

THE SUN OF THE HEART AND THE BAI-RO-RGYUD-'BUM\*

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*Background*

**I**n recent years we have seen much progress in scholarship clarifying the historical development of the Rdzogs-chen traditions of contemplative practice. Not long ago, this topic was, to quote Churchill in a context he never dreamt of, “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma,” but now — thanks in large measure to the initial impetus provided by the late Herbert Guenther’s interpretations of the writings of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-64); to the pioneering contributions on the early formation of the Rdzogs-chen of Samten G. Karmay, to whom the present work is dedicated; and to the access to traditional instruction provided by some of the leading contemporary teachers of Rdzogs-chen meditation —, we face instead many particular riddles contained within a field whose general features no longer appear to be so mysterious as formerly they did.<sup>1</sup>

One of these particular puzzles is the collection of Rdzogs-chen tantras from the library of Rtogs-ldan Rinpoche that was published in 1971 under the title *The Rgyud 'Bum of Vairocana* (hereinafter: *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*). As the introductory remarks accompanying that work made clear, the collection had obvious affinities with the then known edition of the *Rnying-ma-rgyud-'bum*, but also included many tantras not identified in the available catalogue of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa (1730-1798).<sup>2</sup> Questions surrounding the origi-

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\* The present essay was first presented to the International Association of Tibetan Studies meeting at Indiana University (Bloomington) in 1998. It is a pleasure to make it available in the present collection honoring a friend of many years, Samten G. Karmay, whose work has done so much to open the present subject-matter for scholarly investigation.

<sup>1</sup> For relevant background see, especially, Guenther 1975-76, 1984, 1994, Karmay 1988, Ehrhard 1990, Dudjom 1991, Germano 1994, Achard 1999, van Schaik 2003, Klein and Wangyal 2006, and Arguillère 2007. On the question of Rdzogs-chen in the Dunhuang documents, first explored in the work of Karmay, see most recently Meinert 2007. There have been, in addition, numerous popular translations of Rdzogs-chen texts that I do not attempt to document here.

<sup>2</sup> Since the original publication of *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* many additional materials for the study of the *Rnying-ma-rgyud-'bum* collections have become available. The Tibetan Buddhist Nyingma Tantras Archive, a project at the University of Virginia under the direction of Prof. David Germano, is seeking to develop a complete, comparative digital catalogue of the available sources. See also Ehrhard 1997. See now, too, the valuable resource created by Cantwell et al. 2002.

nal provenance of the collection, the period and lineage in which it was compiled, remained unanswered.

In the course of my work on the English version of the late Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che's *Rnying-ma'i chos-'byung*, I became intrigued by references to the transmission of Rdzogs-chen materials in the Zur lineage, particularly during the 12th century. In the accompanying bibliography (Dudjom 1991 II: 269), I hazarded the guess that one of the works mentioned in the hagiography of Zhig-po Bdud-rtsis (1143-1199), namely, the *Sun of the Heart of Contemplation* (*Bsam-gtan snying-gi nyi-ma*, Dudjom 1991 I: 654), could be identified with a similarly titled text, the first text in fact contained in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, which is entitled *Pañ-sgrub-rnams-kyi thugs-bcud snying-gi nyi-ma*, the *Sun of the Heart Which is the Essential Spirit of the Scholars and Saints*.<sup>3</sup> This guess led me to comment speculatively to several colleagues about the possible provenance of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, and this *snyan-brgyud* came to be published, and later cited, without my prior knowledge or permission.<sup>4</sup> I am now fairly convinced that my original hunch was in essence correct, and in the body of this essay will attempt to substantiate this, at the same time drawing out what conclusions might be warranted for our thinking about the history of the Rdzogs-chen tradition and the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* itself, while also now providing interested colleagues with an appropriate citation.

