

incarnation lines,²⁰⁸ it seems very likely that Kun dga' rin chen received texts on the rNgog tradition, perhaps coming from sPre'u zhing, from the 4th Zhwa dmar, and included them in the large collections he was building. One of the texts copied at the time may have been the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*. It was reproduced, augmented by the writings of later 'Bri gung hierarchs and a mass of other texts likely stored in the gNas bcu lha khang, in the DK-DZO. Thus, the 'Bri gung lineage played a decisive role in the preservation of the rNgog tradition, even in one of its last avatars, the *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*. As shown below, Kong sprul received the transmission of the works the 4th Zhwa dmar lineage from Khra lebs Rin po che, himself a holder of the 'Bri gung lineage.

1.4.3. The *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod* (KGND)

Another collection containing many texts related to the rNgog traditions and that is used in the present dissertation is the *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*, the “Treasury of bKa' brgyud Mantras” compiled by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas in 1854. Kong sprul defines his work in the introductory title of the collection as the “golden teachings of the glorious Mar rngog bka' brgyud,”²⁰⁹ which, at his time, were “weak like a stream in winter.”²¹⁰ True to his aim of reviving the tradition, Kong sprul compiled a three-volume collection which can be considered as the apotheosis of the rNgog tradition, gathering in an unprecedented way the seven maṇḍalas together with other representative transmissions of Mar pa and of the highest yoga tantras in general. The aim of the present section is to present Kong sprul's sources, and especially the ones not introduced until now, the circumstances of composition of the collection, its various editions, its content and its legacy. The rNgog transmissions will be outlined in more detail in Chapter I.2.

'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899) is one of the great polymaths of Tibet's 19th century, and the reader is referred to the many sources now available on his life.²¹¹ According to Alexander Gardner, “he created one of the largest collections of writings, both edited writings and compositions, of any Tibetan scholar,” and thus played an immense role in the revival of many traditions on the verge of extinction in the 19th century, and for the general vitality of Buddhism in Eastern Tibet in that period and until now. Even though he officially belonged to the Karma bka' brgyud order and was based in dPal spungs Monastery, he was a Ris med (“Nonsectarian”) master, with writings related to most Tibetan traditions. He had two close friends, who were also colleagues, masters and disciples, in the persons of

²⁰⁸ The 6th Zhwa dmar, Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584-1629), was the brother of the first Che tshang and Chung tshang incarnations, respectively 24 and 25th throne-holders. The two marked the transition from a family succession on the seat to an incarnation line.

²⁰⁹ KGND, 1: 1: *dpal ldan mar rngog bka' brgyud kyi gser chos*.

²¹⁰ KGND, 1: 8.1.

²¹¹ See e.g. Smith 2001, 235-272: “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement.” According to Kurtis Schaeffer (Smith 2001, 7), this is perhaps Gene Smith's most famous written work. One can also read Kong sprul's autobiography translated in Barron 2003, and the one composed online by Alexander Gardner: <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Jamgon-Kongtrul-Lodro-Taye/4358> (accessed on May 24, 2007). Gardner is the author of a dissertation on “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams: Religious Geography, Revelation, and Nonsectarianism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Tibet.”

the Sa skya (and Ris med) master 'Jam dbyang mkhyen brtse dbang po (1820-1892), who he met in 1840, and the rNying ma treasure-revealer mChog gyur gling pa (1829-1970), who he met in 1853. The three collaborated on many projects and treasure-revelations, and were known as a trio, *mKhyen Kong mChog sde gsum*.

Kong sprul's legacy is called the *Five Treasuries (mdzod lnga)*. They were compiled between the mid-1850s and the end of his life and span more than hundred volumes. The first compilation was the KGND, which is presented below. It was followed by the *Treasury of Precious Hidden Teachings (Rin chen gter mdzod)* containing more than hundred cycles of treasures and compiled between 1855 and the 1880s.²¹² Then, between 1862 and 1864, he redacted the *Treasury of Knowledge (shes bya mdzod)* summing up all fields of knowledge of the Tibetan world.²¹³ Finally, in the last fifteen years of his life, he compiled the *Treasury of Precious Instructions (gDams ngag mdzod)* related to the eight lineages of practice.²¹⁴ A fifth collection, the *Expansive Treasury (rGya chen bka' mdzod)* can be considered Kong sprul's collected writings on various topics.²¹⁵

The *Treasury of bKa' brgyud Mantras* has not yet been the subject of any study, despite its importance for the bKa' brgyud lineage. This dissertation aims at remedying the situation, as well as shedding light on its heart, the rNgog tradition, which is largely forgotten despite its centrality in the tantric apparatus of the bKa' brgyud school. The collection contains manuals of initiation, rituals and explanations of the Mar rngog bka' brgyud lineage, and represents the tantric legacy of Mar pa in Tibet.

Sources

Despite his virtuosity, Kong sprul did not, and could not, have worked in a literary vacuum. His collection largely relies on previous works that he either included untouched in the collection or reworked in order to make a more convenient tool for transmission and practice of the traditions in question. Kong sprul presents his sources in the introduction to the collection: first are Indian texts, the tantras themselves, as well as commentaries, *sādhana*s, *maṅḍalavidhis*, etc. composed by Indian masters and very often the sources of the ensuing traditions. Mar pa received them from either Nāropa or Maitripa. The traditions transmitted in

²¹² See Schwieger 1990, 1995, 1999 and 2009 for a description of the content of the collection and Schwieger 2010 for a summary of these many years of cataloguing the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.

²¹³ The *Shes bya mdzod* is integrally translated into English by the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group and published by Snow Lion between 1995 and 2013. I used particularly Kongtrül, Guarisco & McLeod 2005, Kongtrül & Harding 2007 and Kongtrül, Guarisco & McLeod 2008 for the present research, that is to say translation of parts of Book Six and Eight (out of ten) on the Buddhist tantras.

²¹⁴ See Kapstein 1995 and 2007 on “gDams-ngag: Tibetan Technologies of the Self.” The 18 volumes are currently being translated by scholars affiliated to the Tsadra Foundation (see the project page: http://dnz.tsadra.org/index.php/Main_Page, accessed on May 24, 2017, which contains all Tibetan texts in Unicode format). The introductory volume (Kongtrül & Barron 2013) is a general presentation of the “eight chariots of practice” (also available on the portal).

