprets Orgyan Tenzin’s remarks to mean that he thought Dzogchen teachings had not yet reached Dolpo before then (2013, p. 339 & n. 17), but this appears to be too general a reading, considering his own teacher Orgyal Palzang had already
dozens of students, and Orgyan Chökyi mentions that when they traveled to Mekyem, they did so “together with a large entourage of one hundred escorts.”\textsuperscript{140}

Despite his status as an important lineage holder and a purported incarnation of Yudra Nyingpo,\textsuperscript{141} Orgyan Tenzin’s legacy of transmission appears to have waned, eclipsed by the adoption of newer treasure traditions in subsequent generations. The retreat at Tadru is reportedly in ruins, no longer visited by spiritual seekers. There is no present incarnation line of recognized \textit{tulkus (sprul sku)} of Orgyan Tenzin. It is unclear how many people still practice Garwang Dorje’s \textit{Profound Essence} in lower Dolpo,\textsuperscript{142} or how many hold the reading transmission for \textit{The Melodies} or \textit{Instructions for Directly Seeing the Innate Mahāmudrā}. Tertön Garwang Dorje’s transmissions remain commonly practiced in Nubri (Manaslu),\textsuperscript{143} but those transmission lineages were maintained by other students of the tertön in the Nubri and Tsum Valleys. This begs an important question: why study the life of a master who may have had a significant impact in the time and place he was active, but whose impact has waned over the following generations?

One answer to this question is in that in understanding Orgyan Tenzin’s life and teachings, we can further understand the lives of his notable teachers and students, such as his taught Dzogchen in Dolpo. It seems Orgyan Tenzin was referring to “this Dzogchen [teaching]” of dark retreat practice. Orgyan Tenzin mentions practicing dark meditation (\textit{mun sgom}) after receiving it from Kunzang Longyang (\textit{The Melodies}, 38.5). I have not yet located information about the Ösel Dorje Nyinčō (\textit{od gsal rdo rje snying chos}). Song #62 (164-166) of \textit{The Melodies} is an instruction and advice for the monks and nuns to whom he taught this practice.

\textsuperscript{140} Schaeffer, 2004, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{141} Yudra Nyingpo was a student of the early Tibetan translator Vairocana and Vimalamitra, who is considered to be one of Guru Rinpoche’s twenty-five close disciples. He played an important role as a translator during in the early dissemination of Guru Rinpoche’s Dzogchen teachings (Nyoshul Khenpo, 2005, pp. 81-82).
\textsuperscript{142} There are a small number local practitioners in the Tijirong area who practice the Zangtik in 10th day puja assemblies (Khanyam Rinpoche, personal communication, 11/10/22), but I have not yet had an opportunity to locate or interview them.
\textsuperscript{143} Personal communication, Drupla Sherab Dorje, 1/27/23.
yogic consort Orgyan Chökyi, whose notoriety may have already eclipsed his before Kurtis Schaeffer’s 2004 translation of her life story. Another is that by recovering interesting tales and profound lyrics that are not well known to contemporary discourse, we gain a greater appreciation of the nuances of historical transmission, providing further richness and meaning to dominant narratives. In this case, Orgyan Tenzin’s erudite and prolific voice reveals a complex mind, balanced between the spiritual contradictions of his day, expressed with profound sensitivity and compassion. My only hope as a translator is to be able to offer some semblance of the beauty and directness of his style for those interested to read the songs of a carefree Dzogchen yogi, who merely referred to himself as “an old beggar without merit.”

Chapter 3. Orgyan Tenzin’s Teachers and Teachings

Emaho!
Leave behind the appearances of this life—
Become skilled in accomplishing something meaningful for the next.
In order to accomplish something meaningful for your next life,
Exert yourself in study, contemplation, and practice.
First, with the three types of faith,
Listen to many instructions from the gurus,
And read many past masters’ life stories,
Sūtras, and commentaries.

-Tadru Orgyan Tenzin

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144 That Orgyan Chökyi may have been Orgyan Tenzin’s consort is supported by a comment made by Kagar Rinpoche to Corneille Jest in the 1960s, quoted in Schaeffer, 2004, p. 23.
145 Most traditionally educated persons from Dolpo to whom I talk with about Orgyan Tenzin are only able to locate Orgyan Tenzin as “the root guru of the ḍākinī Orgyan Chökyi.”
146 I use this term intentionally to point out that this study is also informed by a “hermeneutic of recovery” (McClimock, 2017, p. 91), hoping to draw readers attention to the fact that many stories that were once told are worth finding and telling again in order to gain a more broad and diverse understanding of the complexity of religious cultural transmission in Dolpo, and in the Buddhist context more generally.
147 sprang rgyan bsod nams med pa nga (The Melodies, 469.1 and The Condensed Life, B104a.4).
148 e ma ho/ tsho ’di ’i snang ba rgyab skur nas/ phyi ma ’i don chen grub mkhas mdzod/ phyi ma ’i don chen sgrub pa la/ thos bsam sgom pa ’bad par bya/ dang por dad pa rnams gsum gyis/ bla ma ’i zhal gdam mang du nyon/ rgyal
Orgyan Tenzin’s Seven (or Ten) Gurus

In the opening lines of The Condensed Life, Orgyan Tenzin supplicates his “seven gurus whose kindness is unrepayable,”149 whom he invokes in a number of songs.150 However, he gives the names of more than ten teachers in The Condensed Life, and declares in later songs that he had studied with “ten masters.”151 Though he recounts his mother Pema Tsomo carrying him on her back to meet Karma Lobsang as a child,152 it seems neither his mother153 nor Karma Lobsang are included in the list of seven. Katog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu would also not have been included, since Orgyan Tenzin did not meet him until he was seventy-four,154 and appears to have begun writing The Condensed Life and had completed most of The Melodies before then. Regarding the “ten gurus,” Orgyan Tenzin may be referring to Mekyem Lama Gyaltsen,155 the Sakya lama Sonam Gyaltsen,156 Lama Trinlé of Mé,157 and possibly Lama Nyima Gyaltsen of Balung158 in addition to the masters described below. The following discussion of Orgyan

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ba gong ma’i rnams the dang/ bka’ dang rtan chos [sic – bstan bcos] mang ltos/ (The Melodies, 463.2-463.4 and The Condensed Life, B97a.4-B97b.3).

149 The Condensed Life, B2b.2.
150 For example, found in the supplication and Song #2 of The Condensed Life, and Song #s 13 (pp. 36-37), 15 (pp. 40-41), 149 (381-382), and 191 (pp. 455-457) of The Melodies.
151 The Condensed Life, B57a.
152 The Condensed Life, B5a. The life of Karma Lobsang (kar ma blo bzang, 1592/3-c.1670) is discussed in Ehrhard, 2001, pp. 101-107 and Mathes, 2001, pp. 172-174. His mother plays an important role in his early life encouraging him to take the example of his dying father to heart by practicing the dharma. It is common to hear the insightful point that for many practitioners, their own mothers served as their first spiritual teacher. One gloss for the Tibetan term “lama” (bla ma) is “highest mother.”
153 The Condensed Life, B47a. Though in the middle of the text, Orgyan Tenzin names Tsewang Norbu as his “final guru” (“mtha’ ma tshire dhang nor bu,” The Condensed Life, B57a.1), at the end of The Condensed Life, Orgyan Tenzin names an additional master as his final guru, Trinlé Dorje (“mtha’ ma ’phrin las rdo rje,” The Condensed Life, B147a.4), who also is mentioned in The Melodies (pp. 282 & 332). I have listed Orgyan Tenzin’s gurus in the order they appear in The Condensed Life.
154 The Melodies, pp. 223-225. This could be the Lama Nyima Gyaltsen from Balung mentioned a number of times in The Melodies, but more likely a different Lama Gyaltsen from Mekyem from whom Orgyan Tenzin received extensive sūtra transmissions for three months in his forties (The Condensed Life, B24a and The Melodies, p. 223). Orgyan Tenzin mentions later joining Lama Gyaltsen for NarakTongshar (na rag stong mchog) ceremonies when he was seventy-two (The Condensed Life, B32a and The Melodies, p. 422) and receiving from him Sangye Lingpa’s Gathered Intent at Tashi Phen when he was seventy-seven (The Condensed Life, B87b and The Melodies, p. 452).
155 The Melodies, pp. 15-16.
157 ibid.
158 ibid.
Tenzin’s teachers and their lineage transmissions not only illuminate the major influences on Orgyan Tenzin’s life and teachings; they offer a roadmap to a majority of the practice lineages that were being transmitted to Dolpo from Tibet at the time.\footnote{That said, the full picture of the transmissions in and out of Dolpo in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is beyond the scope of this paper, and would necessarily include a discussion of the Kagyü lama Tenzin Repa (bstan ’dzin ras pa, 1646-1723), discussed in Schaeffer (2004, pp. 26-30), Ngawang Namgyal (ngag dbang rnam rgyal, b. 1628), discussed by Ehrhard (2013, pp. 314-324), and a number of Sakya lamas, such as Sonam Wangchuk (bsod nams dbang phyug, 1660-1731), whose biography is translated in Snellgrove (1967, pp. 183-230).}

Karma Lobsang\footnote{Karma Lobsang seems to have been well known among the people of the northwest Himalayas and west Tibet in the mid-seventeenth century, having founded Sang Ngag Choling (gsang sngags chos gling) in Barbong (Mathes, 2001, p. 172). He was also involved in a five-month inauguration of a teaching center at Shelri Drugdra (shel gyi ri bo ’brug sgra), after which 58 people entered three year retreat there (Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106).}

\textit{(karma blo bzang, 1592/3-c.1670)}

It is worth first mentioning the central Tibetan master Karma Lobsang, who had a singular impact on the lineages to which Orgyan Tenzin belonged.\footnote{Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106.} Karma Lobsang studied at Rechung Puk (ras chung phug)\footnote{For more on Rechung Puk, see Akester, 2016, pp. 422-424.} in his youth and was sent by the Sixth Sharmapa Chökyi Wangchuk (chos kyi dbang phyug, 1584-1630) to be the resident lama of Dragkar Taso (brag dkar rta so) near Kyirong, a site associated with Milarepa.\footnote{Ehrhard, 2013, p. 229-230 & p. 333, n. 5.} He then traveled extensively in western Tibet, Dolpo, Mustang (Lo) and Manang. He was a root teacher of Orgyan Tenzin’s gurus Gyalwang Sengé and Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje,\footnote{Ehrhard, 2013, p. 235.} and had a strong connection with Orgyan Tenzin’s root guru Orgyan Palzang, who stayed with Karma Lobsang at his retreat cave in the remote Nar Valley.\footnote{Mathes, 2001, p. 172.} Karma Lobsang bestowed empowerments for the \textit{Embodiment of the Precious Ones} on Orgyan Tenzin when he was four years old.\footnote{dkon mchog spyi ’dus. The Condensed Life, B141a.} This was the only time Orgyan Tenzin met him, as Karma Lobsang retired to Nar in the late 1660s\footnote{Ehrhard, 2001, p. 104.} when Orgyan Tenzin was a pre-teen, not to return to Dolpo.

\textit{The “Seven Gurus,” Plus One}
1) Orgyan Damchö Palzang (prgyan dam chos dpal bzang, 1617-1677)

The father vidyādhara, Orgyan Palzang, bestowed upon me
The stallion of the outer monastic vows of a renunciate.167

Orgyan Palzang, Orgyan Tenzin’s root guru,168 was a native of southern Mustang near
Thini.169 As a young man, he studied at the Sakya monastery Tanak Thupten Namgyal in Tsang
(where he would later send Orgyan Tenzin).170 He then set off for thirty years of pilgrimage,
retreat and wandering, beginning with three years studying the revealed treasures of Pema
Lingpa (padma gling pa, 1450-1521) in the Paro area of Western Bhutan,171 and three years with
Tertön Düdül Dorje (bdud ’dul rdo rje, 1615-1672) in Dartsedo in Kham, from whom he
received the Sublime Dharma Heart Essence of the Nirmanakāya.172 In Sikkim, he received the
treasure teachings of Shikpo Lingpa (zhig po gling pa, 1524-1583) and the Collected Teachings
of the Dharma King Srongtsan Gampo173 with Phuntsok Namgyal (phun tshogs rnam rgyal,
1604-1670).174 He spent many years in retreat at Riwo Palbar, where he studied with the Dochen
(mdo chen) Kagyü master Norbu Dechen (nor bu bde chen, b. 1617), and returned to Mustang
via Kyirong and Manang, where he studied with the Kamtshang Kagyü masters Karma Chöphel
(karma chos ’phel) and Karma Lobsang, described above.

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167 pha rigs ’dzin o rgyan dpal bzang gis/ phyi rab byung btsun pa’i rta po gnang (The Melodies, 36.3-36.4). In
response to the sponsor Sengê Kyap offering him a horse after he had consecrated the main statue in Dechen Jong
Lhakhang, Orgyan Tenzin sang Song #13 of The Melodies (p. 36-37), a praise to his seven gurus that describes a
metaphorical steed each one bestowed upon him. Those verses are reproduced here. Unfortunately, only six gurus
are mentioned in the song (in both recensions consulted), likely the result of a scribal omission.

168 The Condensed Life, B6a & B124a


171 ibid, p. 221.

172 dam chos sprul sku snying thig. Snellgrove locates this text in volumes 3-5 of The Collected Rediscovered
Teachings of spo bo gter chen bdud ’joms rdo rje (1979, p. 79).

173 chos rgyal srong btsan sgam po’i bka’ ’bum. I have not located this text.

174 Ehrhard, 2013, p. 221.
In 1668, he founded the monastery Kutsab Ternga (sku tshab gter lnga) southwest of Jomsom near the fortress of Garab Dzong which housed sacred terma objects and substances given to him by Tertön Düdul Dorje. He served as a priest for the local lords of Dzong and Dzar in the Baragaon area of southern Mustang, who sponsored him to preside over annual rituals at Muktināth.

Orgyan Palzang was invited in the late 1690s to southern Dolpo by prominent descendents of Namdrol Zangpo, giving public empowerments in the Kag area. A thirteen year old Orgyan Tenzin would have met him at that time, receiving lay vows and his dharma name. Orgyan Tenzin mentions receiving transmissions from Orgyan Palzang at a later time, including the treasure of Sangye Lingpa (sang rgyas gling pa, 1340-1396) called The Gathered Intent, the Heart Essence of the Nirmanakayas, the Six Dharmas, a namthar of Guru Rinpoche and other texts of the Nyingma tradition. Orgyan Palzang spent most of the final years of his life at Kutsab Ternga in Mustang, serving as a retreat master for other monks and developing the monastery. One interesting exception was a final trip to the hidden valley Kyimolung in Manaslu, where he was invited by Tertön Garwang Dorje to inspect some of his revealed treasures. Orgyan Tenzin does not mention further teachings with Orgyan Palzang, who passed away when Orgyan Tenzin was about twenty years old in Tibet. Orgyan Tenzin later wrote heartfelt songs of devotion to Orgyan Palzang, referring to him as “a Dzogchen yogi with

175 For more information on Kutsab Ternga (sku tshab gter lnga) and Garab Dzong (dga’ rab rdzong), see Snellgrove, 1979, pp. 20-41 and Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 218-225.
177 Ehrhard, 2013, p. 222.
178 The Condensed Life, B6a & B124a and The Melodies, pp. 7-8.
179 sangs rgyas gling pa’i dgongs ’dus.
180 sprul sku snying thig.
181 chos drug. The Condensed Life, B124a. The Six Dharmas could be referring to those referred to as the Six Dharmas of Naropa, the Six Dharmas of Niguma, or the Six Dharmas of Dzogchen. They include the practices of bardo, tummo, dream, illusory body, phowa, and luminosity. Orgyan Tenzin describes his experiences training in these practices with Orgyan Palzang in Song #40 of The Melodies (B120b-B126b).
183 Ehrhard, 2013, p. 213.
hundreds and thousands of Dzogchen students,” who “was Orgyan [Padmasambhava] in person.”

2) Thupten Mipham Wangpo (thub bstan mi pham dbang po, d. 1684/1686)

The most kind Thupten Wangpo bestowed upon me
The supreme stallion of pith instructions.

Thupten Wangpo was born in Tangjön (gtang byon) in southern Dolpo near Tijirong, not far from Orgyan Tenzin’s birthplace. He trained with Sonam Palzang (bsod nams dpal bzang) in the Sarma tradition, received novice vows from the central Tibetan Drukpa Kagyü master Ngawang Thogmé (ngag dbang thog med) at Sandul Temple, and received full monastic ordination from the Fifth Drukchen Gyalwa Pagsam Wangpo (rgyal ba dpag bsam dbang po, 1593-1641) at the Drukpa monastery Gyalche Tsal in Tibet. He then traveled to Ngari Shari Chödzong to receive the complete transmission of Drukpa teachings from Ngawang Thogmé. Upon telling his master that he was “only interested to receive the knowledge-wisdom empowerment,” Ngawang Thogmé gave him an extensive instruction on the key importance of the bodhicitta vow and practice, stating that one cannot attain enlightenment without it.

After receiving initiations and instructions from Ngawang Thogme, Thupten Wangpo completed a retreat on the preliminaries and tummo inner heat yoga as his main practice. He

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184 Such as songs #169 (pp. 414-416) and #190 (pp. 453-455) of The Melodies.
185 The Condensed Life, B124a.
186 Biographical information from the namthar of Thupten Wangpo is sourced from his Tibetan language biography, reproduced in Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 427-442. Thupten Wangpo’s namthar only mentions he was born in a pig year, which could reasonably be 1599, 1611, 1623, 1635, or 1647. In The Condensed Life (B19b), Orgyan Tenzin writes he died when he was twenty-seven (c. 1784), whereas in The Melodies (p. 34), he writes it was when he was twenty-nine (c. 1786).
187 drin can thub bstan dbang po yis/ man ngag zhal bzhes rta mchog gnang (The Melodies, 36.5).
188 ‘brug pa ngag dbang thog med.
189 See Ehrhard, 2013, p. 333.
190 ‘brug pa’i gra sa chen po rgyal byed ’tshal.
191 sha ri chos rdzong.
192 she rab ye shes kyi dbang thob pa tsam gyi mos pa byung (Phuntsok, 2020, 433.12-433.13).
193 Thupten Wangpo’s namthar lists the following: Chakrasamvara (bde mchog khrö bo), the Yoga of Innate Mahāmudrā (phyag rgya chen po lhan gcig skyes sbyor), the Drukpa Dharma Cycle Selmadrup (’brug lugs kyi chos
returned to southern Dolpo to be near his parents, building a hut at Chölung Bumkyi Dragthog\(^{194}\) and doing retreat with the support of a local chieftain. Thupten Wangpo’s *namthar* includes seven songs of experience describing impermanence and mahāmudrā style meditation instruction. He spent his later years at a hermitage at Dechen Dzong,\(^{195}\) the site of Dechen Palri where Orgyan Tenzin established his first meditation retreat center.

Orgyan Tenzin recalls receiving Drukpa Kagyü teachings from Thupten Wangpo when he was seventeen (circa 1774), noting that “he taught me many secret instructions.”\(^{196}\) Upon asking him about the significance of his recurring dreams of building temples, Thupten Wangpo interprets the dream as a prophecy that Orgyan Tenzin would build many spiritual supports and teach many students,\(^{197}\) a statement that must have struck him deeply. He passed away when Orgyan Tenzin was twenty-seven (c. 1784). Orgyan Tenzin went to Kathmandu to have a reliquary made for his remains, which he encased in a statue of Guru Rinpoche and installed at Dechen Palri Retreat.\(^{198}\)

3) Sakya Khenchen Jampa (*mKhen chen 'jams pa*, 17th century)

Specific biographical information is lacking regarding which great scholar (*mkhan chen*) at the Sakya Monastery Maitreya Temple to whom Orgyan Tenzin refers in *The Condensed Life*. Orgyan Tenzin describes two meetings with this master, taking novice ordination on the second

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\(^{194}\) *chos lung 'bum gyi brag thog* (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 436).

\(^{195}\) Ehrhard, 2013, p. 335.

\(^{196}\) *The Condensed Life*, B8a.1. In *The Melodies*, he lists these as guru worship (*bla ma mchod pa*), the six dharmas of Naropa (*na ro chos drug*), Amitayus and Hayagriva (*tshe rta*), the Kagyü Golden Rosary of Lives (*bka’ rgyud gyer phreng*), Wrathful guru Kilaya (*bla ma drag po ki la*), and many others (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 434). Many of these he would have later passed on to Orgyan Tenzin.

\(^{197}\) *The Melodies*, p. 15.

\(^{198}\) *The Condensed Life*, B19b-B20a.
Khenchen Jampa’s instructions on the monastic vinaya appear to have had a very strong impression on him. It was these instructions that Orgyan Tenzin closely followed during three years of strict monastic discipline in his early twenties, when he refrained from eating meat or drinking alcohol. Khenpo Jampa appears to have been somewhat gentle with his young Dolpo acolytes, advising them to drink beer if they were thirsty on the way back to their village, to abandon it after their return.

Orgyan Tenzin’s dedication to monastic discipline must have been unique among the practitioners at that time in southern Dolpo, since he remarks that people poked fun at him for carrying the mendicant’s staff and begging bowl, and offered him alcohol although he was a monk. After his three year retreat in his mid-twenties, it seems that Orgyan Tenzin relaxed his attitude toward monastic conduct, since he mentions drinking alcohol with other lamas on numerous occasions in *The Melodies*.

4) Rigdzin Gyalwang Sengé (rig ’dzin rgyal dbang seng ge, b. 1628)

The great accomplished father, sovereign of realized ones, bestowed upon me
The stallion of pointing out appearances and awareness.

Gyalwang Sengé held his family lineage’s seat of Chödzong (chos rdzong) in Mangyul, Tibet, and was associated with a temple at Muktināth in lower Mustang, Nepal. He was a student of Karma Lobsang, from whom he received the lineage teachings of the *Four Lettered Mahāmudrā* and the *Oral Lineage of Rechungpa*. He was a close dharma friend of Tertön
Garwang Dorje.\textsuperscript{207} Orgyan Tenzin received Jatsön Nyingpo’s \textit{Embodiment of the Precious Ones},\textsuperscript{208} the \textit{Mirror of the Mind of Vajrasattva}\textsuperscript{209} and mahāmudrā instructions from Gyalwang Sengé on three occasions in south central Tibet when he was in his early twenties. Orgyan Tenzin recalls asking questions about the meditation practice of searching for where mind comes from, abides, and goes (\textit{byung gnas ’gro gsum}), to which a pleased Gyalwang Sengé replied, “this person from Dolpo has a very sharp mind!”\textsuperscript{210}

After practicing Gyalwang Sengé’s meditation instructions, Orgyan Tenzin reports clear experiences of mixing of stillness and movement, about which he sang a celebratory song of the teachings and their results.\textsuperscript{211} He follows this with a brief song of devotion and praise to Gyalwang Sengé, “the guru who pointed out his mind,” whom he recalled with tears bursting forth from his eyes.\textsuperscript{212} Other than his first pilgrimage to Tibet, Orgyan Tenzin mentions travelling to meet him again at Zapuk (\textit{za phug}) after his time spent with Garwang Dorje in Kyimolung. He writes that he received eight volumes of empowerments and reading transmissions, including Vajrasattva and other [practices] from the \textit{Embodiment of the Precious Ones},\textsuperscript{213} the \textit{Eastern Treasures}, and the \textit{Western Treasures}.\textsuperscript{214}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106.
\item \textsuperscript{208} \textit{dkon mchog spyi ’dus. The Melodies}, pp. 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{209} \textit{’rdod ’rgyal}, \textit{The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa} was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 301-302 and Roberts, 2007, pp. 1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{206} ras chung snyan brgyud /rgyud. The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Snellgrove, 1967, p. 269.
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106.
\item \textsuperscript{208} \textit{dkon mchog spyi ’dus. The Melodies}, pp. 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{209} \textit{’rdod ’rgyal}, \textit{The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa} was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 301-302 and Roberts, 2007, pp. 1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{206} ras chung snyan brgyud /rgyud. The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Snellgrove, 1967, p. 269.
\item \textsuperscript{208} \textit{dkon mchog spyi ’dus. The Melodies}, pp. 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{209} \textit{’rdod ’rgyal}, \textit{The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa} was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 301-302 and Roberts, 2007, pp. 1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{206} ras chung snyan brgyud /rgyud. The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Snellgrove, 1967, p. 269.
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106.
\item \textsuperscript{208} \textit{dkon mchog spyi ’dus. The Melodies}, pp. 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{209} \textit{’rdod ’rgyal}, \textit{The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa} was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Ehrhard, 2013, pp. 301-302 and Roberts, 2007, pp. 1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{206} ras chung snyan brgyud /rgyud. The Oral Lineage / Tantra of Rechungpa was a practice lineage of the six dharmas of Nāropa transmitted by Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa (\textit{ras chung pa rdo rje grags pa}, 1084-1161), a prominent student of Milarepa. See Snellgrove, 1967, p. 269.
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ehrhard, 2001, p. 106.
\end{itemize}
Dozens of the meditation instructions Orgyan Tenzin offered in songs to students appear to contain key terms and phrases from Gyalwang Sengé’s mahāmudrā teachings.

5) Palden Dorje Rinchen Namgyal (*dpal lden rdo rje, 1663-1723*)

The most kind father, Palden Dorje, bestowed upon me
The supreme stallion of the sublime path of means.

Palden Dorje was affiliated with Hrab monastery in upper Dolpo. He transmitted teachings on the practices of *Vajravidāraṇa*, *Sarvavid Vairocāna*, *Hevajra*, *Vajrapaṇi*, and the Severance practice (*gcod*) of Machik Labdrön to Orgyan Tenzin when he was in his early twenties.

Orgyan Tenzin composed an acrostic song of devotion for Palden Dorje, which plays on his names, writing “You are lord of the three profound dharma vows in union,/ Master of luminosity, dream yoga and illusory body.” This statement makes sense in the context of an episode that Orgyan Tenzin recalls in *The Condensed Life*, in which Palden Dorje demonstrates esoteric yogic practices referred to as *trulkhor* (*'phrul 'khor*). When the others who observed them criticizes the lama behind his back, Orgyan Tenzin remains patient and explains the proper

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*Lhundrup Gyatso*. Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche wrote that he took this terma “as the essence of my daily yoga of generation and completion” (Gyamtso, 2011, p. 165).

*dkon mchog spyi* *'dus rdo sems sogs/ shar gter nub gter* (*The Condensed Life*, B21b).


*pha drin can dpal ldan rdo rje yis/ thabs lam dam pa'i rta mchog gnang* (*The Melodies*, 36.6).

Ehrhard, 2013, p. 333.

*rmam 'joms*. Refers to the All-Conquering One (*rdo rje rnam 'joms*), a form of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, practiced by Sakya monks in retreat.

*Kun rig*. Referring to the All-Knowing One (*kun rig rnam par snang mdzad*), the “Sarvavid Vairocāna; Adi-buddha belonging to the Pariśodhana tantra; a class of Yoga Tantra; popular in the Sakya Tradition” (RYD). A funerary ritual is commonly practiced by Sakya monks, also accumulated as a retreat practice (Khenpo Kunsang Choephel, pc 5/26/23).

*Kyel* sugg. *em., dge B, dge D T. kye rdor* is an abbreviation for *kye rdo rje* (*Hevajra*). Orgyan Tenzin discusses receiving these practice instructions from Lama Palden Dorje (*bla ma dpal ldan rdo rje*) and this retreat in *The Melodies* (pp. 15-20), describing his meditation experiences in Songs #4 (pp. 17-18) and #5 (pp. 18-20).

*The Melodies*, 412.1.
way of understanding the distinctions between the three sets of vows of the Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.\footnote{222}

6) Kunzang Longyang (\textit{kun bzang klong yangs}, 1644-1696)

The vidyādhara Kunzang Longyang bestowed upon me
The stallion of Dzogchen fruition.\footnote{223}

Kunzang Longyang, from the Jumla area,\footnote{224} was the “heart son” (\textit{thugs sras}) of Orgyan Palzang.\footnote{225} After his master’s death, he established his residence at Orgyan Palzang’s hermitage Kutsab Ternga southwest of Jomsom, and continued his function presiding over annual rituals at Muktināth for the lords of Dzong and Dzar. With their sponsorship, Kunzang Longyang was able to study for eight months in central Tibet with the influential treasure revealer Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa (\textit{rig ’dzin gter bdag gling pa}, 1646-1714) at Mindrol Ling monastery, and again with Rigdzin Pema Trinlé (\textit{rig ’dzin padma ’phrin las}, 1640-1718) at Dorje Drak monastery (\textit{rdo rje brag}),\footnote{226} two of the six major monasteries of the Nyingma school in Tibet.

Orgyan Tenzin reports that at the ages of thirty-one and thirty-two, Kunzang Longyang bestowed upon him an extensive amount of teachings and empowerments, including the Kadampa Dharmas of the Father and Son,\footnote{227} the Complete Collection of the Eight [Sādhana] Instructions,\footnote{228} the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, the Heart Essence of the Nirmāṇakāya, terma texts of Dūdul Dorje and Jatsōn Nyingpo, the collected songs of Milarepa, Orgyan Palzang’s \textit{namthar},

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{bka’ gdams pha chos bu chos}. See Tsepag Rigdzin, and BRTMCM. \textit{Dharmas of the Father and Son} refers to two volumes of teachings from the Kadampa tradition. The Father Dharma is the first volume compiled by Dromtönpa Gyalwai Chungné (’brom ston pa rgyal ba ’byung gnas, 1004-1064), including questions and answers with Atiśa Dipaṅkara (\textit{jo bo rje a ti sha dśi pa m ka ra}, 982-1055) and a biography of Atiśa. The Son Dharma is the second volume, compiled by Ngog Legpai Sherab (\textit{rngog legs pa’i shes rab}), which includes stories of Dromtönpa’s life and his teachings.
\item \textit{bka’ brgyad yong ’dus}. The Eight Sādhana Instructions are a collection of early Nyingma tantric deity practices, transmitted to Tibet during the early transmission by Padmasambhava and others.
\end{itemize}
and roughly one-hundred [other] Indian and Tibetan scriptures including many sutras and tantra teachings of the Nyingma tradition.\textsuperscript{229} Following these teachings and transmissions, Orgyan Tenzin reports that he experienced great progress in Dzogchen trekchö and thögal practices, developing great certainty in his perceptions of the six torches (sgron ma drug) and four visions (sngang ba bzhi).\textsuperscript{230}

During the winter of 1696, when Orgyan Tenzin was forty, Kunzang Longyang passed away.\textsuperscript{231} This appears to have devastated Orgyan Tenzin, as he was the last of Orgyan Tenzin’s primary gurus to die. He composed the song entitled \textit{A Long Melody of Yearning with Devotion} at that time.\textsuperscript{232} He later recalled Kunzang Longyang and Orgyan Palzang again in another heartfelt song of longing for his past masters.\textsuperscript{233}

7) Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje Dawa Gyaltsen (\textit{gar dbang rdo rje}, 1640-1685)

\begin{quote}
The great nirmānakāya vidyādharā bestowed upon me
The supreme stallion of the profound dharma treasure.\textsuperscript{234}
\end{quote}

Garwang Dorje, who Jamgön Kongtrul included in his compilation of the biographies of one hundred tertöns,\textsuperscript{235} was born in Ngari, western Tibet, and was active in south central Tibet and the northwest Nepali Himalayas. He was considered to be incarnations of Padmasambhava’s disciple Namkhai Nyingpo and of the founder of the Jangter (byang gter) treasure tradition, Gödemchen Ngödrup Gyaltsen (rgod ldem chen dngos grub rgyal mtshan, 1337-1409).\textsuperscript{236} After performing retreat in the hidden valley Kyimolung (skyid mo lung) in the Tsum valley of Nepal,

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[229]{\textit{The Condensed Life}, B20a-B20b and \textit{The Melodies}, pp. 38-39.}
\footnotetext[230]{\textit{The Melodies}, p. 38.}
\footnotetext[231]{\textit{The Melodies}, p. 83.}
\footnotetext[232]{mos dgus kyi gdung dbyangs ring mo. Song #30 (pp. 83-89) of \textit{The Melodies}.}
\footnotetext[233]{\textit{The Condensed Life}, B88b-B9-b and \textit{The Melodies}, Song #190 (pp. 453-455).}
\footnotetext[234]{sprul sku rig ‘dzin chen po yis/ zab gter chos kyi rta mchog gnang (\textit{The Melodies}, 36.5-36.6).}
\footnotetext[235]{Gyamtso, 2011, pp. 261-263. Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje Dawa Gyaltsen should not be confused with the tertöns Garwang Chimé Dorje (Kongtrul, 2011, pp. 295-296) and Garwang Letro Lingpa (Kongrul, 2011, pp. 246-257).}
\footnotetext[236]{This and other information in this section sourced from Ron Garry (2007) \textit{Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu}, https://treasuryoflives.com/biographies/view/rigdzin-tsewang-norbu/9372, Accessed July 14, 2023.}
\end{footnotes}
he revealed his first terma, a rediscovered treasure of Gödemchen, *The Mirror of the Mind of Vajrasattva* (*rdo sms thugs kyi me long*), which Orgyan Tenzin received from Gyalwang Sengé.\(^{237}\) He revealed a number of treasure texts in Kyimolung and the Kyirong area,\(^{238}\) and later exchanged terma teachings with the tertön Nyima Drakpa (*nyi ma grags pa*, 1647-1710) from Kham. Garwang Dorje wrote a commentary on one of Nyima Drakpa’s *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* termas, *Great Perfection from Fear: An Explanation on Liberation Through Hearing in the Bardo*.\(^{239}\) Garwang Dorje’s termas were authenticated by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (*ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617-1682)\(^{240}\) and Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorje.

Orgyan Tenzin spent a number of months with Garwang Dorje around 1681, receiving transmissions and instructions on the *Mani Kabum* (*ma ni bka’ bum*), preliminary practices, and mahāmudrā-Dzogchen meditation teachings from the *Self Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu* terma cycle, referred to as *Directly Seeing the Innate* (*gnyug ma geer mthong*). The latter transmission was the basis for Orgyan Tenzin’s mahāmudrā meditation instructional commentary on this treasure cycle.

8) Katog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (*rig ’dzin tshe dbang nor bu*, 1698-1755)

Emaho! Tsewang Norbu, who upholds the quintessence of the nine yānas
Of the great blissful island of Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava,
I pray you bless me by bestowing empowerment.
May your lotus feet remain steadfast, great tamer of beings!”\(^{241}\)

\(^{237}\) *The Condensed Life*, B16b.

\(^{238}\) These include *The Unsurpassed Innermost Oral Lineage of Padmasambhava* (*padma’i snyan brgyud yang sang bla med*), *The Self Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu* (*zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal*), *The Great Compassionate One, the Heart Essence of the Three Roots* (*thugs rje chen po rtsa gsam snying thig*), *the Vajrākīlaya Cutting Razor* (*rdo rje phur pa spu gri reg gcod*), and *The Great Compassionate One Who Liberates Wandering [Beings]* (*thugs rje chen po ’gro ha kun grol*), also known as the *Self-Liberation of the Afflictions* (*nyon mongs rang grol*), among others.

\(^{239}\) *bar do thos pa rang grol gyi khrid yig ’jigs skyob chen mo*.

\(^{240}\) The Fifth Dalai Lama was also considered a treasure revealer, and was included by Jamgön Kongtrul in his compilation of the biographies of one hundred tertöns (Gyamtso, 2011, pp. 348-350).

Tsewang Norbu, of Kham, was recognized as the reincarnation of Nyingma lama at a young age. He revealed terma in his youth, and Jamgön Kongtrul also included him in his compilation of biographies of one hundred tertöns. He trained in Nyingma and Kagyü traditions with many lamas from Mindrol Ling and Dorje Drak at Katok (kah thog) monastery, and later studied with the Kagyü master Zurmang Chetsang Sungrab Gyatso (zur mang che tshang gsung rab rgya mtsho, 17th/18th century). He received Jonang teachings from the Trewo lama Karma Tenzin Dargye (tre bo bla ma karma bstan 'dzin dar rgyas) and the full Jonang transmission from Drupchen Zur Kunzang Wangpo (zur kun bzang dbang po) in 1728, who recognized him as a reincarnation of one of Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltse's students. He transmitted these Jonang teachings, including the philosophical view of “other-emptiness” (gzhan stong), to many lamas who in turn taught and wrote about them. These lamas included the Thirteenth Karmapa Düdul Dorje (bdud 'dul rdo rje, 1733-1797), the Tenth Sharmapa Chödrup Gyatso (chos bsgrub rgya mtsho, 1742-1792), and the Eighth Tai Situ Chökyi Gyaltsen (ta'i si tuchos kyi 'byung gnas, 1699-1774), to whom he taught in 1748 in Nepal after he completed his second renovation of the Boudha stūpa. Tsewang Norbu traveled extensively in western Tibet and Nepal, where he also renovated the Swayambhū stūpa in the 1750s before his death in Kyirong in 1755.

Tsewang Norbu was also involved in settling some political disputes and the restoration of Katok Monastery. In addition to his work reviving the Jonang lineage in Tibet, he was active in gathering and propagating revealed terma teaching lineages in Tibet and Nepal. As mentioned,

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244 Stearns, 2010, p. 78.
he traveled to the remote Tadru hermitage to receive transmissions, empowerments, and instructions for Tertön Garwang Dorje’s terma teachings from Orgyan Tenzin, including the *The Heart Essence of the Nirmāṇakāya*, *Self Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu*, *The Great Compassionate One*, *The Heart Essence of the Three Roots*, *Vajrākīlaya Cutting Razor*, and *The Great Compassionate One Who Liberates Wandering Beings*, also known as *The Self-Liberation of the Afflictions*. In addition to these, Orgyan Tenzin offered him “guidance for [the spiritual practice of] the rainbow body of [the system of] the honorable [sTag sham] Nus-lDan [rdo-rje].”

In return, Tsewang Norbu offered Orgyan Tenzin the complete empowerments and reading transmissions for the *Clear Expanse of the Heart Essence of the Ḍākinis* (*klong gsal mkha’ ‘gro snying thig*) a treasure of Pema Dechen Lingpa (*padma bde chen gling pa*, 1663-1713), “and he authoritatively appointed [Orgyan Tenzin] a master of the Nyingtik tradition.”

As we can see, Orgyan Tenzin’s teachers brought numerous practice teachings from a variety of lineages to Dolpo, including dozens of reading transmissions for sūtras, tantras, commentaries and spiritual biographies. These made up a majority of the popular practices that were active in Dolpo in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Orgyan Tenzin passed these on to hundreds of students, ensuring their continuity and proliferation in the Himalayas.