### *The Sun of the Heart*

*The Sun of the Heart* opens with a short introduction (3.1 - 4.1), in which two Tibetan bhikṣu-s, Bai-ro-tsa-na (Vairocana) and his companion Legs-grub, are in the course of receiving instruction from Shri Sing-nga-pra-pa-ta (Śrī Siṃha) in the assembly hall of Ha-he-na-ku-sha (Dhahena).<sup>5</sup> Coming to the exposition of the esoteric instructions in the area of mind (*man-ngag sems-phyogs*), he perceives that it is the time for Tibet to be tamed by this teaching, and so he imparts six particular teachings to them:

1. *Rig-pa khu-byug*
2. *Rtsal-chen sprugs-pa*

<sup>3</sup> *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 1, plates 1 - 172. In the remainder of this essay I refer to passages from this text by page and line number, given in parentheses without further identification.

<sup>4</sup> Germano 1994. The article in question in fact cited my unpublished opinions so frequently that it is a matter of some astonishment that the editors of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* made no effort at all to verify the many remarks that were attributed to me there. Germano's reference was repeated in Ehrhard 1997: 263.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout this article I transcribe names and terms exactly as they are found in the *Sun of the Heart*, adding other, more widely known designations in parentheses where relevant.

3. *Khyung-chen lding-ba*
4. *Rdo-la gser-zhun*
5. *Mi-nub rgyal-mtshan nam-mkha'-che*
6. *Rmad-du byung-ba*.

With the original circumstances in which the teaching was imparted to the Tibetans thus described, the text launches into a series of expositions of the first five texts just enumerated, providing also brief indications regarding the qualities of the guru and appropriate circumstances for practice. It frequently describes these teachings as having been transmitted from Kun-tu-bzang-po to Dga'-rab-rdo-rje, and sometimes thence to 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen.<sup>6</sup> I shall not discuss here in detail the identifications of the texts that are referred to by the titles just mentioned: the relationship between the first five titles and the five corresponding teachings is made very clear in the *Sun of the Heart* itself, and these five, moreover, correspond to the list of five "earlier translations of the Mental Class" found in many Rnying-ma-pa works<sup>7</sup>—the *Rig-pa khu-byug* and *Rdo-la gser-zhun* in particular are now very well known to contemporary students of Rdzogs-chen.<sup>8</sup> The sixth, the text called *Rmad-du byung-ba*, a phrase that occurs in the titles of several Sems-sde tantras, is also usually included in the later lists of tantras transmitted by Śrī Siṃha to Bai-ro-tsa-na.<sup>9</sup>

This series of five teachings, which comprise more than half of the *Sun of the Heart* (to 104.6), is followed by a disquisition on "exegetical methods in general" (*spyir bshad-thabs*), explained in terms of the "aural transmissions relating to view, meditation, conduct and result" (*lta-bsgom-spyod-*

<sup>6</sup> The pagination of the five teachings is as follows: 1. *Rig-pa khu-byug* (4.1 - 14.4); 2. *Rtsal-chen sprugs-pa* (14.4-22.1); 3. *Khyung-chen lding-ba* (22.1-48.6); 4. *Rdo-la gser-zhun* (49.1-64.4); 5. *Mi-nub rgyal-mtshan nam-mkha'-che* (64.2-104.6). The close of the last interestingly remarks that "that [teaching] is not like what has been said in [the teachings of] the translators of the dharmacakra and Śākyamuni" (*de ni chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba mdzad mkhan dang/ shag thub la sogs par brjod pa lta bu ma yin no, 104.5*). The phrase *chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba mdzad mkhan* may also be understood on analogy to *'khor lo bsgyur ba* in the sense of Cakravartin.

<sup>7</sup> The first five are often classed as the *snga'-gyur lnga*, the "five early translations," among the eighteen tantras of the *Rdzogs-chen sems-phyogs* that Vairocana transmitted. There are, however, differing redactions of these tantras in circulation and I have not yet attempted to identify the works referred to in the *Sun of the Heart* with actual texts to which we now have access. On the basis of the titles alone we may propose, however, the following general identifications, at least as a point of departure: 1. *Rig-pa khu-byug* (*Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 5, no. 8.a; Kaneko no. 8.1); 2. *Rtsal-chen sprugs-pa* (*Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 5, no. 8.b; Kaneko no. 8.3); 3. *Khyung-chen lding-ba* (*Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 5, no. 8.c; Kaneko no. 8.2); 4. *Rdo-la gser-zhun* (=Byang-chub-kyi sems bsgom-pa, *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 5, no. 8.d; Kaneko no. 14); 5. *Mi-nub rgyal-mtshan nam-mkha'-che* (perhaps to be identified with *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 4, no. 4; see Karmay 1988, p. 23, n. 22).