²¹⁵ Many texts from this collection have been independently translated but given the motley character of the collection (unlike the other four), no general study is available.

the Mar rNgog lineage are introduced in Part 1.2; the story of these Indian masters and of Mar pa is studied in Chapter II.1.

Secondly Kong sprul mentions the Tibetan works that precede him. In this category, he differentiates five stages of writings available to him and that he consulted in order to elaborate the KGND:

- 1) The earliest Tibetan texts such as the *mDo sbyar* and *Gur gyi srog shing* by Mar pa [commentaries on *Hevajra* and *Pañjara*]; the manuals composed by rNgog Zhe sdang rdo rje as well as his commentary on the *Two Segments* [i.e. the *Hevajratantra*, called] *Likeness of a Precious Ornament*; the *Collected [Works]* of mGar [bKra shis dbang phyug] and rTsags [Dar ma rgyal po, who were mDo sde's main disciples]; the “Old rNgog maṇḍalas,” which are compilation of manuals by later rNgog such as Kun dga' rdo rje, Thogs med grags pa, Rin chen bzang po, and so on.²¹⁶
- 2) The manuals composed by the Venerable Omniscient Rang byung rdo rje [3d Karmapa, 1284-1339] on the three—*Hevajra*, *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Guhyasamāja*—as well as on *Mahāmāyā*, and so on; and by his successors: the Venerable [mThong ba] Don ldan [the 6th Karmapa, 1416-1453]; the 7th [Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho, 1454-1506]; [the 8th Karma pa] Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-1554); the Great 'Jam dbyangs [Don grub 'od zer] from mTshur phu (14th-15th c),²¹⁷ and so on, that is to say the main Kaṃ tshang tradition, in which many manuals on most tantras of the Mar rNgog [tradition] were composed.²¹⁸
- 3) The “Manuals on rNgog Maṇḍalas” composed by Khrimis khang Lo chen bSod nams rgya mtsho. They provide outlines and clarify practices on the basis of the Old rNgog Maṇḍalas. Based on these, the manuals of the Lord sPyan snga [the 4th Zhwa dmar Chos

²¹⁶ KGND, 1: 6.2-4: *bod gzhung snga shos rje mar pa'i mdo sbyar/ gur gyi srog shing/ rngog zhe sdang rdo rje'i yig cha rnams dang/ brtag[s] gnyis 'grel pa rin chen rgyan 'dra/ mgar 'bum/ rtsags 'bum sogs kyi bshad rgyun dgongs pa gung bsdebs te/ rngog phyi ma kun dga' rdo rje/ thogs med grags pa/ rin chen bzang po sogs kyi yig cha phyogs bsdams rngog dkyil rnying ma dang/*

²¹⁷ He was a disciple of the 5th Karma pa bDe bzhin gshegs pa (1384-1415) and a master of Lo chen bSod nams rgya mtsho (Ehrhard 2002b, 45-46). He was the abbot of mTshur phu Monastery for 45 years and developed the mTshur phu tradition of astrology (<http://www.tibet-encyclopaedia.de/tshurphu-schule.html>, accessed on May 24, 2017).

²¹⁸ KGND, 1: 6.4-5: *thams cad mkhyen pa rang byung zhabs kyis bde dgyes gsang gsum mā yā sogs kyi yig cha mdzad pa'i rjes 'brang/ don ldan zhabs/ rje bdun pa/ mi bskyod rdo rje/ mtshur phu 'jam dbyangs chen po sogs kyis mar rngog rgyud sde phal mo che'i yig cha ji snyed cig mdzad pa'i kaṃ tshang lugs gtso che ba dang/*

grags ye shes] have the wise vision endowed with the two forms of knowledge which thoroughly strains the stains of errors.²¹⁹

- 4) The great Venerable Jo nang [Tāranātha, 1575-1634] cleaned the general hybridations and crossovers [which had crept in] the rNgog practices and composed manuals which purely and unmistakably expound the Indian root texts and Mar pa's interpretation.²²⁰
- 5) Lord Karma Chags med summarized thoroughly the extensive initiation texts which are set in for example the Old rNgog Maṇḍalas by unifying the self and front [generation stages], thus speeding up the empowerment.²²¹

Although the empowerments and reading transmissions of the latter three are uninterrupted, I mainly took as a base the writings of the Lord sPyan snga [the 4th Zhwa dmar] and the Venerable Jo nang [Tāranātha], which are unmistakable as to the meaning and have a majestic blessing.²²²

The first phase is the rNgog tradition as it is conserved in the NKCK, excepting Rin chen bzang po's writings, which remain unavailable. It is not clear how much of these Kong sprul had at his disposal when he compiled the KGND, but he gives the impression that he had them, which means that the writings that have recently resurfaced from the gNas bcu lha khang were not the only ones surviving in the 19th century. The second phase is dispersed in the collected works of the Karma pas, and the rituals are largely available, though not as a specific collection. As for the third phase, although some miscellaneous works of Lo chen are available (W1CZ1099), his complete works, which seem to be present in the gNas bcu lha khang and are catalogued by bits in the DC, have not been published yet. The *gSung 'bum* of the 4th Zhwa dmar is available and contains several rituals and commentaries related to the rNgog traditions, as are those of Tāranātha and Karma Chags med. Among these, the manuals (*yig cha*), that is to say the cycles of texts containing everything necessary for the practice of a specific tantra—empowerment ritual, main *sādhana* and related rites, as well as commentaries and explanations—that were composed by the 4th Zhwa dmar and Tāranātha are considered the most appropriate by Kong sprul because they are charged with spiritual influence, have the appropriate length, are easy to use and without mistake. He therefore used those as a base, sometimes including the original documents, sometimes editing them, and thus compiled in

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 6.5-6: *rngog dkyil rnying ma la gzhi byas nas sa bcad dang phyag len gsal bar phyes pa'i khrims khang lo chen bsod nams rgya mtshos mdzad pa'i rngog dkyil yig cha dang/ de la gzhi byas mkhyen gnyis ye shes kyi gzigs pas nor 'khrul gyi rnyogs pa shin tu bgrungs pa rje spyan snga'i yig cha rnams dang/*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 6.6-7: *rngog pa'i phyag bzhes spyi'i rgyas 'geb dang 'dra 'dres bsal nas rtsa ba'i rgya gzhung dang mar pa'i dgongs pa 'khrul med gtsang dag tu mdzad pa jo nang rje btsun chen po'i yig cha dang/*

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 6.7: *dbang gzhung rgyas pa rngog dkyil rnying ma ltar bkod cing sgrub tshul bdag mdun dbyer med shin tu mdor bsod mgyogs dbang gi ched du bkod pa rje karma chags med kyi yig cha bcas sde tshan lnga tsam mthong ba de dag go bsdur/*

²²² *Ibid.*, 1: 6.7-7.1: *phyi ma gsum ka'i dbang lung rgyun ma chis kyang gtso boer je spyan snga dang/ jo nang rje btsun zung gi gsung ni don ma 'khrul zhing byin rlabs kyi gzi byin chags ba gzhir bcas/*

one collection the “Mar rNgog Teachings” which had until then been scattered and in high risk of being lost.