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246 * thugs rje chen po rtsa gsum snying thig.
247 * rdo rje phur pa spu gri reg gcod.
248 * thugs rje chen po ‘gro ba kun grol.
249 * nyon mongs rang grol.
Chapter 4. Tibetan Language Spiritual Biography

"When there is so much material about the teachings themselves and the means of putting them into practice, why read biographies? The traditional answer is that the inspiring lives of great practitioners arouse our faith and devotion; however, there is something more... [they are] not just a reference book, but an integral element of the living transmission of the teachings."

-Richard Barron (Lama Choky Nyima)

Typologies of Tibetan Literary Genres: Meta-genre and Blurry Distinctions

As discussed in Chapter 1, exploring the genre or tradition of indigenous literature in which a hagiographic text was produced is a fruitful method in critically understanding it. This chapter examines the conceptual boundaries of the spiritual biography genre in Tibetan and Himalayan literature.

*The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies* fall at the intersection of three Tibetan literary sub-genres in which Orgyan Tenzin was very familiar: hagiographic spiritual biography or *namthar* (*rnam thar*), spiritual autobiography (*rang rnam*), and collected songs of spiritual experience (*mgur 'bum*). These were traditionally understood along a classically Vajrayāna Buddhist outer-inner-secret rubric. Songs of experience “are often weaved into autobiography and biography... though they should be distinguished from narrative verse,” since they offer “atemporal reflections on themes in Buddhist doctrine, even if they refer to particular events in the author’s life.” This accurately describes the formats of *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*. The former is composed entirely in verse (except for the editor’s epilogue), alternating

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253 Translator's Preface to Dorje, 2005, p. xliii.
255 See Gyatso, 1998, p. 103; Terrone, 2010, pp. 160-162; and Tiso, 2010, pp. 11-12. The Outer-Inner-Secret Secret rubric even was used by some Tibetan scholars such as the Drukpa Kagyu master Padma Karbo ('brug pa padma dkar po, 1527-1592) to describe the entirety of Tibetan Buddhist literature, though he placed the literary category of “Biography” into the category of Outer Sciences, whereas Inner sciences were related to Buddhist hermeneutics and Secret Sciences related to Vajrayāna practice. Perhaps recognizing the limitations of this schema, he placed *vajra*-songs and hymns of praise (which would have included what we are calling spiritual songs of experience) in a “Miscellaneous” category (Cabezón & Jackson, 1996, pp. 24-25).
between narrative and song, and the latter alternates between brief prose narration and verse songs (until the final 10% of the text, which switches to narrative verse). Taken together, Orgyan Tenzin’s two biographical texts present us an opportunity to appreciate the lines of demarcation between sub-genres as theoretical ideals that break down in practice. As we do this, we are compelled to ask two related questions: 1) What are the relationships between these categories in general, 2) What do The Condensed Life and The Melodies tell us about them?

Cabezón and Jackson provide a valuable overview of indigenous and academic attempts to categorize the genres of Tibetan literature, appropriately noting that while there is no exact equivalent term for “literary genre” in Tibetan, many Tibetan scholars developed typologies to organize their canonical work.257 Their own “heuristic” typology of eight Tibetan literary meta-genres places hagiography and autobiography together with chronicles (rgyal rabs) and religious histories (chos ’byung) in a “History and Biography” category; while they locate songs of experience (nyams mgur) as a type of poetry together with epics (sgrung), folk songs (glu), and other creative literature in a “Literary Arts” category.258 Cabezón and Jackson recognize that theirs “is not the only, nor necessarily the best, way one could organize Tibetan literature in its entirety,”259 listing instances where sub-genres may overlap.260

Alternately, the modern scholar Tulku Thondup divides the entirety of Tibetan literature into Religious and Secular, with “History and biography” and “Poetic composition and yogic songs” located in the religious category, along with an additional “History” genre in the secular

258 Ibid., pp. 30-31.
259 Ibid., p. 31.
260 Their examples of sub-genres that may overlap include ornate long-life prayers placed in the rubric of Ritual rather than Literary Arts, technical literature on vows and observances placed in Literature on the Paths rather than Philosophical Literature; and treatises on practices that are placed in Literature on the Paths but may as well be classified under Ritual due to their ritual applications (Cabezón and Jackson, 1996, p. 32).
This method marks a clear distinction between “religious” history (chos ’byung) and spiritual biography (rnam thar), and “secular” history (lo rgyud), providing a foundation for how this paper understands and treats Tibetan language “spiritual biography” as dharma literature. Autobiography (rang nam) or hagiography (rnam thar): Notes on Authorship

Others have described the origins and structure of namthar, Tibetan language hagiographies, which for the purposes of this paper I define as a spiritual biography prepared by a master’s disciple(s), in contrast with spiritual autobiographies that are ostensibly composed by the subject themselves. Tibetan hagiographies come in a number of narrative formats. Sometimes an author is identified in the “commitment of composition” (rtsom par dam bca’) after the initial homage, or in a colophon, though often the person who prepared the text is not identified. The text may be presented as an original compilation of written and/or oral material arranged into a third person narrative biography, a close student’s description of the master’s life based on their recollection, a recounting of the life of the master as told in the first person, or some combination of those. Tibetan literature was often the product of a team of

262 This format has its limitations as a universal schema, but is useful for our purposes of understanding The Condensed Life, and for appreciating how it would have been treated by seventeenth and eighteenth century Himalayan persons. For example, a valuable alternative is the extensive classification organized by the western academic Manfre Taube, which includes biographies in a History and Geography genre, completely separate from a Songs category. Taube’s system focuses on the structure of the literary work as well as their function (Cabezón & Jackson, 1996, pp. 27-28).
263 See Roberts, 2007, pp. 4-6; Robinson, 1996, pp. 61-67; Ary, 2007, pp. 15-16; Tiso, 2010, pp. 1-16; Gyatso, 1998, pp. 102-106; and Terrone, 2010, pp. 157-162. Here I use the term “Tibetan” to refer to the language of composition, since local scholars from Dolpo, Nubri and other Himalayan areas in the traditional Tibetan cultural sphere would argue that their literature is not “Tibetan” in a national or political sense, despite their being written in various dialects of the classical Tibetan language.
264 Terrone, 2010, p. 162.
265 Jamgön Kongtrul states in the promise of composition at the beginning of his biography of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, “in order to enhance the reverence of fortunate disciples, I will give a slender account of that which has fallen to my own understanding” (Akester, 2012, p. 30).
266 For example, Tsangnyön Heruka presents his biography of Milarepa as being narrated by Rechungpa.
268 For example, in the colophon to the terma biography of Yeshe Tsogyal, revealed by Taksham Samten Lingpa, the authors state that they “saw with our own eyes the events that are described here,” and that they “wrote down these, the Lady’s words, on sheets of yellow paper, without addition or subtraction and without exaggeration or
authors working together over time, a shared nature of authorship that is also normative for the Tibetan language biographical tradition. The Condensed Life begins as an autobiographical first person written account of the master’s life. The narrative switches after their deaths to a third person account of cremation, miracles, and a discussion of their importance, integrating the story of their liberation into the succession of lineage gurus and the broader context of that particular lineage’s teachings. By presenting them as autobiographical narratives spoken by the subject of the biography to dutiful students who state that they merely wrote what they heard without any alterations, the text immediately gains authority and authenticity. The authors are sometimes identified in the colophon to the text as the ones who “arranged” (god) the text.

Though The Condensed Life is presented in this way, there is some evidence that it was a group effort completed over the course of thirteen or more years. At the outset, Orgyan Tenzin states that he wrote (bris) it when he was “approaching his seventieth year,” yet describes events that occurred throughout his seventies until he was eighty. The final song of the text

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269 For example, the Fifth Dalai Lama’s biography was “a massive work of over five thousand printed pages” that was “product of a team of highly educated court scribes and scholars” (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 49). See also Cabezón, 2001, pp. 248-251; and Sernesi, 2015, pp. 465-467 & 475-479.

270 Claiming that the text was written with pure fidelity, free of any alteration or addition, along with apologies for any errors, appears to be a standard disclaimer provided by editors and writers of Tibetan language spiritual biographies, dating at least to Gomtsul’s collection of Gampopa’s writings (Roberts, 2007, p. 5 & n. 16, p. 236). Some form of these statements appear in the colophons to the Dolpo biographies of Orgyan Tenzin (B148b & B155b) and his contemporaries, including those of Chökyong Palzang (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 75-76), Palden Dorje (Phuntsok, 2010, p. 472), and Orgyan Chöyi (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 180 and Phuntsok, 2010, p. 688). For example the author of the epilogue of Orgyan Tenzin’s Condensed Life states that he had “written it without the faults of invention or making modifications or adulterations” di la rang bzo'i skyon dang bcos slad med par 'bri ba (B148b).

271 For example, the text slips into the use of honorific verbs for Orgyan Tenzin in a few instances (gnang ba, bzhugs pa), which would have been introduced by a student rather than spoken by the master himself.

272 The Condensed Life, B3a.2.

273 The Condensed Life, B144b.
“was spoken as he was about to pass into nirvāṇa,” at age eighty-two, indicating that someone else wrote it down. The editor, who identifies himself as “Trenbuwa” in the colophon, added an epilogue, where the text takes its full expression as a namthar with requisite praises to the master, descriptions of miracles at his death and cremation, identifications of the master’s previous rebirths, and scriptural quotations with commentary.

Trenbuwa purports that the first 148 of 157 folios of the text are a faithful rendering of the life of Orgyan Tenzin as “he dictated it,” but it is not clear which parts were written by Orgyan Tenzin’s hand, which parts were written as Orgyan Tenzin dictated it, or which parts were composed (sbyar) using Orgyan Tenzin’s songs from his collected songs as an iterative editorial process. Orgyan Tenzin remarks roughly a dozen times that there was more to a song but he had not “written” it due to excessive length. This indicates that the songs were originally sung (spontaneously or not), written down at a later time, and eventually collated together with narrative transitions between songs to construct a song collection. For example, Orgyan Tenzin mentions in The Melodies that a student named Chökyapma requested permission to write down his songs at Nyimapuk. At least three of the songs in The Condensed Life

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274 The Condensed Life, B140b.2.
275 Further confusing the situation is that different recensions of The Condensed Life have different colophons that name different sponsors (yon mchod) and scribes (yi ge pa). It is likely that these sponsors and scribes were responsible for the copying of the particular manuscript in which they are recorded, not text’s original writing, which appears to have been done by Threnbuwa, who is mentioned in all available colophons. Schaeffer appears to mistake the sponsors and scribe named in the Dalhousie recension (D) as the ones for the original manuscript (2004, p. 26).
276 Folio numbers are based on recension “B,” the U can manuscript from Drumba, Jomsom. NGMCP Microfilm: L 206/3.
277 zhal mnga’ nas gnang ba sprangs (The Condensed Life, B148a).
278 mang yod kyang/ yig bongs che bsam ma bris so (The Condensed Life, B62a).
279 The question of the spontaneous nature of the songs is beyond this discussion, but in The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin introduces a number of the songs as having been directly sung in the moment (Such as Song #19 in The Melodies, pp. 50-52). By indicating some songs were spontaneously sung, he appears to imply that others were not spontaneous. See Appendix D for evidence of two songs which were edited between when they were written in The Melodies and The Condensed Life.
280 The Melodies, p. 327.
appear edited from their forms in *The Melodies*, so it is unlikely that the text which has been passed down to us records the exact words that Orgyan Tenzin spoke at the time of each song’s composition. Though Orgyan Tenzin was likely the source of the text’s first-person content, it is impossible to know the extent Orgyan Tenzin was involved in the composition of the afterword and the editing process of the text before and after his death in 1737. This may be why Orgyan Tenzin (or his editors) identified the text as a *namthar* in its title, despite its presentation as an autobiography (*rang rnam*).

That being the case, copiers of *The Melodies* assigned it an alternative title as Orgyan Tenzin’s extensive *namthar*, despite its clearly autobiographical nature, rather than merely label it his autobiography or song collection. This seems to indicate more about how it was viewed by his followers and the tradition, rather than a statement on its authorship. In any case, what would have been the purpose for composing a shorter biography if a longer autobiographical song collection already existed? Orgyan Tenzin states at the beginning of *The Condensed Life* that there were concerns over limited paper and funds, and students and patrons would be more able to copy (or sponsor someone to copy) a shorter version of the as yet unnamed collection of his songs.

However, this very practical reason does not address why one would produce a spiritual biography in the first place. It appears that historical and political concerns were far from his

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281 See Appendix C for a side by side comparison of three songs from *The Melodies* that appear in an edited form in *The Condensed Life*.

282 Similarly, the conversation Orgyan Chökyi’s and Orgyan Tenzin held about departing Tadru is recorded differently in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 163) compared with how it is recorded in *The Condensed Life* (B27a). Another example is that Orgyan Tenzin’s mother’s spoken words are written in narrative verse, but it is unlikely that she actually spoke in verse (The Condensed Life, B7a).

283 Indeed, we can find potential evidence to support a hypothetical continuation of the process of autobiography becoming hagiography, where an ordinary term later becomes written as an honorific term in the autobiographical portions of the text, such as *lag* for *phyag* (hand) or *byas* as *mdzad* (to do) (B142). This may indicate a willful edit by later scribes, making the first-person content written by a master about themselves (ordinary term) into narrative third person about a master (honorific term).

284 See Appendix F.
mind, as Orgyan Tenzin concludes a very cursory overview of his ancestry, parents’ names, and birth, by saying “this is the compulsory conventional history.”

To Orgyan Tenzin, the worldly circumstances of his life may have been necessary to mention as part of the traditional namthar structure, yet are ultimately unimportant for a religious text. Indeed, in The Condensed Life and The Melodies, people and events deserve mention to the extent that they support the intention of the texts to transmit concepts and experiences about the dharma. For example, the only political figure named in The Condensed Life is Vikram Śāh, the Jumla monarch who initiated the reconstruction of the Sandul temple, and he is not presented with much greater importance than the others who provided their patronage.

Unlike The Condensed Life, The Melodies appears straightforwardly autobiographical, yet does not attempt to provide a continuous narrative flow of his life. As a collection of songs, the prose narration functions to provide the set and setting for each of the 201 songs identified in the text. Some of the events described in The Melodies are not included in The Condensed Life, so The Condensed Life cannot be considered merely to be the condensed version of The Melodies, as it contains additional details of Orgyan Tenzin’s early life and includes nineteen songs not found in The Melodies. Therefore, The Condensed Life appears to have been partially a product of Orgyan Tenzin’s students, and the resulting text functioned as a more completely hagiographic complement to Orgyan Tenzin’s autobiographical collection of songs.

Hypothetical Continuums in a Meta-Category

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285 kun rdzob lo rgyus dgos pa chung (The Condensed Life, B3b.2-B3b.3). This is in contrast to the life stories of his contemporaries such as Tenzin Repa, Karma Lobsang, and Orgyan Palzang, which include background information on the social and political events that affected their families and communities before their births. Orgyan Tenzin’s use of the term “history” (lo rgyus) may indicate that Orgyan Tenzin felt that this type of history was not really that relevant for the dharma transmission in the text. Orgyan Tenzin refers to details in a life story that are dharma teachings as “liberation stories” (rnam thar), which we see in Song #46 of The Condensed Life titled The Song of A Life Without Regret (B140b-B145a).

286 See Ehrhard, pp. 336-337 for his discussion positively identifying Vikram Śāh.

287 Though not made explicit in the title or text of The Melodies of Experience, it is referred to as “collected songs” (mgur 'bum) in The Condensed Life (B3a.3).
Bearing in mind all of the above, I propose adding a “spiritual biography” meta-genre to Cabezón and Jackson’s list of overlapping sub-genres. This category would consist of any mix of prose or verse religious (Buddhist or Bön) biographical literature including hagiography, autobiography, songs of experience, autobiographical verse poetry\textsuperscript{288} and even life-story supplications (\textit{rnam thar gsol 'debs}), a type of devotional liturgy that recounts relevant spiritual accomplishments of a master while requesting their blessings, intended to be memorized and chanted as a means of transmitting direct experiences of realization.\textsuperscript{289} The works composing this meta-genre are grouped together based on their function as a form of dharma transmission.

It is more informative to understand these texts as sitting along a continuum of Tibetan spiritual biographies: at one pole would be a hypothetical autobiography penned by the biographical subject, acting alone. At the other would be hagiographies written by lineage disciples from gathered materials, such as Tsangnyön Heruka’s famous biography of Milarepa. The further the act of composition occurred from the master’s lifetime and personal writings, the further the hagiography would lie on the continuum away from autobiography. \textit{The Melodies} would fall near the autobiographical pole, since Orgyan Tenzin and his students arranged it over the course of his lifetime from his songs, which they wrote down at various times. \textit{The Condensed Life} would lie between the autobiographical pole and the center, as it has sections composed by both Orgyan Tenzin and his students during his lifetime, and an epilogue composed after his life by Trenbuwa. Cases where a master has “left a diary for his successors to transcribe into a hagiography, as great Lamas commonly did, and still do,”\textsuperscript{290} would fall at the

\textsuperscript{288} Such as Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo’s \textit{Essential Biography} (Akester, 2012, pp. 1-7).
\textsuperscript{289} The \textit{Clearing Obstacles on the Path} (\textit{bar chad lam sel}) supplication to Guru Rinpoche is a popular example of this type of literature.
\textsuperscript{290} Akester, 2012, xxii.
center of the continuum. However, the inspirational, “didactic and commemorative”291 functions of these compositions are similar regardless of their place on the continuum: to encourage lineage students’ renunciation and practice, describe key doctrinal details, transmit concepts to enhance and remove obstacles to meditation practice, and engender a direct connection to non-conceptual wisdom via the devotional experiences of the reader or listener. Songs and spiritual biographies, whether short or long, are read or sung aloud again and again, which may be why Orgyan Tenzin wrote the entirety of The Condensed Life in verse, a somewhat unique format for Dolpo spiritual biographies.292

Many biographies contain collections of spiritual songs that serve narrative functions but whose meanings transcend the particular situation in which the song is found.293 However, not all biographies contain songs, and not all songs are autobiographical. Therefore, the presence (or absence) of spiritual songs represent a vertical axis upon which we can map Tibetan language spiritual biographies. The Melodies is an autobiography composed almost entirely of songs, so it would sit high on the song axis, whereas the content of The Condensed Life is split between song and narrative verse, so it would sit in the middle of the song axis. Some songs are explicitly autobiographical, while others are more universal or ambiguous as to the circumstances of their composition. For this reason, many collections of songs contain narrative transitions between songs that contextualize them for the reader/listener, whether they are on the autobiographical or hagiographical side of the continuum. Works in this meta-genre may be fruitfully studied via the

292 For example, the namthars of his teachers Palden Dorje, Garwang Dorje, and Thupten Wangpo, and his students Orgyan Chökyi and Shakya Palzang, are written in prose with only the songs presented in verse, a more common literary format for Tibetan spiritual biographies. The mixed prose and verse format of Tibetan biography dates back to Tsongkhapa (tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1359-1419)’s biography of his teacher Chenga Drakpa Changchup (spyan snga grags pa byang chub, 1356-1386) (van der Kuijp, 1996, p. 400). A magnificent example of the style is Zhabkar Tsokdrub Rangdrol’s autobiography, about which he states, “to make it pleasant to those of superior, middling, and lesser capacities, I... (as a few learned and accomplished persons have done in the past) alternate prose and verse” (Ricard, 2001, p. 10).
text critical and literary methods employed below, but their usefulness as historical source material would need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Outer, Inner, or Secret?

The three namthars of Orgyan Tenzin’s teacher Garwang Dorje are categorized as outer, inner, and secret, a common organizational strategy for Tibetan spiritual biographies. The outer biography “deals of course with the more factual or observable aspects” of a master’s life, the inner biography was concerned with "the less visible and more personal interior aspects" such as his spiritual education, and the secret biography would detail "aspects... kept secret" such as meditative experiences. Specifically, these categories “correspond to the outer level (spyi) of life experience (childhood and separation from family household); inner (nang) processes of religious training (renunciation, pilgrimage, religious study, and teachings from masters); and secret (gsang) discourses emerging from gradual spiritual development (contemplations, meditations, visions, and revelations),” including “personal considerations, inner contemplations, perceptions or signs of realization, lists and descriptions of visions and dreams, and often songs of experience (nyams mgur).” Though Garwang Dorje’s were composed written as multiple texts, elements of all three also may appear in a single biography. Inner and secret namthars would necessarily contain content derived from the actual experience of a master, written in journals, sung aloud, or shared in conversations with students or colleagues.

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294 As another notable example, Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo structured his narratives of Jamgön Kongtrul’s life into three sections, the outer, inner, and secret (Akester, 2012, pp. xxi-xxiii).
296 Ary, 2007, p. 15.
297 ibid., p. 16.
298 Terrone, 2010, p. 162.
299 ibid.
Neither *The Condensed Life* nor *The Melodies* could be specifically described as an outer, inner, or secret biography, though the texts differ in their levels of emphasis. *The Condensed Life* provides more details of Orgyan Tenzin’s outer life, such as his family origins, early training, pilgrimages, temple restorations, and shifts to new hermitages. He describes his teachers, some of the transmissions he received and a few of his dreams and visions; but he does not go into deep detail nor provide an exhaustive account. The latter half of *The Condensed Life* consists primarily of instructional songs (gdams pa’i mgur) to particular students who are identified by name. The final song includes a lengthy outer-inner level overview of the highlights of his spiritual career, *The Song of A Life Without Regret*, that covers the main points of the text and his key point of advice for his followers: practice now so you may die without regret, worry or fear.

*The Melodies* also contains significant episodes loosely organized by his age, mostly to introduce the circumstances surrounding a particular song, and includes greater detail regarding the teachers he met, the textual transmissions he received, and the practices he performed at drupchen (sgrub chen) and while in retreat. It is also rich with accounts of his dreams, visions, and experiences of realization, often expressed through his songs, including a short autobiography sung to a ḍākinī in a dream and three songs referred to as his “secret biographies” (gsang ba’i rnam thar) requested by students and patrons when he was fifty-six years old. Therefore, *The Condensed Life* could be described primarily as Orgyan Tenzin’s outer biography, with elements of the inner biography emerging as the narrative continues, while

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300 It was not uncommon, however, for lamas to maintain exhaustive lists of the transmissions and teachings they had received, which would be compiled into register referred to as gsan yig or thobs yig. Such a text of Orgyan Tenzin’s does not seem to have been prepared or preserved.
301 Sernesi, 2015, p. 473, n. 30.
302 ’gyod pa’i med pa’i rnam thar cig yin no (Song #46 of *The Condensed Life*, B140b-B145a).
303 Song #18 of *The Melodies*, pp. 48-49.
304 Songs #121-123 of *The Melodies*, pp. 285-308.
The Melodies represents more of an inner-secret biography. Taken together, the two biographies make up a more complete picture of Orgyan Tenzin’s life than either provides on its own, which appears intentional. Chapter 5 of this paper takes a closer look at the connection between these two texts, following a discussion of the format and function of spiritual biography in Dolpo.

The Traditional Structure and Function of Spiritual Biography in Dolpo Literature

The root of the entirety of the Dharma relies upon devotion for the guru. In order to develop devotion, it is necessary to look at the liberation stories of the gurus.305

-Introduction to Orgyan Tenzin’s guru Thupten Wangpo’s namthar

The traditional structure of namthar generally follows a formulaic pattern of eight or ten sections, whether the text was autobiographical or written by others. For example, the prologue to the namthar of the Dolpo Lama Chökyong Palzang (chos skyong dpal bzang, 1636-1702),306 which Orgyan Tenzin and his associates would have read, reports that the lama requested his students to write it in ten sections “for the benefit of future students in my lineage and the faithful.”307 These are: “[1] family, clan and lineage; [2] birth from a womb and entering into the wheel of dharma; [3] becoming a renunciate; [4] entering into full monasticism, [5] the way of taking the three complete sets of vows including bodhicitta and secret mantra; [6] relying on a qualified guru; [7] the way of partaking the nectar of [the guru’s] speech; [8] the way signs of the

305 chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba bla ma’i mos gus la rag las/ mos gus skye bar byed pa la bla ma’i rnam thar mthong dgos (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 427).
306 Chökyong Palzang’s biography (Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 1-76) was completed in 1703 by Shakya Palzang and Dawa Palzang. Shakya Palzang was also a student of Orgyan Tenzin.
307 Phuntsok, 2020, 4.13-4.14. Alternately, Jamgön Kongtrul’s organized the namthar of Jamyang Khyyentsé Wangpo into eight related categories, which include the past lives and details of the master’s death: “[1] how [his appearance in the world] was foretold in authentic prophecies; [2] how he took rebirth in accordance with his spiritual determination and aspirations; [3] how he entered into the precious teachings of the enlightened ones; [4] how he then accomplished the stages of listening to and reflecting on [the teachings]; [5] how, after absorbing their import, he attained realisation; [6] how he consequently served the teachings and living beings; [7] how in addition he accumulated merit in diverse ways; [8] how after reaching the completion of his activities he dissolved into the expanse of space” (Akester, 2012, p. 31).
warmth [of progress] arose through practice; [9] they way [realization] was enhanced through wandering in mountain solitude; and [10] the way the fruition of accomplishment was attained and the benefit of beings was performed.”

Certainly aware of the requisite format, Orgyan Tenzin opens his own story by briefly mentioning his family line, father, mother and his birth, and continuing by listing his masters, details of ordination, and teachings he received. While the narrative is not arranged into separate chapters in *The Condensed Life*, each of the elements mentioned in Chökyong Palzang’s *namthar* are present.

Though some *namthar* consist of rote lists of holy sites, gurus, transmissions, retreats and students, and often include familiar stories of maternal dreams, compassionate childhood acts, and intense devotion felt upon hearing a guru’s name, the formulaic structure of the genre also allowed for unique expression. For example, the ten chapters of Orgyan Chökyi’s *namthar* provide an excellent example of a unique adaptation of this traditional formula.

Orgyan Tenzin clearly shared his guru Thupten Wangpo’s enthusiasm for the life stories of remarkable practitioners, which went beyond composing his own and possibly Orgyan

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308 Phyi rabs rgyud ‘dzin bu slob dang/ dad ldan rnam la phan phyir du/ rang gi rnam thar zur tsam ‘bri/ rigs dang rus dang cho ’brang dang/ lhums nas bitams dangchos sgor bzhugs/rab tu byung dang hsnyen par rdzogs/byang sems dang ni gsang sngags kyi/ sdom gsum ji ltar blangs tshul dang/ mtshan ldan bla ma bsten nas su/ zhal gyi bdud rtsi myong tshul dang/ nyams blangs drod rtags skyes tshul dang/ bogs ’don ri khrad ’grims tshul dang/ sgrub ’bras ’gro don byas tshul sogs/ de rnam sprang po ’i rnam thar yin (Phuntsok, 2020, 4.14-4.19).

309 “The ten ‘chapters’ of Orgyan Chökyi’s *namthar* are: 1) How she suffered in her youth, 2) How she developed revulsion [for samsāra] herding goats, 3) How she cut her hair; changed her appearance [to a nun] and looked after horses; and impermanence arose; 4) How she requested teachings and watched stillness and movement [of mind]; 5) How she performed pilgrimage to Nepal and Kalaish, making aspirations; 6) How she became depressed working in the kitchen; 7) How she abandoned the hustle, meditated and recited the mani; 8) How she stayed in solitude and blissful experiences arose; 9) How she kept her samaya and maintained purity of her three doors; and 10) How she displayed death and impermanence. The ḍakini spoke the following words as she was dying.” Daki o rgyan chos skyi dkyi rnam thar ni/ dang po chung dus sding ri byung lugs dang gcig/ de nas ra dzi byas nas skyo shas skyes tshul dang gnyis/ de nas skra gcad las gyur rta dzi byas na mi rtag pa byung tshul dang gsum/ de nas chos ’khrid bzhus nas gnas ’gyu las tshul dang bzhis/ de nas bal yul ii se bsdkor tshul nas smon lam btub tshul dang lnga/ de nas ’thabs kha byas nas sems nyid skyo tshul dang drug/ de nas ’du ’dzi born as sgom dang ma Ni bgrangs tshul dang bdun/ de nas tshig kyang sdad nas skyid nyams char ‘tshul dang brgyad/ de nas dam tshig sdom pa bshurungs nas sgo gsum gtsang ma byas tshul dang dgus/ de nas mi rtag ‘chi ba bstam tshul dang bceu yod pas/ de yang le ’u bceu po ’di ’bri bar byed pa la/ mkha’ ’gro ma ma shi ba’i dus su ’di skyad ces zer byung ngo/ (Phuntsok, 2010, 639.2-639.10).
Chökyi’s (despite its depiction of him actively discouraging her from writing it). His student Shakya Palzang identifies him as an instigator for writing his own autobiography, and Orgyan Tenzin passed along the reading transmissions of numerous spiritual biographies of lineage and root masters, continuing their unbroken lines of transmission.

As mentioned, both *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies* include autobiographical “life story” songs (*rnam thar gyi mgur*). In addition to the three “secret namthar songs” and *The Song of A Life Without Regret* described above, Song #39 of *The Melodies* is also notably autobiographical, which describes the seven joys in the life of a yogi that he experienced. One of Orgyan Tenzin’s secret namthar songs in *The Melodies* was requested by a group including the monk Shakya Palzang, whose namthar has been preserved. The great importance that Orgyan Tenzin, his teachers, contemporaries and students placed on the composition and reproduction of local spiritual biographies and songs appears to be based on a keen appreciation for the key role that intense, heartfelt devotion occupies in the mahāmudra and Dzogchen systems in which they were immersed.

These stories and songs served to inform and inspire devotion for past masters and the sacred places associated with them, reinforcing the transformative power of pilgrimage and practice at the hermitages of past masters. Orgyan Tenzin composed numerous praises to various

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310 See note 129 above.
311 Phuntsok, 2020, p. 443. Shakya Palzang is mentioned in *The Melodies* as having performed the woodwork during the repair of the Maitreya temple at Sandul in approximately the year 1704 (p. 199), and is the recipient of Song #109 of *The Melodies* (pp. 258-260), which is about the three types of discipline.
312 *The Melodies* (pp. 114-115). These are: 1) Having attained a precious human body, his parents allowed him to enter the dharma; 2) Having learned to read and write, he studied cause and effect and understood virtue and non-virtue; 3) Having received empowerment from qualified masters, he practiced preliminaries and the main practices of development and completion stages; 4) He diligently practiced the six dharmas and Dzogchen; 5) Having done winds and consort practices, he was freed from attachment to alcohol or sex and experienced the four joys, awareness and emptiness; 6) Having mastered his perceptions, others gave him wealth, which he did not keep but used to make practice supports; and 7) Having instructed his students in the path of liberation, they made effort in accomplishing it.
313 Song #122 of *The Melodies*, pp. 296-302.
holy sites where he and his followers visited. He states that he sang a song linking the Sandul Temple with other important holy sites in India, Tibet, and Nepal, “to encourage future followers toward faith, devotion, and [performing] prostrations, circumambulations, and offerings.”

Such faith and devotion serve as catalysts for spiritual advancement on all stages of the path; kindled, nurtured, and safeguarded through listening to songs and stories celebrating holy places and spiritual accomplishments.

In the Tibetan literary tradition, spiritual biographies and song collections were multifunctional, intended to invoke different types of spiritual transformation in the reader or hearer. As one of countless examples, Orgyan Tenzin’s contemporary Tenzin Repa, the founder of a monastery at Shelri Drukdra (shel ri ’brug sgra) in upper Dolpo, describes in his namthar how he wept deeply upon reading The Collected Songs of Milarepa. Based on Milarepa’s example, he attempted to run away from home multiple times as a teenager to become a wandering yogi. These transformative experiences or realizations manifest on multiple levels of metamorphic potency, dependent upon the reader’s own conditioning and connection with the master who is the subject of the story, regardless of the authorship of the text or its “historical” veracity. On an outer level, the reader may be motivated to emulate the example of the model spiritual life of the master. On an inner level, the reader may be inspired with revulsion toward worldly life, compassion for the intolerable situations in which sentient beings find themselves, or experience intense devotion toward the lineage guru. This devotion

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314 See Appendices A-C, “Praises” category.
315 ma ’ongs rjes ’jug rnams la dad nos phyag bskor dkar me sogs la bskul ’dehs phyir du/ dkar chag gnas kyi phan yon ’di gsungs so” (The Melodies, 126.3-126.4). This is one instance of the honorific verb gsungs being placed into the first person narrative, an indication of a scribal error or of a student composer slipping into the 3rd person.
317 See McClintock, 2017. Also, as Lama Sherab Drime writes in the introduction to his translation of Lapchiwa Namkha Gyaltsen's biography: “Reading this may well change your life... so don't you complain that you weren't warned!” (Drime, 2015, p.7).
may engender a secret or innermost level of transformation, invoking a direct perception of what is ultimately ineffable. Orgyan Tenzin alternately refers to this ultimate experience of mind as “ordinary awareness” (tha mal shes pa) or “dharmanāya” (chos sku) in the manner of the mahāmudrā tradition; or “nature of mind” (sems kyi gnas lugs) in the manner of the Dzogchen tradition. This seems to be why Orgyan Tenzin concludes his song to Orgyan Changchup summarizing the Dzogchen trekchö (khregs chod) and thögal (thod rgal) pith instructions with the direct advice to “practice pure perception and devotion, dharma practitioners!” The outer/inner/secret levels of spiritual experience that may be engendered in the reader reflects the traditional outer/inner/secret typology of spiritual biographies, discussed above. This indicates that the three-fold typology for Tibetan language spiritual biographies is not only based on the content of the text, but also on the transformative way it may be experienced in the recipient.

Reading transmission: The Distinction Between “Dharma” and “History”

As we can see, spiritual biographies and songs play an important role in Tibetan and Himalayan Buddhist religious transmission. Unlike the early Sakya masters’ characterization of spiritual biographies as “history” (lo rgyud), the Kadampa and early Kagyu spiritual biographers used the term namthar, meaning “complete liberation.” This may have been to distinguish it from conventional histories, and since that time Tibetan language spiritual biographers have specifically used the term namthar to refer to the liberation stories of past masters and indicate their sacrality. Therefore, this study and translation has approached Orgyan Tenzin’s biographies as works of dharma literature, rather than as merely historical source material.

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319 *dag snang mos gus bgyis dang chos byed rnams* (The Melodies, 100.5).
321 A discussion of Tibetan language historiographies is beyond the scope of this paper. Despite their utility as historical sources, we cannot rely upon spiritual biographies as history without critically analyzing and cross-referencing their content, since it does not seem these texts were intended to be merely read as histories, despite some concern for historical accuracy (Tiso, 2010, pp. 10-11). A rough comparison of *The Melodies* and *The Condensed Life* unveils numerous contradictions between the “historical facts” found in each text. For example, *The
It appears that the practice of providing a “reading transmission,” known as lung (lung, āgama), can be interpreted as a distinctive marker of “dharma literature,” which would be distinct from secular histories (lo rgyud) or annals (deb ther).\textsuperscript{322} Even literature that may be religious in content but not intended to function as religious teachings, such as religious histories (chos byung)\textsuperscript{323} or monastery registries (dgon pa ’i dkar chag), may not qualify as “dharma” under this interpretation.\textsuperscript{324} Lung are traditionally understood to authorize a student to read and study a particular text and pass along the blessings of an unbroken lineage of transmission, since only someone who has received the lung for a text can pass it along to others. This practice likely harkens back to pre-literate Indian Buddhist tradition when sūtras and expository compositions were passed to students orally. The practice of reading transmission assumes an additional gate keeping function in the tantric context when they are coupled with ritual empowerments (dbang, abhiṣekha) and esoteric practice instructions (khrid), preventing non-initiates from even looking at the words of a secret tantric text, much less engaging in the hidden practices contained therein.

Orgyan Tenzin used clear evocative metaphors when singing about the importance of maintaining reading transmission:

\begin{quote}
Dharma without lung is the demon that ruins the teachings...\textsuperscript{325}
Through receiving lung one becomes a caretaker of the dharma.
\end{quote}

\textit{Condensed Life} states that Orgyan Tenzin visited Tertön Garwang Dorje in Tibet when he was thirty-three (approximately 1689), though Garwang Dorje passed away in 1685. \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 20-23) states that Orgyan Tenzin met Garwang Dorje when he was twenty-five (approximately 1681). These types of discrepancies could be due to simple errors introduced in the editing and copying process, or intentional conflation of events in order to simplify the narratives. For example, multiple visits to a place in \textit{The Melodies} are only mentioned once in \textit{The Condensed Life}, and vice versa, such as Orgyan Tenzin’s visits with Kunzang Longyang (\textit{The Condensed Life}, B21b).

\textsuperscript{322} Tiso makes a similar point about the esoteric religious nature of namthar, writing that “one may use the biography of Milarepa (i.e., the one by gTsang smyon Heruka) as a spiritual practice in the bKa’ brgyud pa by receiving reading permission and empowerment, showing that it is recognized as a tantric practice text” (2010, p. 6).

\textsuperscript{323} Whether a particular text referred to as a religious history could be considered a dharma text is up for debate, and in this analysis would depend on the intention of the author(s) of the text in question.

\textsuperscript{324} That said, Orgyan Tenzin writes that he composed Song #44 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 126-129), which he refers to as a registry of pilgrimage places (gnas dkar chag), “for the purpose of encouraging faith and devotion in future followers” ma ’ongs rjes ’jug rnam s la dad mo phyag bskor dkar me sogs la bskul ’debs phyir du (126.3-126.4).