<sup>8</sup> Karmay 1988, Norbu and Lipman 1987.

<sup>9</sup> *Rmad-du byung-ba* occurs in the title of *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 2, no. 2 (cf. Kaneko nos. 10, 20, 40, 42).

'bras-kyi snyan-(b)rgyud, 105.1-120.6). This subject-matter is further amplified by a group of brief commentaries and outlines on four Rdzogs-chen tantras, each given with its title in the vulgar Sanskrit often found in Tibetan works of this period, but with alternative titles at the end of each work. The texts in question are:

1. 'Bras bu rin po che dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi dka' 'grel, also called *Rin po che za ma tog 'bar ba* (121.1 - 127.3).
2. *Lta ba ye shes mdzod chen chos kyi dbyings*, also called *Rin po che 'phrul gyi lde mig* (127.3 - 130.5).
3. *Bsgom pa ye shes gsal ba chos kyi dbyings*, also called *Yang gsang thugs kyi lde mig* (130.5 - 132.6).
4. *Spyod pa ye shes 'bar ba chos kyi dbyings*, also called *Zab mo mchog gi lde mig* (133.1 - 134.5).

The texts of the tantras commented upon here are included in the second volume of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, it is of great interest that the work closes with an extended discussion of "exegetical methods for explaining the precepts" (*man-ngag bshad-pa'i bshad-thabs*, 134.5 - 172.3). Here it treats of five major topics, explaining the teaching in terms of the significance of: (1) the history (*lo-rgyus*, 135.1 - 164.3), (2) the root [of the teaching, i.e. *byang-chub-kyi sems*] (*rtsa-ba*, 164.3 -6), (3) yoga (*rnal-'byor*, 166.2-169.3),<sup>11</sup> (4) the purpose (*dgosched*, 166.2-169.3) and (5) the words themselves (*tshig*), in fact a commentary on the *Rig-pa'i khu-byug*, referred to here as the "text" (*gzhung*, 169.3 - 172.3). The first and fullest of these sections is of special importance, as it is certainly one of the earliest relatively well-developed histories of the Rdzogs-chen traditions, it establishes the provenance of the work within the early Zur lineage, and it seems clearly related to the later expanded biographies of Bai-ro-tsa-na, known generally under the title '*Dra-'bag chen-mo*.<sup>12</sup> To call this a "history," however, is perhaps misleading, for this

<sup>10</sup> *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 2, nos. 1.d-g. As Mr. Philip Stanley reminded me, the four texts commented upon here are among the Rdzogs-chen works preserved in the Peking edition of the Tibetan canon, nos. 5039-5042. Perhaps it is significant, too, that we find texts relating to the '*Khor-ba rtsad-gcod* cycle in close proximity (nos. 5031-5035), which is also the case in *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 2, nos. 1.a-c, and i-n. The provenance of the Rnying-ma materials that are found in the Peking edition of the canon remains an intriguing problem. The Zur, of course, were active in China under the Yuan, but more pertinent, no doubt, was the reception by the Fifth Dalai Lama of elements of the old *Zur-lugs*. Cf. Ehrhard 1997: 262-263.

<sup>11</sup> This passage interestingly expands upon various explanations of the Tibetan term *rnal-'byor*, and offers a very fine example of the manner in which some Tibetan religious circles were exploring the peculiarly Tibetan connotations of Buddhist terminology, quite apart from questions of Sanskrit usage.