Circumstances of compilation

Kong sprul describes his project and the conditions of its elaboration in his autobiography and in the introduction to the KGND, at the head of the first volume.²²³

In the early 1850s, 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po had travelled to the main seat of the rNgog, sPre'u zhing, where he had a vision of Mar pa and had received a prophecy that Kong sprul should codify the rNgog maṅḍalas.²²⁴ From 1852, and more insistently in 1853, he requested Kong sprul to make new manuals for the rNgog maṅḍalas. Karma bsTan pa rab rgyas (19th c.), one of the 9th Si tu's disciple, remarked that although Karma Chags med's manuals were without mistake and full of blessing, they had the defect of being too condensed, although that made them quite convenient to carry. As the continuity of most earlier manuals were on the verge of interruption, it was in effect quite difficult to do group or personal practices on these tantras. It would thus have been good to have new manuals before it was too late and the transmissions was lost. mKhyen rtse, when granting Kong sprul teachings on the rNgog maṅḍalas, argued for his part that these transmissions were incomparable, but the continuity of the old manuals was often interrupted and, in later manuals, the specific import of each tantra was not always clear, so that one often had to rely on post-hoc additions to give a complete transmission.²²⁵

Faced with these requests, Kong sprul wondered whether he was suited for such a work and asked confirmation and omens from his masters and colleagues. Then, in June 1853, the 9th Si tu, who was considered an emanation of Mar pa, died. As the omens for the composition were good and as Kong sprul wished to honor the memory of his deceased master by creating a collection including all of Mar pa's tantras so that it would be available in dPal spungs, he finally accepted the request and started his task by compiling the manuals for the *Hevajra* transmission.²²⁶

Over the next year, he consulted all available materials, compiled what was suitable and composed new manuals, all the while doing personal practices on these tantras. During the process, he was blessed first by the visit of the 6th Khra lebs, Ye shes nyi ma (19th c.), who held the complete transmission of the works of the 4th Zhwa dmar. Khra lebs was the recipient of a very pure lineage coming from 'Be lo tshe dbang kun khyab (18th c.), a disciple of the 8th Si tu, who himself had received several lines of transmission from the 4th Zhwa dmar, including the 'Bri gung one mentioned above. Additionally, in the spring of 1854, Kong sprul

²²³ Barron 2003, mostly pp. 87-97, and KGNDdkar chag, 7.7-9 for the general need of collecting these transmissions, pp. 9-11 on how Kong sprul's masters requested him in particular to undertake such an anthology.

²²⁴ Akester 2016, 254, 266.

²²⁵ KGNDdkar chag, 9.

²²⁶ Barron 2003, 87-92.

was granted the transmission of the complete works of Tāranātha by Karma 'Od gsal 'gyur med (d.u.), and he completed a first version of his work in the summer of that year.

Editions

The dPal spungs xylograph

Kong sprul was based in dPal spungs Monastery, in Khams, located to the south of the capital city of sDe dge. From the 1850s, he lived in the nearby retreat centre of rTsa 'dra rin chen brag, about one hour walk up the mountain behind dPal spungs. Kong sprul's *Five Treasuries* were all initially printed at the dPal spungs printing house, which is located a few hundred meters from the main temple. In a research trip during the summer 2015, I had the chance to visit the old printing house. Nowadays, it is completed by a new one higher up on the hill, near the bShad grwa, where the *bKa' 'gyur* is printed. The old printing house remains in use, and when I visited it, two men in their fifties were printing a copy of the 9th Si tu's *Complete Works*. I was accompanied by a monk from dPal spungs Monastery in charge of the printing house, who was answering my queries.

According to the monk, in addition to the blocks for the *Complete Works* of the 8th and 9th Si tus, there remain onsite the woodblocks of four of Kong sprul's treasuries, the longest, the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (originally 62 volumes), being missing. The original editions of the *gDams ngag mdzod* contain ten volumes, the *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod* and the *Shes bya mdzod* three volumes each, and the *rGya chen bka' mdzod* ten volumes.

The blocks of the KGND are kept on the left wall of the second room, where the two men were working; they printed a page of the *Dud sol ma sādhana* at my request. Given the number of blocks, I estimate that only a third of the original blocks are available; according to the monk in charge, there are blocks from all three volumes, but with pages missing, which is why the collection is not printed onsite anymore. He told me a copy of the original collection is kept in the library of the main temple, but I did not access it.

Although the KGND is said to originally contain three volumes numbered *om*, *āh* and *hūng*, it is possible that it was sometimes packed as six volumes. This is what I witnessed with the 9th Si tu's works, which were being printed. Although the monk told me it was five volumes, they were packed as ten. He told me the set was sold around 2.300 RMB (approx. 300€).

Original copies and later editions of the KGND

The KGND as we know it today, the one on which I rely for the present work, was published in eight volumes in 1982.²²⁷ This edition differs in several aspects from the original print, the two most obvious differences being the amount of volumes and the order of the texts included. In order to understand how the collection was conceived by Kong sprul, its various

²²⁷ It was published in Paro (Bhutan) by Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey and is available for download on TBRC (W20876).

iterations, and how the present edition may differ from the description provided in Kong sprul's catalogue, it is important to clarify the history of the collection's publication.