\textsuperscript{325} lung med chos ni bstan pa ’i phung ’dre yin (\textit{The Melodies}, 241.2-241.3).
Through it, one becomes able to uphold and preserve Buddha’s teachings.\footnote{For Sonam Lödro’s biography, see Snellgrove, 1967, pp. 79-124; and Phuntsok, 2010, pp. 58-123.}

For example, it is just like visiting the glacial head of a river: \textit{Lung} is the source of dharma, both sūtra and tantra.\footnote{\textit{Phyag rgya chen po} lhan cig skyes syor gyi phyag rgya chos su mi la'i rnam mgur dang rje bsod nams blo gros kyi rnam mgur rnam gsog phyag rgya chos su gnang bas bogs shin tu che ha bung mchis (Phuntsok, 2020, 11.17-11.19).}

In keeping with tradition, Orgyan Tenzin maintains the reading transmissions for the spiritual biographies and collected songs of foundational lineage masters, such as Padmasambhava, Milarepa,\footnote{The Melodies, p. 316. “Then, at Jangmang Go, I offered Lhachen Lama the empowerments, reading transmissions [and instructions] for the \textit{Self Luminosity of the Profound Essence Dharmadhātu} [Treasure Cycle]. As supportive teachings, I offered the reading transmissions for Orgyan [Padmasambhava]’s \textit{namthar}, the autobiography and songs of Rgidzin Garwang Dorje, and my own songs of experience” \textit{de nas byang mang ’go na/ lha chen bla ma la zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal gyi dbang lung gsam phul/ phyag rgya chos la rgyan rnam thar/ riggs ’dzin gar dbang rdo rje ’i rnam mgur/ kho bo rang gi nyams mgur sogs kyi lung rnam phul/ (316.3-316.5). Multiple autobiographies and song collections are attributed to Garwang Dorje, and it is not clear to which he is referring here, though it is possibly the \textit{Inner Life Story and Song Collection Ritual of the Great Nirmānakāya Vidyādhara Garwang Dorje Nyöngpo} (sprul sku rig ’dzin chen po gar dbang rdo rje snying po ’i nang gi rnam thar nyams mgur gyi rim pa} (NGMPP L 144/3).} and those in the \textit{Kagyü Golden Rosary} [of Lives]; those of his own gurus such as Orgyan Palzang\footnote{For Sonam Lödro’s biography, see Snellgrove, 1967, pp. 79-124; and Phuntsok, 2010, pp. 58-123.\footnote{\textit{Dper na chu mgo gangs la thugs pa ~tar/ chos kyi ’byung khungs mdo rgyud gnyis rang yin (The Melodies, 242.1-242.1).}} and Tertön Garwang Dorje; and even for his own collected songs!\footnote{\textit{The Melodies, p. 38; Schaeffer, 2004, p. 169; and Phuntsok, 2010, p. 676.}} Other lamas from Dolpo also report having received reading transmissions for local spiritual biographies. For example, Chökyong Palzang writes that his teacher gave him “the \textit{lungs} for the collected songs of Milarepa and [the Dolpo master] Lord Sonam Lödro\footnote{The Melodies, p. 38.} [\textit{bsod nams blo gros, 1456-1521}] as supportive dharma [teachings] for \textit{The Innate Yoga Mahāmudrā}, which was a great enhancement.”\footnote{\textit{The Melodies, p. 38.}} Both Orgyan Tenzin and Chökyong Palzang describe these transmissions as “supportive dharma [teachings]” (\textit{rgyab chos}), indicating their function of supporting students with conduct to emulate, inspiring them with devotion for those gurus, and
supplementing instructions with additional direct mind teachings contained in the stories and songs themselves.333

By providing others the reading transmission for his own spiritual songs, Orgyan Tenzin appears to have initiated the canonization process of his own works, a formal act elevating its status into a form of scripture.334 It is notable that he reports this in The Melodies, as it shows he continued adding to a song collection for which he had already provided a reading transmission, providing evidence of the iterative compositional process of The Melodies.

Having explored some of the aspects and functions of Himalayan spiritual biographies and collections of songs of experience, let us turn to the specific textual characteristics of The Condensed Life and The Melodies, and their textual relationships.

Chapter 5: Inter-textual Characteristics of The Condensed Life

A Tale of Two Texts: Shared Songs and Insights into Literary Process

We would expect two ostensibly autobiographical texts, or two biographical texts composed about a single person during their lifetime, to share a great deal of narrative content and agree on the details. On the other hand, separate authors with different prerogatives could produce very different narratives by engaging diverse literary strategies, such as borrowing from

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333 For example, Tiso points out that in Dolpo, Milarepa’s songs are considered “reserved” texts “to be sung and discussed only among experienced tantric practitioners” (2010, xxxvii).

334 In Buddhist literature, the terms canon and scripture are somewhat interchangeable and fluid. For more discussion on the open and inclusive nature of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, specifically in the Nyingma school, see Stanley, 2009, pp. 60-66. Tiso points out that a Buddhist text, including Tibetan spiritual biography, “merits veneration if it achieves the sacred purpose of its author… [and t]exts that merit veneration are generally classified as canonical or scriptural” (2010, p. 4). He continues that “[t]he text of the biography thus comes to be seen as a physical manifestation of the process by which a human being can attain Buddhahood ‘in one lifetime, in one body;’ the ‘book’ becomes ‘canonical’ because of its results” (Tiso, 2010, p. 6).

Additionally, Sernesi has pointed out the strategy of propagating authoritative biographical texts of past masters in order to provide legitimacy for the supremacy of a lineage and to attract material or political support (2015, pp. 492-493). Both The Condensed Life (B149a) and The Melodies (p. 298) assert that Orgyan Tenzin was a reincarnation of Yudra Nyingpo. By upholding those texts as dharma texts, which are considered to be the inspired words and body of an enlightened master, that claim is thereby legitimized.
other biographies, adding input from the oral tradition, or employing their own creative license. This would result in spiritual biographies of a single figure taking different shapes over time, often with conflicting information. Though there are places where The Condensed Life and The Melodies disagree, it seems those disagreements are primarily due to unintentional errors.

There are multiple ways that content may overlap between different Tibetan language spiritual biographies of a master written by a single author, such as when an extensive autobiography has been condensed into a shorter narrative of the same life (or a biography expanded), or a biography written about the first part of a master’s life continued in a later volume, which may gloss over or omit details that are in the first. Though we see elements of both of these scenarios in the relationship between The Melodies and The Condensed Life, the situation is not that straightforward. An examination of the nature of the close relationship between The Melodies and The Condensed Life sheds light on Orgyan Tenzin’s literary process.

As described above, songs are embedded into the larger narratives of The Condensed Life and The Melodies. Since the pecha folio format of traditional Tibetan language texts did not allow for offsetting a verse with a paragraph break, indentation or quotation marks, demarking the precise beginning and end of a “song” can present a challenge. The demarcations of most of the songs are mostly clear in the first 90% of The Melodies (pp. 1-423 of 473 pages), with prose transitional text inserted between songs, providing contextual information for the following or preceding song. However, in places it is difficult to demarcate individual “songs” in The Condensed Life, which is composed entirely in verse (containing verse songs embedded into verse narrative). Orgyan Tenzin and his editor(s) appear to have addressed this issue by

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335 For example, see Kongtrul’s shorter and longer biographies of Khyentse (Akester, 2012).
336 For example, see the first and second volumes of Shabkar’s life (Ricard, 2001).
337 In Appendices A and B I have included catalogues with brief descriptions and page numbers for all of the songs that appear in The Condensed Life and The Melodies, to serve as an aid for those who may wish to study them in detail, and to provide a sense of the breadth and creativity of Orgyan Tenzin’s prolific corpus of songs.
preceding most of the songs with a mantra and/ or a verse of supplication, and following most of the songs with the quotation particle “jes,” concluding term “iti,” or a sign. Unfortunately, they are not consistent, which may indicate that different sections of the text were added by different people at different times. Since the exact parameters of what qualifies for a song is not entirely clear, but were necessary to define for cataloguing purposes, I have used the following working definition which applies to nearly all of Orgyan Tenzin’s 220 songs:

A distinct set of four or more verses held together with consistent content, that are typically demarcated in the beginning with a mantra and/or verses of supplication and at the end with a quotation marker or special sign, and often contain a transitional statement identifying the context and the recipient of the song before and/or after the song.

Twenty-seven of the forty-six songs that appear in The Condensed Life also appear in some form in the The Melodies: twenty-three shared in full (spelling variations and occasional omitted lines notwithstanding) in a single long section at the end of The Melodies, three that were reworked but are identifiable as different iterations of the same song, and one where the first three lines are given in The Condensed Life with the reader directed to The Melodies for the remainder of the song. Additionally, the lengthy debate in The Melodies between Orgyan Tenzin’s body, the

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338 The Sanskrit term indicating the end of a quotation.
339 See Appendix C. This long shared passage spans 46 out of 473 pages (423.4-455.1, 457.3-471.1) of The Melodies and 49 out of 157 folios of The Condensed Life (B47a.3-B106b). One exception is that Song #191 of The Melodies (pp. 455-457) appears in The Melodies but is missing from the corresponding section in The Condensed Life. It is addressed to the patron Mingyur Deden Paldzom. It may have been omitted later as it appears to be somewhat critical of patron Paldzom, who may have been a sponsor of the copying of The Condensed Life.

The second exception to the consistency of the fully shared section is the name meaning song to Buchung Ngawang (Song #201 of The Melodies, pp. 471-473 and The Condensed Life, B129a-B133b), which is placed later in The Condensed Life and in a significantly altered form. The song appears to have been originally composed for the sponsors Buchung Ngawang and Paldzom as an epilogue to transition into the colophon of The Melodies, which was then reworked and included in the final edition of The Condensed Life.

340 See Appendix C. See Appendix D for a side-by-side comparison of the first two songs that were borrowed from The Melodies into The Condensed Life in an edited form.
341 The song of the rotten thief who stole the wealth at Pingdring at night (Song #163 of The Melodies, pp. 404-405 and Song #3 of The Condensed Life, B31b).
nature of his mind, the lord of death and the innate gods and demons appears in a condensed form in *The Condensed Life*,\footnote{342} but does not qualify as a song according to the above definition.

Categorized table of songs identified in *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Category</th>
<th># in <em>The Condensed Life</em> only</th>
<th># in <em>The Melodies</em> only</th>
<th># shared between texts</th>
<th>Total # of songs</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice / encouragement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lamas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations / praises</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation Experiences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminiscence of past gurus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice to self</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs sung by others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate between mind and body, gods and demons*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not counted as a song.

Direct and Indirect References to “The Collected Songs” in *The Condensed Life*

*The Condensed Life* makes thirteen explicit references to an earlier version of *The Melodies*, referring to it only as the “collected songs” (*mgur 'bum*). All of these references appear in the first third of *The Condensed Life* (up until Orgyan Tenzin’s seventy-fourth year\footnote{343}), representing the initial 90% of *The Melodies*. At that point, *The Melodies* switches to narrative

\footnote{342} *The Melodies*, pp. 371-381 and *The Condensed Life*, B33a-B33b.
\footnote{343} Approximately 1689 (*The Condensed Life*, B47a).
verse and the final 10% of matches the narrative and song content of the middle portion of The Condensed Life. The first reference in The Condensed Life to the collected songs appears in the “Commitment to Compose” section, when Orgyan Tenzin writes that some students said, “If the large collected songs of the master were condensed, your lineage disciples and patrons would have the ability to copy it.” It appears that the collected songs had not yet been given a title at that time.

Seven of the specific references in The Condensed Life point the reader to the collected songs for more verses related to a topic (i.e., “There are many [verses like that] one can see in [my] collected songs”), four reference more songs on a particular subject (i.e., “There are many songs about the view and meditation./ In my collected songs, so I did not write them here”), one for more discussion on a particular topic (i.e., “The reasons are in my collected songs”), and one as a specific reference to the remainder of a song where only the first three verses are provided in The Condensed Life, mentioned above. The references appear to be a strategy to save paper and ink. Orgyan Tenzin was writing in the remote valley of Tadru, where resources were scarce. He explains at the outset that “at that time we had concerns over paper and resources, [so] I wrote this condensed version.” Some of the references are clear about this: “Besides these, I have many stories./ But thinking this would be too long, I did not write them.” Though in some instances we can locate the exact verses in The Melodies to which the text refers, most have not been possible to positively identify. Finally, Orgyan Tenzin

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344 *The Condensed Life*, B3a.3-B3a.4, reference #1.
345 *The Condensed Life*, B14a.3, reference #2. Also see reference #s 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, & 12.
346 *The Condensed Life*, B32b.1, reference #8. Also see reference #s 9, 10, & 13.
348 Song #3 of *The Condensed Life*, B32b, reference #13.
349 dus kyi tab kyis shog bu dang/ yon la tsher ba yin ’dug (*The Condensed Life*, B3a.4-B3b.1).
350 gzhchen yang lo rgyas mang yod kyang/ yig bongs che bsam ma bris so (*The Condensed Life*, B4b.4-B5a.1).
351 Such as song #3 of *The Condensed Life* (B32b), which appears in *The Melodies* as Song #166 (pp. 408-410).
mentions that other songs from his time at Tadru were not included in *The Condensed Life*, and indeed we can find thirty-three such songs included in *The Melodies* that are not present in *The Condensed Life*.

As a shortened life story, many of the episodes mentioned in *The Condensed Life* are described in greater detail in the *The Melodies*. However, despite the narrative overlap between the two texts, there is a significant amount of additional biographical detail in *The Condensed Life* not included in *The Melodies*, filling out the narrative of *The Melodies*. This includes information about his parents and family lineage (mentioned above as a component of a complete namthar), anecdotes about his heartfelt exchanges with his mother during and after his father’s death; experiences at Sakya, Samye, and other pilgrimage places in Tibet and Nepal; advice he received from Sakya Khenchen Jampa and Palden Dorje; the death of his yogic consort Orgyan Chökyi; as well as other stories and nineteen songs that appear in *The Condensed Life* but not *The Melodies*, described in the chart above.

In addition to the explicit references described above, there are numerous less direct inter-textual connections (including un-cited quotations and paraphrased passages) between *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*. *The Condensed Life* borrows numerous common phrases from songs in *The Melodies*, while later songs in *The Condensed Life* also borrow from earlier songs in the text. These include stock phrases, or “micro-forms,” related to key themes of Orgyan Tenzin’s teachings, such as the drawbacks of samsāric life, impermanence and the inevitability of death, the joys of mountain retreat, the challenges of communal religious life, and

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352 *The Condensed Life*, B45b.2.
353 The songs in *The Melodies* that appear to have been written in Tadru but do not appear in *The Condensed Life* including Song #s 141-143, 145-154, 157-162, 164-176, & 191. See Appendix B for details.
354 See Appendices A-C.
Due to the reasons described above, to fully understand the content of the narrative and songs in The Condensed Life it has been necessary to consult The Melodies for additional song verses and supporting information about Orgyan Tenzin’s narrative and teachings.357

In summary, we can find the following examples of the literary or textual relationships between The Condensed Life and The Melodies, examples of which have been discussed above:

- Direct borrowing of stock terminology, key phrases, entire verses, or sets of verses from the songs in The Melodies into The Condensed Life.
- Reworking content in a song from The Melodies into a similar song in The Condensed Life.358
- Direct borrowing of prose narration from The Melodies, adapted into narrative verse in The Condensed Life.
- Condensing biographical information or combining episodes from The Melodies into The Condensed Life.
- Adding or filling out information in The Condensed Life that is not included in The Melodies, including songs that were composed and descriptions of events that took place after the completion of the The Melodies.
- Generally reusing thematic concepts from The Melodies in The Condensed Life.

Based on the above analysis, it appears that from his twenties up until he was seventy-four,359 Orgyan Tenzin (and his students) continued to add new songs to his collection of songs, make copies of the songs in various collections, and perform reading transmissions for them.360 He began composing The Condensed Life at age seventy,361 using the collected songs as a primary resource. Before the visit of Katog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu to Tadru, Orgyan Tenzin and his

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356 For example, a variation of the phrase “it has no essence” (snying po med) occurs over dozen times between the texts, referring variously to material resources, practitioners who live in towns, samsaric life in general, and so forth.
357 I have included as many of these relevant passages in footnotes to the translation of The Condensed Life.
358 See Appendix D.
359 Approximately 1729.
360 As mentioned above, Orgyan Tenzin mentions that his student Chökyapma requested permission to write down the songs he sung at Nyima Puk (The Melodies, p. 327), and that he had given a reading transmission of his collected songs prior to this (The Melodies, p. 316).
361 Approximately 1725.
assistants discontinued adding new songs to The Melodies to focus their energy on composing the narrative verse of The Condensed Life. They continued the composition of The Condensed Life until after Orgyan Tenzin was seventy-seven, but well before his death at eighty-two, and appended the new material they had written in The Condensed Life to the full set of collected songs prepared before Orgyan Tenzin was seventy-four. This was finalized as The Melodies from Mountain Retreat and the distribution process began, which is to say people began copying it by hand. The final twelve songs of the The Condensed Life were completed after that point, and the epilogue was added after Orgyan Tenzin’s death, which makes up The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin as we have it today.

Other Literary Influences on The Condensed Life

Many of the themes discussed by Orgyan Tenzin, his teachers and his contemporaries are nearly universal in the writings of Tibetan Buddhist masters, and it is often impossible to pinpoint the precise literary influences or origins of particular ideas due to the complex intertextual nature of Buddhist literature and teachings. That being the case, we can connect some lines between The Condensed Life, The Melodies, and other texts that Orgyan Tenzin read, with an emphasis on the spiritual biographies of his own gurus.

As mentioned above, The Condensed Life follows the traditional structure of other spiritual biographies, such as the ten chapters of Chökyong Palzang’s namthar. It also reflects the spiritual biographies of Orgyan Tenzin’s gurus Palden Dorje, Thupten Wangpo, and Garwang Dorje, which are similarly presented with “songs” interspersed throughout their

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362 Approximately 1737. His age would have been eighty-two according to the Tibetan system, which would have been age eighty in the Western system.
363 Except for Song #191 of The Melodies (pp. 455-457), which is the only song that falls within the final 10% of The Melodies (pp. 423-473) not included in The Condensed Life (see note 339 above).
narratives. Specifically, Orgyan Tenzin’s work appears to have been influenced by the much shorter namthar of his master Thupten Wangpo. Like The Condensed Life, Thupten Wangpo’s namthar begins with a biographical narrative and switches to a series of seven songs presented as practical instructions. These songs lament the nature of the human condition in cyclic existence, express disappointment for people who squander their precious human lives chasing after material pleasure, and remind the listener of the inevitability of death and the importance of preparing for it. These tropes echo the most common themes in Orgyan Tenzin’s songs of advice.

Additionally, in a few of his songs Orgyan Tenzin repeats or paraphrases the Drukpa Kagyü teacher Ngawang Thogmé’s teachings about the three sets of vows that are recorded in Thupten Wangpo’s namthar. Orgyan Tenzin sings, “Friends early in life become enemies later in life, and enemies early in life become friends later in life.” In the context of bodhicitta, Ngawang Thogmé says:

Attachment to friends and anger toward enemies is the seed of negativity and the root of affective emotions. Therefore, abandon attachment to friends and anger toward enemies! [Relationships in] former and later lives are inexhaustible, and even in this lifetime, friends early in life become enemies later in life, and enemies early in life become friends later in life.

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365 Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 427-442.
366 In Thupten Wangpo’s namthar, which is written in the 3rd person, the author of the text is not identified, nor is there a colophon. The colophon is possibly lost—both NGMPP entries (L 681/2 & L 123/2) note the text is missing folio #s 31 and #32 of a total 33. The text does not provide details of the master’s death and cremation, which means it may have been completed during his lifetime. Considering Orgyan Tenzin’s close connection with Thupten Wangpo, it is likely that Orgyan Tenzin had read Thupten Wangpo’s namthar, and it appears that Orgyan Tenzin paraphrases Thupten Wangpo in his own songs and autobiography (it is not impossible that Orgyan Tenzin was the unnamed author of Thupten Wangpo’s namthar).
368 tshe stod gyen la tshe ’jug [sic – mjug] dgra ru ’gyur/ tshe stod dgra la tshe ’jug gyen byed mthong (The Condensed Life, B34a.1-B34a.2).
The final two songs of Thupten Wangpo’s biography concern the topics of impermanence and death. After his parents passed away, he sings a heartfelt song naming various virtues that are destroyed by the “frosts” of negative actions or attitudes.³⁷⁰ For example, he sings, “the flower of the students’ devotion to the guru/ was carried off by the frost of wrong views and losing faith.”³⁷¹ Orgyan Tenzin’s use of the metaphor of a garden of dying flowers for impermanence is reminiscent of this song.³⁷² Thupten Wangpo’s final song consists of advice to a group of nuns who had become distracted from their work. He completes the song with strong words that appear in many of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs of advice: “while seeing that all people come to their deaths, you rotten hearted people don’t wonder about your own? Now [is the time] to do whatever will benefit you at the time of death!”³⁷³ Orgyan Tenzin’s songs are so similar in style to Thupten Wangpo’s it seems he was inspired by listening to Thupten Wangpo’s songs as a young man, or by reading his namthar.

Schaeffer explored the likely influence of Tsangnyön Heruka’s (gtsang smyon he ru ka, 1452-1507) popular namthar and song collection of Milarepa (mi la mgur ’bum)³⁷⁴ on the literary tropes expressed in Orgyan Chökyi’s namthar.³⁷⁵ They appear to have influenced Orgyan Tenzin’s own songs, and The Melodies is structured in a format similar to Tsangnyön Heruka’s collection of Milarepa’s songs (mi la mgur ’bum). This is to be expected: Heruka’s biography and song collection of Milarepa’s became ubiquitous across Tibet and the Himalayan Buddhist world. As two among many of examples, the final half of The Condensed Life echoes Milarepa’s

³⁷⁰ Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 440-441.
³⁷¹ Phuntsok, 2020, 440.23-441.1.
³⁷² The Condensed Life, B146b.
³⁷³ mi rnams thams cad ’chi ba mthong bzhi du/ rang nyid ’chi snyams med pa’i snying rul po/ da ni ’chi khar ci phan gang phan gyis (Phuntsok, 2020, 442.2-442.3).
³⁷⁴ Known popularly in English as The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa.
“Replies to the Questions of Students,”376 and The Melodies includes two odes to beer (chang stod)377 which are similar in theme to Milarepa’s own Beer Drinking Song.378

The Condensed Life ends with Trenbuwa’s epilogue that details the miracles that occurred at Orgyan Tenzin’s death and cremation, and provides a discussion of his unique status and importance. His discussion shares at least six passages (including identical sūtra and tantra quotations) with the introduction to Chökyong Palzang’s 1703 namthar,379 written thirty-five years earlier in Dolpo. Though the passages are rearranged, much of them appear to be borrowed word for word or presented in a slightly modified form,380 which would be considered an egregious act of plagiarism today. However, this was common practice among Indian and Tibetan Buddhist authors/compilers of sūtra and commentaries.381 It appears to have also been commonplace in Orygan Tenzin’s literary circles: versions of these same passages and quotations also appear in the epilogue to the namthar of Orgyan Tenzin’s master Palden Dorje, completed in 1723.382 We can be sure that Orgyan Tenzin and his student editors would have had access to Palden Dorje’s namthar as well as Chökyong Palzang’s, but it is not clear from which

376 Stagg, 2016, pp. 549-566.
377 Song #82 of The Melodies (pp.198-199) and Song #108 of The Melodies (pp. 256-258).
378 Stagg, 2016, pp. 593-598.
379 Alternately, the corresponding sections of both texts may have been borrowed from another earlier text, which I have not identified. I have included the details of these borrowed passages in the footnotes to the translation of Orgyan Tenzin’s The Condensed Life. According to the colophon, the introduction and epilogue to Chökyong Palzang’s namthar were composed by Shakya Palzang (shAkya dpal bzang) and Drupchen Dawa Palzang (grub chen zla ba dpal bzang) for the sake of Drupchen Konchog Paljor (grub chen dkon mchog dpal ’byor) (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 76). Orgyan Tenzin mentions a Gelong Shakya Palzang three times in The Melodies (pp. 199, 258, & 295) to whom he sings Song #109 (pp. 258-260) at Drikung Monastery (Dolpo), which is a teaching on the pratimokṣa and bodhicitta vows, and Song #122 of The Melodies (pp. 296-302), his second “secret namthar.”
380 For a detailed comparison of the passages in question, see the notes to the following translation of The Condensed Life, B149a-B150b.
382 The colophon of the namthar of Palden Dorje indicates that it was completed on the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the female water hare (September 12, 1723) by Gelong Lodrö Palzang (dge blo gros dpal bzang), Gelong Konchok Namgyal (dge slong dkon mchog rnam rgyal), and Gelong Palden Tsering (dge slong dpal ldan tshe ring) at Tashi Ding Retreat (Phuntsok, 2010, p. 473).
*namthar* Trombuwa was borrowing, or if he was borrowing from another source. Some of the quotations in question also appear to have been popular in the introductions and epilogues to Tibetan *namthars*. For example, Zhabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol (*zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol*, 1781-1851), writing a century later in east Tibet, includes two of the six quotations shared between the epilogue of *The Condensed Life* and the introduction to Chökyong Palzang’s biography. It is unlikely he was directly influenced by *namthars* from Dolpo, which raises the question of what was the “original” source that used these quotations to introduce or conclude Tibetan language spiritual biographies, from which the others borrowed.

Conclusions

The above analyses support the hypotheses that 1) *The Condensed Life* was completed after the culmination of the process of the collation of Orgyan Tenzin’s songs into *The Melodies*, using it as primary source material; 2) Orgyan Tenzin (and his co-authors / editors) read and had access to the other biographical material described above during the composition of *The Condensed Life*, using them as direct and indirect resources; and 3) While composing *The Condensed Life*, they borrowed and paraphrased information from other spiritual biographies, song collections, sūtras, tantras, terma literature and commentarial texts not described above. Much of this “borrowing” can be understood as a method of “composition,” in the sense that *The Condensed Life* was “composed” or aggregated from the collective memory and cultural consciousness of Himalayan Buddhism by putting together various parts to make a new whole.

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383 In fact, multiple scenarios of “borrowing” are possible, for which more research is required to determine. It is possible that both Trenbuwa and the authors of Palden Dorje’s *namthars* both borrowed from Chökyong Palzang’s *namthar*, Trenbuwa borrowed from Palden Dorje’s *namthar* which borrowed from Chökyong Palzang’s, or that one, two, or all of them are borrowing from an earlier text that I have not yet located.

384 The first quotation in question is unnamed in *The Condensed Life* but in the other texts it is cited as being from *The Salty River Sūtra* (*ba tshwa can gyi chu klung gi mdo*), which is similar to a quotation found in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (see note in the translation of *The Condensed Life* for a comparison). The other quotation is from *The Vajra Tent Tantra* (Ricard, 2001, p. 8).
This study and translation add to the significant scholarship on the genre of Tibetan language spiritual biographies and songs. It illuminates some of the complex ways they are related to each other, both horizontally within a single generation of authors and vertically through time. Much of the supporting data for these textual relationships are presented in the following appendices and the footnotes to the translation. It has also shown how Orgyan Tenzin’s biographical writings add significantly to our knowledge of the transmission of Tibetan Buddhist texts and practices into the northwest Nepali Himalaya in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Taken together, *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies* paint a rich picture of the life and times of a prolific composer and a fully dedicated teacher who employed his literary skill to provide nuanced advice for navigating the challenges of spiritual life in mountain hermitages. His writings also shine light on the attitudes of a community concerned with both preserving the foundations of their traditions and building onto them. Finally, the texts provide specific details of the many lineages of teachings that were passed into and out of Dolpo at that time, as well as the special oral pith instructions of the masters who carried them at great effort over high passes to distant valleys, safeguarded in their minds and on their backs.
Partial translation of *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin*[^385]

*Introduction*

This translation is based on three of four[^386] known recensions of *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin (sprang rgyan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pa’i rnam thar bsdus pa bzhugs so)* by Orgyan Tenzin. These are indicated in the apparatus of the translation and comparative Tibetan edition as:

**B** - *sprang rgyan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa*.[^388]

_Dbu can_ manuscript from Drumba, Jomsom. NGMCP Reel No: L 206/3

**D** - *sprang rgyan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa*.[^389]

1985 publication by Damchoe Sangpo, Amar Villa, Catholic Road, Dalhousie, HP., Printed at M. M. Offset Process, 2409 Ballimaran, Delhi-110006. NGMCP L Reel No: 220/4.

**T** - *sprang rgyan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa*.[^390]

"The Tijirong exemplar". Reproduced from the copy in the library of Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok, Kathmandu, Nepal; from a text procured in Tijirong, Dolpo, Nepal.

[^385]: _ita gru ’o rgyan bstan ’dzin pa’i rnam thar bsdus pa bzhugs so._

[^386]: I was unable to access the fourth recension of this text. (*sprang rgyan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa B D T.* NGMCP Microfilm: L 670/2. Owner: Lama Lhundrup. Riphu Gompa, Dolpo).

[^387]: _pa’i_ sugg. em., pas B D T.

[^388]: mTshams pa Ngag dbang (owner), Drumba, Jomsom.

[^389]: Reproduced from the version in the library of Tulku Tsewang. LCCN: 85903335; Shelf Mark Lcc: BQ976.R447 O74 1985; Hollis Id: 014255881

[^390]: This text was used by Khenpo Menlha as the exemplar for Orgyan Tenzin’s *namthar* in his anthology of fourteen Dolpo biographies (2010, pp. 582-638).
Since the reproduction of manuscript B from the Nepal National Archives is the clearest version, it was as used for pragmatic reasons as the basis for the comparative Tibetan edition. All instances where D and T deviate from B are included in the apparatus to the Tibetan comparative edition. Instances where there is a significant difference between B and the translation provided below are indicated in footnotes to the translation. Instances where English terms have been included in the translation but do not appear in the Tibetan text are demarcated in square brackets. To facilitate the narrative flow for the reader, I have also included section headings in brackets in the translation.
[B1a, D1, T1] The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin

[Homage]

[B1b, D2, T2] Namo Guru Dhewa Dākinī Siddhi Hung!

To the Victor of the three times, the supreme universal embodiment,
Samantabhadra, the spontaneous presence of the five buddha families, Vajrasattva,

[B2a] Garab Dorje, the Lotus-born Master,

[T3] The supreme chief dākinī, sole mother Tsogyalma,
And the one endowed with the three kindnesses, Orgyan Palzang,

[B2b, D3] I go for refuge in all my rebirths and lifetimes.

Also to Terton391 Garwang Dorje and the others:

[T4] My seven very kind gurus whose kindness is unrepayable,
And the skilled upholders of the teachings, a multitude of emanations
Who guide all beings with the nectar392 of their melodious voices.

I bow to all the accomplished learned masters of India and Tibet.
Amitābha,393 Avalokiteśvara, and the Lotus-born,

[B3a, D4] The Six-armed protector, the Goddess Shingkyong,394 and the other [guardians],
And the deities of the three roots; please bless us.

391 ston] T, gton B D.
392 rtsi] T, tsi’i B D.
393 snang mt‘a’.
394 tha mo zhi ng skyong.
[Commitment to Compose]

When this old beggar Orgyan was approaching seventy years of age, students said, [T5]"If the large collected songs of the master were condensed, your lineage disciples and patrons would have the ability to copy it." Because many were saying this, and at that time [B3b] we had concerns over paper and resources, I wrote this condensed version.

[Family Background]

“Pha Namo Guru

I bow to the Father Guru!

I am said to be in the line of King Chensum.

It is separate from the Highlands.

Our area is called Lhemik.

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395 The traditional Tibetan system for counting the age of a person deviates from the system commonly used today. Similar to the traditional Korean system, a newborn is considered to be one (i.e., in their first year of life), and an additional year is added to the tally of one’s age at each lunar new year (which lands in February / March in the Tibetan calendar). Since Orgyan Tenzin was born August 18, 1657, he would have been counted as “one” until the following Tibetan new year’s day, February 3, 1658, when he would have turned “two.” In the common modern system, he would have not even turn “one” until August 18, 1658. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the exact calendrical year in which an event occurred based on Orgyan Tenzin’s self-reported age (assuming his memory and the texts were accurately recorded). The time that Orgyan Tenzin writes that he was “seventy years old” could have fallen anywhere between February 3, 1726 and February 21, 1727. For the sake of ease, I have left Orgyan Tenzin’s ages as they appear in the text, and given approximate years in the modern calendrical system, where possible.

396 'ga ' T, 'gra ' B D.
397 sku gzhogs chen mo'i mgur 'bum. Referring to Orgyan Tenzin’s autobiographical collection of songs, later titled The Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat.
398 bsdus] T, sdus B D.
399 gyis] T, gyi B D.
400 smrar mkhan mang du byung bas] D, B T om.
401 dus kyi tab kyi shog bu dang/ yon la tsher ba yin 'dug. Translation tentative.
402 rgyal po spyan gsum brug pa zhes. The line of King Three Eyes. The mother of Orgyan Tenzin’s root guru, Orgyan Palzang, was also from this family line (Ehrhard, 2013, p. 220).
403 stod] T, bstod B.
Our family was average people of aristocratic caste.

My father’s name was Jamyang.

And my mother’s Pema Tsomo.

On the tenth day of the seventh lunar month of the Bird Year,\textsuperscript{405}

Just as the sun was rising,

My mother gave birth to me

And named me Tsering Kyabsu.\textsuperscript{406}

That is my brief compulsory conventional history.\textsuperscript{407}

\[Introduction\]

[T6] Both the birthplace of the omniscient one of Dolpo\textsuperscript{408}

And the place where this old beggar was born,

[B4a] When observed by people from important places,\textsuperscript{409}

Do not seem very impressive.\textsuperscript{410}

[D6] There are important places, with their hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands [of people];

And also unimportant places, tiny villages,

\textsuperscript{404} \textit{Ihas mig zer}. The name refers to an enclosed area for keeping livestock. Lhemik is near Tijirong. (Menlha Phuntsok, 12/13/22).

\textsuperscript{405} August 18, 1657.

\textsuperscript{406} tshe ring skyabs su. The previous 8 lines are missing in D, reading instead only \textit{pha ma rig rus gzhan du gsal}.

\textsuperscript{407} kun rdzob lo rgyus dgos pa chung. The preceding eight lines are from Phunstok, 2010, pp. 582-583, but missing in B, D and T.

\textsuperscript{408} kun mkhyen dol po. Referring to the reknown Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltse (\textit{dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan}, 1292-1361), aka “The Buddha From Dolpo” (\textit{dol po sangs rgyas}).

\textsuperscript{409} kyis T, gyi B D.

\textsuperscript{410} Orgyan Tenzin repeats a similar line in the beginning of his song, \textit{A Story of a Life Free from Regret} toward the end of this text (B140b-B141a).
Existing all over India and Tibet.  

What do fools know?  

This is known by the wise.

“The emanations of the buddhas manifest in any place.”

This is taught in the sūtra words of the victor.

[B4b] As a result of the truth of cause and effect,

Even the compassionate may be born as animals,

[Yet] their discrimination of the dharma does not wane.

For example, the Buddha Śākyamuni

Had five hundred pure rebirths,

[T7] And five hundred impure rebirths.

These were emanations for the sake of guiding wandering beings.

This is known by the wise.

[D7] Besides these, I have many stories,

[B5a] But thinking this would be too long, I did not write them.

[Early Years]

When I had reached my fourth year,

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411 yin] T, yod B D.
412 kyis] T, kyi B D.
413 blun po rnams kyis ci zhig shes. Translation tentative.
414 kyis] T, kyi B D.
415 nyams] D T, nyam B.
416 kyis] T, kyi B D.
My most kind mother carried me on her back
To meet Lama Karma Lobsang.

Though there were memories and impressions\textsuperscript{417} at a young age
I occasionally recalled, my parents stopped me [from talking about them].\textsuperscript{418}

Up until my fifth year,\textsuperscript{419}
I only played pretend Dharma games
Together with all the other children.
[But] at that time all the young ones,
[B5b] [Merely] played games of the three poisons or five poisons.

[T8] From between my fifth or sixth year,
I only remember meaningless ordinary things.

[D8] When I had reached my seventh year,
My very kind mother and elder sister
Taught me ka, kha, and so forth, so I was able to recognize the letters.
By my eighth or ninth year, I knew how to read and write.

When I had reached my thirteenth year,\textsuperscript{420}
[B6a] I received the precepts\textsuperscript{421} of a lay practitioner

\textsuperscript{417} \textit{dran snang sogs/yad yud dran kyang}.
\textsuperscript{418} \textit{chung ngu’i dus su dran snang sogs/yad yud drang kyang pha ma’i bkag}. This seems that he may be implying that he was having impressions of past lives but his parents kept him from talking about them.
\textsuperscript{419} \textit{lo lnga tshun gyi spyad rabs la}. Translation tentative.
\textsuperscript{420} \textit{dbyangs}, ff. 7-9.
At the holy feet of
My precious root guru Orgyan Palzang.\textsuperscript{422}
At that time he gave me the name Orgyan Tenzin.

At Kunzang Drak hermitage,\textsuperscript{423}
I [received] Sangye Lingpa’s treasure, The Gathered Intent,\textsuperscript{424}
And also the Heart Essence of the Nirmanakayas,\textsuperscript{425}

[D9, T9]The Liberation Story of Orgyan\textsuperscript{426} and so forth.

[B6b] I received many other empowerments, transmissions and instructions,
[Numbering] about twenty one volumes.
He showed extremely great compassion
Particularly to me, the young boy monk.

When I had reached fourteen,
My old father, the one called Jamyang,
Showed the signs of death, and my mind became sad.
My kind mother, Petso,
Was overcome with grief,\textsuperscript{427} and recited\textsuperscript{428} the mani [mantra].\textsuperscript{429}

\textsuperscript{421} bslab\ sugg. em., slab B D, bslabs T.
\textsuperscript{422} Orgyan Palzang was Orgyan Tenzin’s initial Dzogchen teacher, who Orgyan Tenzin describes as having “hundreds and thousands of Dzogchen students” rdzogs chen kyi slob ma rgya stong byung ba (The Melodies, 416.3-416.4). Song #169 of The Melodies (p. 414-416) is an acrostic (ka breng) supplication to Orgyan Palzang.
\textsuperscript{423} gi\ sugg., em., gis B D T. kun bzang brag gi dgon pa. Totally Excellent Cliff Hermitage, located near Dolpo Kag east of Sandul (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 12/13/22).
\textsuperscript{424} sangs rgyas gling pa’i dgongs ’dus. Tertön Sangye Lingpa (sangs rgyas gling pa, 1340-1396).
\textsuperscript{425} sprul sku snying thig.
\textsuperscript{426} rnam\ sugg. em., rnams B D T. O rgyan rnam thar. Could be referring to the O rgyan rnam thar dpag bsam ljon shing by Yeshe Tsogyal (ye shes mtsho rgyal, 8\textsuperscript{th} century).
\textsuperscript{427} drags\ sugg. em., grags B D T.
My mother said to me,

[B7a] ‘The affairs of this world are like childish games.\(^{430}\)

No living being possesses the power to remain.\(^{431}\)

My son, look at the example of your father's death!

[T10] Repay your parents’ kindness\(^{432}\) by endeavoring in the sublime dharma.

[D10] Oh! This is my heartfelt advice to you, my son!’

Then, with her body, speech and mind,

She exerted herself, offering prostrations\(^{433}\) on my behalf.