<sup>12</sup> Note also that while a manuscript version of the '*Dra-'bag chen-mo* is included in vol. 8 of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, it certainly has no original relationship with the other

section of the *Sun of the Heart* is primarily a lineage-list, expanded with the inclusion of occasional myths and legends. It opens with a version of the well-known Rdzogs-chen account of the primordial enlightenment of the buddha Samantabhadra,<sup>13</sup> and then lists the succession of teachers of the Rdzogs-chen in India, providing only brief remarks on the circumstances of transmission from Samantabhadra through Mañjuśrīmitra (135.3 - 138.6). The entire lineage in India is as follows, and will be seen to resemble closely the list derived from the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo* as given by Karmay.<sup>14</sup>

1. Kun-tu-bzang-po (Samantabhadra)
2. Rdo-rje-sems-dpa' (Vajrasattva)
3. Dga'-rab-rdo-rje (Dudjom 1991 I: 490-494)
4. 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen (=Mañjuśrīmitra, Dudjom 1991 I: 493-493)
5. Rgyal-po 'Da'-he-na-ta
6. Sras thu-bo Ha-ti (Rājahasti)
7. Sras-mo Pa-ra-ni
8. Rgyal-po Yon-tan-lag-gi bu-mo Gnod-sbyin-mo byang-chub
9. Rmad-'tshong-ma Par-na
10. Kha-che'i mkhan-po Rab-srang
11. U-rgyan-gyi mkhan-po Ma-ha-ra-tsa (= King Indra-bhūti)
12. Sras-mo Go-ma-de-byi (Princess Gomadevi)
13. A-rya A-lo-ke
14. Khyi'i rgyal-po Gu-gu-ra-tsa (Kukkurāja)
15. Drang-srong Ba-sha-ti (= ṛṣi Bhāṣita)
16. Rmad-'tshong-ma Bdag-nyid-ma
17. Na-ga-'dzu-na (Nāgārjuna)
18. Gu-gu-ra-tsa phyi-ma (the later Kukkurāja)
19. 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen phyi-ma (the later Mañjuśrīmitra)
20. Lha'i mkhan-po Ma-ha-ra (Devarāja)
21. Bud-dha-kug-ta (Buddhagupta)
22. Shri Sing-nga (Śrī Siṃha)
23. Dge-slong-ma Kun-dga'-ma

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manuscripts comprising the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* itself, and thus should not be considered to be properly part of this collection. One of the later redactions of the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo* is now available in English translation: Palmo 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Dudjom 1991 I: 115-119 and 447-450, Kapstein 2000: chapters 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> Karmay 1988: 19-21. The two lists are almost identical. Karmay was unaware that the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo* was indeed repeating a received tradition at this point, and not itself inventing the lineage it reports. The concurrence between the *Sun of the Heart* and the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo* here possibly strengthens my suggestion that the *Sun of the Heart* forms an important part of the background for the latter text.

24. Bye-ma-la-mu-tra (Vimalamitra)

25. 'Phags-pa Bai-ro-tsa-na

The *Sun of the Heart* further specifies (138.6) that numbers 18-24 constitute the “lineage of seven,” with Bai-ro-tsa-na as the eighth added to this group.

There are many interesting features of this list, which merits a much fuller analysis than space permits here. I confine myself to two topics of interest:

(a) As its inclusion in the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo* demonstrates, some knowledge of the lineage as given here was preserved through at least the 14th century, though the Rnying-ma-pa historians who do refer to it tend to abbreviate it, mentioning the figures 4-24 only as an enumeration of twenty-one, twenty-three, or twenty-five generations, among whom few particular names are given.<sup>15</sup> This sometimes results in the enumeration of the intervening generations being forgotten altogether: in the *Gsan-yig* of Gter-bdag-gling-pa (1646-1714), for instance, the *Rdzogs-chen-sems-sde* lineage passes directly from 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen through Śrī Siṃha to Bai-ro-tsa-na, although the lineage in Tibet that follows is closely similar to that given in the *Sun of the Heart*.<sup>16</sup> The figures in the lineage in India who were still to some extent remembered seem to have been those also mentioned in connection with the traditions of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, certainly the most important aspects of the Zur-lugs for the later *Rnying-ma Bka'-ma* tradition.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Nyang-ral* 488, for instance, mentions a lineage passing through “five hundred who were learned, including the twenty-five generations” (*(gdung rabs) nyi shu rtsa lnga la sogs pa mkhas pa lnga brgya la brgyud*). *Klong-chen chos-'byung* 202-203 enumerates Rgyal-po Dha-he-na-ta-lo, Sras thu-bo Ha-ti Rā-dza-has-ti, Sras-mo Pa-ra-ni, Klu'i Rgyal-po, Gnod-sbyin-mo byang-chub and the former Kukkurāja as having beheld the visage of Dga'-rab-rdo-rje. He further remarks that, down to Vimalamitra, there are differing enumerations of 25, 23, 21, 7, 5, 3, and 1 generation(s) in the lineage of transmission. Kong-sprul (1813-1899), *Gdams-ngag-mdzod*, vol. 12, 702.6, refers to the “twenty-one learned ones” (*mkhas-pa nyi-shu-rtsa-gcig*) intervening between Dga'-rab-rdo-rje and Bai-ro-tsa-na in the lineage of the “eighteen empowerments of the expressive power of awareness” (*rig-pa'i rtsal-dbang bco-brgyad*) according to the Kaḥ-thog tradition, and enumerates a lineage of the *Rdzogs-chen sems-sde* stemming from Kaḥ-thog (704.2-5) that passes from Dga'-rab-rdo-rje through Mañjuśrimitra, Dha-he-ta-la, Go-ma-de-ba, Rab-snang-brtan, Tshogs-bdag, Klu-sgrub, Rdo-rje legs-brtsal, Ku-ku-rā-dza, Thor-tshugs-dgu-pa and Mar-me-mdzad to Śrī Siṃha and thence to Bai-ro-tsa-na. That the Kaḥ-thog school may have preserved a richer tradition than the central and western Tibetan Rnying-ma-pa in regard to some of the obscure figures listed in the Indian *Rdzogs-chen* lineages is apparent, too, in the *Sems-sde'i rgyud-lung-gi rtsa-ba gces-btus nang-gses le-tshan bdun*, given in *Bka'-ma*, vol. 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Gter-bdag Gsan-yig*, plate 38.

<sup>17</sup> Examples include Indrabhūti, Gomadevī, and Kukkurāja. See, e.g., Dudjom 1991 I: 458-462. On the mahāyoga and anuyoga lineages of the Zur, refer to *Mdo-dbang* and Dudjom 1991 I: book two, part five.

(b) Some of the relatively obscure figures mentioned, for instance, the nun Kun-dga'-ma, are also known to Gnubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes's *Bsam-gtan mig-sgron*.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the form of Buddhagupta's name, Buddha-kug-ta, conforms with other relatively early sources, including once again Gnubs-chen.<sup>19</sup> This seems to suggest that the *Sun of the Heart* belongs to a stratum in the history of the Rdzogs-chen still close to that of the *Bsam-gtan mig-sgron*, which indeed was also current within the early Zur tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Following the enumeration of the lineage in India, the lengthiest part of the history is given over to a biography of Bai-ro-tsa-na, treating especially of his exile in Rgyal-mo-rong in the east, and his disciple G.yu-sgra Snying-po (138.6 - 163.5). This entire section of the work merits careful comparison with the account of Bai-ro-tsa-na in the later *'Dra-bag chen-mo*, of which the *Sun of the Heart* is possibly one of the prototypes.<sup>21</sup> The historical discussion then closes with an enumeration of the lineage from G.yu-sgra onwards (163.5 - 164.3). Knowledge of the figures mentioned here was, of course, very well preserved in the later tradition.<sup>22</sup>

- 27. Bsnnyags-gnya' (Gnyags Jñānakumāra)
- 28. Sog-po Lha-dpal-gyi-ye-shes
- 29. Bsnubs (Gnubs) Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes
- 30a. Thugs-kyi sras bzhi (Pa-gor Blon-chen 'Phags-pa, So Yes-shes (sic!) dbang-phyug, Sru Legs-pa'i sgron-ma, Bsnubs Khung-lung (Khu-lung) Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho; cf. Dudjom 1991 I: 612-615)
- 30b. Sras Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho
- 31. Myang-mi Shes-rab-mchog
- 32. Myang Ye-'byung

<sup>18</sup> *Bsam-gtan mig-sgron* 316 and 412.