We know of the inner organization of the original collection through the following sources:

- The catalogue of the original print, authored by Kong sprul (KGNDdkar chag)
- The records of teaching received by Dil mgo mkhyen brtse Rinpoche (1910-1991) and bDud 'joms Rinpoche (1904-1987).²²⁸

Then, as far as the original print is concerned, there are two copies whose content was accessible to me during research:²²⁹

- One copy in three volumes is conserved at the Namgyal Institute, in Gangtok, Sikkim (India). I consulted this copy in December 2015 and made a reproduction of the catalogue created onsite. Unfortunately, one page of the catalogue is missing, so that a complete knowledge of the way the texts are organized is not possible. I did not realize this while in the library and did not inspect each of the three volumes to see if it fitted the catalogue.
- One copy in four volumes is kept at the Uppsala University Library in Sweden. It was brought to Uppsala University by Toni Schmid from an expedition to Sikkim and Nepal in 1962 and catalogued by Helmut Eimer in 1975. Although the catalogue reflects the presence of four volumes, these are in fact the original three which have been shuffled and with some texts missing.²³⁰

Furthermore, three collections have been published in exile:

- The first modern edition was reproduced in 1974 in Tashijong, Palampur (India) in six volumes.²³¹ This edition was commissioned via the PL 480 program of the Library of Congress and is therefore kept at several US libraries, but is not available on TBRC.²³² I consulted a copy available in the British Museum.²³³ This is a photomechanical reproduction of the original xylographs belonging to gNas gngang dPa' bo gTsong lag snang ba dbang phyug (1912-1991). It was reproduced through the efforts of mDil mgo mkhyen brtse Rin po che by Khams sprul Don grub nyi ma (1931-1979), who

²²⁸ See bibliography for details. Dil mgo mkhyen rtse's *gsan yig* is also reproduced in the *gSung 'bum* of the 8th Khams sprul Don grub nyi ma, 5: 465 - 482.

²²⁹ There might be more copies of the original dPal spungs print in traditional, academic and private libraries worldwide. As the aim of the present part is not to gain a precise understanding of the spread of the KGND but rather of the way the collection was and is organized, no effort of comprehensiveness has been made.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* 1975, 7. The part on the KGND is on pp. 54-63. There is no trace of the collection in the actual online catalogue of the library.

²³¹ See bibliography for all editions. Numbered *om stod* and *smad*, *āh stod* and *smad*, and *hūng stod* and *smad*.

²³² For a description of Gene Smith's contribution to the field of Tibetan studies, and especially his purchasing of books for U.S. research institutions through the PL480, see Smith 2001, ix-x.

²³³ I consulted it in May 2017 with the help of Charles Manson, librarian at the British Library.

was the head of the Tibetan Craft Community of the Sungrab Nyamso Gyunpel Parkhang. The original volumes are each divided in two.

- A set in eight volumes was published in Paro (Bhutan) in 1982. It was “supplemented and enlarged at the order of the Ven. mDil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che.”
- The publishing house of Dil mgo mkhyen brtse’s monastery, Shechen Publications, reproduced the eight volumes in a computerized version in 1994.²³⁴

The most noticeable difference between the editions is the number of volumes. While the difference between three and six can easily be explained by the fact that the original volumes were bulky and hence cut down into two volumes of a more manageable size (though the volume breaks are not always the same in various editions),²³⁵ the additional two volumes in the 1982 and 1994 editions are more difficult to account for. The TBRC states that the collection was “expanded by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche to include special teachings concerned with Vajrapāṇi according to the Ngok tradition.” In fact, the Vajrapāṇi transmission included by Kong sprul was received by Ras chung pa, Mi la ras pa’s famous disciple, from Varacandra in India²³⁶ and was not transmitted by either Mar pa or the rNgog, so they can hardly be considered the “Mar rNgog tradition.” Kong sprul included this tradition of Vajrapāṇi (*ras chung lugs kyi phyag rdor gtum chung, phyag rdor gtum chung* for short) in the first part of the KGND, the Initial Virtue, in order to “dispel obstacles,”²³⁷ and it is possible that such was mKhyen brtse’s reason too. The Vajrapāṇi tradition included by mKhyen brtse in the 1982 edition is another one, called gTum chen. Kong sprul mentions rituals by Karma Chags med and according to the ’Brug pa tradition, while mKhyen brtse includes rituals of the Karma bka’ brgyud tradition (by the 5th Zhwa dmar and the 9th Karma pa). mKhyen brtse states in a foreword to the 1982 edition that these teachings represent a support (*rgyab brten*) to the KGND,²³⁸ just like the *Zab mo nang don*, the *brTags gnyis* and the *rGyud bla ma* are the theoretical background of the bKa’ brgyud tradition. It is as well possible that they were quite rare and that appending them to the original KGND was seen as a good way to safeguard these transmissions. However that may be, the most compelling reason might be that there needed to be a substantial difference between the 1974 and the 1982 editions in order to be able to proceed with a new publication despite the copyright laws.

Leaving aside the obvious aim of the new publication—to disseminate the collection as much as possible (an aim which was achieved, if we are to believe the number of sets present in the various institutions worldwide)—another substantial difference that justifies the 1982 edition is the order in which the texts are reproduced. There is no difference in the content or

²³⁴ Matthew Kapstein informed me of the existence of a mTshur phu edition in the end of the 1980s. This is a copy in smaller format of the original three volumes. No more detail is available to me at the time of revision (March 2018).

²³⁵ According to Matthieu Ricard (http://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Rinchen_Terdzo_Preface, accessed on 30.06.2017), the Library of Congress did not commission volumes with more than 600 pages through its Public Law 480 Program.

²³⁶ As shown by the history of the transmission included in the beginning of the 7th volume: “Glan lugs kyi lo rgyus.” In KGND, 7: 1-11.

²³⁷ KGND dkar chag, 12.3: *gtum chung bar chad sel ba*.