[B7b] Each day as the sun rose,

She visualized the assembled deities of the five families of the victorious ones

And the three jewels

\(^{428}\) dren. Present tense of byrang, “to count,” or “to recite”.

\(^{429}\) om mani padme hung.

\(^{430}\) In Song #158 of The Melodies (pp. 399-401), addressed to the community of monks at the Péson Drupde, Orgyan Tenzin provides additional rich analogies for “the affairs of this world,” which are “like a quagmire,” “a honey coated razor,” and “excellent food mixed with poison” ‘jig rten bya ba sdug gi ‘dam zab yin/ ‘jig rten bya ba spu gri ’sbrang rtsi yin/ ‘jig rten bya ba zas bzang dug bsres yin/ (401.1-401.2).

\(^{431}\) ‘jig rten bya ba byis pa ’i rtsed mo ’dra/ lus can kun la sdad dbang mi ’dug go. Based on the Dalhousie manuscript alone, Schaeffer translates this passage as "The world is like the tip of a knife: It is impossible for human bodies to stand on it" (2004, p. 24), though in comparison with the other recisions the meaning translated here seems more likely (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 12/13/22). Here I shifted the negative modifier from the verb to the subject ("All living beings do not have staying power"). Orgyan Tenzin reuses a similar version of the first line of this couplet in different contexts later in this text: As an encouragement to Barbong Lama Gugye to not waste time: “Ultimately, all phenomena are childish games, so when you are young make effort in study, meditation, and mantra repetition. When you are old, it is best to be free of regrets” mthar thug chos rnams byis pa ’i brtsed mo yin/ gzhon nu ’i dus su thos sgom sngags bzlas rem/ rgas dus ’gyod pa med na dga ’rab yin (B82a.3-B82a.4 & The Melodies, 448.5-449.1); in the context of an instruction on the practice of Illusory Body: “Having cultivated Illusory Body, the appearances of this life collapse. See the affairs of the world as childish games” sgyu sgsom pa tshe ’di ’isnang ba zhig/ ’jigs rten bya ba byis pa ’i btsed mor mthong (B124a.4-B124b.1). He also uses variations of this line in Song #100 of The Melodies (pp. 235-237): “The affairs of this world are like illusory games” ‘jig rten bya ba rgyu ma ’i rtsed mo ’dra/ (236.5); Song #145 of The Melodies (pp. 365-368): “The affairs of this world are childish games” ‘jig rten bya ba byis pa ’i btsed mo yin (366.4); and Song #155 of The Melodies (pp. 390-392) “Superficial phenomena are childish games” kun rdzob chos ni byis pa ’i brtsed mo yin (391.3-391.4).

\(^{432}\) Here it is not clear if she is talking only about the kindness of herself and his father, or the kindness of all sentient beings, since this could be read to extend to all parent sentient beings.

\(^{433}\) kyis] T, kyi B D.
In the four directions: east, south, west, and north.

She offered prostrations and prayed,

‘By [these prayers] of mine, may my son

Rise like the sun for the sake of sentient beings!

Whatever aspiration prayers I offer with my speech,

I do so thinking one pointedly, on behalf of my son.’

The thought that I would not be able to reciprocate my mother's kindness

Remained in my heart.435

[B8a] In my seventeenth year,

[D11] I received the teachings of the Drukpa tradition436

[T11] From Lama Thupten Wangpo.437

He taught me many secret instructions.

He was a very kind master.

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434 yis D T, yi B.
435 A ma de yi drin lan ni/ 'khor thabs med bsam snying la yod. Orgyan Tenzin also refers to the unrepayable kindness of his gurus in this text and in The Melodies, such as when he refers to “my root guru Orgyan Palzang/ Whose kindness was unrepayable” rtsa ba'i bla ma o rgyan gyi dpal bzang/ bka' drin 'khor med (B141b.1-B141b.2). In Song #133 of The Melodies (pp. 335-337) he refers to his seven “gurus whose kindness is unrepayable” bka’ drin 'khor med kyi bla ma (335.3).
436 ban 'brugs] sugg em. “Ban” likely refers to ban dhe. According to Mathes, “ban de” is Dolpo and Limi language for “Buddhist” (1999, 64 n. 20.) Menlha Phuntsok confirmed this interpretation (personal communication, 12/13/22). The term ban dhe appears later in this text (B134b & B135b) to refer to Bandhe Puk cave. Bandhe also used to refer to monks in some places in the Purang region of southwestern Tibet (Khenpo Kusang Chophel, personal communication, 5/26/23).
437 Thupten Wangpo, also known as Mipham Wangpo (mi pham dbang po) and Orgyan Tenzin were from the same area near Tijirong. The namthar of Thupten Wangpo lists some of the Drukpa Kagyu empowerments and transmissions he received from his master Ngawang Thogmé, which he would have passed on to Orgyan Tenzin: Cakrasaṃvara (bde mchog khrö bo), the Yoga of the Innate Mahāmudrā (phyag rgya chen po lhan geig skyes sbyor), the Drukpa Dharma Cycle Selmadrup ('brug lugs kyi chos 'khor bsa l ma grub pa), guru worship (bla ma mchod pa), the six dharmas of Naropa (na ro chos drug), Amitayus and Hayagriva (tshe rta), the Kagyū Golden Rosary of Lives (bka’ rgyud gser phreng), Wrathful Guru Kilaya (bla ma drag po ki la), and many others (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 434).
In my eighteenth year\textsuperscript{438} I traveled to the pure land of Ütsang.

My kind mother missed\textsuperscript{439} me, her son,
And I also missed\textsuperscript{440} her, my mother.

[As] her son, I grasped her hands [before departing],

\textbf{[B8b]} [As my] mother, she made excellent aspirations [for me].

Longing for my mother, we traveled east,
And arrived at Tanak Thubten [Namgyal Ling].\textsuperscript{441}

To the entire assembly of lamas and monks,
I made an excellent tea offering, together with dedications [on behalf of my father].\textsuperscript{442}

\textbf{[T12]} I made preparations to study [there],

[But] my wicked companions did not allow me to stay.

[Nevertheless] I established an auspicious connection\textsuperscript{443} with studying dialectics.\textsuperscript{444}

\textsuperscript{438} 1674.
\textsuperscript{439} ‘phreng] T, phreng B D.
\textsuperscript{440} ‘phreng] T, phreng B D.
\textsuperscript{441} bstan] D T, stan B. rta nag thub bstan. The Victorious Island of the Teachings of the Sage of Black Horse [Valley] (\textit{rta nag thub bstan rnam rgyal gling}) located in Tsang (\textit{gtsang}), Tibet, was founded in 1473 by Gorampa Sonam Sengge (\textit{go rams pa bsod nams seng ge}, 1428-1489), who stayed there for most of a decade (TOL). It was historically "an important place of study for many Dolpo lamas" (Khenpo Menla Phuntsok, 2021, p. 168), to the point there was a permanent “Dolpo College” for monks from Dolpo. Sonam Wangchuk remarked that there were “so many rooms in the Dolpo College… we were occupied just with repairing holes in the roofs” (Snellgrove, 1967, p. 249). Thubten Nambyal Monastery is not to be confused with Tanak Phu Monastery (\textit{rta nag phu dgon}) founded by Gó Khukpa Lhetse (\textit{dgos khus pa lhas btsas}, 11th c.), where Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen studied with the master Rinchen Yeshe (\textit{rin chen ye shes}), influencing his shentong philosophical views (Stearns, 2010, pp. 13 & 43). Contemporaries of Orgyan Tenzin from Dolpo who studied at Tanak Thupten Namgyal Ling include his teacher Orgyan Palzang (Ehrhard, 2013, p. 2020), Chókyong Palzang (\textit{chos skyong dpal bzang}, 1636-1702) (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 132) and Sonam Wangchuk (\textit{bsod nams dbang phyug}, 1660-1731) (Snellgrove, 1967, pp. 231-273).
\textsuperscript{442} bsngo rten. Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 12/13/22.
\textsuperscript{443} ‘brel] D T, ‘bres B.
\textsuperscript{444} mtshan nyid. Orgyan Tenzin mentions this episode in \textit{The Melodies; de nas rang lo bco brgyad pa’i dus su dbus gtsang la phyin pas/ thub bstan rnam rgyal du slebs pas/ btsun gzhon rnam ‘phar phyin rnam ‘brel svogs la/}
Next we went to the great holy city of Lhasa.

At the two Jowo Śākyamuni [statues],

We offered butter lamps and prostrated around [the temples].

Visualizing all sentient beings beginning with my parents,

I made great effort in the rounds of prostrations.

Then we traveled to Samyé.

At the foot of the Gorkha pass,

There was [free] beer set up at Kyishö village.

There were hundreds and thousands of people going afar,

And hundreds and thousands coming back.

They were giving out food and beer every day,

Saying, “practice virtue until your death.”

Because I saw kings of dharma like that,

I lamented those kings of misdeeds.

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The two Jowo Śākyamuni statues in Lhasa are said to have been each gifted to the Tibetan Emperor Srongtsan Gampo by one of his wives, Brikuti from Nepal and Wangchen from China.

The two Jowo Śākyamuni statues in Lhasa are said to have been each gifted to the Tibetan Emperor Srongtsan Gampo by one of his wives, Brikuti from Nepal and Wangchen from China.

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*mtshan mo slob gnier byas nas/ nyin mo grogs gleng thug pa mthong bas/ yid shor nas slob gnier byed pa ’i sgrabs byas pas/ grogs mched rnams kyi bsdod du ma bcug* (pp. 9-10). Despite his desire to study as a young man, in Song #130 of *The Melodies* (pp. 327-330), a māhamudrā pointing out instruction, he refers to his time studying at the monastery (which would include dialectical study and debate) as “biased argument about tenet systems in the monastery” gnas dgon grub mtha’i kha ’dzin (328.4). He says it did not result in “unobstructed stainless self-awareness” rang rig dri med zang thal (328.5), because it is “intellectual theorizing” go yul blos byas (328.5). He expands on this idea in Song #130 of *The Melodies* (pp. 335-337), playing it into an homage to the guru: “When I think of the distracting bustle from the time I was arguing in the monastery, I offer this happy song of the secluded mountain retreat, to my qualified guru” sde dgon kha ’dzin gyi dus su/ rnams yangs ’du ’dzin la bsam na/ ri khrod dben gnas kyi kyi klu/ mtshan ldan ba’i la/ brol lo/ (335.2-335.3).

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*dkar* sugg. em., skar B, D, T.

*gor kha la yis la rtsa na*. Gorkha pass, not yet identified.

*chang gtsugs.*

*nam shi dge ba byed zer ro*. Translation tentative.
There was a girl at that settlement,
Said to be fifteen years old,
Who had been offered [marriage proposals] by many chieftains.\footnote{In Song #139 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 349-353), Orgyan Tenzin comments that “those dharma kings are more rare than gold. Through fighting, wicked kings separate all beings from their life force” \textit{chos kyi rgyal po de ni gser las dkon par ‘dug go/ sdig rgyal thab brtsod mang pos ‘gro kun srog dang bral song} (350.5).}
Having vowed not to engage in worldly activities,

[D13] She swore off samsaric deeds.\footnote{\textit{dpon po mang po} \textit{i blangs pas na}.}
She committed to offering one hundred thousand circumambulations
Of the Samyé temple courtyard.\footnote{\textit{gycam tsas}.}

[B10a] She circumambulated in four sessions.\footnote{\textit{mthun sugg. em., thun} B D T.}
There were fifteen handmaidens there,
And four young men protecting the noble girl,\footnote{\textit{lcam} D T, \textit{cam} B.}
All together about twenty-one servants
Offering circumambulations without regard to day or night.
To accumulate that number of circumambulations,
They said it would take her twelve years.
Everyone was amazed at such deeds of a noble girl.

[B10b, T14] We had been to all the holy pilgrimage places,
But we were amazed by that noble lady.
I and all of my dharma friends,\footnote{\textit{kyis} T, \textit{kyi} B D.}
Exerted ourselves, prostrating and circumambulating.

I said these humble words at that\textsuperscript{457} time.

[Song 1: Devotion to Lhasa and Samyé]

‘Ema\textsuperscript{458}

[D14] As I see many engaged in virtue

In a holy place such as this,

I feel sorry\textsuperscript{459} for my own land.

The universal monarchs of thousands of worlds,\textsuperscript{460}

Were the kings Srongtsen Gampo\textsuperscript{461}

[B11a] And Tritsong Detsen, truly manifested.\textsuperscript{462}

The guru who led one hundred thousand [beings] on the path of liberation,

Was likewise indeed the Lotus Born.\textsuperscript{463}

I spoke these words

As my devotion for Lhasa and Samyé arose.

[Further Pilgrimage and Teachings]

[T15] Then we went to Samyé Chimpu.\textsuperscript{464}

I thought, ‘This is the supreme holy place

Of the Lotus born of Oddiyana.’

\textsuperscript{457} de] T, bde B D.
\textsuperscript{458} E ma] T, B D om.
\textsuperscript{459} skyo ba skyes.
\textsuperscript{460} bsgyur] sugg. em., bgyur B, gyur T. stong ‘khor lo bsgyur ba’i rgyal po.
\textsuperscript{461} srong btsan sgam] sugg em., srog tsan rgam D T.
\textsuperscript{462} lde’u] T, sde B D.
\textsuperscript{463} Here Orgyan Tenzin is referring to the Buddhist ideal of a perfect dharma king and the ideal of the perfect guru.
\textsuperscript{464} mchims phu] sugg em., ching bu B D T.
Devotion welled up inside me and tears\textsuperscript{465} burst forth.

[B11b] I thought, 'How incredible it would be,
If the precious one of Oddiyana were here now!'
And I became extremely sad.\textsuperscript{466}

[D15] Then, although we had the intention,

We were not able to visit the great holy site of Tsari.\textsuperscript{467}

We went to Yuru Tradrug,\textsuperscript{468} Lhasa,

And the Accomplished Heat Cave at Rechung Puk [Monastery].\textsuperscript{469}

After we went for pilgrimage in Lhodrak,\textsuperscript{470}

We mistook the way and returned through Yadrok.\textsuperscript{471}

[T16] Later, at the upper floor of the great temple

[B12a] Of the glorious Sakya [Monastery],

The older ones\textsuperscript{472} [in our group] obtained\textsuperscript{473} full monastic ordination
In front of the [master] named Khenchen Jampa.\footnote{bsgrubs} There were only four of us\footnote{byams} younger ones, they said, 'It is taught that the number [of initiates] required for taking monastic ordination should be [odd numbers of] three, five, or seven\footnote{bdun} and the like. Therefore it is unacceptable to bestow\footnote{bster} vows to two or four and so on.' So I alone was left out.

The great wise master [Khenchen] said,\footnote{zhal mnga\' nas.}

\textbf{[B12b]} ‘You need not fear the teacher,’\footnote{mkhan po} The monastic preceptor\footnote{gsang ste sugg. em.} nor the ordination interviewer.\footnote{dri sugg em.}

\textbf{[D16]} In the lower [vehicle of] individual liberation and

The unexcelled Vajrayāna,

A transmission to a small group\footnote{chig brgyud.} holds enormous blessings.

An excellent dependent connection [between us] has occurred.'

\footnote{bsgrubs}{D, bsgrub B T.}
\footnote{byams}{T, byam B D. 'byam pa mtshan can. This would be referring to an elder master of Sakya Monastery at the time (roughly 1675). Alternately, this could be translated as “Khenchen Jampa Tsenjan,” or “the great wise master named Jampa.”}
\footnote{kyis}{T, kyi B D.}
\footnote{nged}{T, nyed B, nge D.}
\footnote{bdun}{D T, bsdun B.}
\footnote{bster}{D, gter B T.}
\footnote{zhal mnga\' nas.}{}
\footnote{mkhan po}{T, gtsun chung D, btsun chung T.}
\footnote{gsang ste sugg. em.}{gsang te D, seng te B T. gsang ste ston pa refers to the monastic preceptor who interviews a prospective initiate to determine if they have the proper prerequisites for ordination. Here D has the term “seng te” crossed out and replaced with “gsang te”. This indicates that the scribe for D may have been copying either B or T (or a successor to one or both), and corrected the misspelled term after realizing the mistaken spelling.}
\footnote{dri sugg em.}{dri B D T. 'dri brtsod pa. The ordination interviewer is a senior monk who asks the initiate monk or nun questions to determine if he or she has the prerequisites for ordination (Khenpo Menlha, personal communication, 4/21/23).}
\footnote{chig brgyud.}{A lineage passed to a single individual or small group of practitioners [KM, personal communication, 4/21/23].}
He said 'When one knows the true distinction between
A novice monk [upholding] the ten precepts, And a fully ordained monk with two-hundred and fifty [vows],
[They know] the one [upholding] genuine novice vows, Is equal to a mediocre fully ordained monk.'

He said, 'Before arriving back in your village,
Drink beer when you are thirsty.
After arriving back home, uphold your vows.'
He extensively taught the benefits and advantages
Of [upholding] the pratimokṣa vows.
But since [my companions] were young, they forgot them and transgressed [their vows].

When I saw the immense carved wooden columns,

In the great assembly hall of Sakya Monastery,

[B13b] I became full of sorrow.
[T18] Our good and bad habitual impressions are like our body’s shadow.⁴⁹⁴

After⁴⁹⁵ I beheld the grand Sakya temple,
I had recurring dreams of building a temple
Continuously for ten years, both day and night.⁴⁹⁶

Whatever deeds previously done
Follow us around in the future.
The habitual impressions⁴⁹⁷ of
Whatever topics one has studied in a former life
Certainly will manifest in this present life.

Look at the present for what you have done in the past.

[B14a] For where you will go in the future, be cautious about cause and effect.

Those skilful in generosity in past lives
Enjoy prosperity⁴⁹⁸ in future lives.
Those who cultivate samādhi in this life,

⁴⁹³ He appears to have been saddened because of his belief that in Dolpo the dearth of great monasteries or temples was due to a lack of merit of the people.
⁴⁹⁴ *grib*. Alternately, T gives “*sgribs*” instead of “*grib,*” meaning “stain” or “obscuration.”
⁴⁹⁵ *tshan chad.*
⁴⁹⁶ *mtshan* T, *tshan* B. In *The Melodies* (p. 15), Orgyan Tenzin describes asking Lama Thupten Wangpo about the significance of his recurring dreams: “One day I asked Lama Thupten Wangpo about my recurring dream of a consistent habitual impression of me building a temple. The Lama said that it was a [sign of a] dependent connection which [meant] I needed to build [spiritual] supports and care for many students in the future” *nyin cig bla ma thub bstan dbang po ’i drung du/ bdag gi smi lam la rgyun du/ gtshug lag khang bzhengs pa ’i bag chags zhig rtag tu yong gin ’dug zhus pas/ bla ma ’i gsung nas/ ma ’ongs pa na rten bzhings [sic] dang tshogs pa bu slob mang po ’i dag po byed dgos pa ’i rten ’brel yin gsung/ (15.3-15.4).
⁴⁹⁷ *bags* chags.
⁴⁹⁸ *longs spyod che.*
Become great meditators in the future.

There are many [verses like that] one can see in [my] collected songs.\textsuperscript{499}

\textbf{[T19]} At the age of nineteen,\textsuperscript{500}

I took [novice] vows\textsuperscript{501} with the great Sakya master [Khenchen Jampa].\textsuperscript{502}

Then, in Dingri,

\begin{itemize}
  \item [B14b] We made excellent visits to all the sites of Phadampa Sangye.
  \item Continuing through Nyanam,\textsuperscript{503} we arrived in Nepal.\textsuperscript{504}
  \item We made a complete pilgrimage of the sacred sites of the Kathmandu Valley,\textsuperscript{505}
  \item Principally\textsuperscript{506} to the Great Stūpa [Boudhanāth].
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{499} mgur sugg. em., 'gur B T. While Orgyan Tenzin refers to \textit{The Melodies} numerous times in this text for more information, it has not been possible to identify with certainty the song from \textit{The Melodies} being referenced in every instance. Here Orgyan Tenzin may be referring to Song #131 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 330-331), a song of advice sung to sponsors at Nyima Puk, where he describes various types of positive results from positive actions performed in previous lives, such as discipline, generosity, patience, and the accumulation of merit. For example, he writes that “due to the causes of generosity and compassion, abundant food, wealth and possessions are the results of generosity in a past life” sbyin pa dang snying rje’i rgyu nyid kyi/ zas nor dang longs sphyod phun gsum tshogs/ de tshe sngon sbyin pa’i ’bras bu yin/ (330.3).

\textsuperscript{500} Approximately 1675.

\textsuperscript{501} Since Orgyan Tenzin was not yet twenty, he is likely referring to novice (dge tshul) vows, not vows of full ordination (dge slong). Orgyan Tenzin merely writes in \textit{The Melodies} that he attained ordination, without specifying the type of vows: In the presence of the master at the Sakya temple, I obtained monastic ordination” sa skyar lha khang mkhan po’i drung du/ rab byung bsgrubs nas/ (The Melodies, 10.2).

\textsuperscript{502} It was not uncommon for monks from Dolpo to be trained in their youth as Nyingmapa practitioners by family members in their village, and then later depart for Lo (Mustang) or Tibet to take ordination and continue studies in Sakya monasteries, since there were no formal institutions in Dolpo dedicated to the study of dialectics or epistemology. For example, this was the path taken by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltse, although in his case he had to run away from home since his parents forbade him to go, rather insisting that he remain in Dolpo and study Nyingma tantras (Stearns, 1999, pp. 10-11). Perhaps it was Dolpopa’s example that other monks from Dolpo later emulated. This includes Orgyan Tenzin’s own gurus Orgyan Palzang and Kunzang Longyang, ostensible Nyingma lamas who were ordained as Sakya monks and served as royal preceptors for the Dzong rules in lower Mustang. In any case, at that time in southwest Tibet and the Himalayas fully ordained monks in the Kagyu and Nyingma tradition were very rare, so if a practitioner wished to take ordination, he would have to have done it in the Sakya tradition (Khenpo Menlha, personal communication, 4/26/23). Orgyan Tenzin’s master Thupten Wangpo’s receiving ordination from the Drukpa Kagyu masters Ngawang Thogme at Sandul (Phuntsok, 2020, pp. 431-432) and Gyalwa Pagsam Wangpo at Drukpa Gyalche Tshal appears to be an exception to this trend.

\textsuperscript{503} gnyi’ nang| sugg. em., snya rnams B T.

\textsuperscript{504} pal po, i.e. bal yul, referring to Nepal. At that time, “Nepal” would have referred only to the Kathmandu Valley.

\textsuperscript{505} bal yul. For an example of some of the sacred sites of the Kathmandu Valley they were likely to have visited, see the biography of Orgyan Chökyi (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 155).
I saw the king circumambulate Swayambhū [Stūpa]

Riding atop an elephant,
And I lamented all such wicked kings.\textsuperscript{507}

Seeing the ablutions\textsuperscript{508} of the Newari men and women,
Their gods and\textsuperscript{509} the offerings they made,
It struck me that this must be a heaven realm.

Since\textsuperscript{510} the fruition of pure virtuous karma\textsuperscript{511}

\textbf{[T20]} Is birth in a heaven realm such as this,
I felt sorry about my homeland.

Then we visited the Jowo [Statue] at Kyirong.\textsuperscript{512}

At the onset of the Month of Miracles,\textsuperscript{513}
All of the people of Kyirong

Had taken the one-day [eight-fold] vows of purification and confession.\textsuperscript{514}

\textsuperscript{506} bgrangs] sugg. em., grangs B T. mgo bgrangs pa. Literally this means “headed by,” and though it can mean “starting with,” here it seems to mean “principally” (Khenpo Menlha, personal communication, 4/23/23).
\textsuperscript{507} sdig rgyal. In Song #36 of The Melodies (pp. 105-107), sang during a later pilgrimage to the Kathmandu Valley, Orgyan Tenzin laments the wickedness of the kings of Patan, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur who were at war, writing “At that time, there was discord between the three kings [of the Kathmandu Valley], and a great deal of fighting broke out. I saw all of their subjects caught up in the conflict, [many of whom] had died, and I became extremely despondent” de’i dus su rgyal sde gsum po ma ’chams par/ dmag ’khrugs shin tu che bas/ skyes pa thams cad ’khrug bcod kyi nang du shi ba mthong bas/ sens shin tu skyo ba byung/ (105.1-105.2).
\textsuperscript{508} gtsang ’khrus.
\textsuperscript{509} dang] T, la B.
\textsuperscript{510} kyis] T, kyi B.
\textsuperscript{511} dkar po dge ba’i las.
\textsuperscript{512} skyid grong. Kyirong, a distict in south central Tibet, bordering Nepal. skyid rong jo bo.
\textsuperscript{513} cho ’phrul T, chu ’khrul B. cho ’phrul zla ba. The “Month of Miracles” celebrates miracles the Buddha is said to have displayed when taming heretics. It corresponds to the first month in the traditional Tibetan calendar, which falls in February / March. Ostensibly this would have been the first month of his 20th year, corresponding to February 14 - March 14, 1676.
\textsuperscript{514} gso sbyong bsnyen gnas blang] sugg. em., bso sbyong gnye gnas gnas slangs B, bso sbyong gnyen gnas slangs T. This refers to the rite of taking the eight one-day vows (yan lag brgyad pa’i bsnyen gnas). “The upāsaka precepts for lay
Observing their prostrations and circumambulations,

I felt that people born in such a holy place
Must have accumulated merit in their past lives.
I felt sorry when I saw degenerate lands,
Thinking they must be the result of negative deeds.

[Studying with Gyalwang Sengé]

At that time, the wealthy people of Langpo Khar
Organized a public empowerment,
And made extensive offerings
To Lama Gyalwang Sengé.

We had finished all of our provisions in Ütsang and Nepal
And had nothing left [to eat].
We were starving pilgrims.

Since there was a large amount of buckwheat flour

practitioners include the five fundamental vows (pañcaśīla) not to (1) kill, (2) steal, (3) commit sexual misconduct, (4) lie, or (5) use intoxicants. Additionally, three other precepts are taken on full-moon and new-moon days for a total of eight (aṣṭāṅgaśīla): not to (6) eat after the noon meal, (7) engage in entertainment or adorn oneself with ornaments or cosmetics, or (8) sleep on high beds.” David Gitlen. The Dhārani Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas. 84000 Glossary (84000.co, Accessed 2/7/23).

Orgyan Tenzin discusses this portion of his pilgrimage tour in The Melodies (pp. 9-11).

Neither the translator nor the author of this text was able to find a source for the statement that the Dhārani was recited on the third day, but the source is said to be Ratna Lingpa's biography of Orgyan Lhundrup Gyatso (ō rgyan lhun grub rgya mtsho, b. 1658). He was a disciple of Karma Lobsang, and “a close dharma friend of Garwang Dorje (gar dbang rdo rje, 1640-1685)” (Mathes, 2001, p. 175).

"grags" typically means “reknown.” However, in all known recensions of this text and in other contemporary texts from Dolpo consulted by the translator, “grags” is used in place of “drags,” the excessive particle, creating the excessive form of an adjective, such as “very hungry” or “too hungry,” i.e., “starving.”
In the empowerment donations\textsuperscript{523} the people of Langchu Valley\textsuperscript{524} Offered to Lama Gyalwang Sengé, He gave three sacks\textsuperscript{525} of buckwheat flour To our group of seven dharma friends,

[D18] Which relieved us of our hunger pains.

Lama Gyalwang Sengé was invited To\textsuperscript{526} Chöding Hermitage,\textsuperscript{527} Where he stayed bestowing empowerments and instructions from

[B16b] The \textit{Mirror of the Mind of Vajrasattva}.\textsuperscript{528}

Thus, my dharma friends and I

Fully received the Vajrasattva empowerments and transmissions.\textsuperscript{529}

\textsuperscript{522} \textit{pa yis} sugg. em., \textit{pa yi} B D, \textit{pa'i} tshe T.

\textsuperscript{523} \textit{dbang yon}. The donations offered to the lama for conferring an empowerment.

\textsuperscript{524} \textit{glang chu yul pa}.

\textsuperscript{525} \textit{khal gsum}. A \textit{khal} consists of 20 \textit{drey} (\textit{bre}), a unit of measurement used in Tibet for grain which is roughly equivalent to one liter (RYD). In Dolpo, one yak would typically carry a load of two sacks of twenty-five \textit{drey} each (Khenpo Menlha, personal communication, April 26, 2023).

\textsuperscript{526} \textit{par} D T, \textit{pas} B.

\textsuperscript{527} \textit{sdings} T, dings B D. \textit{chos sdings dgon pa}. It is not fully clear whether this Chöding Hermitage refers to Palmo Chöding (\textit{dpal mo chos sding}) Gompa founded by Bodongpa in 1350 in Purang, Nyanam County, Western Tibet (https://library.bdr.c.io/search?q=%22chos%20sdings%22&lg=bo-ets&t=Place. Accessed April 26, 2023); Samdrup Chöding Hermitage in Dolpo; the Chöding Gompa founded in 1050 in Lhurup Dzong that was associated with the Kadampa sect; or Dargye Chöding near Drachi founded by Tsélé Natsok Rangdrol in 1535 (Akester, 2016, p. 285). Based on the geography, it is most likely the first in this list.

\textsuperscript{528} \textit{gi} T, gis B D. \textit{rdo rje sems thugs gi me long gi dbang 'khrid brtsugs}. This terma of the Northern Treasures tradition was discovered by Rigidzin Gödemchen Ngodrub Gyaltseñ (\textit{rig 'dzin rgod ldem chen dngos grub rgyal mthshan}, 1337-1409), who reconcealed it for later rediscovery by Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje (Preface to the \textit{rdor sems thugs kyi me long}, New Delhi: Tarna Blama, 1973). It is a teaching on the six dharmas from the Dzogchen perspective.

\textsuperscript{529} In \textit{The Melodies}, Orgyan Tenzin adds that Gyalwang Sengé also “transmitted teachings on the \textit{Sky King Embodiment of the Precious Ones} dharma cycle of Tertön Jatsön Nyingpo and other common and uncommon instruction manuals. I felt intense devotion and great weariness toward the impermanence [of samsāra]” \textit{gter bston 'ja' tshon sning po'i chos bskor dkon mchog spyi 'dus nam mkha'i rgyal po sogs zhus pas/ bla mas thun mong dang mthun mang ma yin pa'i 'khrid rims gyi zhal dam 'dra snang byung bas/ shin tu mos gus dang mi rtag pa'i skyo shas chen po bung ngo} (p. 10.3-10.4).
At that time, at Ribo Palbar,⁵³⁰

[T22] The people of the Kyirong⁵³¹ Valley

Had requested mahāmudrā mind teachings.⁵³²

Gelong Orgyan Chözang⁵³³ and I

[B17a] Both [went and] received the mind teachings.

I understood that stillness and movement are inseparable,⁵³⁴

With various [experiences] of mingling of meditative equipoise and post-meditation.⁵³⁵

[The Three Vows]

From the age of twenty-one to twenty-three,⁵³⁶

[D19] I kept in mind the commands⁵³⁷ on monasticism

[Given] by my master at the Sakya [Monastery] shrine hall,

Perfectly safeguarding my [novice] monastic vows.

I gave up⁵³⁸ meat and alcohol for three years,

[B17b] And held the begging bowl⁵³⁹ and mendicant’s staff⁵⁴⁰ close.⁵⁴¹

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⁵³¹ skiyid grong] sugg. em., kyi dgrong B, kyi grong D, skiyid sgrong T.

⁵³² phyag chen sems ’khrid. In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin explains that “since my dharma friends did not allow me to study in Ütsang, I had the thought that I needed an introduction to my mind by any means. Therefore, since all the people of Kyirong were going to Ribo Palwar to receive introduction to mahāmudrā teachings from Lama Drupchen, Gelong Orgyan Chözang and I also went for the introductory teachings, and received teachings on mahāmudrā” dbus gtsang du slob gnyer byed du grogs mch ed rnas kyi ma gter/ da sems ngo zhig c is kyang spro dgos bsam pa yod pas/ skiyid grong lung pa’i mt’ams c ad/ ri bo dpal ’bar du bla ma g rub c hen gyi drung du/ ngo spro d phyag chen zhu ru ’gro yin ’dug pas/ dge phreng o rgyan chos bzang dang nged gnyis kyi kyang ngo spro d zhu ru phyin pas/ phyag chen gyi khrid brtsugs (10.4-11.2).

⁵³³ Later in this text (B97a-B98b and Song #196 of The Melodies, pp.463-464) Orgyan Tenzin sings a song of instruction to one Gelong Orgyan Chözang, likely the same person.

⁵³⁴ gnas ’gyu dyber med shes. In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin celebrates this experience with two songs of experience, Song #1 (11.5-12.4) and Song #2 (12.5-13.5).

⁵³⁵ mnyams rjes ’dres pa mang zhi byung. mnyams rjes is a contraction of mnyam bzlag (meditative equipoise) and rjes thob (post-meditation).

⁵³⁶ 1677-1679.

⁵³⁷ bko ’d sugg. em., skos B D T. zhal bko.

⁵³⁸ rgyab] sugg. em., gyab B D T.
I acted conscientiously with body, speech, and mind.

Some called me ‘the vain monk,’\(^{542}\)

While others praised me with great admiration.\(^{543}\)

On the occasions when people drank beer,

They [insisted on] offering me sweet wine\(^{544}\) over and over again.

At the age of twenty-four,\(^{545}\)

I received teachings on Machig’s Severance,\(^{546}\) the Six Dharmas,\(^{547}\) and so forth,

From Lama Palden Dorje.\(^{548}\)

When we saw him perform the esoteric yogic exercises,\(^{549}\)

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\(^{540}\) \textit{Khar bsil} sugg. em., \textit{khar sil} B, D.\

\(^{541}\) \textit{Rgyab} sugg. em., B, D.\

\(^{542}\) \textit{Dge slong pho so}. Translation tentative.\

\(^{543}\) \textit{Mos gus che bstod byed}.\

\(^{544}\) \textit{Bur chang}. A sweetened fermented beverage of low alcohol content made by mixing molassas into a preparation of cooked barley, caltrop (Tib. \textit{gze ma}, \textit{tribulus terrestris}), and wheat, used for treating “wind” (\textit{rlung}) disorders (\textit{Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo}, https://dictionary.christian–steinert.de, accessed 8/8/23). Here it is not clear what exactly Orgyan Tenzin means by this, since he does not provide more details. It could be that the local people offered him sweet wine in an attempt to have him loosen his strict adherence to monastic conduct, as an act of respect or politeness, or a combination of both.\

\(^{545}\) Approximately 1679. In \textit{The Melodies}, Orgyan Tenzin writes that he received teachings from Lama Palden Dorje when he was twenty-one (1677), but does not mention the six dharmas (\textit{chos drug}) nor the following episode about his companions with wrong views. The discrepancy in his age could be due to a scribal error or he may have had multiple meetings. “Also, when I was twenty one, from Lama Palden Dorje I received instructions on the All-Knowing One, the Total Destroyer, Vajrapāṇi, Machig[‘s Severance], and Shavaripa. Then the lama told me I should perform the Hevajra practice he had taught to me” \textit{yang rang lo nger cig bas dus su/ bla ma dpal ldan rdo rje’i drung du/ kun rig/ rnam ’joms/ phyag rdon/ ma gcig/ sha ba ri’i khrid zhus/ bla ma’i gsung nas dges rdon gyi nyams len byed dgos gsungs nas/} (15.4-16.1).\

\(^{546}\) \textit{Ma cig}.\

\(^{547}\) It is not clear whether he is specifically referring to the Six Dharmas of Nāropa or Niguma here, though likely the latter. For example, Organ Tenzin’s Dolpo contemporary Chökyong Palzang mentions receiving the Six Dharmas of Niguma from the master Lhundrup Palzang (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 131).\

\(^{548}\) Palden Dorje (\textit{dpal ldan rdo rje}, 1663-1723) was born in Dolpo Tongshong Tranpto (\textit{dol po stang gshong sbrang bstod}). His seat in Dolpo was Shading Gompa. Orgyan Tenzin’s Song #167 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 410-412) is an acrostic (\textit{ka breng}) supplication in remembrance of him that plays on his other name, Rinchen Namgyal (\textit{rin chen rnam rgyal}). Perhaps with this episode in mind, he refers to him in the song as “the lord who unites the three vows of the profound dharma” (412.1).
Some people developed wrong ideas

Based on [outlooks] that were worldly or from lower vehicles.

They said, 'He has cast off his conduct of monastic discipline!'

They dispaired him and said all sorts of trifling things.

[D20] I remained composed in an expanse of patience, [saying nothing].

Then, I, the one in monastic garb, [said],

[B18b] The pratimokṣa [vows] are the foundation of the dharma.

[Merely] knowing the four [root] lay [precepts]

And the ten precepts of the novice

[T24] Is of no use—they must be kept!

Instruction in the secret mantra [vehicle] is necessary

After training well in both aspiration and application [bodhicitta].

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549 'khrul 'khor. Skt., adhisāra. Yogic exercises designed to stimulate and control the inner winds and channels. Orgyan Tenzin is asserting here that one can hold multiple levels of vows simultaneously without contradiction, when done properly.

550 'jig] D, 'jigs B T.

551 'dul pa'i spyod pa bor.

552 pskur bzhus.

553 than thun smras mkhan 'byung. Translation tentative.

554 bzod pa'i dbyings su mnyam par bzhag. This unique, somewhat elaborate way of saying “I remained patient” is reminiscent of a line Orgyan Tenzin’s guru Thupten Wangpo sang to himself after he had been slandered: “Likewise, [you] beggar Mipham [Thupten] Wang[po]/ meditating on patience in the state of the reality of awakening/ apply yourself in practicing in the changeless state!” de bzhin sprang po mi pham dbang/ byang chub chos nyid ngang du bzod pa sgom/ 'gyur med ngang du nyams len 'byungs (440.10-440.11).

555 so thar chos kyi 'gram gzhi yin. In Song #112 of The Melodies (pp. 264-267), Orgyan Tenzin makes the same statement in different word order: “The foundation of the dharma is the pratimokṣa vows” chos kyi 'gram bzhis so thar sdom pa yin (265.3), and in again in Song #154 (pp. 388-390) he specifies that “maintaining the ethical discipline of pratimokṣa is the foundation of the dharma” so thar tshul khrims bsrungs ba chos kyi bzhis [sic] (388.5).

556 pas] sugg. em., pa'i B D T.