<sup>19</sup> Norbu 1984 consistently reads "Buddhagupta," correcting against the *Bsam-gtan mig-sgron*. The orthography of other old sources, such as the *Dkar-chag ldan-kar-ma* and Pel-liot tibétain 44 (where it is a question of the transcription of the name Śrīgupta), however, confirms that the reading *kug-ta/gug-ta* does correctly represent the old Tibetan transcription.

<sup>20</sup> This is not to say, however, that it is necessarily the case that the composition of Gnubs-chen's work (circa 10th century) and that of the *Sun of the Heart* were very close. I am maintaining only that both are familiar with similar sources and doctrines, and unfamiliar with developments such as the *snying-thig* traditions, so that both seem to stem from a common matrix within then early Rdzogs-chen tradition. Nevertheless, this does not preclude their composition being separated by several generations.

<sup>21</sup> Note that at the very beginning of this account plates 139-142 are out of order. The correct order here should be: 138, 141, 142, 139, 140, 143, 144, etc.

<sup>22</sup> BA 102-141, *Mdo-dbang* 148-261, *Gu-bkra* 242-283, Dudjom 1991 I: 600-652. Significantly, some members of this lineage are named in the labels of an exquisite ca. 13<sup>th</sup> century *thang-ka* depicting the blue Vajrasattva and now in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Refer to Huntington and Huntington 1990: 309-13 and Kapstein forthcoming.

33. Zur Sha-kya-'byung-gnas
34. Rtse-mo lnga dang rtse-kog (Zhang 'Gos-chung, Memyag 'Byung-grags (Khyung-'dra), Gzad Shes-rab-rgyal-po, Tsag Bla-ma, Zur-chung Shes-rab-grags-pa; cf. Dudjom 1991 I: 622, where the text reads *rtse-mo bzhi dang rtse-kog-gcig*, the last being Tsag Bla-ma)
35. Ka-bzhi gdung-brgyad (only the "four pillars" (*ka-bzhi*) are listed here: Skyo-ston Shakya ye-shes, Yang-kher (Yang-kheng) bla-ma, Rlan Shakya bzang-po, Mda'-dig Chos-shag (Mda'-tig Jo-shāk); cf. Dudjom 1991 I: 642, where the "eight rafters" (*gdung-brgyad*) are also enumerated.)
36. Lha-rje Mda'-tsha hor-po (= Zur Sgro-phug-pa)
37. Lce-ston Rgya-nag
38. Dbus-pa Shakya bla-ma

The list then closes with the characteristic phrase, *des bdag la gnang ngo*, "He bestowed it on me" (104.3). But who is this "me" that occupies the final position in the list? I would suggest that the name immediately preceding, Dbus-pa Shakya bla-ma, is likely to be identified with one of Lce-ston Rgya-nag's leading disciples, Dbus-pa Ston-śāk, who is most often referred to in the histories by his epithet Dam-pa Bse-sbrag-pa (Dudjom 1991 I: 651-2). If this is correct, the self-reference may be due to none other than Zhig-po Bdud-rtsis, who counted Ston-śāk among his teachers and who, as we have seen, was involved in the transmission of the *Sun of the Heart of Contemplation*. Should we understand this to mean that he is the probable author of our text? I do not think that we should rush to such a conclusion, for the references to the *Sun of the Heart* in the histories suggest that it was already more or in less in existence, perhaps as a sort of compendium of treasured Rdzogs-chen instructions of the Zur tradition, though Zhig-po Bdud-rtsis may well have played a role in its redaction in the form in which it is preserved in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* today.