²³⁸ KGND, 1: 1 (there are several p. 1; this is the first one).

orthography of the texts themselves, as all versions (except the computerized one), are reproductions of the original dPal spungs blockprints. The original xylographs, however, like most traditional xylographs of this type, are not numbered continuously: each text has the recto of each folio numbered in the left margin, each time starting at one (*gcig*), without indication of the way the texts should be ordered. The collection, as alluded to by the quotation of bsTan pa rab rgyas above, was in fact largely designed as a teaching material for vajra-masters, who could extract the empowerment ritual they needed when granting an empowerment, or the *sādhana* to be recited during a personal or group practice. When travelling, they did not have to bring the whole set, but only the parts needed. The result of this is that in all of the collections I examined (the Namgyal Institute, Uppsala and British Library sets), the texts were often put in a different order, with texts occasionally missing. This is actually a well-known risk of traditional format books in libraries, where part of a volume is missing because it was borrowed by a lama and never returned. Although the Palampur edition tried to remedy that problem by numbering the volumes continuously, the set was not sorted according to Kong sprul's catalogue before its reproduction, which means that the order is not proper. The 1982 edition by mKhyen brtse, on the other hand, corresponds exactly to the catalogue set by Kong sprul, with no text missing, and with a continuous numbering in each volume. It is probably for this reason that it became the reference edition, and is the reference for the present study. It must be kept in mind, however, that it is only the first six volumes that I call KGND and that no special effort was made to understand the content of the Vajrapāṇi volumes.

Content

There are several generally available tables of contents for the KGND. A short presentation and table of contents is translated in the end of Kong sprul's *Autobiography*;²³⁹ a list of titles of the 1982 edition is displayed on TBRC²⁴⁰ and on the Rangjung Yeshe Wiki.²⁴¹ There are also two catalogues of teachings received, by Dil mgo mkhyen brtse and bDud 'joms Rin po che.²⁴² Above all, there is Kong sprul's introduction,²⁴³ which presents the origin of the transmissions, the contents, the circumstances of composition, as well as a short presentation of the transmissions themselves and of their respective lineages.

The two *gsan yig* list the titles included in the edition they describe, clearly the dPal spungs edition in three volumes in mDil mgo mKhyen brtse's case, with some variations compared with the titles announced for the 1982 edition. bDud 'joms additionally names authors other than Kong sprul, and there are several differences with the online tables. These differences can often be accounted by the fact that online tables only provide the titles of texts with a title page. Some, however, start mid-page without being explicitly announced with a title-page;²⁴⁴

²³⁹ Barron 2003, 515-516.

²⁴⁰ <http://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W20876> (Accessed May 27, 2017).

²⁴¹ http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Kagyü_Ngagdzö (Accessed May 27, 2017).

²⁴² Dil mgo *gSung 'bum*, 25: 48-66; bDud 'joms *gSung 'bum*, 19: 253-278.

²⁴³ KGNDdkar chag.

²⁴⁴ For instance, the '*Dod kham s dbang phyug dud sol ma'i phyi sgrub kyi rjes gnang gi yi ge* by Zhe dang rdo rje is announced in vol. 6: 69-91, and is numbered *kha. Ka* was the previous text, with a title page, starting on p.

these are indicated by mKhyen brtse at the same level than the former. Because of this lack of detail in the online tables, the author indicated (generally the last of the several texts included in that heading) may be mistaken. A complete table of content of volumes 1-6 with these subtitles and sorted by transmission is provided in Appendix 4.

Transmissions contained in the KGND

Kong sprul divides his work into three categories: the initial virtue, the middling virtue and the final virtue.²⁴⁵

The initial virtue

The first of the six volumes is made up of what Kong sprul considers auspicious for a beginning: White Tāra, Amitāyus and Mar pa's three special deities—Uṣṇīṣavijayā (*gTsug tor nam rgyal ma*), Green Tāra (*sGrol ma ljang mo*) and Vajrasattva from King Dzaḥ (*rGyal po dzaḥ nas brgyud pa'i rdo rje sems dpa'*). He also includes the practice of Vajrapāṇi to dispel obstacles, and practices on the master (*bla ma mchod pa*) to open the doors of blessing.²⁴⁶

As far as the Vajrapāṇi transmission is concerned, Kong sprul places it in the initial virtue in order to dispel obstacles, although it is considered one of the thirteen highest yoga tantras of the middling virtue. He indicates at the end of the presentation of the initial virtue that the empowerments of this part only consist in authorizations of practice (*rjes gnang*). Complete empowerments to a tantra (*dbang*) are only in the second part. As one cannot technically receive an authorization of practice before having had one's mind matured by an empowerment, the transmission of the KGND set can be granted in the order of the manual only if the student already received a complete empowerment. If that is not the case, the master should start with the transmission of the highest yoga tantras of the second part, and then proceed with the first part and end with the third, protectors. This remark points to Kong sprul's aim when compiling these tantras: he wants to have something handy, with clear directions for use, so that the transmissions can continue easily in the future.²⁴⁷ This

53, but *ga*, which starts on p. 73 on the second line does not have a title page. Not all texts inserted under the banner of *kha* were composed by Zhe sdang rdo rje.

²⁴⁵ KGNDdkar chag, 11: *lnga pa dbu nas zhabs su bsdus pa'i rnam grangs du zhig gi bstan ce na/ thog mar dge ba/ bar du dge ba/ tha mar dge ba*.

²⁴⁶ KGNDdkar chag, 12. It must be noted that the specific lama ritual included by Kong sprul was composed by Gling Ras pa Padma rdo rje (1128-1188), the teacher of the 'Brug pa school founder gTsang pa rgya ras (1161-1211). This seems a surprising choice when considering that Kong sprul also authored a guru-yoga of Mar pa that could be imagined to be fitting in a Mar pa bka' brgyud collection. According to mKhan po Chos grags bstan 'phel (email communication, feb. 2018), the ritual composed by Gling ras pa is considered especially blessed as it was written in one go under the direct inspiration of Vajradhara, hence can be considered a guru-yoga of Vajradhara, who is the embodiment of the master. Moreover, according to Matthew Kapstein (oral communication, March 2018), the style of this guru ritual is closer to the Indian and early bKa' brgyud traditions than later guru-yoga rituals are. More research is needed to clarify this question.