557 bsnyen] sugg. em., gnyen B D T. dge bsnyen rnam pa bzhis. This appears to be referring to the four root vows, which are the first four precepts of refraining from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, and telling falsehoods. Orgyan Tenzin alludes to these in Song #112 of The Melodies (pp. 264-267), an instruction on the three types of vows, writing “the four root vows, plus intoxicants makes five, and so forth” rtsa bzhis chang dang inga sogs rags thogs (265.4-265.5).

558 rags ldog] sugg em., regs tog B, regs rtog D, reg thog T.
Holding [all] three [sets of] vows
Is the supreme path of the Vajrayāna.

In particular, the practices of the third empowerment
Are unsightly for [followers of] the lower vehicles.

[So] I was not angered by their empty words of praise or blame.

These [verses] are in my collected songs.

[Retreat and Transmission]

When I was twenty-five, twenty-six, and twenty-seven,

I sealed [my door] with mud and remained in retreat practice for three years,

Fully performing the approach and accomplishment


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560 smon 'jug gnyis. According to Orgyan Tenzin in Songs #112 (pp. 264-267) and #154 (pp. 388-390) of The Melodies, aspiration bodhicitta is the genuine wish to attain awakening for the sake of all beings and refers to the four immeasurables, and application bodhicitta is the actual practice of the six perfections in order to actualize that goal. He continues that “these constitute engaging in relative bodhicitta. Since engaging in ultimate bodhicitta is necessary, cultivate the path of ripening and liberation of the nine yānas. In particular, train continuously in the dharmas of Madhyamaka, mahāmudrā, Dzogchen, Pacification, One-taste or Bardo” de ltar kun rdzob byang sms lam zhugs kyang/ don dam theg chen myur lam 'jug dgos pa/ theg pa dgu yis smin grol lam mchog sgom/ khyad par dhu ma phyag rdzogs zhi byed dang/ ro snyoms bar do'i chos la yang yang sbyangs (267.1-267.2).

561 bstod smad tshig skam. Literally, “dry words of praise and blame.”

562 de sogs mgur 'bum nang na yod. Here Orgyan Tenzin appears to be referring to Song #112 of The Melodies (pp. 264-267).

563 Approximtely 1680-1682.

564 bcad rgya bsadams] sugg. em., gcad rgya gdam B, spyad rgya gdams D, spyad rgya gdams T. 'dag sbyar bcad rgya bsadams. Literally, “to restrict oneself in retreat by applying mud” this phrase refers to sealing the retreat cell door for a solitary retreat, but here he seems to be using this term to mean that he stayed in solitary retreat without meeting other persons.

565 tshad] T, mchad B, mtshad D.
I exerted myself according to the texts in both the generation and completion [stages].

[T25] When I was applying the approach and accomplishment of the *hum* [recitations]

From the *Blue Heart Practice of the Northern Treasures*,\(^{570}\)

I dreamt of various miraculous apparitions.\(^{571}\)

Once I traveled to visit Orgyan [Padmasambhava].

I met a divine being holding\(^{572}\) a paṇḍita's hat\(^{573}\)

Who said, 'It is I, Orgyan.'

These are in my Collected Songs.\(^{574}\)

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\(^{567}\) *rnam 'joms.* Refers to the “All-Conquering One” (*rdo rje rnam 'joms*), a form of the bodhisattva Vajrapāni, practiced by Sakya monks in retreat.

\(^{568}\) *kun rig.* Refers to the “All-Knowing One” (*kun rig rnam par snang mdzad*), the “Sarvavid Vairocāna; Adi-buddha belonging to the Pariśodhana tantra; a class of Yoga Tantra; popular in the Sakya Tradition” (RYD). A funerary ritual is commonly practiced by Sakya monks, also accumulated as a retreat practice (Khenpo Kunsang Choephel, personal communication, 5/26/23).

\(^{569}\) *kye* sugg. em., *dges B, dge D T.* *kye rdor* is an abbreviation for *kye rdo rje* (*Hevajra*). Orgyan Tenzin discusses receiving these practice instructions from Lama Palden Dorje (*bla ma dpal ldan rdo rje*) and this retreat in *The Melodies* (pp. 15-20), describing his meditation experiences in Songs #4 (pp. 17-18) and #5 (pp. 18-20). These three were also practiced in Dolpo at a similar time by Sonam Wangchuk, who records that at the beginning of a three year retreat at Takar “I performed invocations for quelling spirits for one month. Then I invoked the *Universal Savior* [‘gro ba kun sngo ro] for two months, the *All-Knowing [Sarvavid Vairocāna]* for four months, and then *Hevajra* for nine and a half months” (Snellgrove, 1967, p. 259).

\(^{570}\) *byang gter thugs sgrub sngon po.* A terma revealed by Rigdzin Gödemchen Ngodrup Gyaltsen, the founder of the Jangter Terma (Northern Treasures) tradition. Some said that Terton Garwang Dorje was an incarnation of Gödem Rigdzin (www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Garwang-Dorje/9158, Accessed April 27, 2023). Here we see that Orgyan Tenzin was practicing tantric sādhanas from both the Sakya and Northern Treasure (Nyingma) traditions while in retreat.

\(^{571}\) *bsgyur* sugg. em., *rgyur B, skyur D, ‘gyur T.*

\(^{572}\) *bsnams* sugg em., *rnam B, rnam D T.* This could alternately be understood as “wearing a paṇḍita's hat”.

\(^{573}\) *paN zhva* D T, *pan zha B.*

\(^{574}\) In *The Melodies*, Orgyan Tenzin refers to this episode: “I received the empowerment and transmission of the Guru Offering from the Drukpa tradition; *The Self Liberated Afflictions*; Amitayus, Hayagriva, and Vajra Varahi [Translation Tentative]; the Six Dharms of Naropa; *Wrautiful Guru Dagger; The Kagyü Golden Rosary; The Guru’s Heart Practice; The Queen of Accomplishment* and so forth from Lama Thupten Wangpo. After reciting the refuge, *One Hundred Syllables [of Vajrasattva] and so on from The Guru’s Heart Practice sādhana, I remained reciting the huṃ from the the Heart Accomplishment. Through the power of taming my awareness in the generation stage, at the night I had many dreams such as meeting Guru Rinpoche in person” *bla ma thub bstan dbang po ’i drung du/ ’brug lugs bla ma mchod pa ’i dbang lung/ nyon mongs rang grol/ tse rta bags ma/ na ro chos drug/ bla ma drag po ki la yā/ bka ’byrgyu gser ’phreng/ gu ru thugs sgrub/ grub rgyal mo sogs zhus nas/ gu ru thugs sgrub kyis sgrub thabs kyi sgo nas/ skyabs ’gro yig rgya sogs kyi snyen pa byas/ thugs sgrub huṃ gi snyen pa la dad pas/ skyed rims la rig pa bcun pas stobs kyi/ tshan mo rmi lam bzang nas gu ru rin po che’i zhal ’jal ba la sogs mang du byung (13.5-14.3). He also describes his meditative experiences with huṃ recitation in Song #3 in *The Melodies* (pp. 14-15).
When I was twenty-eight years old,\textsuperscript{575} 

The mind of my\textsuperscript{576} aged spiritual master\textsuperscript{577} 

[B20a] Dissolved into the dharmadhātu.

I went to Nepal to make his reliquary.\textsuperscript{578}

His bones [and relics] were placed inside\textsuperscript{579} a statue of Orgyan [Guru Rinpoche],

Which is still present at Dechen Palri.\textsuperscript{580}

From the age of twenty-nine \textsuperscript{581} I began looking after monks and nuns,\textsuperscript{582}

[D22] And extensively teaching mahāmudrā and Dzogchen for the benefit of beings.

At the age of thirty-one and thirty-two,\textsuperscript{583}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{575} Approximately 1684.
  \item \textsuperscript{576} gi T, gis B D.
  \item \textsuperscript{577} slob] D T, slob B.
  \item \textsuperscript{578} Here he is likely referring to the death of Thupten Wangpo. Orgyan Tenzin would have gone to the Kathmandu Valley to make offerings at the holy stūpas on behalf of his master, and to have his reliquary stūpa made, since at that time there were no artisans in Dolpo who worked with copper and silver, whereas the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley were expert metallurgists. Though in \textit{The Melodies} Orgyan Tenzin states that Thupten Wangpo’s death occurred in his thirtieth year, he appears to describe this episode: “Also, when I was thirty, Thupten Wangpo departed for the pure realms. To have his reliquary made, I went to Nepal. They made an amazing reliquary of a statue of Guru Rinpoche, and I returned to my homeland. I wished to build a temple that would house the reliquary, and though I had the intention I wondered if perhaps it would not be possible to build in that degenerate land. The patron Tashi Phuntok encouraged me that it was necessary, and we were able to build the temple at Dechen Dzong and install the reliquary [inside of it].” \textit{yang rang lo sum beu pa’i dus su/ bla ma thub bstan dbang po zhi ng la phebs nas/ ring bsel mang du ‘byon pas/ gdung rten bzhengs su bal yul du phyin nas/ gdung rten o rgyan rin po che’i sku shin du mtshar ba zhig bzhengs nas/ slar yul du yongs nas/ sku de nyid bzhugs pa’i gnas khang/ gtsug lag khang cig bzhengs ‘dod pas/ bsam pa yod kyang/ yul ngan pa’i mi’ grub pa yin nam snyam pas/ yon bdag bkra shis phun tshogs kyi zhengs dgos pa’i skul lcag byas ste/ bde chen rdzong gi lha khang bzhengs pas rten bzhengs nnams grub zin} (34.3-35.1). Thupten Wangpo’s own \textit{namthar} does not include details of his death or cremation.
  \item \textsuperscript{579} [zhugs] sugg. em., bzhugs B D T.
  \item \textsuperscript{580} \textit{bde chen pal ri}. Glorious Great Bliss Mountain. Orgyan Tenzin memorialized this episode in Song #12 in \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 35-36). Dechen Palri Hermitage is located about a four hour walk above Sandul temple in the Tijirong area. Unfortunately, most of the old statues mentioned in this text and others have since been lost to thieves.
  \item \textsuperscript{581} Approximateley 1685.
  \item \textsuperscript{582} \textit{grva btsun}. Since we know that Orgyan Tenzin had female students, and the term \textit{grva btsun} is somewhat redundant for monks, I have read it as shorthand for \textit{grva pa dang btsun ma} (“monks and nuns”), which is a common contraction in Dolpo.
\end{itemize}
In the presence of Rigidzin Kunzang Longyang

I received the scriptural set of the *Mother Sūtras*,

The Kadampa *Dharmas of the Father and Son*,

The empowerments and reading transmissions for the *Complete Collection of the Eight [Sādhana] Instructions*,

Many dharma cycles of the Nyingma tradition,

And roughly one-hundred [other] Indian and Tibetan scriptures.

When I was thirty-three years of age,


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583 Approximately 1687-1688.
584 Later in this text, Orgyan Tenzin refers to him as Orgyan Palzang’s “heart son” *thugs sras* (The Condensed Life, B88b).
586 *gdam*] T, *gdam* B D. *bka’ gdam pa*. The Kadampa were a monastic sect active in Tibet at the onset of the later transmission, founded by the pupils of Atiśa. They became known for their strict discipline and emphasis on sūtra study, and greatly influenced all other Buddhist monastic traditions of Tibet.
587 *bka’* *gdams pha chos bu chos*. See Tsepag Rigidzin, and BRTMCM. *Dharmas of the Father and Son* refers to two volumes of teachings from the Kadampa tradition. The Father Dharma is the first volume compiled by Dromtönpa Gyalwai Chungné (*’brom ston pa rgyal ba’i ‘byung gnas*, 1004-1064), including questions and answers with Atiśa Dipamkara (*jo bo rje a ti sha dī pam ka ra*, 982-1055) and a biography of Atiśa. The Son Dharma is the second volume, compiled by Ngog Legpai Sherab (*rngog legs pa’i shes rab*), which includes stories of Dromtönpa’s life and his teachings.
588 *bka’* *brgyad yong ’dus*. The Eight Śādhanā Instructions are a collection of early Nyingma tantric deity practices, transmitted to Tibet during the early transmission by Padmasambhava and others.
589 *po* sugg. *em.*, *spo* B T, *spu* D. Orygan Tenzin provides more detail about these transmissions in The Melodies (p. 38): “Also, when I was thirty-two, I received many empowerments and transmissions from Rigidzin Kunzang Longyang. He generally transmitted them supported by the Dzogchen instructions from the *Heart Essence of the Nirmānakāya*. Additionally, he transmitted to me empowerments and reading transmissions of many scriptures, including five volumes of Düdul Dorje’s treasures, five volumes of Jatsön Nyingpo’s treasures, the *namthar* and collected songs of Mila[rep], six volumes of vajra songs, *The Great Chariot*, our own guru Orygan Palzang’s *namthar*, *The Kadampa Father and Son Dharmas*, five volumes of Terdak Lingpa’s treasures, thirty volumes of sūtra, fourteen volumes of *The Mother [Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras]*, the *Threefold Protector Practice* [*grva tog gser gsum* aka *gra lnga rtogs bzung* *gser* *’od bcas*], *The Complete Collection of the Eight [Śādhanā] Instructions of Guru [Rinpoche] and so forth* “yang rang lo so ngyis pa’i dus su/ rig ’dzin kun zang klong yangs kyi drung du dbang lung mang du zhus pas/ spyir rdzogs chen gyi khrid sprul sku snying thig la rten nas zhus pas/ gshan yang/ bdud ’dul rdo rje’i gter chos spu ti lnga/ ja’ tshon snying po’i gter chos spo ti lnga/ mi la’i rnam thar mgur ’bumi/ rdo rje’i ’gur drug/ shing rta chen po/ bdag rang gi bla ma o rgyan dpal bzang gi rnam thar/ bka’ dam pha chos bu chos/ gter bdag gling pa’i gter chos spo ti lnga/ mdo sde spo ti sum bcu/ yum spo ti bcu bzhi/ rgya [sic – brva] rtog gser gsum/ bla ma bka’ bskyad yongs ’dus kyi dbang lung sogs mang du zhus/ (38.1-38.4).
590 Approximately1689. This does not appear possible, as Garwang Dorje passed away in 1685. In *The Melodies* (pp. 20-23) Orygan Tenzin states that he met Garwang Dorje when he was twenty-five (approximately 1681).
I went to visit the great tertön. From the northern passage to Kyimolung.

I traveled to meet him alone, without companions.

At that time many traders from Tagtsé [Dzong] died in the midst of the [heavy] snows at Gomsha Pass.

Since I only had a poor cotton robe, I was [also] close to meeting death.

Thinking it was for the sake of the dharma, I strengthened my fortitude.

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591 o rgyan chen po ‘i lung bstan byung/ Here the text seems to be referring to the divination that predicted his strong connection with the Nyingma Dharma and Tertön Garwang Dorje. In The Melodies (pp. 22-23) the prediction occurs when he is roughly twenty-five (approximately 1681), after which he travels to meet Garwang Dorje in Kyimolung, the hidden valley Garwang Dorje had re-opened.

592 ston sugg. em., bston B D, bston T, gter ston. Those who reveal spiritual treasures hidden in the past by masters such as Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal, Vimalamitra, and others, from the earth or in visions. Here he is referring to Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje Dawa Gyaltsem (mnga’ ris gter ston gar dbang rdo rje zla ba rgyal mtshan, 1640-1685).

593 skyid mo lung gi byang sgo na. Referred to as skye ba lung by Ehrhard (2013, p. 222). The hidden valley of Deden Kyimolung (bde ldan skyid mo lung), one of the seven hidden valleys (sbyas yul) opened by the founder of the Jangter Nyingma tradition, Gödemchen and reopened by Terton Garwang Dorje. It is located in the Tsum Valley of northern Gorkha district of Nepal. Tulku Orgyan Kinoche wrote a poem in praise of the Kyimolung valley (https://lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/tulku-urgyen-rinpoche/praise-kyimolung, accessed 8/7/23). The valley is said to have four doors in each of the four cardinal directions, and the “northern gate” refers to entering the Valley from Tibet in the north, rather than from Gorkha in the south.

594 stag sugg. em. btab B D, stabs T. stag rtse, the Tiger’s peak, is an area to the east of Lhasa in central Tibet and is the legendary homeland of the kings of Tibet before Srongtsan Gampo. I am not totally certain this is the place he is referring to.

595 sgom sha la yis kha khrod du. “kha” refers to “kha ba” (snow). I am not sure the location of Gomsha Pass.

596 It appears Orgyan Tenzin may have been following the tradition of the “cotton clad yogi” (ras pa) and only wearing cotton robes. Otherwise he may have been wearing cotton because that was the clothing primarily available to common folk in the Tijirong area of southern Dolpo at the time (Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 4/26/23).

597 thug T, ‘thug B D.

598 bzod sran bskyed. Orgyan Tenzin recounts this extreme episode in The Melodies, which takes place directly after the divination determining his connection to the terma teachings. The language in this passage of the text so closely resembles The Melodies it appears that the author merely converted it into verse for The Condensed Life: “Then, I set off alone without companions in the direction of Kyirong to meet the Tertön Garwang Dorje. Heavy snows fell at Gomsha Pass. For three days I was lost in the snow, and I was close to death. I thought that since the Victors of the past had given up their lives for the sake of the dharma, even if I died I would have no regrets” de nas bdag gi grogs med cig por skyid grong phyogs su gter bstan gar dbhang rdo rje ‘jal du phyin pas/ sgom sha la la kha ba chen po babs nas/ bzhag gsum tsam kha khrod du lus nas shi la thug pa byung/ rgyal ba gong ma'i chos phyir du srog kyang btang 'dug pas/ shi na yang 'gyod pa med mnyam pa byung ngo/ (23.2-23.4).
At Crystal Cave, the site where Orgyan [Padmasambhava] practiced,

I met the Vidyādhara Garwang Dorje.

I felt that I had met Orgyan [Padmasambhava in person].

I obtained the empowerments, reading transmissions, and instructions for the Profound Essence.

Its supportive teachings, the Self Liberation of Afflictions,

Both the upper and lower sections of the Maṇi Kabum,

As well as several other empowerments and reading transmissions.

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600 rig] T, rigs B D.
601 zab tig. Here Profound Essence refers to the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu (zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal). Self-Liberated Essence of the Dharmadhātu (zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal) may be an alternate name for this terma that appears in some instances, which may be a corrupted name conflating it with The Self Liberation of Afflictions (nyon mongs rang gro). An Avalokiteśvara practice terma also revealed by Garwang Dorje.

In Song #101 of The Melodies (pp. 237-239), Orgyan Tenzin states that “this excellent teaching, the Self-Luminous Essence of the Dharmadhātu, is a profound treasure that is the essence of all profound termas bka’ bzang zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal ’di zab gtor kun gyi snying po yin (237.4). Orgyan Tenzin wrote a collection of ritual manuals and a Dzog-chen mahāmudrā meditation instruction based on this practice cycle.

602 rgyab chos nyon mongs rang gro. According to Tsewang Norbu’s biography, The Self Liberation of Afflictions (nyon mongs rang gro) was also referred to as the The Great Compassionate One Who Liberates All Wandering Beings (thugs rje chen po ’gro ba kun gro) (Mathes, 2013, p. 345-346).

603 ma Ni ‘ka’ bum stod smad gnyis. The two volumes of the cycle of teachings related to Avalokiteśvara, attributed to the king Srongtsen Gampo (srong btsan sgam po), which includes legendary history on the origin of humans (BRTMCM).

604 It seems that Orgyan Tenzin stayed for several months with Garwang Dorje at the Crystal Cave. In The Melodies he describes arriving there and the teachings he received: “At Crystal Cave, where Guru [Rinpoche] practiced, I met the great nirmānakāya vidhyādhara [Tertön Garwang Dorje]. When I embraced him, I felt like weeping greatly, but could not help but smile [translation tentative]. I was extremely joyful. It was no different than meeting Guru Rinpoche at the Copper Color Mountain Paradise. Then beginning with the revealed treasures, for the Preliminaries he bestowed the reading transmission of the Maṇi Kabum; [and he bestowed] the empowerments, reading transmissions, and instructions for the Profound Essence; and from within those, the instructions on Madyamāka and Mahāmudrā Naked Seeing. Then I spent three months training in the deity visualization meditation as a Preliminary” gu ru’i bsgrub gnas shel phug tu/ sprul sku rig ’dzin chen po dang ’jal nas/ mos gus che grags nas sku lus la ’jus nas ngu ba drag gam snyam pa byung te/ sku la ni ’jum pha do te/ dga’ spro che grags nas/ zangs mdog dpal ri na gu ru rin po che ’jal ba dang khyad par med pa byung ngo/ de nas gter chos kyi dbu gtsugs pas/ sngon ’gro la ma Ni bka’ ’bum gyi lung/ nyon mongs rang gro/ gyi dbang ’khrid lung gsum/ zab tig chos dbyings ran gyis dbang ’khrid lung gsum/ de’i nang nas dbu ma dang/ phyag chen po gnyug ma cer mthong gi ’khrid gtsugs pas/ sngon ’gro la zla ba gsum gyi bar du lha khrid la sbyangs/ (pp. 23.4-24.3).

Orgyan Tenzin also recounts his experience receiving teachings from Garwang Dorje in Song #42 (pp. 121-123) of The Melodies.
At Zapuk, I requested Gyalwang Sengé for Vajrasattva and other practices from the *Embodiment of the Precious Ones*, the *Eastern Treasures*, the *Western Treasures*, and so on, totaling eight volumes of empowerments and reading transmissions.

[Later,] I met Kunzang Longyang again at the residence of Orgyan Palzang, and received many transmissions of old and new treasures of the precious authentic teachings of the Early Translation [tradition].

[Restoring Temples, Establishing Retreats]

When I was thirty-four, thirty-five, and thirty-six,

Due to the requests of the Jumla monarch Vikram Śāh,
It was necessary to repair and rebuild the great temple Sandul.

For the masons, wood carvers, plasterers and so forth, and the statues of [Buddha] Šakyamuni and Orgyan [Padmasambhava], [People] sent materials such as gold dust, silver dust, and vermilion.


We completed [re]building the temple in six years.

The food, beer, and [workers’] salaries

Cost about three hundred alé.

It is the [main] temple of Tijirong, and the [primary] assembly hall for three regions.

people, to rebuild the Sandul temple..." sa skyong mi'i dbang po 'dzum lang rgyal po bhir sras kyis/ sa 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang gi zhig bsos byed dgos pa'i bka' nan ches pa'i btabs kyis (p. 24). Ehrhard provides a detailed discussion of the political context and importance of the temple’s reconstruction, as it was situated in a border area between Jumla, Lo (Mustang), and Dolpo (2013, pp. 335-339).

616 gog bsos gezig bsos byed.
617 sa 'dul. Sandul monastery is a Nyingma temple founded in 1590 CE (Phuntsok, 2021, p. 188, row 86).
618 brkos sugg. em., skos B D T.
619 bzo sugg. em., zo B D T.
620 sku tshab. Literally “representative image.” Here it refers to the statues.
621 rdul sugg. em., dul B D T.
622 rdul sugg. em., dul B D T.
623 mtshal sugg. em., tshal T, 'tshal B D. Here tshal refers to vermilion pigment powder, used to make a red paint applied to the walls of temples.
624 btang sugg. em., gtang B D T. Translation tentative. In The Melodies (pp. 44-45), Orgyan Tenzin writes that “to rebuild the three shrine rooms and make the statues of [Buddha] Šakyamuni and Orgyan [Guru] Rinpoche, the [Jumla] king made an a connection [by offering] from his own stores, the Lo [Mustang] Governor Samdrub Palwar made a connection [by offering] from his own stores, and all the lay and monastic made connections [through offerings]. The wealthy made a connection by offering horses and yaks, the humble by offering a coin or two, and we built the temple” gtsang khang gsun gyi zhig bsos dang/ thub chen dang/ o rgyan rin po che'i sku tshab sogs bzhengs pas/ rgyal po rang gi zho khang/ blo bo sde pa bsam 'grub dpal 'bar gyi zhok khang/ gzhed yang skya ser kun gyi 'brel par/ che ba rta dang g.yag/ chung ba dkar cig gnyis kun gyi 'brel par phul nas rten bzhengs pas (44.4-44.5).
625 rten. Literally meaning “support,” I have translated it as “temple” here since the temple is understood to be the support for the public to worship, creating merit.
626 'bul ba. Though typically referring to offerings, 'bul ba can refer to a fee for a service performed.
627 brgya tsam D, rgya rtsem B, rgya tsam T.
628 a las D T, A las B. In Dolpo language, “alé” (a las) referred to a unit of coin currency used in Nepal at the time.
629 ti chu lung pa. An alternate spelling for the Tijirong area, also spelled gter chu rong, “Treasure Water Valley.”
Enormous benefit comes to those who offer prostration, circumambulation, and lamps there.

If one dies at the holy site of Sandul, they will have no fear of wandering in the bardo. So make it your final resting place!

The reasons are in my collected songs.

In my thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirty-ninth year we established the retreat center at Dechen Palri. It is such an incredibly marvelous holy site. As favorable circumstances of earth, precious treasure stones emerged.

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630 du khang.
631 yul kha gsum. Here these three regions likely refer to Bhatshong Yul, Gompa Yul, and Tanjin Khola (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 4/26/23).
632 phan sugg em., pha B D T. pha yon. This alternative spelling for phan yon “benefit” is also found on B13a.
633 dkar T, skar B, bskar D.
634 gyur sugg. em., gyur B T, rgyur D.
635 gyis D, bgyi B T.
636 rgyu mtsan mgur ‘bum nang du yod. Here Orgyan Tenzin may be referring to Song #44 of The Melodies (pp. 126-129), where he provides some reasons for Sandul temple being such a special place, stating that “whoever performs prostrations, makes offerings, or lamps here [at Sandul]/ Will attain happiness in this life and enlightenment in the next./ Whoever stays in meditation here/ Will clear away discordant conditions and achieve harmonious conditions./ Whoever leaves behind their body at this holy site/ Cannot be taken by demons, spirits, or the yakṣa king./ Whoever is cremated here at this holy site/ Their bones will naturally disappear, the six syllable mantra will appear, and other [miraculous occurrences] will happen” (128.4-129.1). From this point of view, it is clear why Orgyan Tenzin decided to make Tadru in the Sandul area his final retreat place. In Song #17 of The Melodies (pp. 44-45), he notably likens the spiritual path to building a temple to inspire the workers “when all the monks, students, and people had tired of the temple building work” skabs cig tu sgra bu slob/ mi thams cad lha khang gi las kyi sna sun pas glu ‘di blangs so (44.2).
637 Approximately 1692-1694.
638 btsugs] T, gtsugs B D.
639 pde chen dpal ri. A Nyingma monastery established in 1311 CE, not far from Sandul temple. Schaeffer mentions that Dechen Palri was a temple at Sandul (2004, p. 31), but they are different places. Menlha Phuntsok provides separate entries in his table of Dolpo monasteries for Sandul and Dechen Palri temples (Phuntsok, 2021, pp. 189-190), and confirmed that it takes about three to four hours to walk between the two, as Sandul temple is down in the valley floor and Dechen Palri is located up on a ridge (Khenpo Menlha, personal communication, 4/26/23).
As favorable circumstances of water, miraculous water gushed out. I [even] witnessed a tree flying through the air!

[B23b] The outer and inner supports altogether

Cost over two hundred alé.

We completed building this sacred support within three years.

[Teaching Around Dolpo]

[T30] At that time, my very kind mother

And our patron Tashi Phuntsok,

Who was a master of generosity and full of faith,

Both passed beyond this life, so I went to Nepal.
Once we had constructed the great Maitreya [statue], we remained at [Dechen] Palri,

[D26] Where the sun's eastern and western rays convene—

[B24a] An isolated place for the cultivation of Dzogchen.

When I was forty years of age,

Lama Gyaltsen, Jatang [Kali] and others invited me

To Mekyem Monastery.


We again returned to Dechen Palri,

And separated the male and female living areas,

Establishing it as a perfectly pure retreat center.

[T31] It became a place for veneration and worship

#35 of The Melodies is a praise to the Boudha stūpa (pp. 104-105), and Song #36 is a lament sung at the Swayambhū Stūpa about the suffering of the wars in the Kathmandu Valley (pp. 105-107).

Orgyan Tenzin also traveled to Nepal to have the Maitreya statue made for Dechen Palri, specifying in The Melodies that the Buddha Maitreya statue was made by “the Newar artisan Abhadeva and roughly eleven others” bal po A bha dhe wa sogs gzo bo bcu gcig tsam... rgyal ba byams pa'i sku bzhengs pa (102.3-102.4), “who were pleased with their compensation” bal po A pha dhe wa sogs yon gyi mnyes par byas (107.3).

Due to its location high up on a hill, Dechen Palri catches the morning and evening sunshine. Though Orgyan Tenzin does not discuss the establishment of Dechen Palri in The Melodies, Songs 26 – 29 (pp. 67-83) of The Melodies are all praises to the holy site Dechen Palri.

Approximately 1696.

btang] D, gtang B T. bla ma rgyal mtsan bya btang. bya btang is a name for a renunciate. Here he is likely referring to Jatang Kali, an important student and patron of Orgyan Tenzin’s, mentioned below. Alternately, it could refer to another of his students, Jatang Orgyan.

me skyim dgon pa. Mekyem Changchup Chöling (me skhyem byang chub chos gling), a Nyingma gompa founded in 1100 CE (2021, p.187, row 53). In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin mentions spending three months receiving profound sūtra transmissions at Mekyem Monastery when he was forty-nine (p. 223). It is unclear if this is referring to the same episode, as the age-dates do not match between the texts.

Though the text reads gnang, it appears he is referring to himself as well as Mekyem Lama Gyaltsen. This is likely an insertion by a student scribe assisting in the composition of the text, or a scribal error introduced later. It may be based on the way a similar episode is written in The Melodies, which uses the honorific compound verb for “to do” (snang [sic – gnang] bar mdzad, 224.1) to refer to the sūtra reading transmissions, and the ordinary verbs “to maintain” (skyangs, 225.1) and “to offer” (phul, 225.3) to refer to Orgyan Tenzin’s activities.

btsugs] D, gtsugs B T.
[For everyone] from Tsharka and below, to Bha and above.\textsuperscript{656}

[B24b] Up through my fiftieth year,\textsuperscript{657}

We instituted\textsuperscript{658} summer dharma teachings at [Dechen] Palri,

And we instituted\textsuperscript{659} winter dharma teachings at Phan.\textsuperscript{660}

[Thus] I was able to explain many mahāmudrā and Dzogchen instructions

To all the dharma practitioners from Tibet and the lowlands.\textsuperscript{661}

[D27] In Kokla,\textsuperscript{662} that virtuous valley of Dharma,\textsuperscript{663}

We recopied fourteen volumes\textsuperscript{664} of the Great Mother Sūtra.\textsuperscript{665}

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\textsuperscript{656} tshar kha man nas bha yan chad.
\textsuperscript{657} nga]} sugg. em., ngo] B D T. Assuming he means from when he was forty to fifty, that would refer to the approximate years 1696-1706.
\textsuperscript{658} btsugs] sugg. em., gtsugs B D T.
\textsuperscript{659} btsugs] T, gtsugs B D.
\textsuperscript{660} phan. Refers to a retreat center south of Sandul, where it would have been warmer in the winter.
\textsuperscript{661} bod rong kun gyi chos pa. The people of Dolpo consider the areas north of them to be Tibet, and they refer to the lower valleys south of Dolpo as rong, which means “valleys” or “low lands.”
\textsuperscript{663} yi] sugg. em., yis B D T.
\textsuperscript{664} po] sugg. em., spo B T, spu D. Based on Orgyan Chökyi’s biography, Schaeffer (2004, pp. 31 & 157) mentions the production of twelve volumes.
\textsuperscript{665} yum chen spo ti bcu bzhi bzhengs. The Great Mother Sūtra refers to the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. Orgyan Tenzin discusses the restoration of the fourteen volumes at length in The Melodies, using it as an opportunity to describe the sacrality of the Buddhist textual tradition from India (pp. 92-99) and to compare and contrast textual preservation with temple building and retreat practice. He appears to have managed the project, and states that the project took one year when he was forty years old: “In Kog, fourteen volumes of the Prajñāpāramitā from both the white Chölung Prajñāpāramitā texts and sūtras had been destroyed by dripping water. The village chief Senge Kyab went to visit the lama and said, ‘we require your compassionate assistance for these Prajñāpāramitā texts’. They made an excellent connection. The lama replied, ‘I am also of the same mind.’” dkog la chos lung dkar po ‘i mdo yum gnyis nas yum po ti bcu bzhi thigs pas brlag nas rul yod pas/ gtsos bo seng ge skyabs bla ma ’i drung du yong nas/ yum ’di la thugs rje ’i mgo ’dren mdzad dagos zhus pas/ rten ’brel legs byung/ bdag kyang de lta bu ’i ’dun pa yod gsung (92. 5-92.3). Orgyan Tenzin does not specify the lama. Sengye Kyab is discussed by Schaeffer (2004, pp. 75, 82 & 144). Song #32 of The Melodies (pp. 94-96) describes the origin of the sutras, and Song #33 (pp. 94-96) compares the process of copying new texts to the process of teaching and training the mind, as well as praising the sponsors, editors, and scribes who took part in the restoration project (pp. 97-98). He completes the discussion with a note about the consecration: “We completed the texts in one year. About ten masters endowed with the five abundant conditions [of the teacher, teaching, assembly, place and time] relying upon maṇḍalas of the Heart Essence and Profound Essence [treasure teachings] consecrated [the texts], causing everyone to rejoice [in the merit]” gsung rabs nmas lo cig la tshar nas rab gnas la phun sum tshogs pa lnga ldan gyi go nas/ bla ma dpon slob
At that time Aji Drupchenmo,\textsuperscript{666} Demonstrated impermanence by passing beyond this life.

Then Jatang Kali\textsuperscript{667}

[B25a] And the patron Chö Gyaltse\textsuperscript{668}

Invited us up toward the Tibet[an plateau].\textsuperscript{669} They arranged public empowerments and dharma teachings\textsuperscript{670} in Tarap, one after another.

[T32] Takyu Buchung Darpo\textsuperscript{671}

\texttt{bcu phrag tsam gyi thugs tig zab tig gi dkyil ’khor la rten nas/ rab tu gnas pa byas pas kun rjes su yid rang bar mdzad do (98.5-99.2).}

\textsuperscript{666} A ci grub chen mo. Assuming she is the same as the Ani Drupchenmo mentioned by Orgyan Chökyi in \textit{Himalayan Hermittess} (Schaeffer, 2004, p.185), her name would have been Sonam Drolma (bsod nams sgrol ma). Here Orgyan Tenzin uses the term in Dolpo dialect for “sister” or “wife” (a ci), but in \textit{The Melodies} he uses a term for “aunt” or “nun” (e ne) (Pema Chime, personal communication, 2/22/23). It is not clear why, though it is possible she was related to him as a sister, cousin, or aunt. Orgyan Tenzin writes that he sang Song #106 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 252-254) to himself when he was saddened by the deaths of Ani Drupchenmo and Gelong Drolma Sangpo (p. 251). The song is presented as critical advice to himself in order to inspire himself toward more dharma practice as a preparation for his own death.

\textsuperscript{667} Jatang Kali (bya giang ka li) is mentioned in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography as one of her patrons whose kindness she wishes to repay in retreat (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 179). Song #59 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 158-160) contains seven pieces of practice advice for Jatang Kali, playing on his name Jatang, “the one who has discarded activity,” i.e., a renunciate. When Orgyan Tenzin was in his early sixties (around 1720), he refers to him as “the elderly Jatang Kali” bya stang ka li bdres po (347.4), indicating Jatang Kali was older than himself.

\textsuperscript{668} gyis T, gyi B D. Chö Gyaltse (chos rgyal mtshan) is mentioned in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography as their patron when Orgyan Tenzin and Orgyan Chökyi were at Mekyem Monastery (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 158). Schaeffer transliterates this name as Chogyal Tsen, but the name Chö is a clan name in the Kog area (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 5/1/23). A contemporaneous Chö Gyaltse is mentioned in Mathes (2003, p. 98) as being the founder of Rinchen Ling (rin chen gling) in northern Dolpo, but it is not clear if this is the same person.

\textsuperscript{669} bod. Though he calls it Tibet, they travel to Tarap in Dolpo, part of the Tibetan plateau. From lower Dolpo, traveling to Upper Dolpo would be like traveling toward Tibet (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 4/26/23). In \textit{The Melodies}, Orgyan Tenzin describes three visits to Tarap and Mekyem Monastery organized by Jatang Kali and Chö Gyaltse: One before and after his time at Drikung (pp. 221-227 & 262-276), and a third time when Orgyan Tenzin was staying at Nyima Puk (p. 347). The second visit is mentioned in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography, “then the master, together with a large entourage of one hundred escorts, journeyed once again to Mekyem Monastery and stayed some time” (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 159). For the sake of space, it seems Orgyan Tenzin only mentions their time at Mekyem and Tarap once here.

\textsuperscript{670} khrom dbang chos ’khrid btsugs. This episode is recounted by Orgyan Tenzin in \textit{The Melodies}, where the names of four other primary patrons are mentioned. In Song #94 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 222-223), Orgyan Tenzin gives advice to those patrons and identifies the public empowerment as a tshe dbang (long-life empowerment), which remain popular in Tibet and the Himalayas. In Song #130 of \textit{The Melodies} (pp. 327-330), he specifies that public empowerments are for “the purpose of increasing lifespan and merit” tshe dang bsod nam rgyas ba’i phyir (327.3), rather than as a secret initiation into an esoteric tantric ritual practice.
And many other faithful persons offered their service.

A multitude of disciples were set toward maturation and liberation.

When I was fifty, fifty-one, and fifty-two,

We were invited to Bantshang.

[B25b] We offered them countless virtuous activities,

Such as public empowerments, purification rituals for the living, and purification rituals for the dead.

[Enormous] wealth was offered up [to the saṅgha] and distributed down [to the people].

At one time, I maintained [the transmission of] the Drikung [Kagyū] teachings.

At one time, I maintained [the transmission of] the Drikung [Kagyū] teachings.

671 rtag kyus bu chung dar po. Takyu is a place near Tarap in Dolpo. In Orgyan Chökyi’s biography, Schaeffer translates this name as “Uchung Darpo” (2004, p. 158), the patron mentioned along with Chö Gyaltsan (Phuntsok, 2010, p. 665). Though the name bu chung is pronounced “Uchung” in some Tibetan dialects, in Dolpo dialect it is pronounced “Buchung” (Pema Chime Gurung, personal communication, 2/19/23). The “faithful Buchung Darpo” dad ldan bu chung dar po is also mentioned in Song #95 of The Melodies (pp. 225-227), which Orgyan Tenzin sang to people who requested dharma transmissions at Mekyem Monastery after the long-life empowerments in Tarap.