### *Implications*

What, if anything, does this tell us of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* itself? One could, I suppose, argue that in the course of rumaging through old manuscript collections the compiler of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* found this interesting old Sems-sde text and decided to include it, in which case it really tells us nothing at all about the history of the collection of which it is but a small part. I think, however, that such a scenario is rather unlikely, and does not reflect a viable approach to the historical analysis of Tibetan scriptural corpora. While some tantras may have incidentally entered the

*Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* in this way, it is unlikely that an expository work, that is not itself a tantra, would have come to occupy a preeminent position within the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* in this fashion. It is on the whole better to suppose that our collection is derived from earlier collections, and that one of these prominently included the *Sun of the Heart*, prominently enough in fact so that it would come to be placed as the very first text in the first volume of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*. Evidence of such a collection would plausibly point to the initial core which grew into the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*. And, indeed, there is evidence of such a collection.

Let us now consider further the reference, mentioned earlier, to the *Sun of the Heart of Contemplation* in Dudjom Rinpoche's *History*. It occurs in close connection with the mention of Zhig-po Bdud-rtsis's study of the "Twenty-four Great Tantras of the Mental Class, including the *All-Accomplishing King* and the *Ten Sūtras*." A generation later, his disciple Rta-ston Jo-ye (b. 1163) is reported to have "studied the *Triple Cycle of the Mother and Sons*, [which comprises] the *All-Accomplishing King*, the *Ten Sūtras* which are its exegetical tantras, and the four groups of exegetical tantras pertaining to the *Tantra which Uproots Saṃsāra* (*'khor-ba rtsad-gcod-kyi rgyud*) ... and the commentaries on meditation [including] the *Six Suns of the Heart* (*snying-gi nyi-ma drug*)..." (Dudjom 1991 I: 658).<sup>23</sup> This last title, I think, may also refer to our text, for as we have noticed above, its point of departure is the transmission of a group of six Rdzogs-chen tantras. Let us note, too, the conspicuous presence in the first several volumes of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* of materials relating to the *Kun-byed-rgyal-po* and the *'Khor-ba rtsad-gcod* cycle of tantras.<sup>24</sup>

Based upon what we have already seen, it is reasonable to assume that during the period with which we are here concerned, roughly the 12th century, there was an on-going process of compilation, within the Zur lineage, of texts and traditions connected with that tradition's treasured teachings of the *Rdzogs-chen Sems-sde*, or *Sems-phyogs*, to use the expression that is actually employed within these texts.<sup>25</sup> The initial parts of the *Bai-ro-*

<sup>23</sup> The entire passage mentions several other texts and teachings, including the *Bsam-gtan mig-sgron*, which are also not represented in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*. If I am correct that the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* is derived in part from an earlier Zur-lugs collection, it must be noted nevertheless that it is not a collection of which we have precise knowledge from our available sources. I defer here discussion of the "twenty-four great tantras of the mental class" (*sems-phyogs-kyi rgyud-sde chen-po nyi-shu-rtsa-bzhi*) referred to above. For their enumeration as given by Klong-chen-pa, see Dudjom 1991 II: 284-285. Possibly some of these are to be identified in *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3, etc.

<sup>24</sup> *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*, vol. 1, no. 4, gives only the last of the three main sections of the *Kun-byed-rgyal-po*, while vol. 2, no. 1, includes the *'Khor-ba rtsad-gcod* cycle. The *Mdo-bcu* (Kaneke no. 10) are nowhere to be found in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*.

<sup>25</sup> The threefold classification of the *sde-gsum*—*sems-sde*, *klong-sde*, *mang-ngag-gi sde*—appears to originate in the tantras of the latter category and is unknown to the other systems of Rdzogs-chen. A single reference to the threefold classification in the *rnam-thar* of

*rgyud-'bum* seem likely to have arisen as a result of this process, perhaps in one of the Western Tibetan lineages stemming from the Zur,<sup>26</sup> so that what we find in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* today includes a truncated version of the Rdzogs-chen teachings of the Zur.