²⁴⁷ KGNDdkar chag, 12.

pragmatism is noted by Peter Schwieger in the context of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* and is a general feature of Kong sprul's work at large.²⁴⁸

The middling virtue

This is the heart of the collection, from volume two to five. It consists in sixteen transmissions associated with thirteen highest yoga tantras.²⁴⁹ In what follows, I explain in a very short and simplified manner the system of Buddhist tantras in order to describe the content of the KGND. The subject is complex and can differ very much depending on the class of tantra one is referring to and the specific perspective of the author. I rely here on the emic presentation made by Kong sprul in the *Shes bya mdzod* and on general definitions of the main terms rather than on secondary scholarship in order to keep with the worldview of the KGND.²⁵⁰

A “tantra” is a text of (generally) Indian origin. It can be a “root tantra” (the *Two Segments* for instance, which is the name of the root *Hevajratantra*), or an “explanatory tantra” (like the *Vajrapañjaratantra*, which is the uncommon explanatory tantra of the *Hevajratantra*). There can be several maṇḍalas²⁵¹ expounded in a tantra, so that several transmissions can develop on the basis of a single tantra. There are for instance in the KGND two maṇḍalas associated with the *Hevajratantra*, that of the main male deity, Hevajra, and that of his consort, Nairātmyā. Similarly, the *Cakrasaṃvara*- and *Catuṣpīṭhatantra* are, in the KGND, associated with two maṇḍalas, centered on either the male or female figure of the tantra. When these tantras spread in India, they were practiced by people who gained “accomplishments” (siddhis), called siddhas. These siddhas created specific rites associated with these tantras, which gave rise to “traditions” (*lugs*, also called *bka' srol*). The practice of *Hevajra*, for instance,

²⁴⁸ See Schwieger 2010, p. 331: “How did Kong sprul strengthen the continuity of the *gter ma* tradition with his *Rin chen gter mdzod*? He did it in two ways. The first one consists of the concrete volumes of the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, a collection of manuals for the immediate and comfortable use. He provided everything which was needed to perform the respective rituals without the need to search somewhere else. This was his ambition. One of his most used phrases for characterizing the ritual prescriptions he had added himself was “arranged as something you just have to read” (*bklags chog tu bkod pa*). The second one goes beyond the mere texts. It consists of the boost and repair of the empowerment lineages and the reading transmissions of the *gter ma* tradition. To ensure the living practice of the *gter ma* teachings for the future and to make their transmission easier Kong sprul had not only collected a cross-section of the *gter ma* tradition. He also composed an extensive prescription on how to bestow the empowerment for the whole *Rin chen gter mdzod* in one go.” Pretty much the same aim is manifest in the *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*, even though directions for use are not as explicit as in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.

²⁴⁹ For a discussions of the various classifications of tantras, see Isaacson and Sferra 2015; Dalton 2005. One of the thirteen tantras, that of Vajrapāṇi, does not have an empowerment but only an authorization and is thus included in the initial virtue.

²⁵⁰ Especially Kongtrül, Guarisco & McLeod 2005 and 2008.

²⁵¹ The term maṇḍala covers a large array of meaning which largely exceeds the aim of the present study. See e.g. Kongtrül, Guarisco & McLeod 2005, 209-213. In general, which is the way I use it here, the maṇḍala of a deity is his world, made up of a palace, a central deity and several others surrounding it. *Ibid*, 203: “In order for an initiation to be conferred, a mandala must first be entered.” This means that when a disciple is empowered, he enters the world of a deity and becomes that deity. From that point onward, he inhabits the world of the deity, and the spiritual path consists in making this outlook the way one sees the world, so that the ordinary world is transformed into an enlightened world.

developed in eight main traditions in India; in Tibet, it flourished in the tradition that Mar pa Lo tsā ba received from Nāropa and in the one that 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba received from Gayādhara, which initially came from Virupa.²⁵² The main traditions included in the KGND are those coming from Mar pa and are thus associated with Mar pa's masters Nāropa, Maitripa, Śāntibhadra and their own masters (see Chapter I.2). Mar pa's traditions are particularly famous for their key-instructions (practical instructions given from master to disciple), which are considered to be particularly efficient for reaching siddhis.

Each transmission included in the KGND comprises several texts that Kong sprul chose among a large pool of rites and commentaries authored by the authors previously mentioned.²⁵³ In general, there is for each transmission an empowerment rite, called a *maṅḍalavidhi* (*dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga*). This is the rite used by the vajra-master when empowering a disciple to the practice of a specific tantra. The empowerment consists in several phases through which the disciple is introduced to the maṅḍala of the deities and is thus empowered by their spiritual strength. This is called the “path of maturation” (*smin lam*).

Once a disciple is empowered, he can practice the deities in question, thus following the “path of liberation” (*grol lam*). This is divided into two phases, the “creation phase” (*b skyed rim*) and the “perfection phase” (*rdzogs rim*).²⁵⁴ The creation phase is practiced by means of various ritual texts. The most common is called a “practice ritual” (literally “methods of practice,” *sgrub thabs, sādhanas*); it is the text a practitioner uses to practice on the deity he has been empowered to embody.²⁵⁵ *Sādhanas* can be of several types depending on the aim of the practice, and can be more or less extensive. There can be further rites aimed at specific activities, such as fire offerings (*sbyin sreg*), and so on. Kong sprul includes *sādhanas* and activity rites for the main transmissions (*Hevajra, Nairātmyā, Mahāmāyā, Catuspūṭha, Nāmasaṃgīti*, and *Guhyasamāja*). He also includes instructions (*khrid*) on their perfection phase, excepting for *Cakrasaṃvara*, which, he says, are well preserved elsewhere.

²⁵² Guarisco and McLeod 2008, 161-166.

²⁵³ In the collection, there are two types of texts, those composed by Kong sprul and those composed by other authors. In all, there are 126 texts. Out of these 126, 70 were authored by Kong sprul (55,6 %), 37 by other authors (29,3 %), two texts are tantras (1,6 %) and sixteen (13,5 %) are anonymous. Among texts by other authors, five come from Tāranātha, but none from the fourth Zhwa dmar or Karma Chags med. Most of the others come from Karma bka' brgyud hierarchs, three from Bu ston Rin chen grub, and eight from rNgog masters (all on Dud sol ma).

²⁵⁴ Guarisco & McLeod 2005, 203: “A person who possesses the [first] two types of confidence initially must learn the meaning of tantra. He or she therefore studies the tantras and their commentaries. Once a sound understanding has been achieved, that student should next begin cultivation of the two phases [of practice] of the meaning of tantra, the precondition for which is to receive, in an appropriate manner, an authentic initiation and to assume properly the pledges and vows. All the stages of the mantric path are thereby included in [two steps]: first, receiving an initiation to ripen oneself and assuming pledges; then, the main element [of the practice], the cultivation of the two phases of the path that effects liberation.”