672 pos sugg. em., po'i B D T.

673 In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin specifies that after the public long-life empowerment in Tarap, there were three months of sūtra reading transmissions given at Mekyem monastery, located above Tarap. He then writes, “after the sutra reading transmissions I maintained instructions on mahāmudrā from the Nyingma tradition and Dzogchen thögal. Also as a pure connection, I thoroughly offered empowerments and reading transmissions for the Great Compassionate One, Self Liberation of Afflictions, long-life empowerments, the eight branches of discipline for all of the householders [translation tentative], the Mani commitments, and prayers on peoples behalf” mdo lung gi rjes la/ phyag chen snyings lugs rdzogs chen thon rgal gyi khrid skyangs/ bzhan yang thugs rje chen po nyon mongs rang grol gyi dbang lung/ tse dbang khyim pa rnams la tshul khrims yan lag brgyad pa/ ma ni'i dam bca'/ bsgo 'brel sogs rnams dkar kyi 'brel pa yang bdag pa phul lo (225.1-225.3). In her biography, Orgyan Chökyi remarks on the extensive homage that the monastic community received at that time from the patrons at Mekyem (Schaeffer, 2004, p. 158).

674 Approximately 1706-1708.

675 pan tshang.

676 gson sbyang gshin sbyang] sugg. em., bson byang bshin byang B D, bson sbyang bshin sbyang T.

677 dkor] sugg. em., bkor B D T.


679 bskyangs] sugg. em., skyangs B D T.
Greatly benefitted the Drikung teachings.

At the time I was fifty-three and fifty-four,

We set off for Demo Shong [Sikkim],

[T33] But the people of Takyu and Bantshang

Detained us [with] many [activities and requests], so we were unable to go.

[B26a] I taught mahāmudrā and Dzogchen for the patrons Chökyab Palzang,

Önpo Lama Kyab, other [patrons],

And many assembled monastics and laypersons.

Lama Nyima [Gyaltsen] from Balung,

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680 phan] T, 'phan B D.
681 It appears Orgyan Tenzin means that by providing transmissions of the Drikung teachings to the community at [Dolpo] Drikung, he ensured that their transmission lineage remained unbroken. Orgyan Tenzin details his time at Palchen Drikung (Dolpo) in The Melodies (pp. 239-262), which includes Songs #102-110.
682 Approximately 1709-1710.
683 'bras mo shongs, an alternate spelling for 'bras mo ljongs, a name for Sikkim which means “Valley of Fruits.” This aborted pilgrimage to Sikkim is recounted in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography (Schaeffer, 2004, pp. 158-159), and it is unclear whether he is referring here to one or two failed trips.
684 kyi] sugg. em., kyis B D T.
685 drags] sugg em., grags B D T. dkyil bkag che grags. dkyil in Dolpo dialect means to detain someone from leaving. Snellgrove describes the enormous amount of requests for assistance and spiritual teachings the Dolpo people placed on lamas in The Four Lamas of Dolpo (1967, p. viii).
686 Chökyab Palzang (chos skyab dpal bzang) was an important political figure in Dolpo and Mustang in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well as a patron of Buddhist activities. His role in mediating a dispute in Mustang is mentioned in the namthar of Sonam Wangchuk (bsod nams dbang phyug, 1660-1731) (Snellgrove, 1967, pp. 216-217, 219). He is also discussed by Schaeffer (2004, pp. 35-36, 43) and mentioned in Orgyan Chökyi’s biography as a patron (2004, p. 159). He is not to be confused with the Dolpo Sakya Lama Chökyab Palzang (chos skyab dpal bzang, 1476-1565), whose namthar is translated by Snellgrove in Four Lamas of Dolpo.
687 dbon po. Önpo, a clan name common in Dolpo (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 4/26/23).
688 ser] sugg. em., gser B D T.
689 In The Melodies (pp. 276-282) Orgyan Tenzin describes his activities in Tinkyu with Chökyab Palzang, Lama Kyab, and other students and sponsors, to whom he sang Song #117 (pp. 277-278), which describes the importance of using the precious human life for virtue. As an example of Orgyan Tenzin’s activities at that time, he writes that “again the people of Tinkyu invited us to Tralung Tiné. For three months in the winter we instituted a great dharma center for the ripening and liberating [instructions] of mahāmudrā, Dzogchen, phowa, mending and purification rites. Over one hundred faithful male and female [students] made virtuous connections there” slar yang ting kyu yul pas sgra lung sti gnas su spyan dras nas/ dgun zla ba gsum phyag chen/ r Negs chen/ pho chos bso hyong la sogs smin grol kyis chos sgra chen po gtsug nas/ dad can pho mo rgya hag tsam la rnam dkar kyi 'brel pa bzhag go/ (281.3-281.4).
Lama Trinlé [Dorje] from Mé,690 and other [lamas]

Gave691 many empowerments and instructions692 to all the dharma practitioners at Bantshang.

Then we went to Nyima Puk.693

690 In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin mentions meeting Lama Nyima and Lama Thinlé at Tralung and exchanging songs with them as a means of creating pure connections, commemorated in Song #119 (pp. 282-284) which he sang at Tralung Chödöng (sgra lungchos sding), and Song #120 (pp. 284-285), sung at Tralung Samling (sgra lung bsam gling). He gives Lama Nyima’s full name as Lama Orgyan Nyima Gyaltsen (bla ma o rgyan nyi ma rgyal mtshan) from Balung (308.5). Lama Nyima may have been an older lama who was not in good health, since Orgyan Tenzin later writes that he “offered Lama Nyima Gyaltser a long-life ritual, longevity empowerment, a cleansing empowerment of the All-Conquering One, and so forth” bla ma rgyan nyi ma rgyal mtshan la gdan bzhugs tse dbang rnam ’joms ’khrus dbang sogs phul (316.2-316.3). Song #171 (p. 417) of The Melodies is a long life prayer offered to Orgyan Tenzin by Lama Nyima, to whom Orgyan Tenzin offers a reply in Song #172 (pp. 418-419).

Orgyan Tenzin later sang Song #132 (pp. 332-334) of The Melodies to Lama Thinlé from Mé as an Ode to Nyima Puk and a Dzogchen instruction on the ground, path, and fruition of various aspects of practice. 691 gnang. Since the verb is the honorific form, it appears that these other lamas are giving the empowerments and instructions, not Orgyan Tenzin. However, Orgyan Tenzin reports in The Melodies that he also offered a series of empowerments and instructions to these and other lamas, so it may be that the use of the honorific here was an error introduced into the text by a student scribe, or the result of a conflation of multiple verbs describing actions by Orgyan Tenzin and the other lamas (see above note). “There I scattered flowers on Lama Orgyan Nyima Gyaltser. He was established as the lama of Balung Retreat Center. He had dream omens of [Guru Rinpoche] Orgyan’s blessings. Then I offered him the empowerments and reading transmissions for the Embodiment of the Precious Ones, the Heart Essence of the Nirmānakāyas, the Self-Liberation [aka Luminosity] of the Profound Essence Dharmadhātu, and five [other] profound treasures [revealed] by [Tertön] Garwang Dorje] Dawa Gyaltser. I also thoroughly offered instructions on Dzogchen Thögal practice and the empowerment, reading transmission and instructions for the Profound Essence to the entire sangha including [him], Kharpa Lama Thinlé; Lama Dorje Lodrö; the lamas, teachers and students from Gupuk; Drupchen Jampa and others from Thakar; Gelong Chöphel and others from Pangri’ der bla ma o rgyan nyi ma rgyal mtshan la me rto ’thor/ ha lung sgrub sde’i bla mar bkod/ khang rang la o rgyan rin po che’i byin gyi blabs pa’i rmi lhas bung ’dug pas/ dkon mchog spyi ’dus/ sprul sku snying tig/ zab tigchos dbyings rang gsal sogs/ gter brton zla ba rgyal mtshan gyi zab gter lnga’i dbang lung sogs dang/ mkha’ pa bla ma ’phrin las dang/ bla ma rdo rje blo gros dang/ gu phug bla ma dbon slob thams cad dang/ mtha’ dkar grub chen byams pa sogs dang/ spang ri dge slong cho’ phel sogs dge ndun rnams la rdzogs chen thod rgal kyi ’khrid dang zab rig gi dbang lung khrid gsum legs par phul/ (308.5-309.3).

692 gdams T, gdam B D.

693 yong] sugg. em., yongs B D T. nyi ma phug, “the Sun Cave” is Nyingma retreat founded in 1530 CE in the Tarap area of Upper Dolpo, present day Buddhaka Rural Municipality, Ward 1 (Phuntsok, 2021, p. 187, row 56). In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin writes about this initial visit to Nyima Puk: “we stayed at Nyima Puk Retreat at the border of Tibet and the lowlands in the Lang Valley, and we remained in continuous river of samādhi” bod rong gnyis kyi sa mtshams glang yul kyi ri khröd nyi ma phug du bzhugs nas chu bo rgyun gyis ‘dzin la bzhugs so’ (316.1-316.2).

Song #132 (pp. 332-334), which opens as an Ode to Nyima Puk and finishes as a Dzogchen instruction to Lama Thinlé, lauds Nyima Puk and the surrounding Lang Valley: “In the vicinity of the snows of Tibet, south of the marvelous holy site of Tisé [Kailash], there are four valleys of people with devotion to meditation practice. In the center of these four is the Lang Valley. At the top of the valley is me, this old beggar, praising this place while anticipating death. The mountain meadows are petals on each side of the valley, where the earth contains blazing jewels and flower gardens. The top of the mountain appears like Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī in union. A stream of medicinal water is opposite a stream of nectar. Here at the holy site of Nyima Puk, which is replete with attributes,
I performed a retreat\textsuperscript{694} and thought to stay,\textsuperscript{695}

\[\text{[B26b]}\] But too\textsuperscript{696} many people came requesting instructions, causing much commotion.\textsuperscript{697}

\[\text{[D29]}\] I became depressed due to the excessive\textsuperscript{698} distractions.

Again, the benefactors from Bantshang and

Lama Lhachen of Jang\textsuperscript{699}

\[\text{[T34]}\] Invited me to Jazang Monastery.\textsuperscript{700}

I offered them the complete empowerments and reading transmissions for the \textit{Profound Essence [Terma cycle of Garwang Dorje]}.\textsuperscript{701}

\[\text{[Then,]}\] at the Tralung\textsuperscript{702} Nechog Monastery,
We performed\textsuperscript{703} the extensive Seven Rebirths Drupchen\textsuperscript{704} and distributed\textsuperscript{705} sacred substances\textsuperscript{706} to everyone from Tibet\textsuperscript{707} and the lowlands.

At one point, Lama Tenzin\textsuperscript{708} Repa [wrote to me]

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{703} btsugs\ sugg. em., gtsugs B D T.
\textsuperscript{704} skyed bdun grub chen. This practice appears to include the flesh of the seven rebirths of a Brahmin (personal communication, Menlha Phuntsok, 4.26.23). In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin mentions three instances of performing the Seven Rebirths Drupchen. Here he appears to only mention the third instance, about which he also writes in The Melodies, “Again we performed the Seven Rebirths Drupchen at Tralung Samling with all the people from Tinkyu, and distributed sacred substance pills all over Tibet and the lowlands” slar sgra lung bsam gling du ting yu yul ba'i nas skyed bdun gvi sgrub pa chen po btsugs nas dam rdzas ril bu bod rong kun la skye/ (317.1).
\textsuperscript{705} He writes about the first, that “when I was forty-seven, we performed the Seven Rebirths Drupchen for the benefit of Orgyan Changchup and for the sake of self and others... The Seven Rebirths Drupchen was sponsored by myself, Lama Kunga, and Ani Paldzom” rang lo zhe bdun pa'i dus su/o rgyan byang chub phan du/rang gzhan gvi don du/skye bdun gvi sgrub pa chen po btsugs... skyed bdun gvi byin bdag ni/ bdag rang dang /bla ma kun dga'/ a ne dpal 'dzoms sogs kyi mdzad pa/ (155.5-156.1, 156.5). Orgyan Tenzin sang Song #58 (p. 157-158) of The Melodies when he was feeling pleased after the drupchen, which praises the Dzogchen lineage and dedicates the merit of the offerings given.

The second Seven Rebirths Drupchen was performed at the second set of empowerments and teachings organized at Mekyem Monastery above Tarap by Jatang Kali and Chögyal Tsen, “since Tarap was a place where the three poisons flourished, I said that for the sake of sentient beings we should make the Seven Rebirths pills by any means possible. From before, they had requested it again and again, so five chant masters and twelve masters performed the Seven Rebirths Drupchen, which was accomplished by relying upon the rituals of the peaceful and wrathful deities and the Self-Liberation of the Profound Essence Dharmadhātu” ta rab 'di sdog gsum rgyas pa'i sa yin pas/ sems can kyi don du skyed bdun ril bu zhig cis kyang sgrub dgos zer/ sngon nas yang nas yang du bskul bas/me skyed dgon par bla ma rnam pa Inga' i dbu mdzad/ dpon slob bcu phrag gnyis kyi skyed bdun gvi sgrub pa chen po btsugs nas/ zhi kho dang zab tigchos dbyings rang gsal gvi tshog la rten sa sgrub/ (262.3-262.5).

\textsuperscript{706} dam rdzas. At the end of a drupchen ritual, performed for seven to ten days, special substances that are blessed from the power of the unbroken group practice are often distributed to the community. In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin details after the first performance of the Seven Rebirths Drupchen that “for the sacred substances which liberate through taste we gathered together the flesh of a Brahmin; special blessed substances from Tertön Jetsün Nyingpo, [Tertön] Dündul Dorje, [Tertön] Garwang Dorje, and [Tertön] Terdak Lingpa; and also special blessed substances from authentic gurus of both the old and new transmissions; and dirt from special holy sites of India and Tibet. More than ten lamas and masters completed a combined sādhana practice for fourteen days and nights, relying upon both the rituals of the Embodiment of the Precious Victors with the peaceful and wrathful [deity practices] and the Self-Liberation of the Profound Essence Dharmadhātu. For the sake of sentient beings, we distributed [the sacred substances] all over the four regions of Dolpo, and to Tibet and the lowlands” myong grol gvi dam rdzas la/ bram ze'i sku sha/ gter bion mja/ tshon pa/ bdud 'dul rdo rje/ gar dbang rdo rje gter bdag gling pa rnam's kyi byin brlabs khyad 'phags dang' gzhen yang bka' gsar snying gni byin brlabs khyad can dang/ rgya bod kyi gnas khyad par can gyis rdol sogs pa kun bsdus nas bla ma dpon slob bcu phrag la ng gnyis/ rgyal ba skon mchog spyi 'dus bzi kho dang gcas pa/ zab rgyas rdogs rang gcas dang gnyis la rten nas cho ga zhag bcu bzhir bdi la sgrub gnyis ka tshar nas/ sems can gyis don du dol gru bzhis/ bod rong kun la skyes/ (156.1-156.5).

Orgyan Tenzin later repeats that they distributed the sacred substances made at the second Seven Rebirths Drupchen, writing “then we distributed the sacred substances all over Tibet, the lowlands, and the four regions of Dolpo” de nas dam rdzas bod rong kun dang/ do gru bzhis/ blo bo sogs la skye bas (267.5-268.1).

\textsuperscript{707} bod. Referring to the Tibetan plateau, i.e. upper Dolpo.
\textsuperscript{708} bstan] D T, stan B.
From Shel[ri Gompa], saying "you need to come quickly." [710]

[B27a] [I went] and we properly consecrated

The lama’s reliquary stūpa, encased in silver. [712] Then I returned [to Nyima Puk]. [713]

[On the way] we made a pilgrimage to the holy place Margom Tsé, [714]

And I offered some condensed Dzogchen instructions

To the community at Margom Tsé Retreat. [716]

[Leaving Nyima Puk]

Then we returned [717] to Nyima Puk.

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709 zhel] D, zhas B, zhes T.
710 In The Melodies, Orgyan Tenzin mentions doing a pilgrimage circumambulation of Shey Mountain (where Tenzin Repa’s residence at Shey Monastery was located) after visiting Margom Tse Gompa, writing that “Lama Tenzin, the teachers and students all welcomed and escorted us with a grand procession, and they sang many songs of experience. While there was a big rain, just as we arrived at Dolma Pass the sun emerged and it was very hot. The attendants and pilgrims said ‘what a marvelous auspicious connection this is! Precious Lama, please sing us a melody!’ So I sang...” bla ma bstan 'dzin ras pa dp on slob rnams kyis bsu ba gser 'phreng 'bul 'degs rgya cher mdzad cing nyams dbyangs kyis ngur ma mang po mdzad do/ char shin tu che bar yod bas grol ma lar slebs tsam la n yi ma shin tu tsha ba shar byung bas/ phyag phyi ba rnams dang gnas bskor rnams 'di 'dra ya mtshan pa'i rten 'brel byung/ bla ma rin po che'i mgur dbyangs snang dgos zer bas/ 'di smras so/ (312.1-312.3). He follows with Song #122, which compares uncompounded reality with the sun in a cloudless sky (312-313).
711 It is not clear to which lama’s reliquary stūpa Orgyan Tenzin is referring to here, though this could also be an error, since The Melodies only mentions “a support” (rten) (348.4). It may have been that of Chökyong Palzang (chos skyong dpal bzang, 1636-1702) (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 5/1/23), though if Orgyan Tenzin’s age-dating system is accurate his death would be around ten years earlier than this episode (Phuntsok, 2020, p. 73).
712 Orgyan Tenzin seems to briefly mention this episode later in The Melodies, writing only that “on one occasion, [Tenzin Repa] invited me to Shey [Monastery], for a consecration. Then he held an enthronement with auspicious blessings [translation tentative]. Lama Tenzin Repa gave a large celebration after the consecration” yang skabs cig shel kyi rten la rab gnas la sphyan drangs nas byin brel rgya shis mnga’ gsol mdzad/ bla ma bstan 'dzin ras pas rab gnas dga’ ston rgyas par mdzad/ (348.4-348.5).
713 yong] sugg. em., yongs B D T.
715 yf] sugg. em., yis B D T.
716 sgrub] sugg. em., bsgrub D, grub B T. Orgyan Tenzin describes this episode in the Melodies, followed by Song #124, a Praise to Margom Tse Gompa: “Once we went to make connections on pilgrimage at Margom. All of the lamas and the community of meditators gave us as extensive a welcome as they could. At Yatser, we made community offerings of tea, white scarves and offering lamps. Then we went to Margom Tse Retreat and practiced samādhi. My [meditation experience] was enhanced, and I sang this song of experience” skabs cig gi tshe dmar sgom du gnas 'brel la phyin pas/ bla ma grub sde kun gyi bsu ba 'bul 'degs ci drag phul/ bdag gi kyang g.ya' mtsher pa la mang ja snyan dar skar me phul/ de nas dmar sgom rtser phyin nas ting 'dzin sgom bas nyams rtogs la bogs thon shing nyams dbyangs 'di smras so/ (309.3-309.5).
[Orgyan] Chökyi, that special woman of awareness, said to me,

[D30, T35] ‘Now I must abandon this hustle and bustle!

My body has grown old, it will not remain,

So I must go to remote mountain retreat!'" Then this old beggar thought to himself,

[B27b] ‘This point made by the younger to the elder

Is damn true if you think about it.’

I also thought to no longer stay,

But to go wander in some empty land, to some remote place.

However, we were detained by Önpo Chökyab [Palzang] and the others there,
Along with the people\textsuperscript{728} of the Lang valley.

We remained seven years at Nyima Puk.

Then I sang this beggar's song:

\[\text{Song 2: Going to Secluded Mountains}\]

'Ema! Think of me, my seven gurus!

When the yogi becomes familiar to the people and the dogs,\textsuperscript{729}

[T36] Settle what's important, discard what's small,\textsuperscript{730} and go!

[B28a] Remaining in one place, attachment and desire increase,

So I am going to secluded mountains to meditate!\textsuperscript{731}

These [verses] are in my collected songs.\textsuperscript{732}

\textsuperscript{728} \textit{pas} sugg. em., \textit{pa'i B D T.}
\textsuperscript{729} In Orgyan Chökyi's biography, a similar exchange is recorded, which Schaeffer translates as “It eventually became noisy with people at Nyima Puk. 'This monastery has grown in seven years,' the master said, 'so I must leave. The victorious Buddha said many times, 'When the yogin is pestered by people and dogs it is time to go. Each month, each year, change your retreat. The risk of death comes like lightning.' Now I must go to Nechen Tadru” (2004, p. 163). The Tibetan is: de nas nyi ma phug tu mi tshub che grags nas/ bla ma'i gsung nas dgon pa 'dir dad nas lo bceu 'gro/ rgyal ba gong ma'i gsung nas/ rnal 'byor mi 'driis tsa na 'gro re ran/ zla re lo re tsam la ri khrod 'pho/ 'chi ba thog babs tshul du yong nyen yod/ zhes mang du gsungs 'dug pas/ da ni gnas chen lta gru zer ba'i lung stong de ru 'gro dgos pa 'dug gsung gin 'dug/ (Phuntsok, 2010, p. 669). Schaeffer translates 'driis as “pestered” (past tense of 'dri in Chandra Das' Dictionary), but 'driis can also mean "to become familiar" or "to become intimate,“ which is how I have interpreted it.

\textsuperscript{730} \textit{bzhag} D T, \textit{zhag B. che zhag chung skyur byas nas 'gro}. Translation tentative, Orgyan Tenzin repeats this line in a later song in this text, writing “if you intend to practice deity meditation properly,/ settle what is important and discard what’s small./ Practice perfect renunciation./ And give the busy distractions to the young” lha sgom yang dag byed dgongs na/ che bzhag chung skyur byas nas ni/ bya gtang rnams par dag pa gyis/ 'du 'dzi gzhun nu rnams la sprod (B133a.4-B133b.2). Alternatively Khenpo Menlha interpreted this sentence to mean, “leave behind the big people, leave behind the small people.”

\textsuperscript{731} gnas cig du sdad chags sdang 'phel/ dbyen pa'i ri la sgom du 'gro/. Orgyan Tenzin’s frustrations with the busy bustle of monasteries and crowded noisy retreats led him to make this point numerous times in this text and \textit{The Melodies}, so that it becomes a key theme in the text. Later in this text, Orgyan Tenzin includes a song with similar lines: “I will not cling to a single place,/ But turn away and leave for a secluded place” gnas geig tu zhen chags nga mi byed/ gnas dbyen sa cig la gyab nas 'gro (B38a.3).

\textsuperscript{732} It is not clear which song Orgyan Tenzin is referring to in \textit{The Melodies}, but Song #67 expresses his earlier frustration and embarrassment with himself and others at indulging in frivolous distractions at the retreat center (pp. 170-172). The song begins by listing the things they are not accomplishing in retreat, and ends with an exhortation to himself and his followers that good companions are precious like gold, but negative companions need to be
[Establishing Tadru Hermitage]

[D31] Then we came\textsuperscript{733} to the secluded area Nurgen,\textsuperscript{734}

And I recalled the earlier prophecy\textsuperscript{735} from my guru.\textsuperscript{736}

At the border of\textsuperscript{737} the Tibet[an plateau] and the lowlands,\textsuperscript{738}

We replaced the parasol\textsuperscript{739} and fully restored

The great Dzakha\textsuperscript{740} Stūpa.\textsuperscript{741}

We [also] repaired that fearsome long bridge\textsuperscript{742} at Terthang plain,

[B28b] Into a wide bridge\textsuperscript{743} that was no longer frightening.\textsuperscript{744}

\footnotesize{abandoned (p. 172). Songs #134 and #135 correspond to the same period at Nyima Puk and contain similar phrases, such as “This old beggar will not stay, I will go to secluded mountain retreat” \textit{sprang rgan mi sdod dhen pa’i ri la ’gro/} (349.2).

\textsuperscript{733} \textit{gyin yong} sugg. em., \textit{rgan yongs} B D T.

\textsuperscript{734} \textit{rnur rgan}. A place on the way to Tadru from Tijirong.

\textsuperscript{735} \textit{bstan} sugg. em., \textit{stan} B T, \textit{rtan} D.

\textsuperscript{736} Orgyan Tenzin seems to be referring to Thupten Wangpo’s earlier prediction when he was around twenty years old that he had a strong karmic connection with temple building. In \textit{The Melodies}, Orgyan Tenzin writes, “one day I asked Lama Thupten Wangpo about a recurring dream I had of an impression of constantly building temples. The lama replied that I had a strong karmic connection and should build temples and take care of a large assembly of students in the future” \textit{nyin cig bla ma thub bstan dbang po’i drung du/ bdag gi smi lam la rgyun du/ gtsug lag khang bzhangs pa’i bag chags zhig rtag tu yong gin/ dug zhus pas/ bla ma’i gsung nas/ ma ’ongs pa na rten bzhengs dang tshogs pa bu slob mang po’i dag po byed dgos pa’i rten ’brel yin gsung/} (15.3-15.4). He later refers to this prediction as a motivation for building a temple at the summit of Dechen Thang when he was forty-nine (\textit{The Melodies}, p. 206).

At the beginning of his recollection of this journey in \textit{The Melodies}, Orgyan Tenzin refers to this prophecy, stating, “based on the prophecy of the guru and the đākinī...” \textit{bla ma mkha’i ’gro’i lung bstan la rten nas} (353.4). It is not clear to what đākinī prophecy he is referring, though he may be referring to visions he had of Vajravārāhī described in Song #122 of \textit{The Melodies}, his second secret \textit{namthar} song (pp. 296-302), or his vision of five đākinīs he meets while in transit to Tadru (\textit{The Melodies}, pp. 356-358).

\textsuperscript{737} \textit{yi’i} D, \textit{yis} B T.

\textsuperscript{738} \textit{bod rong gnyis kyi sa yi mtshams}. Geographically this would refer to the area near Tijirong, where Tadru is located.

\textsuperscript{739} \textit{yi’} sugg. em., \textit{yis} B D T.

\textsuperscript{740} \textit{rdza kha’} D, \textit{dza kha} B, \textit{dza ka} T. \textit{rdza kha’i mchod rten chen mo}. In Dolpo dialect, \textit{rdza kha} refers to a ridge or hill that consists of loose clay or earth and can be difficult to climb (Pema Chime Gurung, personal communication, 2/17/23). Based on the geography, the name of the area is Dzakha, which is the namesake of this stūpa. Orgyan Tenzin writes that the community restored this stūpa again later in this text (B541-B54b), which in \textit{The Melodies} he identifies as being near Dolpo Kag (p. 353). Local tradition maintains that the Dzakha stūpa was first built by Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 5/1/23).

\textsuperscript{741} \textit{yi’} sugg em., \textit{yis} B D T.

\textsuperscript{742} \textit{zam} T, \textit{zams} B D.

\textsuperscript{743} \textit{thang zam}.}
All the people and livestock were delighted.\textsuperscript{745}

Then, at the great holy site of Tadru\textsuperscript{746}

We established\textsuperscript{747} a retreat center, and continued cultivating the view.\textsuperscript{748}

\textsuperscript{744} g.ter thang rgyas zams 'jigs pa de/ 'jigs pa med pa'i thang zam bcos. It is possible that 'jigs pa ("terrifying") is a misspelling of 'jig pa, ("broken") though it is spelled 'jigs pa in all recensions of The Condensed Life and The Melodies, which would render the meaning as \textquotedblleft We [also] fixed the broken long bridge at Terthang plain,\textquotedblright Into a bridge to the plain that was no longer broken\textquotedblright (B28b.4-B29a.1).

Orgyan Tenzin mentions this episode in The Melodies, using language that he appears to have adapted for this text: \textquotedblleft We set off to repair the damaged Dzakha stūpa and replace its canopy. On the way, we repaired the eight Sugata [stūpas] which were damaged. [Also] on the way there was a terrifying cliff-side bridge at Terthang Plain which was harming both people and animals. We replaced the large terrifying bridge at the plain, and all of the people and animals were freed from the space of fear. Then, when we raised the new canopy on the large stūpa at Kag, I sang an aspiration of auspiciousness \textit{rdza kha'i mchod rten chen mo'i zhid ral bcos pa dang/ gdugs gsar 'gel du phyin/ lam zhor la bka' shis mkhan stengs kyis bde gshegs bryad kyi zhid ral bcos/ lam zhor la gter thang gi brag zam 'jigs bo de yis mi phyugs kun la snod pa/ thang zam chen mo gsar 'dzugs mdzad nas mi phyugs kun 'jigs pa'i dbyangs las sgrol/ de nas kag ni mchod rten chen mo'i sduq gsar 'gel dus/ bka' shis smon lam 'di gtab po/ (353.4-354.1).\textit{ This is followed by Song \#140 (pp. 354-356), in which he aspires that \textit{by restoring, repainting, and replacing the parasol of the stūpa} \textit{mchod rten zhid ral dkar byug gdugs phul bas} (354.3-354.4), the beings of the six realms would be liberated from their sufferings and would excel in the three trainings; the seven noble riches of positive qualities; in the view, meditation, and conduct; mature toward liberation; and so forth. He ends with the aspiration that \textit{by repairing the terrifying river bridge, may we be able to lead all beings on the path of liberation!} zam 'phrang 'jigs pa bcos pa yis/ sems can thams cad thar lam 'dren dus shog (355.5).\textit{\textsuperscript{745} btang} D T, rgyab B.\textsuperscript{746} Ita gru. Schaeffer (2004, p. 219) and Ehrhard (2013, p. 345) indicate the spelling for Tadru is \textit{rTa gru}, possibly based on the 1819 biography of Katog Rigdzin Tsegwang Norbu by Chökyi Wangchuk that is quoted in Ehrhard, though most instances of the name occur as \textit{Ita gru} in the recensions of The Condensed Life and The Melodies I have found. Tadru is about a half day walk from Sandul (\textit{sa'du}) according to a direct but dangerous route by the river or more than a day around the mountains. Schaeffer gives 1724 as the date for the move to Tadru (2004, p. 47). Orgyan Tenzin first mentions Tadru in Song \#44 (pp. 126-129) of The Melodies when describing ways of understanding the special qualities of the area around Sandul Temple. He states that in the context of the outer, inner, and secret typology, \textit{"the supreme site of essential self-nature is Tadru" ngo bo nyid kyi gnas mchog sta gru yin/ (128.1); in the context of the body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities typology; \textit{"the activity site is the secluded place Tadru} \textit{phrin las gnas ni ta gru dhen gnas yin/ (128.2); and in the typology of the Six Perfections \textit{the perfection of wisdom site is the secluded place Tadru} \textit{shes rab gnas ni rta gru dbyen gnas yin/ (128.4). Notably, Tadru (which is spelled differently in each of the three verses of the version of this song!) represents the final item in each typology, which indicates the high esteem in which Orgyan Tenzin held the site. In Song \#122 (pp. 296-302), his second secret biography song, he explains that \textit{"Previously, the realized master referred to as Guardian Siddha, Who was the final rebirth of the dharma lord Darpa, Practiced māhamudrā for many years at Tadru, A secluded retreat place in an empty valley/ He continuously trained in prānī breath control day and night/ In his dreams he traversed existence from top to bottom/ He left behind his footprints in the water at Tadru. [Translation tentative] It is prophesized that anyone who drinks the waters of the Tadru valley/ Will be liberated from the lower realms. As a result of his cultivation of samādhi at that time/ In this time instantaneous experience and realization arises/ This arose out of my conviction in the ultimate natural state" [Translation tentative] sngon dus chos rje dar pa'i skyey ba'i mtha/ grub chen brsung skyobs zhes pa'i rtaos ldan zhi/ dhen gnas ta gru lung stong ri khrod du/ lo mang phyag rgya chen po'i nyams len dang/ srog rtsol rlung la nyin mshsan 'khor yug sbyangs/ rmi lam 'gyur srid pa'i rtsa rtse nyul/ rkang pa'i rjes nga ngan ti kru'i chu la kyur/ da rta lung pa de yi chu btangs kun/ ngan song gnas nas grol bar lung du stan/ de dus ting 'dzin sgom pa'i rgyu 'bras kyis/ da rta bdag la cig char nyams rtogs shar/ don dam gnas lugs yid ches nang nas 'char (297.2-297.5).}
Though we fled people and wealth,

People and wealth pursued us.

We did not horde what was accumulated, but put it toward virtue,

Creating numerous supports of body, speech, and mind.

Except for the tenth day of Guru Rinpoche,

We abandoned laziness and distraction.

And all the masters and students cultivated samādhi.

As they say,] When the dharma is strong, the demons are also strong.

At the holy site of the Tadru retreat,

We had [to build] many bridges all over.

[But] the ones we built were swept away by morning.

[T37] Though we fled people and wealth,

People and wealth pursued us.

We did not horde what was accumulated, but put it toward virtue,

Creating numerous supports of body, speech, and mind.

Except for the tenth day of Guru Rinpoche,

We abandoned laziness and distraction.

[B29a] And all the masters and students cultivated samādhi.

[D32] [As they say,] When the dharma is strong, the demons are also strong.

At the holy site of the Tadru retreat,

We had [to build] many bridges all over.

[But] the ones we built were swept away by morning.
[To rebuild them], we bartered a lot of gold and silver without holding back.

Many of the monks and nuns were exhausted [from the work].

Though for some, practice experience increased, Others complained to each other about their difficulties.

[T38] [As is said,] for the sake of gurus and kings, All sentient beings are made weary.

[B29b] When staying on the Tibet[an] plateau, the yaks suffered [carrying loads].

When staying in the lowlands, the nuns and monks suffered [carrying loads].

[But] they carry with them the fruits of their practice.

[Some said] even cultivating the view and meditation is pointless,

[But] it truly does have a purpose!

Those who offered service to the millions of arhats in India,

[D33] Truly gained awakening.

Whoever offers service to the great male and female meditators of Tibet Will [also] attain liberation.

Though the monks and nuns were exhausted carrying loads,

[B30a] I made pure aspirations [for them, praying], 'May it be excellent!'
May you not experience suffering!

I made many aspirations like that.

When this old man was sixty-five,

[T39] We were invited to Lang, Dopa, Takyu, Bantshang, and Nangkhong.

[The people] gave excellent offerings of useful things

Such as horses, yaks, gold, silver, grain and salt.

We were invited to Tatsang Monastery,

Where we saw the [images of] the great deities and met the lamas.

[B30b] We then returned to Tadru.

[On pilgrimages, my students] made connections (connected) with the famed Sakya Karmo lineage throne holder,

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776 btab] sugg. em., btabs B D T.

777 g.lang mdo pa rtags kyus. These three places are considered the three regions of the Tarap area.

778 Nang khong.

779 Though he states that he was seventy at the time, Orgyan Tenzin appears to describe this episode in The Melodies (p. 409), indicating that the patron Chökyab Palzang was the primary sponsor who invited them: “There was an enormous amount of offerings of horses, yaks, gold, silver, salt and grain. We developed our own hermitage, distributing the offerings to the laypersons and the poor, making [practice] supports, and so on. We took the little bit remaining as offerings for the tenth day [puja], without attachment” rta g.yag gser dngul tsha nas 'bul ba'i rnam grang shin du rgya che ba byung bas/ rang rang gi dgon sde mi skya sog s la mchod sbyin lung 'gyed rten bzhengs sogs gong 'phel du stang/ lhag ma cung zad khoyer yongs tshes bcu'i mchod pa dus su ma chag go (410.3-410.4).

780 grva tshang dgon pa. This may be an alternate name for Jazang Monastery (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 5/1/23).

781 phrad] T, khrad B D.

782 yong] sugg. em., yongs B D T.

783 rgyad (sugg. em.), gyad grags B D T.

784 sa skya'i dkar rgyad grag. Translation tentative. Likely referring to the Three White-[elad] Sakyapas sa skya dkar po rnam gsun, ie., the Khön Sakya lineage of Sakya Monastery starting from the Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (sa chen kun dga' snying po, 1092-1158), Sonam Tsemo (bsod nams rtse mo, 1142-1182), and Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen (rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147-1216) (Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo Tibetan, http://dictionary.christinasteinert.co, accessed 8/8/23). In Song #170 of The Melodies (p. 416-417), Orgyan Tenzin refers to this and the monastery as the “king of lamas, the Great Khön, and the king of temples, the Sakya assembly.
Thupten Serdog [Monastery], Ngor [Monastery], and others

Through offerings of communal tea.

They connected with [Swayambhū and Boudha,] the two [great] stūpas of Nepal

Through offerings of sacred lamps.

To the great holy site Tisé, the white snowy mountain,

They performed homage and created connections through offerings three times.

They made connections through offerings to all of the lay and monastic practitioners,

Throughout the valleys of the four corners of the Dolpo region.

I sealed all of our offerings and gifts with dedications

For all the faithful [students] and our benefactors, without discrimination.

hall, the king of lineages, the White Sakya Gyedrag" bla ma'i rgyal po mkhon rgyud bdag chan dang/ lha khang rgyal po sa skyi' gtsug lag khang/ sduc gi rgyal po dkar po rgyad grags sogs/ ngor dang thub bstan gser mdog can rnams la/ dad can rnams kyi gser dngul phul ba rnams (416.5-417.1).

Ngor Sakya Monastery founded in the year 1469 by the student of the great Sakya Khempo Rongtön Shakya Gyaltser (rong ston shAkya rgyal mtshan, 1367-1449), Panchen Shakya Chohden (paN chen shAkya mchog ldan, 1428-1507) (Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo Tibetan, http://dictionary.christinasteinert.co, accessed 8/8/23). In Song #170 of The Melodies (p. 416-417), Orgyan Tenzin mentions his students Üpa Ùmdze Zangpo and others traveling to Sakya Monastery and Thupten Serdog to offer gold, silver, and community tea for all of the monks at those holy places.

This is most likely a transliteration of the Nepali term ‘puja.’

gangs dkar ti se. Tisé is a traditional Tibetan name for Mount Kailash.

The four regions of Dolpo refer to Bantsang, Nangkhong, Tangshong and Tarap (Menlha Phuntsok, personal communication, 5/1/23).

dkar] B T, skar D. sru tsa dkar me. This is most likely a transliteration of the Nepali term ‘puja.’

gangs dkar ti se. Tisé is a traditional Tibetan name for Mount Kailash.