At the same time, we must note that large sections of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* appear to have no relation to the known Zur traditions. Franz-Karl Ehrhard has observed that a number of these tantras found in the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* also appear in versions of the *Rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum* recently located in Nepal.<sup>27</sup> This may suggest some filiation among the textual traditions of the Rnying-ma-pa in the western parts of the Tibetan world, and perhaps the earlier existence of one or more collections that at some point were conjoined with the materials that, as I propose here, must derive from a branch of the Zur. In order to begin to sort out some of riddles that remain here, it will be no doubt useful to begin to compare our evidence regarding the Rdzogs-chen canons in West and Central Tibet with the available documents concerning the early Rdzogs-chen traditions of Kaḥ-thog.<sup>28</sup> One hopes that the tracing of textual stemma on the basis of the available collections, in tandem with internal historical references, such as those I have indicated here, will permit us eventually to document the formation of the Rnying-ma Rdzogs-chen corpus in the crucial period from the 11th through 14th centuries.

Given the importance of the Zur lineage in the history of the *Rnying-ma Bka'-ma* traditions,<sup>29</sup> it remains puzzling that we have no evidence, so far as I have been able to locate to date, of later transmission, or even knowledge, of the *Sun of the Heart*, excepting of course the mere mention of the title in the histories.<sup>30</sup> Even the *Gsan-yig* of the great Gter-dbag-gling-pa, in documenting the continuous transmission of the Zur tradition of the Rdzogs-chen, refers only to relatively late *khrid-yig*.<sup>31</sup> One reason for this was no doubt the great success of the *snying-thig* traditions, which overshadowed the older approaches to the Rdzogs-chen, while absorbing much of their

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Khyung-po rnal-'byor (written c. 1140) may be the earliest reference outside the tantras themselves, and perhaps reflects later editorial intervention. Refer to Kapstein 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Dudjom 1991 I: 702 mentions a Ya-stod zur-pa tradition, from which Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa apparently received some instruction. Besides this brief reference, however, nothing has so far come to my attention that would shed light on the Zur traditions in Western Tibet.

<sup>27</sup> Ehrhard 1997. Note that the tantras common to the collections studied by Ehrhard are concentrated in volumes 6-7 of the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum* (with some also in vols. 4-5), while the works I am tracing to the Zur-lugs are concentrated in vols. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> Relevant sources include *Theg-pa spyi-bcings* and *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, on which see Kapstein 2000, pp. 97-106.

<sup>29</sup> See especially *Mdo-dbang* and Dudjom 1991 I: book two, part five.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., *BA* 138, *Gu-bkra* 281.

<sup>31</sup> *Gter-bdag gsan-yig*, plate 38, refers to two such works (*khrid-yig che-chung*) both authored by Blo-gros-bzang-po, who precedes Gter-dbag-gling-pa himself by only three generations.

teaching.<sup>32</sup> In the *Sun of the Heart*, for instance, we find much emphasis on bringing mind to rest in its natural state (*sems-nyid rnal-du phebs-pa*), a teaching that becomes formalized as part of the preliminary practice (*sngon-'gro*) in the *snying-thig* traditions and their offshoots. Moreover, the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo*, in later times at least, no doubt supplanted whatever older biographies of Bai-ro-tsa-na were still to be found. The great interest shown by later Rdzogs-chen masters, particularly 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820-1892) and his disciples and colleagues, in the recovery and renewal of old and even lost teachings known only from the historical record, never seems to have extended to the early Zur-lugs.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The ascent of the *snying-thig* traditions may have corresponded, too, to a general shift in emphasis from *bka'-ma* to *gter-ma* teachings within the Rnying-ma-pa lineages.

<sup>33</sup> 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse and 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, however, were not altogether without interest in the Zur. According to a story I have been told repeatedly (by the late Dezhung Rinpoche, among others), but which I have not yet seen in written sources, they made great efforts to capture the vital force (*srog*) of the great, miraculous Heruka image of 'Up-pa-lung that had been constructed by Zur-po-che (Dudjom 1991 I: 626-28, 634-35) but which in their day no longer existed.

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