²⁵⁵ Rituals of visualization of the deity are also sometimes called *mngon rtogs (abhisamaya)* (See Kongtrül, Guarisco and McLeod 2008, 236, n. 1). Simplified *sādhanas* are called “single recollection” (*dran pa gcig pa*) and consists in simplified form of deity practice based only on the visualization of the deity and consort without mandala and retinue (*Ibid.*, 311, n. 20).

According to Kong sprul, the tantras of the middling virtue are all of the highest yoga tantra class.²⁵⁶ Many systems of teaching (*bka' srol*) were introduced in Tibet by the various translators and paṇḍitas, but here are gathered the tradition that trace back to Mar pa and his four “heart-sons” (see section II.1.3). They were later propagated by all bKa' brgyud schools, foremost among them the Kaṁ tshang and the 'Bri gung. Among these cycles, most were held and transmitted by rNgog Chos rdor and his hereditary lineage (*Hevajra*, two out of four *Cakrasaṃvara* cycles, *Mahāmāyā*, *Catuṣpīṭha*, and *Nāmasaṃgīti*). Two (*Guhyasamāja* and *Buddhakapāla*) were transmitted to mTshur ston dbang nge, and one (*Cakrasaṃvara*) to Mi la ras pa.

A traditional distinction in highest yoga tantras is between tantras that focus particularly on methods (*thabs*)—called “father-” (*pha rgyud*), or *mahāyogatantras*—and those that focus particularly on wisdom (*shes rab*)— “mother-” (*ma rgyud*) or *yoginītantras*.²⁵⁷ Most of Mar pa's transmissions (*Hevajra*, *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Buddhakapāla*, *Catuṣpīṭha*, and *Mahāmāyā*) are *yoginītantras*. These are further divided in “families” (*rigs*). The first four belong to the Akṣobhya family. The fifth, *Catuṣpīṭha*, to Vairocana's.

The first three transmissions in the collection (*Hevajra* nine deities, *Nairātmyā* fifteen deities and *Pañjāra* combined families) belong to the *Hevajra* cycle. The perfection phase associated with it is called merging and transference (*bsre 'pho*). It was the main practice of Mar pa and the rNgog, and is the one expounded in most detail in the KGND.²⁵⁸

Four maṇḍalas (*Peaceful Cakrasaṃvara Vajrasattva* from the *Samputatantra*, *Cakrasaṃvara* five deities, *Vajravārāhī* five deities and *Six Cakravartin Cakrasaṃvara* from the *Abhidhānottaratantra*) are associated with the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* and two of its explanatory tantras. Their perfection phase is called the six doctrines of Nāropa (*nā ro chos drug*). Following in the footsteps of Mi la ras pa and many of the Karma pas, most practitioners of the Karma bka' brgyud school rely on *Cakrasaṃvara* as their main practice, hence the continuity of the six doctrines as they are practiced in relation with *Cakrasaṃvara* is assured, and Kong sprul does not include instructions on them.

Mahāmāyā is expounded through both the main maṇḍala in five deities and instructions on the perfection phase,²⁵⁹ as is *Buddhakapāla*, with a maṇḍala of twenty-five deities and its perfection phase.²⁶⁰ As far as *Catuṣpīṭha* is concerned, there are the two maṇḍalas of Yogāmbara (the male deity) and Jñānaḍākinī (the female deity), together with the perfection phase of that tantra.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ This is a gloss of KGND dkar chag, 7.

²⁵⁷ For a less traditional presentation, see Isaacson and Sferra 2015.

²⁵⁸ For this part on the texts included in the KGND, see KGND dkar chag, 12-13. For a list of content of the KGND, with the name of each transmission, its class, etc., see appendix 6.

²⁵⁹ Described in Guarisco and McLeod 2008, 183-186.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 179-182.

Additionally, Kong sprul includes two transmissions of Mar pa that belong to the *mahāyogatantra* class, *Guhyasamāja* and *Nāmasaṃgīti*. Tantras in that class are distinguished according to the three poisons, desire, anger, and ignorance. *Guhyasamāja* belongs to the desire class. The cycle expounded in the KGND is that of *Guhyasamāja* with 33 deities of the Ārya tradition, together with its perfection phase, called the Five Stages (*rim lnga*). This was Mar pa's second most important transmission; it was not transmitted by the rNgog but by mTshur ston.

Nāmasaṃgīti is associated with ignorance. Although Mar pa's tradition is considered to be a mahāyoga tantra, it was actually a tantra that rNgog Chos rdor received from other masters than Mar pa. Chos rdor's tradition is called *gSang ldan*, and is more generally associated with the yoga tantra level. Kong sprul elevates it to highest yoga tantra level by virtue of Mar pa's blessing. It is not associated with any perfection phase practice.

Kong sprul includes three more cycles of the father tantras in order to cover mahāyoga tantras of the anger type, although these transmissions do not come from Mar pa. These are the cycles of *Yamāntaka* five deities according to Birvapa's tradition, *Vajrabhairava* nine deities according to Mal Lo tsā ba's tradition, and *Vajrapāṇi* five deities according to Ras chung pa's tradition. No specific perfection phase is included.

In the end of the fifth volume, Kong sprul gathers several Mar pa bKa' brgyud rituals that do not rely on one tantra in particular but explain more general aspects of Mar pa's transmissions such as *gaṇacakras* (*tshogs mchod*), consecrations (*rab gnas*), empowerments, and so on. Kong sprul does not explicitly mention these texts in the catalogue, hence they tend to be displaced or lost in the various editions.²⁶²

Final virtue

In the sixth volume are collected texts that make up the final virtue, with four cycles of protective deities. The first is a transmission of the wisdom-protector Four-Arm Mahākāla with thirteen deities. It comes from rGwa Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1105/1110-1198/1202) and is here according to the Kam tshang bka' brgyud order, with texts by Sangs rgyas mnyan pa (1457-1525) and his disciple, the 8th Karma pa.²⁶³

The second, Vajramahākāla, is derived from the *Pañjaratantra* and was passed through the rNgog.²⁶⁴ It is also called the "Aural transmission of Mar pa" (*mar pa'i / lho brag pa'i snyan rgyud*) because it was "very secret." Very little is known about this transmission in secondary sources, and there is only one text by Kong sprul supplemented by the 11th Si tu Padma dbang chog rgyal po (1886-1952) in the KGND. In the daily protector ritual of the Kam tshang

²⁶² One of the texts, the *rJe btsun lho brag pa'i khyad par gyi gdams pa snyan gyi shog dril bzhi'i lo rgyus gzhung lhan thabs dang bcas pa* (KGND, 5: 191-224) also figures in the *gDams ngags mdzod*, 8: 203-233. See Mei 2009, 29-36.