Though unclear here, it appears that Orgyan Tenzin did not accompany this group on their pilgrimages to central and western Tibet and the Kathmandu Valley. He refers to this pilgrimage to central Tibet in the short colophon to Song #170 of The Melodies (pp. 416-417), writing that “when the central Tibetan Ùmze Zangpo and others offered community tea in Tsang, I sang this at the holy site Tadru” dbus pa dbus mdzad bzang po sogs dbus gtsang la mang ja 'bul pa'i dus su gnas chen rta gru na smra pa'o (417.4). He includes the aspiration prayer mentioned here at the end of the song: “By this merit, may all the male and female beings,/ Completely gather an expanse of merit and wisdom./ As the result of this merit and wisdom,/ May they quickly attain the two sacred [kāyas]!” dge ba 'di yi skyo bo pho mo kun/ bsod nams ye shes rgya chen tshogs rdzogs shing/ bsod nams ye shes las byung 'bras bu yi/ dam pa gnyis po myur du thob par shog (417.3). Translation tentative.
Introduction to the Comparative Edition

The Tibetan language comparative edition below has taken the “B” manuscript as its basis. Contractions (bskungs yig) have been written in their full forms. I have indicated where manuscripts “D” and “T” diverge from “B” in the apparatus. The reader will notice there are a large number of spelling variations between the text’s witnesses.\(^{791}\) Since the manuscripts contain numerous idiosyncratic orthographies, which may represent acceptable local spellings of certain terms,\(^{792}\) (especially in the cases where all known witnesses of the text employ the identical local spelling), I have not attempted to “correct” every spelling into their standard Tibetan spellings in a critical edition.

The critical choices made for the translation are indicated in the footnotes to the translation. The comparative edition allows for non-readers of Umé to see the instances in which D and T differ from B.

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\(^{791}\) Snellgrove reports that the first scribe he hired in Dolpo to copy a text made so many errors the text he produced was unusable (1967, p. 69), and that his next scribe was prone to spelling errors due to trying “to write too much without referring to his master-copy” (1967, p. 70). We can surmise that many of the scribes engaged in hand-copying the witnesses to this text had a similar level of skill.

\(^{792}\) For example, Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok asserts that grags, a verb meaning “reknown,” is an acceptable spelling for the excessive particle drags. Therefore I have left it as it is to avoid accidental hubris of the foreign translator. While the reader of standard Tibetan may frown upon this approach, which admittedly has its shortcomings, I have indicated in the footnotes to the translation itself where the English translation is based upon a spelling of a word that diverges from ”B,” or where I have suggested an emendation conforming to standard classical Tibetan that diverges from all known witnesses of the text.
[B1a, D1, T1]ཤེ་བོ་ནུས་ཀྱི་བདེ་ལེགས་སུ་དམར་པོས་བཤད་པར་ཨོ་བར་མི་བཞིན་

[B1b, D2, T2]ནུས་ཀྱི་བདེ་ལེགས་སུ་དམར་པོས་བཤད་པར་ཨོ་བར་མི་བཞིན་

[D3]དེ་དང་་མེ་[B2b]བཞིན་བདེ་ལེགས་སུ་དམར་པོས་བཤད་པར་ཨོ་

[B3a, D4]བཞིན་[T5]མི་འབྲེལ་འབྲུག་པ་[D5]ཀྱི་ང་

藏文版
བོད་ཡིས་བོད་པའི་[B4b]བཞེད་ཀྱིས།

ལོ་[T8]འདེབས་པར་འམ་འདུག
ལོ་[D8]འདེབས་པར་འདུག
གག་ལེན་ལམ་ཡིག་རིན་ཐེས།

ལོ་[B6a]འདེབས་པར་འདུག
ཞེས་ལེན་ལམ་ཡིག་རིན་ཐེས།

བོ་[B6b]འདེབས་པར་འདུག
དབང་པོ་མོ་ཐོབ་ལེན་ལམ་ཡིག་རིན་ཐེས།

843 ང་D.
844 ང་T.
845 ཏ་T.
846 ཏ་T.
847 ཏ་T.
848 ཏ་D.
849 ཏ་DT.
850 ཏ་T.
851 ཏ་DT.
852 ཏ་D.
853 ཏ་T.
854 ཏ་D.
855 ཏ་T.
ོངས་ལ་བ3ན་ནས་སེམས་ཉིད་ིན་ཅན་ཨ་མ་པད་མཚa་དེ།

འཇིག་ེན་བ་qིས་པའི་vེད་མོ་འe།

དཀོན་མཆོག་གfམ་པོ་དམིགས་ནས་ནི།

བy་བLན་འ_ོ་བའི་Lས་ཉིད་L།

西藏,856 すいはる,857 あずき,858 [B7a] かし,859 かい,860 たまき,861 たけの,862 ふく,863 たけの,864 たけの,865 ふく,866 たけの,867 たけの,868 ふく,869 たけの,870 [D11] むすび,871 つが,872 かわ,873 つが

856 かし T.
857 あずき T.
858 [B7a] かし D.
859 かい T.
860 たまき T.
861 たけの T.
862 ふく T.
863 たけの T.
864 たけの T.
865 ふく T.
866 たけの T.
867 たけの T.
868 ふく D.
869 たけの T.
བཀའ་ཅན་ཨ་མ་ཡིན།

རང་ལོ་བཅོ་བོ་འོ་བའི་ཞས།

དས་གཙང་དག་པའི་ཞིང་ལ་རིན།

ང་ཡང་ཨ་མ་ཉིད་ལ་རང་།

ཨ་མས་བོན་ལམ་བཟང་པོ་བཏབ

མ་ལ་རིན་བཞིན་རོགས་རིན།

ནག་བ་ནི།

ཟེབ་ད་ཀོན་པའི་ཤེན་འདེས་ས།

[0]དེ་ནས་གནས་ཆེན་སར་རིན།

ར་མེ་§ལ་ནས་རོར་ོས་

ཕ་མའི་ཐོག་ངས་སེམས་ཅན་ལ།

དམིགས་ནས་རོར་རེམས་ནས་

dསམ་ཡས་རོར་རིན།

[0]ོགས་ངན་མིས་ིས་

དོད་འེལ་

མས་

་

ཆོས་

དོབ་

870 མ་བས་ T.
871 ཁོན་ T.
872 དབས་ T.
873 བདག་ T.
874 མིག་ T.
875 ཡང་ T.
876 ཅེ་ T.
877 ད་ D T.
878 ཞེས་ D T.
879 མ T.
880 ཚུ་ D, རོ་ T.
881 ད་ D T.
882 ཚ་ D.
883 དང་ D.
884 ད་ D T.
885 ལུང་ D.
886 ལུང་ D.
887 བ བ.
གོར་ག་ལ་ཡི་ལ་v་ན།

ཕར་ལ་1་3ོང་འ_ོ་བ་དང་།

ཉིན་རེ་བཞིན་L་‰ོ་ཆང་གཏེར

དཔོན་པོ་མང་པོའི་nངས་པས་ནི།

བལ་པོི་q་བ་qེད་རི་ཤིབསམ་ཡས་u་ཁང་1་v་ལ།

དབོང་བ་འ|མ་ཚaའི་གདམ་བཅའ་མོན་བཞིར་ད་ནས་བ༡ོར་

888 བོ་T.
889 བཙ་T.
890 བ5ེར་T.
891 བཙ་T.
892 བཙ་T.
893 བཙ་T.
894 བཙ་T.
895 བཙ་T.
896 བཙ་T.
897 བཙ་T.
898 བཙ་T.
899 བཙ་T.
900 བཙ་T.
901 བཙ་T.
902 བཙ་T.
903 བཙ་T.
904 བཙ་T.
905 བཙ་T.
906 བཙ་T.
907 བཙ་T.
བོར་བའི་ངས་ཀ་བསོག་པ་ལ།

ལོ་ངས་བོ་གཉིས་དགོས་སོ་ཟེར།

དེ་འེའི་མཛད་པ་ལ།

མི་མས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡ་མཚན་

ངེད་རང་གནས་བོར་ཐམས་

ཅད་ང་།

དཔོན་མོ་དེ་ལ་ཡ་མཚན་

དབྱེ་ས་*ང་པོའི་འདི་ད་¬ས།

བདེས་*ང་པོའི་འདི་ད་¬ས

གནས་ཆེན་[D14]འེ་འེའི་ཏུ་གནས།

དེ་ནས་བསམ་ཡས་འཆིང་ར་

དེ་ཏུ་འདི་གནས་མཆོག་ཡིན་ནོ་

བསམ།

དེ་འདི་འདི་གནས་ལོས་ང་ཡིན།

དེ་ནས་བསམ་ཡས་འཆིང་

ར་རིན།

དེ་ཏུ་འདི་གནས་མཆོག་ཡིན་ཟེར།

[908] ཡོག་T.
[909] ཤབ་D.
[910] མོ་T.
[911] འ་D.
[912] T.
[913] ཆེ་T.
[914] ལ་T.
[915] ཚེ་T.
[916] ཤ་T.
[917] ལབ་T.
[918] བར་T.
[919] སར་T.
[920] འཕྲ་T.
[921] བོར་T.
[922] ར་T.
[923] ར་T.
[924] ར་T.
ད་‰་ཨོ་1ན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ

ཆེ་བ་ལ།

བསམ་ནས་བ་ཤིན་།

དེ་ནས་གནས་ཆེན་པ་ལ།

མོས་པ་ཡོད་ང་མ་ཞིབ་སོང་།

རས་ང་གི་ཅོད་རི་ལ།

ཉེད་རང་གཞོན་པ་བཞི་སོམ་ི།

བོད་ནས་འོག་ཁང་ཆེན་མོའི་མོ་ན།
གཞི་དང་བཞི་ལ་སོགས་པ་ལ། བཞིན་པ་གཏེར་མི་Dང་གfང་། མཁན་པོ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞལ་མངའ་ནས། 

བZབས་པ་གཏེར་[D16]ནང་གཙོ་སེར་བར་དང་། ་ལེགས་པ་ཞབས་པ་ལ་འཇིགས་མི་དགོས།

[བོད་]འོག་མ་སོ་སོར་ཐར་པ་དང་། 

དགེ་ལ་དང་། ཉིས་1་V་བyའི་དགེ་Zོང་གཉིས། 

དགེ་ོང་འ€ིང་དང་[B13a]མཉམ་མོ་གfང་། 

ཁ་ོམས་སིངས་པོ་འ€ེང་ཅིག་གfང།

ཁ་ོམས་ནས་ ོམ་པ་བªངས།

འོང་ོམ་གཅིག་q་rེས་ལ་sས།

བ3བས་[B13a]རྩ་བཀྲ་དག་

བ3བས་[B13a]ས་པ་བདག་

བ3བས་[B13a]མཚན་

xོམ་

གཅིག་

942 ཆུ་T.
943 ཆུ་D.
944 སྤྱི་T.
945 སྤྱི་DT.
946 སྤྱི་T.
947 གྲོ་DT.
948 གྲོ་T.
949 གྲོ་DT.
950 གྲོ་T.
951 ཐུབ་T.
952 ཐུབ་D.
953 ཐུབ་D.
954 ཐུབ་T.
955 ཐུབ་DT.
956 ཐུབ་D.
957 ཐུབ་T.
958 ཐུབ་DT.
959 ཐུབ་T.
960 ཐུབ་D.
961 ཐུབ་T.
962 ཐུབ་D.
963 ཐུབ་D.
ཕ་ཡོན་པའི་གཉིས་ལག་ཆེན་མོ་ཡི་མཐོང་བའི་ཚི།

སེམས་པོ་མེ་བཞིན།

བག་ཆགས་བཟང་ངན་ས་ིབ་བཞིན།

རི་མ་མེ་བཞིན་པ་གཏོང་ནི།

དེ་སོགས་མང་ཡོད་འམ་ནང་

This is likely an intended abbreviation for pha yon or phan yon.

From here two folio sides of D (corresponding to what would be D9a & D9b) are missing.
[B15b]ཆེས་རབ་ལམ་ཐབས་[996]རབས་སོ་[997]། རང་ལེན་ཁོང་བ་བཟོ་བོ་[998]ཆེ།


ངེད་རང་གཉིས་ིས་སེམས་འིད་ས། ལན་འབ་གནས་འང་བཟང་དང་།
ད་ས་རི་བོ་དཔལ་འབར་ན། ཆོང་བ་དང་།
ར་ཆེན་སེམས་འིད་ས། ལན་མེད་ཤེས།
མཉམ་ཟེས་འེེས་པ་མང་ཞིག་ཅེད་པའི་ལས།
ཉེར་གཅིག་ཉེར་གམ་ས་པའི་ཁང་མཁན་པོ་ཡིས།
རབ་ང་ཞལ་ལས་འན་ནས་ནི། རབ་ང་ོམ་པ་9མས་དག་བངས།
ལོ་གམ་ཤ་ཆང་བ་བµར་ནས། མ་ཚད་ཁར་བསིལ།
ས་ངག་ཡིད་གམ་བག་ཡོད་ཤས། ལ་ལ་དགེ་ོང་ཕོ་སོ་ཟེར།
ལ་ལ་མོས་ས་ཆེབོད་ཤེད་པའི་[T23]་ས།

[1019] ཟེར་མེད་དཔོན་པོ་[1020] བཤད་པར་ཐོབ།
[1021] མོར་སེམས་དབང་ང་.[1022] ལེགས་པར་ཐོབ།
[1023] ཆོས་བཟང་དང་།[T22]བཤད་པའི་ཆུས་གུང་།
[1024] ལེགས་པར་ཐོབ། [1025][B17a]་ས། ལན་འབ་གནས་འང་བཟང་
[1026] ལན་འབ་གནས་འང་བཟང་།

[1027] བཤད་པར་ཐོབ། རབ་དོན་མཐའ་ཆོས་བཟང་
[1028] [D19] སེམས་ཇི་ལྟར་བད་ཅན། རབ་ལྕགས་དབང་དབང་།
[1029] རང་བས་ཞིབ་ཙམ་བདེ་དབང་།
[1030] [B17b] ལན་མེད་ཤེས།

[1031] བཤད་པར་ཐོབ། རབ་དོན་མཐའ་ཆོས་བཟང་[1032] རབ་དོན་[T23]་ས།
[1033] རབ་དོན་མཐའ་ཆོས་བཟང་[1034] རབ་དོན་[T23]་ས།
ང་ལ་ར་ཆང་མང་གཏེར

ཉེར་བཞི་ལོན་པའི་ས་ཉིད་ན།

མ་ཅིག་ཆེས་ལ་སོགས་བས

འ‡ལ་འཁོར་ག་པ་མཐོང་བའི་ཚ།

འཇིགས་ཡེན་ཐེག་དམན་ལ་སོགས་ིས།

འLལ་བའི་ོད་པ་བོར་ཞེས་ཟེར།

[D20]བཟོད་པའི་དqིངས་མཉམ་པར་བཞག

སོ་ཐར་ཆོས་འ_མ་གཞི་ཡིན།

དགེ་གཉེན་9མ་པ་བཞི་པོ་དང་།

དགེ་“ལ་རེགས་ཏོག་བy་པོ་འདི།

£ོན་འ¶ག་གཉིས་ལ་ལེགས་ངས་ནས།

གསང་བ་¦གས་ི་གདམ་པ་དགོས།

བ5ེར་འ. 

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ོམ་པ་གམ་དང་ནི། ། [B19a] ལེག་སྐབས་1054 སྐབས་1055 ལེག་སྐབས་

དེ་ོམ་པའི་ལམ་མཆོག་ཡིན། ། འཐེག་དམན་1054 མས་ི་1055 མིག་མ་འཛིན།

བ3ོད་£ད་ཚ6ག་མ་ཐོབ་བ་མེད། ། དེ་སོགས་འར་འོམ་ནང་ན་ཡོད།

ཉེར་V་ཉེར་tག་ཉེར་བན་གམ། ། ཐེག་དམན་ལོ་གམ་འདག་ར་གཅད་1056 1057 1 ། 1058 འདི་

1059 སོ་མས་[D21] སོ་ཐེག་པའི་[1060 སོ་ཆེན་1061 སྐོར་1062 མགྲོ་1063 སྐུ་མ་] འབ།

1064 སོ་ཆེན་1065 ཚེན་པོ་བོད་པོ་དེར་དུས་[B19b] སོ་ཆེན་1066 སྐོར་1067 འབ།

1068 [T25] སོ་ཆེན་1069 སོ་ཆེན་1070 སོ་ཆེན་1071 སོ་ཆེན་

1072 སོ་ཆེན་1073 སོ་ཆེན་[1074 སོ་ཆེན་

1075 སོ་ཆེན་[1076 སོ་ཆེན་]

1049 སོ་ཆེན་D.

1050 སོ་ཆེན་T.

1051 སོ་ཆེན་D T.

1052 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1053 སོ་ཆེན་D{T}．

1054 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1055 སོ་ཆེན་T．

1056 སོ་ཆེན་D{T}．

1057 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1058 སོ་ཆེན་D{T}．

1059 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1060 སོ་ཆེན་D{T}．

1061 སོ་ཆེན་T．

1062 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1063 སོ་ཆེན་D{T}．

1064 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1065 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1066 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1067 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1068 སོ་ཆེན་T．

1069 སོ་ཆེན་T．

1070 སོ་ཆེན་D．

1071 སོ་ཆེན་D, སོ་ཆེན་T．

1072 སོ་ཆེན་D T．

1073 སོ་ཆེན་D T．

1074 སོ་ཆེན་T．
ཉེར་བོད་ལོན་པའི་ལས་ཉིད་ན། བདག་གིས་ོབས་དཔོན་བེས་པོ་དེ།

དགོངས་པ་ཆོས་ི་[B20a]དིངས་ཏི་བཞིན་བཞེངས་ད་བཞེངས་ཆེན་དཔལ་རིར་བཞེངས།

ཨོ་ན་ཟེ་དྲག་ཕན་ཆད་གཉིད་ཁངས། རང་བཞུན་བཞེངས་ལོ་བཞེངས་བོད་ཁོར་མང་པོ་དང་།
སོ་བམ་འོའི་ཉིད་ན། ཨོ་ན་ཆེན་པོའི་ང་བན་ང་། ནོ་འོ་མོ་ངི་ང་བོ་ན། བཏོན་བཏོན་། ལོག་མེད་གཅིག་ལོ་1ན་བ®མ་བར་ཁོད་སོད་[B21a]དུ། 1103
ཏབ་འི་འཚང་པ་མང་པོ་ཤི། འི་འག་པ་ང་བས་ན། ཆོས་རིར་ཡིན་བསམ་[T27]བཟོད་བེད
[D23]བ་1105. ལོ་1106. ཤ་ལ་ཡི་1107. མ་ཎི་བཀའ་མ་3ོད་£ད་གཉིས། གནས་ཤེས་1108. རིགས་འཛན་གར་དབང་Wོ་Xེ་མཇལ
[1109]ཨོ་1ན་པ་ང་། ཟབ་ཏིག་དབང་འི་སོམ་ལ། ས་ཆོས་ཉོན་མོངས་[B21b]རང་_ོལ་དང་། མ་ཎི་བཀའ་འ|མ་3ོད་£ད་གཉིས། ལིག་1110. རིག་[1111]དཀོན་མཆོག་Pི་འLས་Wོར་སེམས་སོགས། ཤར་གཏེར་བ་གཏེར་ལ་སོགས་པ།
1105. ལོ་D.
1106. ལོ་T.
1107. ལོ་D T.
1108. ལོ་T.
1109. ལོ་T.
1110. ལོ་T.
1111. ལོ་D.
1112. ལོ་D.
1113. ལོ་D T.
1114. ལོ་D T.
བློ་ཞི་སོ་བཞི་སོ་[D24] ཤེས་རབ་ལ་ ངོན་ཏོ་བསམ་པའི་བོད་ འོ་ཆེན་པོ་དེའི་གོག་ 1125 བཟོ་ཤིང་ངོ་སོགས་། 1126 ལོ་འག་ནང་ཞེན་བཞེངས་ཚར། 1127 ཧིག་སོང་ཏི་…་•ང་པའི་ོ་ཁང་ཡིན།
བས་བཟོད་ཅུ་[1134] བོད་བཟོད་ནི། སོ་་དཔོན་[1135][T29]གུ་་[1136]ཞི་ལ།


བོད་དུས་[T30]དོན་ནས་[T31]ནད་ཅན་ཞི་[T30]
[1156]བཤད་[T30]
[1157]བཤད་[T30]
[1158]བཤད་[T30]
[1159]བཤད་[T30]
[1160]བཤད་[T30]

[1161]བཤད་[T30]
[1162]བཤད་[T30]
[1163]བཤད་[T30]
[1164]བཤད་[T30]
[1165]བཤད་[T30]
[1166]བཤད་[T30]
[1167]བཤད་[T30]

[1168]བཤད་[T31]
[1169]བཤད་[T31]
བོད་རོང་ནི་ཕན་ཆོས་འིད་གསར་འབད།

བོད་ལ་ནོ་ངས་རབ་།

ཡོན་བདག་[B25a]རོ་ཕན་མཚན་བོད་ལ་འིད་སོགས།

"ོར་ནོར་ཡར་མར་མཆོད་ཁ་མང་བཤད།

བཏང་འདས་ནས་མི་གནས།

བོད་པོ་གས་།
སི་[D28]ན་ཉིིམ་མོ་སྒྲིི་, 1189 ལུག་པ་པར་, 1190 ལུ་ག་པ་རི་, 1191 བ་ལ་

དུས་[T33]་དོན། ཕི་ཟི་ཐོ་སྦྱོར་པ་, 1192 ཀ་ལ་དོན། དྲུ་ན་བཤད་, 1193 དངོས་

ཆེ་[B26a]དོན། ལ་དོན། ལ་བ་, 1194 ཁ་བཏོན་, 1195 དང་གཅིག་

དབོན་པོ་བ་དོན། ལ་བ་, 1196 བདེ་, 1197 བདེ་, 1198 བདེ་

དབང་འིད་གདམས་པ་བོ་དོན། དབོན་པོ་, 1199 བདེ་, 1200 བདེ་

དེ་ནས་བ་ལ་ཡོངས། དབང་འིད་ བདེ་, 1201 བདེ་, 1202 བདེ་

1189 རས་ར་ D, རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1190 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1191 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1192 རབ་ཟིམ་ D.
1193 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1194 རབ་ཟིམ་ D T.
1195 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1196 རབ་ཟིམ་ D.
1197 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1198 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1199 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1200 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1201 རབ་ཟིམ་ D.
1202 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1203 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
1204 རབ་ཟིམ་ T.
ཟབ་ཏིག་དབང་•ང་ལེགས་པར་§ལ།
_་•ང་གནས་མཆོག་དགོན་པ་ན།

1205 [T34] རོ་ཐོན་ཱ་ཚབ་ ལེགས་པར་བསམ་བྱས།
1206 ཐབ་དབང་ T.
1207 རག་པོ་བཀའ་ལ།
1208 ར་བོད་དུ་མོ་ར་ T.

1210 ཡོད་གནས་མཆོག་ T.
1211 ཁྱེན་གཉིས་པར་ [D27a]ནས་ཀྱི་զེས།
1212 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.

1214 འབུམ་གནས་མཆོག་ T.
1215 རིན་པོ་ཆེན་པོའི་ [D30]ིར།
1216 གཟུགས་དཔེར་ T.
1217 བྱེད་པའི་མཐོང་ T.
1218 སྐྱེས་ T.

1219 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.
1220 ཟེར་ཐོགས་དབང་པོ་ T.
1221 རྗེ་གྱུར་ T.

1222 ུན་ཐོགས་དཔེར་ T.
1223 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.
1224 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.
1225 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.

1226 རྗེ་བཙོད་ T.
དེ་ཆེན་པོའི་རི་ལ་±ོམ་L་འ_ོ།

[1229] ཞེས་སོགས་འCར་

[1230] དེ་ནས་རི་Šོད་

[1231] བོད་རོང་གཉིས་ི་

[1232] ི་ཡིས་

[1233] མཚམས།

[1234] དེ་ནས་རི་Šོད་

[1235] བོད་རོང་གཉིས་ི་

[1236] ི་ཡིས་

[1237] རི་ཐེན་

[1238] དེ་ནས་[T36]ུན་ཅན་

[1239] བོད་རོང་གཉིས་ི་

[1240] ི་ཡིས་

[1241] རི་ཐེན་

[1242] དེ་ནས་[D31]ུན་

[1243] བོད་རོང་གཉིས་ི་

[1244] ི་ཡིས་

[1245] རི་ཐེན་

[1246] བོད་རོང་གཉིས་ི་
འཇིགས་པ་མེད་པའི་[B28b]བེད་པར་1247བོད་པ། དོན་ལག་སྐེབས་དེ་བོད་པ་1248

དེ་ནས་གནས་ཆེན་བ་[T37]མོ་གདོན་1249བོད་པ། དེ་བོད་པ་1250འི་[D32]ཆོས་ཟབ་ས་ན་བོད་ཟབ་1251

ལེ་ལོ་གནམ་གཡེངས་1252བེ་ལ། དབྱངས་ད'ལ་མང་པོ་འཕངས་1253་བསོག་འཇོག་མ་གཞི་རོགས་གཏོང་། 1254

ཀཁ་འི་ཚས་བོ་མ་ོགས་པ། ད་རིང་གེ་རེར། སར་མར་ཟམ་¥ེང་མང་ཡོད་པས། 1255

—་བོན་མང་པོ་འོ་1256པ་ལ། ལ་ར་ང་། 1257བེ་མང་9བ་མ་1ལ་པོའི་[T38]1258

1246 འོ་T.
1247 འོ་D.
1248 འོ་D T.
1249 འོ་D T.
1250 འོ་D.
1251 འོ་D, འོ་T.
1252 འོ་T.
1253 འོ་D T.
1254 འོ་D T.
1255 འོ་D.
1256 འོ་D, འོ་T.
1257 འོ་D.
1258 འོ་D, འོ་T.
1259 འོ་D T.
1260 འོ་T.
1261 འོ་T.
1262 འོ་T.
1263 འོ་T.
1264 འོ་T.
སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་འོ་1ལ་གཏང་བོད་[B29b]ལ་བ>གས་Lས་གཡག་9མས་=ག

རོང་ལ་བ>གས་Lས་བ¨ན་=ག

བ¨ན་འeན་1ག་འོ་1ལ་ཡང་།[B30a]£ོན་ལམ་བཟང་པོ་འདེབས་ལེགས།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

བོད་L་±ོམ་ཆེན་ཕོ་མོ་ལ། ཞགས་Ÿོག་f་qེད་མཐར་པ་ཐོབ།

西藏语言
མང་ཇ་9མས་འེལ་པ་§ལ།
བལ་ལ་མཆོད་ཡེན་གཉིས་པོ་ལ།
གམ་མཆོད་འེལ་པ་ལན་གfམ་§ལ།
དོལ་•ང་བཞིའི་•ང
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O rgyan bstan ’dzin (1657-1737). zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las ro bsregs bya ba ’i rim pa. NGMCP Reel No: L 659/12.

O rgyan bstan ’dzin (1657-1737). zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las dpal ldan mgon po dmag gi rgyal po ’i bsregs pa. Reel No: NGMCP, L 659 /12.

O rgyan bstan ’dzin (1657-1737). zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las zhi ba ’i sbyin bsregs dngos grub rgya mtsho. NGMCP Reel No: L 659 /12.
Phun tshogs khan po sman lha. *gangs can dol po 'i lo rgyus ka la ping ka'i sgra dbyangs zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. Kathmandu: Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok Gurung Lama, 2021.


Shākya dpal bzang & grub chen zla ba dpal bzang. “*bla ma chos skyong dpal bzang po 'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan bzhugs so*.” In *gang can dol po khul gyi ris med bstan 'dzin skyes chen dam pa rnams kyi rnam thar phyogs gcig tu bkod pa deb gnyis pa bzhugs so*. Edited by Menlha Phuntsok. Taipei: Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2020, pp. 1-76.

Anonymous. Thupten Wangpo. “*bla ma rin po che sbas pa 'i rnal 'byor pa chen po thub bstan dbang po 'i rnam thar ngo mtshar smad 'byung zhes bya ba bzhugs so*”. In *gang can dol po khul gyi ris med bstan 'dzin skyes chen dam pa rnams kyi rnam thar phyogs gcig tu bkod pa deb gnyis pa bzhugs so*. Edited by Menlha Phuntsok. Taipei: Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2020, pp. 427-442.
English Language Sources


Appendix A:
Categorized Catalogue of Songs from *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Category</th>
<th>Number of Instances</th>
<th>Percentage of total (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to others</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice / encouragement to others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lamas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations / praises</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs sung by others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation Experiences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Debate between mind and body, gods and demons)*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not counted as a song.

**Song # (folio numbers): Brief Description**

*Indicates a song that appears in part or in full in The Melodies From Mountain Retreat.*

**Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lamas (7 total):**

Song 1 (B10b-B11a): Song of devotion at Lhasa and Samyé, how amazing if Dharma kings and Padmasambhava were still actually there.

Song 2 (B27b-B28a): Leaving Nyima Puk: Staying in one place causes attachment and anger.

Song 3* (B31b): The rotten thief stole the wealth at Pingdring at night, result is birth as yidak or a human beggar.

Song 21* (B77b-B79a): Being stuck indoors in a blizzard.

Song 23* (B85b-B86b): Things lack essence, sad song after Lama Kunga Lekpo died.

Song 33* (B101b-B105a): Lamenting the death of vajra brother Gelong Drolma, the second Milarepa.

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1284 Folio numbers correspond to the Drumba, Jomsom recension of *The Condensed Life* (NGMCP Microfilm: L 206/3).

1285 Most of the songs do not contain individual titles in the text. Though I have attempted to provide an indication of the key point of each song for descriptive purposes, the descriptions are a work in progress.
Song 35 (B106b-B109a): A critical song for those wicked at Trethrō, who turn away from the Buddha dharma. The name *Jatang* has been put onto demons, who are without practice.

**Advice / encouragement (14 total):**

Song 4 (B33b-B35b): Song of impermanence at Thapkha Gyong.
Song 6 (B37a-B37b): Search for the nature of mind, to Lama Kharpa’s relatives.
Song 19* (B69b-B73b): Advice about death to himself and Pingdring Drupchen Norbu
Song 24* (B86b-B87a): The short song of impermanence.
Song 25* (B88b-B90b): Recalling the gurus Orgyan Palzang and Kunzang Longyang.
Song 30* (B97a-B98b): Short advice for the path, to Orgyan Chözang.
Song 31* (B98b-B100a): Be skilled in making requests to learned masters, to Drupchen Tenzin Chöphel.
Song 32* (B100a-B101b): Those who practice are rare, to Orgyan Sonam, one of the few who listen.
Song 34* (B105a-106b): Medicine Buddha advice to Drupchen Orgyanpa.
Song 36 (B109b-B111b): Song of numbers: Aspiration to recognize two selflessnesses; reduce eight worldly concerns; accomplish 6+1 Mani syllables, etc. To Lama Tenzin Phuntsok.
Song 38 (B114b-B117b): By maintaining wisdom without method, you will not traverse the paths, but with compassion you accomplish aspirations of beings. To Buchung Chödzin.
Song 41 (B126b - B129a): Song 41 (B126b - B129a): Train in virtue with characteristics, train in virtue without characteristics. Compassion and emptiness. To Tsha’u Kokgo Palzang.
Song 42* (B129a-B133b): Name meaning song to Buchung Ngawang and the patron Paldzom.
Song 43 (B134a-B135b): Advice for all beings to be happy, to encourage all local people to quickly engage in virtue. When the old Tadru man was 81, sang at remote Bandhe Puk.

**Instructions (17 total):**

Song 5 (B35b-B36b): To Ani Drupamo when she was struggling, all appearances are dharmakāya.
Song 9* (B40b-B41b): Liberation through the word empowerment, to Lama Ütse.
Song 10 (B41b-B42b): The excellent, middling, and lesser types of abiding, to Lama Ütse.
Song 11 (B43a-B45b): The student endowed with faith, diligence, and wisdom.
Song 13* (B50b-B52b): The song of advice to Chö Tsering, the accomplished meditator at Wentse.

Song 16* (B56a-B63b): The song of liver illness, the three manners of dying, and dying with fearlessness.

Song 18* (B65b-B69b): Various examples of cause and effect.

Song 22* (B80a-B82b): Nothing to view, to meditate on, or observe as conduct, to Barbong Lama Gugye.

Song 26* (B90b-B92b): Vajrasattva practice encompasses all, to Gelong Yezer.

Song 27* (B92b-B94b): Cultivating ordinary awareness, to Sonam Palden.

Song 28* (B94b-B96.1b): The stages of the mantra path. To Kaju Zangpo.

Song 37 (B111b-B114b): For liberation, there is no difference between men and women, see all things as essence-less, practice mani day and night. To the faithful woman Pal Puti.

Song 39 (B117b-B120b): Mahāyāna view, freedom from four extremes; the practice path of the Six Dharmas and the six pāramitās; and mahāmudrā and Dzogchen joined. To Kajuwa.

Song 40 (B120b-B126b): Though I studied words, I was not freed from self-grasping. I didn’t see the essence, etc. Don’t be like that, abandon self grasping. Explains and describes experiences training in the Six Dharmas with Orgyan Palzang. To Kajuwa Chöphel.

Song 44 (B135b-B138a): The view, like a bright sky, free of obstruction. Meditation, settling in non-distraction. Conduct, compassion and emptiness in union, realizing selflessness of self and phenomena. Fruition, free of hope and fear, happy to die. To Drupchen Norbu.

Song 45 (B138a-B140b): How to practice: analytical meditation on impermanence, development stage with intense devotion, and completion stages. Undistractedly look at essence of mind, again and again. To the patrons Namgyal, Orgyan Kyapma, and Butrima Kyapma.

Song 46 (B140b-B184a): The Final Testament of Orgyan Tenzin: A Song of A Life Without Regret, Short overview of his life and teachings with his gurus. The three manners of dying, how to be free of worry. Three ways of dying with warmth. Sung before his death.

Celebrations / Praises (3 total):

Song 7* (B38a-B38b): Attachment to one place is deluded; metaphors of the crying geese up high, the screeching eagle in the middle, and the roaming tiger below..

Song 8 (B38b-B40b): Praise to Tadru
Song 29* (B96.1b-B97a): The praise to Tadru, where mind itself is seen.

**Autobiographical (2 total):**
Song 12* (B50a): Meeting Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu.
Song 15* (B54a-B56a): The song of offerings, dedications, and patrons at the great Dzakha Stupa

**Personal Meditation Experiences: (1 total)**
Song 17* (B63b-B65b): The song of examples of impermanence that give rise to the perception of impermanence.

**Songs by Others (2 total):**
Song 14* (B52b-B54a): The Long-life Supplication to Orgyan Tenzin in 16 lines.
Song 20* (B76a-B77b): Heartfelt request made by Tok Gyaltsen and the other lamas and meditators.

**Other:** A Debate* (B33a-B33b): The debate between Orgyan Tenzin’s body and mind itself.
Appendix B:
Categorized Catalogue of Songs from *The Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Category</th>
<th>Number of Instances</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advice / encouragement to others</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to others</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations / praises / aspirations</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Meditation Experiences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lamas</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice to Self</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical / narrative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminiscence / supplication of gurus</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs sung by others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Debate between mind and body, gods and demons)*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not counted as a song.

**Song # (page numbers1286): Brief Description1287**

*Indicates a song that appears in part or in full in The Condensed Life Of The Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin.

Personal Meditation Experiences (17 total):

Song 1 (11-12): Short mahāmudrā song of buddhas and sentient beings being only separated by awareness or non-awareness. Sang after Gyalwang Sengé’s instructions in Kyirong.

Song 2 (12-13): Song of natural liberation of thoughts. In the empty sphere of awareness, bright like the cloudless sky, thoughts naturally clarify. Sang after feeling devotion for the guru.

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1286 Folio numbers correspond to the Damchoe Sangpo (Dalhousie, 1984) edition of this text.
1287 Most of the songs do not contain individual titles in the text. Though I have attempted to provide an indication of the key point of each song for descriptive purposes, the descriptions are a work in progress.
Song 3 (14-15): Song of self liberation, the nature of mind free of effort, the view, practice, conduct, and fruition. When you understand thoughts as dharmakāya, you are a yogi.

Song 4 (17-18): Homage to Sakya masters, sang after experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-thought in retreat. Train in the great mahāmudrā of the awareness and emptiness of mind.

Song 5 (18-20): Sakya masters. Sang after great certainty in development and completion stages arose. The root of all phenomena is mind, grasping at any of the four extremes is foolish.

Song 6 (26-27): Sang after practicing termas of Garwang Dorje. My body, channels, and mind are the three bodies. Mind has been Samantabhadra since the beginning. With too many words, there is no liberation. Training in appearances and awareness, we meet the deity.

Song 41 (120-121): Ten types of non-distraction; the continuous effortless non-dual experience.

Song 64 (167-168): The song of fourteen freedoms (bral ba): view free of concepts, wandering free of clinging, alone free of companions, compassion free of discrimination, etc.

Song 66 (169-170): Song of experience of illusory body in charnel ground; amidst the dry corpses, find freedom from the dualistic delusion of gods and demons, and see awareness.

Song 76 (186-188): A song of experience of view, meditation, conduct, and fruition, dedicated to the deceased young person at Khyunglung Gompa.

Song 86 (204-205): The body is of rainbow, yet also of flesh and blood; inseparability of appearances and emptiness; ultimate dharmakāya beyond mind. Don’t search for it.

Song 87 (205): Special clear awareness, do not need to search for mind, result is essence-less.

Song 96 (228-229): Gods or demons are my own mind, in the charnel ground. If you don’t realize the empty nature of mind, just pretending to do yogi conduct in the mountains.

Song 97 (229-230): Song of self-liberation, wandering in the empty land Khrölung. Plays on word “rangdrol.” Maras and demons are mind’s delusion, liberate them by recognizing it.

Song 142 (360-361): Sets of outer, inner and secret happinesses of the yogi. Though having realized mind, must cultivating it by resting in equipoise, as you smelt iron or refine gold.

Song 166 (408-410): Illness is the test of the meditator. I don’t need treatments or healing rituals. Now I am glad to be ill, and happy to die. To the wandering ascetic (drang srong).

*Song 182 (435-436): Various examples that arouse [the perception] of impermanence.”
Instructions to others (51 total)

Song 15 (41-42): The Sovereign View, Meditation, Conduct and Fruition; Recognizing mind nature in the six bardo. At Dechen Pelri Tsemo.

Song 16 (41-42): Cutting self-grasping and delusions in this life.

Song 32 (94-96): Sūtra transmission lineage from India to Tibet; copying the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras is supreme; first maintain the practice of the dharma, then make representations.

Song 34 (99-100): Dzogchen trekchö and thögal pith instructions, to Orgyan Changchup.