²⁶³ It is presented after the next one in the KGNDdkar chag (KGNDdkar chag, 13 and 40-41) but in this order in the 6th volume.

²⁶⁴ KGNDdkar chag, 13 and 39-40.

order, the offerings and prayers to Vajramahākāla and Dud sol ma are grouped together, and the two are considered the specific protectors related to the KGND and Mar pa's traditions.

Third is the cycle of *Dhūmāṅgārī* (*Dud sol ma*), which is derived mainly from the *Catuṣpīṭhatantra* and became the central protective deity of the rNgog pa bka' brgyud teaching (see I.2). Many texts in this cycle were authored by rNgog masters, unlike in other sections of the KGND generally authored by later masters or by Kong sprul.

Closing the collection is the transmission of the five bKra shis tshe ring ma, a group of female protectors particularly associated with Mi la ras pa and the "lineage of practice" (*brgub brgyud*).

Legacy

Kong sprul completed a first version of the KGND in the summer of 1854.²⁶⁵ He then revised the collection several times (in 1856, 1881 and 1886),²⁶⁶ enriching it with the new transmissions he was receiving from various masters. He transmitted it completely for the first time in the spring of 1860, to the 14th Karma pa Theg mchog rdo rje (1798-1868).²⁶⁷ He transmitted it again to the 15th Karma pa mKha' khyab rdo rje (1871-1922) in Tsa 'dra in 1887, together with the entire range of Karma bka' brgyud transmissions. On that occasion, many more lamas came to receive the transmission, so that the hermitage was completely full.²⁶⁸

In all, Kong sprul transmitted the complete collection on seven occasions, thus ensuring its diffusion.²⁶⁹ One such moment was in 1882, when Thar rtse sLob dpon 'Jam dbyangs Blo gter dbang po (1847-1914) sojourned in Tsa 'dra for several months with his entourage, also receiving the *gDams ngag mdzod* and several other transmissions.²⁷⁰ Blo gter dbang po was a disciple of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rtse dbang po. Together they compiled a massive collection of *sādhanas*, the *sGrub thabs kun btus*, and later Blo gter dbang po gathered an even more massive set of tantric transmissions, the *rGyud sde kun btus*. Both collections rely on the KGND (as on many other such compilations of all periods) for the inclusion of maṅḍalas relating to the rNgog and Mar pa bKa' brgyud maṅḍalas in general, reproducing the commentaries and rituals authored by Kong sprul.

Blo gter dbang po, from Ngor monastery, commissioned a set of paintings of the 139 maṅḍalas included in the *rGyud sde kun btus*. This collection was brought to exile in the early 1960s by the Ngor mkhan chen bSod nams rgya mtsho (1930-1988, called Hiroshi Sonami during his exile in Japan). He, together with Musashi Tachikawa, published schemas of these

²⁶⁵ Barron 2003, 93-97

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 223

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 224.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 275.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

maṇḍalas in 1989 and 1991, and Tachikawa, together with Ragu Vira and Lokesh Chandra, also took part in the publication of line drawings of the 139 maṇḍala in 2006. As the *rGyud sde kun btus* includes Kong sprul's *sādhanas* on the rNgog maṇḍala, these reproductions are helpful tools to visualize the specificities of the rNgog transmissions as they are codified in the KGND. The schemas of the Seven rNgog maṇḍalas have been reproduced in the present study, with the authorization of Musashi Tachikawa, to whom I am extremely grateful (see Chapter I.2).

In general, Kong sprul played an instrumental role in the revival of Tibetan Buddhism in Eastern Tibet. He describes in his *Autobiography* how during his life he actively collected and practiced all transmissions available, many of which were on the verge of disappearance. He systematized them in his *Five Treasuries* and taught them widely and repeatedly to those that requested them. Thanks to these colossal efforts, many traditions, including Mar pa's, were effectively saved. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many bKa' brgyud, rNying ma and Sa skya masters from Khams fled Tibet. Some, like the 16th Karma pa Rig pa'i rdo rje (1924-1981), bDud 'joms Rin po che, mDil mgo mkhyen rtse Rin po che, Ka lu Rin po che (1905-1989), Be ru mKhyen rtse Rin po che (b. 1947), Che tshang Rin po che, and many others, held these traditions and transmitted them in exile, to fellow Tibetans and to Westerners, also republishing the precious sets of text they had brought with them. Thus, the Mar rNgog tradition was preserved.

Despite the centrality of the KGND in the bKa' brgyud schools, it is far from being well-known today. As pointed out above, no study goes beyond a general outline of contents, and the rNgog pa lineage is largely forgotten. There are a few individuals who practice the central transmissions of the collection, *Hevajra* and *Nairātmyā*, but in general most bKa' brgyud sub-schools focus on other systems (*Cakrasaṃvara* and *Vajravārāhī*, as well as *Kālacakra* and *Jināsagara*; the latter two are not included in the KGND). It is hoped that the present research can help in a modest way to spread a degree of awareness of the importance of the rNgog lineage for the preservation of Mar pa's teaching and shed some light on the difference of this transmission with that propounded by Mi la ras pa (the sNyan brgyud), sGam po pa (the Dwags po bKa' brgyud), and all the specific developments of the bKa' brgyud sub-schools. The rNgog tradition, as it is presented in the KGND and in other collections such as the DK-DZO, is in some way equated to Mar pa's tradition. The rNgog preserved Mar pa's tantric exegesis and strived to keep it as pure as possible, without mixing it with other traditions. Their main practices, *Hevajra* and *Nairātmyā*, were also Mar pa's. Their main protector, Dud sol ma, was also Mar pa's. Their practice of the perfection phase, merging and transference—the perfection phase associated to the *Hevajratantra*—was also Mar pa's. Hence, the KGND aims at preserving the Mar rNgog Teaching. In some way, this dissertation, although named after the rNgog, is also a study of the Mar rNgog tradition.