Song 43 (123-125): Dzogchen style pointing out instructions: deluded beings don’t know they are buddhas; cut grasping and rest; don’t search: the waves and ocean are the same ocean.

Song 48 (136-139): To nuns after pointing out instructions: abandon non-virtuous friends, train in the preliminaries, main practice and meditation on movement, stillness, and awareness.

Song 51 (143-146): Root of dharma is renunciation; root of suffering is the mind; buddha and beings are just words, the difference is whether there is attachment or not. To Ani Palmo.

Song 61 (162-164): Song of the six dharmas of Dzogchen, they are for clearing obstacles and enhancements for Dzogchen practice. The diligent will attain buddhahood in this life.

Song 68 (172-173): Mind pointing out song; where mind comes from, abides, and goes? It is not seen by looking, but seen by not looking. To Aku Rabjung Tsering Dorje.

Song 69 (173-175): Deity, mantra, and awareness training is skillful means; if you are expert in outer dharma, but do not see the nature of mind, it is mere talk! To Ani Palden Dolma.

Song 70 (175-176): Song of advice to nuns in retreat at Dechen Palri. Full overview of the path of dharma practice, with mahāmudrā mind meditation instructions.

Song 77 (188-190): Acrostic 30 Consonants song #3; description of the steps on the path of development and completion. Sung after 3 days fasting.

Song 79 (192-194): Overview of the path, preliminaries to pointing out mind. Ordinary mind is un-made; practice without a goal. Sung to an intersex person at Kochar at Kailash.

Song 91 (213-215): The song of lessening needs: Meeting empty luminosity lessens attachment and anger; meeting the grandfather of compassion lessens the grandson of hatred.

Song 92 (215-216): The beggar’s practice: The 84000 dharmas and 84000 afflictions are inseparable; sāṃsāra is non-dual with nirvana. Being free of intellect is the dharmakaya. Union is sambhogakaya. Diligence in benefitting others is the nirmanakaya.

Song 95 (225-227): Preliminaries and mind pointing out. To Buchung Darpo at Mekyem Gompa.
Song 101 (237-239): Reply to Lama Pema Namgyal’s letter. Zaptik Chöying Rangsel is a profound treasure with the essence of all termas. Describes amazing aspects of Dzogchen.

Song 107 (254-255): Benefits of the 10 syllables of the mani; sung at Drikung Rapsel. The Mani mantra contains the supreme and common siddhis, complete with all mantra and dhāraṇī.

Song 109 (258-260): Three types of discipline, guard them like your eyeballs: pratimokṣa’s 10 non-virtues; bodhicitta’s pāramitās, and skillful means. To Gelong Shakya Palzang.

Song 112 (264-267): Instructions on the 3 sets of vows: eight divisions of pratimokṣa; aspiration bodhicitta is the four immeasurables, application bodhicitta is the 6 pāramitās.

Song 113 (268-270): Recognize nature of mind as movement and stillness; looking for wisdom by dispelling thoughts is like wanting butter by discarding milk. Sung at Jaglung Gompa.


Song 119 (282-284): Sets of outer, inner, secret, and innermost secret things: outer free of activity, inner free of effort, secret free of meditation, innermost secret pervades all; etc. Sung at Tralung Chöding for Lama Nyima and Lama Trinlé.

Song 125 (312-313): Sunshine of reality in a cloudless sky. In the uncompounded space of reality, free of clouds of delusion, “Buddha” is a mere imputation. Sung at Shel Ribo.


Song 130 (327-330): The 10th Lunar Day Oral Instruction. Don’t return empty handed from the golden island. Mix display of appearances and emptiness. To Chökyapma at Nyimapuk.

Song 132 (332-334): Ode to Nyima Puk, and numerous aspects of the ground, path, and fruition from the Dzogchen view, regarding faith, meditation, etc. To Lama Thinle at Nyima Puk.

Song 136 (343-345): The Song of the Old Dzogchenpa. In the vast expanse of awareness, looker and looking, good and evil, mix as one; external appearances arise as empty mind itself.

Song 139 (349-353): Song playing on the word “golden.” The renunciate yogi, the dharma king, actualizing mind are all rare like gold. To the Drupchen Ngedon Namgyal from Utsang.

Song 146 (368-369): Tinkyu is full of negativity to be abandoned; how to practice the quick path: nature of mind. At Tadru, to new meditators and to the Tinkyu Chieftain Chöphel.

Song 150 (383-384): Recognizing mind in bardo instruction to Namto girl at Tadru. Overview of the path: practice virtue, abandon non-virtue, fix awareness one pointedly.
Song 151 (384-386): Without realizing emptiness, definitive meaning won’t be realized. Rely on methods: diligence, etc. When one recognizes mind, no need for words. To Üpa the yogī.

Song 152 (386-387): Explanation of phowa practice. Now you are like the setting sun, covered in white hairs and wrinkles, death is inevitable. To Kunga Legpa who was dying.

Song 153 (387-388): Without realizing emptiness, you expound a fool’s emptiness, and are afraid of emptiness. This inferior wisdom is the fool’s awareness. Sung to some fools.

Song 154 (388-390): Overview of path: mix stillness and movement, experience taste of samādhi free from attachment to śamatha experiences; its the path to nirvana. To 21 Drupchenpas.

*Song 155 (390-392): Padmasambhava’s instructions: The moth is deceived by form, the deer by sound, the bee by odor, the fish by taste, and the elephant by touch. How are the five sense desires for people? You need conduct of a lion or garuda. To Umze from Tö Ngari.

*Song 156 (392-394): Students with faith, diligence, and wisdom should seek a guru with [realization] of emptiness and compassion. To Lama Druptop Chowang.

Song 158 (395-397): Mahayana and Vajrayana have great potential profit and loss. Three poisons are purified by the three poisons itself. To Dharma Tare, the consort(?)/yoginī.

Song 159 (397-398): Meditating on death is the practice of the natural bardo (life). If you know karmic cause and effect, what to accept and reject, you are a bhikśu. To Gelong Dargye.

Song 160 (398-399): Brief instruction of the path. Its time for the ferry of this precious human body you’ve attained to carry you across the ocean of samsāra. To Bhuchung Ngawang.

Song 161 (399-401): Non-meditation free of effort. Happiness or sadness is due to the past accumulation of virtue or not; so strive in karmic cause & effect. To the Peson Drupde.

Song 162 (401-404): At Tadru, meditation experience increased but the nuns are tired. Holy places are difficult. Building the bridge of the 3 bodies. To the raging wild river at Tadru.

Song 164 (405-407): Excellent wealth is the 7 noble riches, 3 wisdoms, 3 trainings, 10 dharma activities, bodhicitta, having a human body, etc. So be generous! To Sharkyi Rabsel.

Song 165 (407-408): On non-meditation. First you maintained the view, meditation, and conduct with grasping. Now, free of grasping, where have they gone? At Pesön, to Lama Kunga.

Song 173 (419-420): Acrostic song #8, watch from where mind comes and abides, without searching. It doesn’t matter how much you know, you must purify the five afflictions.

*Song 178 (425-427): My songs embarrass the wise but delight fools. Though you have knowledge, need wisdom that unifies the meanings. To drupchen Chö Tsering, at Wentse.
*Song 181 (429-435): Song of liver illness, the three manners of dying, dying with fearlessness, a vision of Amitayus. Worry comes when relating to things as permanent.

*Song 187 (447-449): No view: lack of substance; nothing to meditate: cultivate inseparably; nothing to perform: work for beings; nothing to achieve! To Barborg Lama Gugye.

*Song 192 (457-458): There is no practice of the preliminaries, main practice, taking empowerments, or post meditation that is not encompassed by Vajrasattva. Consecration is necessary to merge wisdom being with samaya being. To Gelong Yezer.

*Song 193 (458-460): Cultivating ordinary awareness. If you have ordinary awareness free of delusion, everything becomes it, a continuous river of samadhi. To Sonam Palden.

*Song 194 (460-461): An overview of the stages of the path of mantra. Though you are an expert in the sutras, let me explain the stages of tantra. To Kaju Zangpo Thupten Soma.

Advice / encouragement to others (53 total):

Song 7 (27-28): A response to those who criticize yogis.

Song 8 (28-29): The reasons why I am a beggar, like the carefree masters of the past.

Song 9 (29-31): To the naughty nuns who are not fully worldly but also don’t practice dharma.

Song 10 (32-33): Stay in mountains not towns; the three types of warmth at death.

Song 11 (33-34): Criticize your own faults, not those of others; examine yourself and see the nature of your mind.

Song 17 (44-45): To the tired temple builders, how to restore the temple of clear awareness in the style of a yogin.

Song 21 (55-56): Encouragement to weary students: think of future lives, make effort, and practice the sovereign view of mahāmudrā and the sovereign meditation of Dzogchen, becoming free of hope and fear.

Song 23 (58-59): Monks and nuns who seem skilled on the outside but are distracted by hustle and bustle and untrained on the inside will not gain accomplishment.

Song 25 (62-65): Death is the universal path for everyone; practice the sovereign view of mahāmudrā, sovereign meditation of Dzogchen, and the sovereign of fruition, the Bardos.

Song 31 (89-92): Five ways of taking illness on the path; gods, kings, even Buddha had to leave; those who go to guru without renunciation can’t listen, find faults in the teaching.

Song 37 (108-111): Differences between the busy town monastery, and remote mountain retreat.
Song 47 (135-136): Don’t grasp at ordinary virtue, practice ultimate non-dual virtue; don’t grasp at enjoyments, settle in equipoise; train in your body as deity, thoughts as dharmakāya.

Song 49 (139-141): To nuns, practice now when you can, while you are at the border of the lower and upper realms! When you are aware of your nature, you become a ḍākinī.

Song 52 (146-148): Thirst for realization, the body is a summer flower; the 6 pāramitās quench 6 afflictive thirsts: greed quenched by generosity, attachment by discipline, anger by patience, laziness by diligence, distraction by concentration, ignorance by wisdom.

Song 53 (148-149): Consider the thirsts of the six realms; give up their causes, go to the dharma.

Song 55 (150-152): Discipline causes the benefit of self and other; eight worldly dharmas are Mara’s hold; seeing you own faults is skillful. For yogis and women who were arguing.

Song 59 (158-160): The harmony of the nine yānas, with seven pieces of advice for Jatang Kali.

Song 62 (164-166): Song of special characteristics of Dzogchen sung after teaching dark retreat. Buddhahood without meditation, and pure realms without going anywhere!

Song 71 (176-178): Acrostic 30 Consonants song #1; advice to nuns in retreat at Dechen Palri. Material wealth has no essence; cultivate pith instructions of Shri Singha.

Song 72 (178-180): Why I have to go to Tisé (Kailash). Praises to Tisé; three reasons for pilgrimage to Tisé taught in the termas. If you go, you become a noble one.

Song 78 (190-192): Though there is butter in milk, if left un-churned, butter won’t come out. Though awakening is, must have diligence, apply teachings and practice or no result.

Song 82 (198-199): Returned from Kailash; received excellent offerings of chang, offered the chang nectar to gurus and yidams, 5 wisdoms arose. May everyone see the Middle Way!

Song 83 (200-201): Song at Dzahabir (Jabhir) Drupchen, making julen. Overview of the path; recognize yourself as enlightened body, speech and mind, and dissolve into space.

Song 85 (202-204): Patrons, be generous, offering up and down, otherwise risk rebirth as pretas.

Song 90 (211-213): Song play on the word “rang.” Difference between Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha; Vajrayana supreme; doubt causes wrong views. To Aku Rangtodpa.

Song 93 (217-221): 30 points of advice from a beggar. Overview of path. Meditator, know bliss, clarity and non-thought. Drupchen, mix meditation and post meditation. Lama, give up attachment, anger and self-grasping. Rigdzin, mix emptiness with samaya, mantra; etc.

Song 94 (222-223): Patrons: make offerings up and give alms down. Cultivate your ordinary body as Avalokiteśvara. To Tsering Mingtri and other patrons of the Tarap public wang.
Song 98 (230-233): Song of sets of three things to contemplate and observe; observe when there is harmony and disharmony, yogi! The charnel ground in an empty land is so joyful!
Song 100 (235-237): To those with self grasping, even a painted rainbow seems real. Wordly activities are like illusory games; give up attachment. To an old couple at remote Thartsé.
Song 103 (240-242): Song on the importance of lung; without it, the teachings wane; it is like meeting the source of water at a glacier, the lung is the source of the sūtra and tantra.
Song 105 (249-250): Alone at Birgyal above Drikung; why I don’t need companions or divinations; searching for them diminishes samādhi. I have my awareness as an attendant.
Song 114 (270-272): Three sets of three sadnesses and their antidotes; keep in your heart what is needed at death, to recognize nature of deluded appearances; to Shiting Gompa monks.
Song 117 (277-278): Sponsors, prepare for death, life is a flicker flame in the gale. The next life could be up or down. Numerous ways of accumulating virtue. For patrons at Tinkyu.
Song 126 (313-314): Phowa song at Shey Ribo. When death comes, practice the winds and channels. Guru Rinpoche will eliminate all attachments to this life, so train for death.
Song 127 (317-319): About children passing. It’s ok to grieve, but it has no essence. Children bring happiness but are also the seeds of negativity. For a couple whose child died.
Song 128 (319-312): Practice while you are young and healthy, people of Shimen!
Song 131 (330-331): The past life causes of the human body, wealth, beauty, etc. Practice those causes. Don’t regret not practicing or preparing for death! To the patrons of Nyima Puk.
Song 133 (335-337): Happy song of mountain retreat, glad to not be in the monastery! Avoiding Dzogchen maras in midst of different situations. To Lamas and Utse’s of Dechen Palri.
Song 134 (337-339): Acrostic 30 Consonant Song #5 about ordinary mind. Mind’s undercurrent is saṃsara, undistracted resting is buddhahood. To Tingkyu physician Tsering Phuntsok.
Song 135 (339-342): Song in a letter to Amji Önpo in Ütsang, Ütsang is sad, meditators are bound with attachment. Meditation in southern forests is better. Buddhas have grasping, they cling to dharmadhātu, which includes all beings, so they don’t cling to anything!
Song 143 (361-363): The ground, a cave in the empty land; the path, the yoga of realization; the fruit, the empty dharmatā. To Orgyan Zangmo and young monks, nuns at Tashi Tagtsé.
Song 145 (365-368): Wandering in empty lands, our lacking is the revenge of what we left behind, but we are content with simple yogi life. To Orgyan Zangmo in Tashi Tserlang.
Song 157 (394-395): You accumulate wealth with wickedness, shackled with greed, and your wealth falls to enemies. Supreme wealth is generosity! To rotten hearted rich people.

Song 168 (412-414): A warning about hell, even wicked kings get their punishment there, may you be remorseful and make effort in confession! To some hunters who came to Tadru.

*Song 184 (440-442): Avoid meditation without study and study without meditation. Must be endowed with emptiness and compassion. To drupchen Norbu at Pingdring.

*Song 189 (452): Song of impermanence, recalling Orgyan Palzang’s compassion and blessings, which enabled him to set beings on path to ripening and liberation. At Tashi Phen.

*Song 190 (453-455): While recalling gurus Orgyan Palzang and Kunzang Longyang, gave advice for yogis and yoginīs. Sang at Tashi Phen after Lama Gyaltsen’s empowerment.

Song 191 (455-457): Advice about suffering having no essence. Observe the essence of the suffering mind! By observing it, you pacify it. To the patron Mingyur Deden Paldzom.

*Song 196 (464-464): Pithy advice for the path. Look at life stories of past masters. Mountain retreat is the yogi’s homeland, towns are like a muddy quagmire. To Orgyan Chözang.

*Song 197 (465-466): Be skilled in making requests to masters. To Drupchen Tenzin Chöphel.

*Song 198 (465-466): Though I speak a lot, those who keep it in mind are few, you one of the few who listen. Those who practice are rare. Look at sutras often. To Orgyan Sonam.


*Song 201 (471-473): Name meaning song to Buchung Ngawang and [Mingyur?] Paldzom.

Advice to self (15 Total):

Song 20 (53-54): The yogi can practice dharma with anything, happily subsisting on julen.

Song 22 (56-58): Supplication for blessings to accomplish the practice; to be able to remain in remote mountain retreat and not return to worldly life.

Song 54 (149-150): When very thirsty, think of impermanence, the divine dharma, and the guru; thinking that, mix empty clarity with awareness, and suffering arises as blissful samādhi.

Song 56 (152-154): The song of enhancement, of the ten “Angs.” Though I have afflictions, I have the panacea of five the wisdoms; enjoy sense pleasures as a display of bliss.

Song 67 (170-172): The song of not being diligent. Shame at distraction: not free of elaboration, not achieving the purpose of others, not acheiving goal, etc. Keep bad company far way!
Song 89 (208-210): One to ten song: verses count in order one to ten. Then 3 sets of 1, 2, 3:
   Dzogchen language of offerings to the ultimate 3 bodies, 3 roots, etc.
Song 106 (252-254): A shameful song of hypocrisy, after Ani Drupchenmo died. Not
   keeping stable samādhi while telling others to be diligent; dying empty handed; etc.
Song 110 (260-262): Acrostic 30 Consonants (ka mad sum bcu) Song #4. The Song of Leaving
   Busy Distraction: I need less obligations at the gompa, they increase mental agitations.
Song 138 (348-349): This old man is anticipating death, what is the point of celebrations and
   drinking beer? I need to stop wasting time, go to mountain retreat and prepare for death.
Song 141 (358-360): All the reasons I am going to secluded mountain retreat at the empty land
   of Tadru. Cut the root of distraction at the base, ordinary awareness is the supreme guide.
Song 147 (369-371): Song of wild things: in the place of wild wind, water, passes and snow,
   taming wild feet, wild hands, wild awareness. My promise on my Tadru retreat door.
Song 148 (371-373): If you don’t see the eight worldly concerns, what’s the use of meditating in
   retreat? Without faith, it is the cause of saṃsāra, etc. Look at your mind! Sang at Tadru.
Song 149 (381-382): A song of impermanence, when I felt I was in the jaws of death and mind
   and body would separate. Mind and body have a discussion as they part and feel sad.
Song 174 (420-422): I teach but my practice is weak. When you are able to purify self-grasping,
   then you can encourage others to virtue. To himself while on bar do mthong grol retreat.
Song 183 (436-440): Lists many examples of cause and effect, wonders “is it real or not?”

Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lama (17 total):
Song 19 (50-52): Sad song of worldly people and householders who follow worldly dharmas fail
   to repay their parents’ kindness.
Song 24 (59-62): A response to war: Give up worldly concerns, rely on the guru and defeat the
   outer, inner, and secret enemies of mind and afflictive emotions.
Song 36 (105-107): Song at Swayambhū Stupa, lamenting the senseless war in the Kathmandu
   Valley; so much death; worldly affairs are sad, best to go away and practice Dzogchen.
Song 38 (111-113): Song at the guru’s empty bed. The guru has gone to the empty unobstructed
   ground. There is no essence to anything, no subject nor object, self grasping is delusion.
Song 40 (116-119): Snow ruined the harvests; saṃsāra is vicious, especially for farmers;
   practicing the dharma is the only way to avoid its suffering.
Song 65 (168-169): Sad song of the thirty-four illusions (all 34 lines include the term “illusion” (*sgyu ma*). About impermanence, sang after Takta the skilled artist died at a young age.

Song 74 (183-184): Song of 10 Evils (*ngan bcu*), sang at Kailash Dzutru Cave. For those who die empty handed despite having obtained a precious human life.

Song 80 (194-196): A whispered song of sadness about young people dying and the suffering of saṃsāra; Dzogchen leads to freedom. Sung to an old dying woman at Kochar Kailash.

Song 88 (206-207): About the barbaric non-dharmic folks of Tingling; plays on numbers: 3 realms, 3000 worlds, 3 existences, 4 types of birth, 5 paths, 7 worlds, 9 lower realms, etc.

Song 99 (233-235): Song to lazy meditators at the remote retreat; how sad when people don’t think of death and meditators accumulate wealth, etc. Sang after a storm damaged crops.

Song 104 (243-244): The Drikung nun who disrobed; She went with bad company; she has no one to care for her, such pity. A fatherless child, a bit of joy, then suffering like rain.

Song 137 (345-347): Advice at Nyima Puk, stay in simplicity and in solitude, caves are best for meditators; the essential point to meditation is undistracted non-meditation.

*Song 163 (404-405): A rotten thief stole the puja articles and offerings at Peson at night. The result is birth as yidag or beggar human. But the blessing of positive action is happiness.

Song 172 (418-419): In response to Lama Nyima’s long life prayer. I have no ability to tame beings; by blessings of serving my gurus, we have what we need. Practice what you can!

*Song 186 (445-446): A sad song of being stuck indoors with drunk people in a blizzard.

*Song 188 (451-452): Things lack essence, death comes for all. Kings have no power over it, physicians no cure for it. May we all die without torment. After Kunga Lekpo died.

*Song 199 (466-469): Lamenting the death of vajra brother Gelong Drolma, who was like the second Milarepa. He got his wish to die before Orgyan Tenzin. Difficult to cope.

**Celebration / Praises / Aspirations (29 total):**

Song 12 (35-36): Aspirations at the Dechen Jong Lhakhang consecration; establishing the auspiciousness of supports of the three awakened bodies.

Song 14 (39): Praise to Four Visions of Thögal, the sovereign of gurus, the sovereign of deities, the sovereign of Dharma, and the sovereign of practice.

Song 26 (67-70): Praise to Dechen Palri retreat #1; it is Sangtok Palri for Dzogchen practitioners, with outer, inner, and secret signs of the view, meditation, conduct, and fruition.
Song 27 (70-74): Praise to the Dechen Palri retreat #2, towns are prisons; various metaphors for the hermitage: a crouching lion, Santok Palri, Potala, Orgyan Palri, Kunthong Laka, etc.

Song 28 (74-77): Praise to Dechen Palri retreat #3; description of the outer inner secret retreat; studying philosophical lists is the cause of more distraction.

Song 29 (77-83): Praise to Dechen Palri retreat #4; worldly power is the path to lower realms; hermitage is a royal capital with ministers, treasuries, royal edicts, generals, weapons, etc.

Song 33 (97-98): In praise of copying Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras; manuscript copying metaphors for transmission: On the paper of empty mind, with the lama’s ink and student’s pen, etc.

Song 35 (104-105): In praise of the Boudha Stupa; with aspirations that they all may visit again.

Song 39 (114-115): The song of the seven joys of a yogin’s life; “don’t I have them”?

Song 44 (126-129): Linking Sandul to the holy places of India, Tibet and Nepal in terms of the five awakened aspects and six pāramitās; outer, inner, and secret virtues; and its benefits.

Song 45 (130-132): Erecting the natural stupa of awakening: build it on the foundation of the precious human body; devotion is the base; pure samaya is the life force pillar; etc.

Song 57 (154-155): Dzogchen song welcoming lamas who came for Thuktik Terma teachings; how great to have a healthy human body; may the wish fulfilling jewel of terma shine.

Song 58 (157-158): Dzogchen lineage praises and dedications for the Seven Rebirths Drupchen.

Song 60 (161-162): The drunken song of seven profundities (zab bdun), for Lama Sonam Gonpo.

Song 63 (166-167): Praise of Pukkar and Drakmar holy sites, sung while on pilgrimage there.


Song 75 (184-186): Song of 10 Excellences, sung in Milarepa’s Dzutrul Cave at Kailash.

Excellences of dharma, path, view, meditation, conduct, fruition, accomplishment, etc

Song 81 (196-198): Saw buddha’s face in a naturally arisen image at Shalmo Cave, Kailash, where there is Guru Rinpoche’s body print; don’t search for buddha, it is naturally arisen.

Song 84 (201-202): The Song of Fours: Lama with four endowments, not separate from the four activities, confessing with four powers, free of four obscurations, with four faiths, etc.

Song 102 (239-240): Praise of Dolpo Drikung Gompa; summer is cool and the harvest ripens, winter is warm and the people wear cotton. A land of generosity; a place of meditators.

Song 108 (256-258): A praise to beer as the ambrosia of the union of samsāra and nirvana. Plays on the words “bdud” and “rtsi” describing the play of delusion and wisdom as non-dual.
Song 111 (263-264): Song of the five abundances (time, place, teacher, companions, and teaching). Aspirations for sponsors of second Seven Rebirths Drupchen at Mekyem.

Song 115 (273): Beautiful words for Patro Karma Yangdzin Lama; poetry of a beautiful place.

Song 120 (284-285): Sets of three great things: Three heats, three strengths, three joys, three pleasant things, three blisses, three supremeities, etc. Sung at Tinkyu Tralung Samling.


Song 140 (354-356): Aspirations at the restored Dzakha Stupa and Terthang bridge. Stupa: to liberate sentient beings of the six realms; Bridge: to lead beings on the path to liberation.

*Song 144 (363-365): Praise to Tadru: Attachment to one place is deluded; metaphors of the crying geese up high, the screeching eagle in the middle, and the roaming tiger below.

Song 170 (416-417): Praise of Sakya holy sites in Tibet, and aspirations for the merit of Upa Umdze Zangpo and other students who made pilgrimage and offerings of gold and tea.

*Song 195 (461-463): The praise to Tadru, where mind itself is seen. To the meditators at Tadru.

**Reminiscence of / Supplications to gurus (6 total):**

Song 30 (83-89): *A Long Melody of Yearning.* Great gurus have passed on, we are left longing.

Song 50 (141-143): *A Melody of Longing Lament,* missing Garwang Dorje: To whom will I prostrate or offer my experiences? I’ll offer them to you when we meet in the pure land.

Song 118 (280-281): I recall my lamas from the center of my heart, as I wander in remote places I remember their deeds. For Aku Gelong Gonpa and the monks and nuns from Drikung.

Song 167 (410-412): Acrostic song #6, of devotion to Palden Dorje aka Rinchen Namgyal. Lord of the three vows in union! Skilled in luminosity, dream yoga, illusory body and trulkhor!

Song 169 (414-416): Acrostic song #7, recalling Orgyan Palzang. Sang due to certainty in Thogal. Mind is encompassed by non-meditation. May we see the actual state directly!

Song 175 (422): 4 line supplication to seven gurus to lead beings and patrons to liberation.

**Autobiographical / narrative (8 total):**

Song 13 (36-37): The seven supreme steeds gifted by my seven supreme gurus.

Song 18 (48-49): Autobiographical introduction to the dākinī who appears in a retreat dream, with instructions on attaining higher rebirth.

Song 42 (121-123): Obtaining the Zabtik Chöying Rangsel from Ngari Tertön Garwang Dorje.
Song 121 (285-296): Secret Biography #1. Refrain ending each quatrain: “This is my secret biography.” Requested by Lama Chophel and the Patron Chökyap Palzang.

Song 122 (296-302): Secret Biography #2. Discusses dream prophecy of building temples, etc.

Song 123 (302-308): Secret Biography #3. Ends with sets of three verses describing the outer, inner, and secret aspects of different experiences.

*Song 177 (423-425): Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu’s visit to Dolpo. They meet and offer each other empowerments and instructions, he doesn’t accept offerings, ‘I find wealth repulsive.’

*Song 180 (428-429): Offerings and dedications at the great Dzakha Stupa, with a list of patrons.

**Songs by others (5 total):**

Song 18.1 (46-47): Ḍākinī appears in his dream during retreat and sings to him, offering conducive conditions for retreat. (Counted as part of Song 18 above).

Song 46 (132): A song by chief Chonam Gyaltshog requesting Orgyan Tenzin’s blessing.

Song 171 (417): Balung Lama Nyima’s 4 verse long life prayer for Orgyan Tenzin.

Song 176 (423): Sang by the Gyamo Rong ascetic who did retreat at Tadru. Leaving for Tisé. We have a past life connection, we won’t meet again, may we meet in the pure realms.

*Song 179 (427-428): The Long-life supplication for Orgyan Tenzin in 16 lines.

*Song 185 (444-445): Heartfelt request for blessings from Tok Gyaltsen and other meditators.

**Letters (4 total):**

Letter 1 (237): Letter requesting blessings, from Pema Namgyal, a Zabtig meditator, whose mind was pure of duality.

Letter 2 (244-245): Tenzin Repa, Shelri Phukdra, #1. To Tenzin, the holder of the dharma...

Letter 3 (245-247): Tenzin Repa, Shelri Phukdra, #2. Reply to his explanation of the ground, path and fruition, which were a little imperfect. To the one with white robe, whose mind is stainless. Explains the ground and fruition.

Letter 4 (247-248): Tenzin Repa, Shelri Phukdra, #3. How wonderful it would be to meet.

**Other:**

(371-381): A debate between Orgyan Tenzin’s sick body, the nature of his mind, the lord of death and the innate gods and demons, which are non-dual but perceived as being dual.
Appendix C:
Songs shared in common between *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*

Categorized Table of songs identified in *The Condensed Life* only, *The Melodies* only, and the songs shared between the two texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># in <em>The Condensed Life</em> only</th>
<th># in <em>The Melodies</em> only</th>
<th># shared between texts</th>
<th>Total # of songs</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice / encouragement to others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentations about worldly life, deaths of lamas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrations / praises</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meditation Experiences</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminiscence of past gurus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice to self</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiographical</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs sung by others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate between mind and body, gods and demons*</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not counted as a song.

**Songs fully in common between *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies***:

1) Meeting with Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (Song #177 of *The Melodies*, pp. 423-425 & #12 of *The Condensed Life*, B47a-B50b)

2) Song of advice to the accomplished meditator at Wentse (Song #178 of *The Melodies*, pp. 425-427 & #13 of *The Condensed Life*, B50b-B52b)

3) Long-life Supplication to Orgyan Tenzin in 16 lines (Song #179 of *The Melodies*, pp. 427-428 & #14 of *The Condensed Life*, B52b-B54a)
4) Song of offerings, dedications, and patrons at the great Dzakha Stūpa (Song #180 of The Melodies, pp. 428-429 & #15 of The Condensed Life, B54a-B56a)

5) Song of liver illness (Song #181 of The Melodies, pp. 429-435 & #16 of The Condensed Life, B56a-B63b, a long autobiographical song with multiple sub-songs embedded in it)

6) Song of examples of impermanence that give rise to the perception of impermanence (Song#182 of The Melodies, pp. 435-436 & #17 of The Condensed Life, B63b-B65b)

7) Song of various examples of cause and effect (Song#183 of The Melodies, pp. 436-440 & #18 of The Condensed Life, B65b-B69b)

8) Song of advice about death to Pingdring Drupchen Norbu (Song #184 of The Melodies [10 lines omitted], pp. 440-442 & #19 of The Condensed Life, B69b-B73b)

9) Supplication song from Tok Gyaltsen and others (Song #185 of The Melodies, pp. 444-445 & #20 of The Condensed Life, B76a-B77b)

10) Sad song of being stuck indoors in a blizzard (Song #186 of The Melodies, pp. 445-446 & #21 of The Condensed Life, B77b-B79a)

11) Song of nothing to view, nothing to meditate, and nothing to observe as conduct to Barbong Lama Gugye (Song #187 of The Melodies, pp. 447-449 & #22 of The Condensed Life, B80a-B82b)

12) Sad song about the lack of essence of things after the monk Kunga Lekpa died (Song #188 of The Melodies, pp. 451-452 & #23 of The Condensed Life, B85b-B86b)

13) Short song of impermanence (Song #186 of The Melodies, p. 452 & #24 of The Condensed Life, B86b-B87a)

14) Song of advice for yogis and yoginis at Tashi Phen while recalling the gurus Orgyan Palzang and Kunzang Longyang (Song #190 of The Melodies, p. 453-455 & #25 of The Condensed Life, B88b-B90b)

15) Song of Vajrasattva instruction to Gelong Yezer (#192 of The Melodies p. 457-458 & #26 of The Condensed Life, B90b-B92b)

16) Song of instruction on cultivating ordinary awareness to Sonam Palden (#193 of The Melodies pp. 458-460 & #27 of The Condensed Life, B92b-B94b)

17) Song of instruction to Kaju Zangpo on the stages of the mantra path (#194 of The Melodies, pp. 460-461 & #28 of The Condensed Life, B94b-B96.1b)

18) Song of praise to Tadru, where mind itself is seen (#195 of The Melodies, pp. 461-463 & #29 of The Condensed Life, B96.1b-B97a)

19) Song of pithy advice on the path to Orgyan Chözang (#196 of The Melodies, pp. 463-464 & #30 of The Condensed Life, B97a-B98b)

20) Song Be skilled in making requests to learned masters to Drupchen Tenzin Chöphel (#197 of The Melodies, pp. 464-465 & #31 The Condensed Life, B98b-B100a);

21) Song of advice to Orgyan Sonam, one of the few who listen (#198 of The Melodies, pp. 465-466 & #32 of The Condensed Life, B100a-B101b)
22) Song lamenting the death of his vajra brother Gelong Drolma (#199 of *The Melodies*, pp. 466-469 & #33 of *The Condensed Life*, B101b-B105a)


**Songs that appear in alternate forms in *The Condensed Life* and *The Melodies*:**

1) Song of attachment to one place being deluded: the geese, eagle, and tiger song and a song of praise to Tadru retreat (#144 of *The Melodies*, pp. 363-365 & #7 & 8 of *The Condensed Life*, B38a-B40b)

2) Liberation through the word empowerment, to Lama Útse (#155 of *The Melodies*, pp. 390-392 & #9 of *The Condensed Life*, B41b-B42b)

3) The name meaning song to Buchung Ngawang and Paldzom (#201 of *The Melodies*, pp. 471-473 & #42 of *The Condensed Life*, B101b-B105a)

**Song from *The Melodies* referenced in an abbreviated form in *The Condensed Life*:**

1) The song of the rotten thief stole the wealth at Pingdring at night (#163 of *The Melodies*, pp. 404-405 & #3 of *The Condensed Life*, B31b).
Appendix D:

Songs in *The Condensed Life* likely adapted from *The Melodies* (Aligned side by side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Condensed Life, Song #7 [B38a-B38b]</th>
<th>The Melodies, Song #144 (pp. 363.2-365.2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>བཟོས་[B38a]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38a]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<tr>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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<td>བཟོས་[B38b]་དོན་མེད་ད་པ་དེ་ཞི་མོ།</td>
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</tbody>
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1281 བཟོས་[B38a].
1282 བཟོས་[B38b].
1283 བཟོས་[B38b].
1284 བཟོས་[B38b].
1285 བཟོས་[B38b].
1286 བཟོས་[B38b].
The Condensed Life, Song #8 [B39a-B40b]

The Melodies, Song #144 (continued)

1301 རོ་མ་T. 1302 རོ་མ་D. རོ་མ་T. 1303 རོ་མ་T. 1304 རོ་མ་T. 1305 རོ་མ་T. 1306 རོ་མ་T.
The Condensed Life, Song 10 [B41b-B42b]

Melodies, Song #155 (part 2) (391.1-392.2)

...
Appendix E:
Witnesses of *The Condensed Life of the Old Beggar Orgyan Tenzin*

#1) *Ila gru ’o rgyan bstan ’dzin pa'i rnam thar bsdus pa bzhugs so.*
In *gangs can dol po khul gyi ris med kyi bstan ’dzin skyes chen dam pa rnam kyi rnam that phyogs gcig tu bkdod pa bzhugs so* (*The Anthology of Dolpo Biographies, Vol. 1*), compiled by Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok. *Ila gru O rgyan bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar.*
*Dolpo Buddha Service Center: Kathmandu, 2010, pp.582-538.*
*The editor of this compilation, Khenpo Menlha, gave a new title to *The Condensed Life.*

#2) *sprang rgan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa.*
"The Tijirong exemplar". Text used by Khenpo Menlha as the exemplar for *The Anthology* (#1), Ume manuscript, 203 folios. Reproduced from the copy in the library of Khenpo Menlha Phuntsok.

#3) *sprang rgan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa.*
1985 publication by Damchoe Sangpo, Amar Villa, Catholic Road, Dalhousie, HP., Printed at M. M. Offset Process, 2409 Ballimaran, Delhi-110006.
Reproduced from the version in the library of Tulku Tsewang. (BUDA version). 95 folios LCCN: 85903335, Shelf Mark Lcc: BQ976.R447 O74 1985, Hollis Id: 014255881
Exact facsimile of the text of Nampa Kunden, Jumla: Rangrig Dorje, NGMCP L 220/4.

#4) *sprang rgan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa.*
NGMCP Microfilm: L 206/3
Owner: mTshams pa Ngag dbang. Drumba, Jomosom

#5) *sprang rgan o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas rnam thar bsdus pa.*
NGMCP Microfilm: L 670/2
Owner: Lama Lhundrup. Riphug Gompa, Dolpo.
Appendix F:
Additional texts authored by Tadru Orgyan Tenzin, including known recensions.


1.B) *Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat by the Carefree Orgyan Tenzin (bya bral o rgyan bstan ’dzin pas ri khor kyi nyams dbyangs)*. 266 folios, Kakar Gompa, Dolpo: Tsering Tashi Lama, NGMCP L 406/5.


1.D) *Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat by the Carefree Orgyan (bya bral ba o rgyan pas ri khor kyi nyams dbyangs)*. 227 folios, Dolpo: Rang rig Dorje, NGMCP E 1563/14

An alternate title of this recension is given as *The Collected Songs and Life of the Great Siddha Orgyan Tenzin (grub thob chen po o rgyan bstan ’dzin gyi rnam thar mgur ’bum)*.

1.E) *Melodies of Experience from Mountain Retreat by the Carefree Orgyan (bya bral ba o rgyan pas ri khor kyi nyams dbyangs gzhugs so)*. Leiden University Libraries I.KERN 2740/M374. BDRC# MWOLULDC325313.


Mugum: Tulku Tsewang. NGMCP E/2304/39.


4) *Ritual for Performing Cremation from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu* (zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las ro bsregs bya ba’i rim pa). Ribu Gompa, Dolpo: rNam rgyal Lama, NGMCP L659/12.

5) *A Burnt Offering for the Glorious Protector War King from the Self-Luminous Profound Essence Dharmadhātu* (zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal las dpal ldan mgon po dmag gi rgyal po’i bsregs pa). Ribu Gompa, Dolpo: rNam rgyal Lama, NGMCP L659/12.


7) *Shortcut to Accomplishment: A Four-fold Burnt Offering from the New Treasure, Wrathful Guru* (gter gsar bla ma drag po’i las bzhi’i sbyin sreg dngos grub myur lam). Samagaon, Nupri: Lopon Gyurmed. NGMCP L392/2. (Unconfirmed if authored by Tadru Orgyan Tenzin.)